

evening was golden in the west, and a great stillness seemed to have fallen on the country-side. Disappointed, I stood on the bank, opposite a part of the pool into which poured the waters of a tributary brook. At my side was an old, grey-haired fisherman, my attendant since boyhood, my mentor and my friend, speaking words of counsel, as, weary from hours of fruitless casting, I threw my salmon fly over the inrush at the throat of the "hover."

"It's beyond me to explain, sir," he said, "but I've often noticed that a big fish isn't to be found in the same 'run' as a little 'un. A salmon's like a trout in that way. A twenty-pounder don't seem to sort well with a ten-pounder, except, maybe, at spawning time. There's many a place on this river where I've never hooked a big fish, though I've caught a botcher (grilse) in it on low water, and ten or twelve-pounders when the stream ran high. And there's many a spot where I've never known a fish under fifteen pounds to come either to worm or fly, though most every season some big chap or other would show hisself there, and give me a bit o' sport, or set me for days a-thinking and contriving of dodges to get the right side of 'n. I don't count on kelts (salmon that are dropping back to sea after spawning); they'll stay nigh anywhere; it's of the fresh-run fish, as bright as silver, that I'm thinking. They don't stay long in one spot; but, for all that, any fish of twenty pounds and upwards is more or less like that old trout we used to hook every spring by the big stone in the Tancoed reaches, till at last we hooked him once too often, and the fun of planning to catch him was over. If there's a monster salmon to be had, it's in such-and-such a place you'll come across him, and you needn't think of getting his sort in another part of the pool, or anywhere else, till you fish a run that's as like to the first as pea to pea. This pool ain't of much account in spring, and I don't think it's much use fishing it when the 'botchers' come up in June and July, but with good water, any time after grouse shooting begins, there's no better pool on the whole river. Be careful, sir,