

FISHING.—No. VI.

Since writing my last article I have had the pleasure of inspecting some home manufactured rods, made by Mr. Purcell of Barrington St. Let alone the fact that we ought to support home manufacture as much as possible, I can honestly say that with such rods at our very doors there is no need for ordinary fishing to get any other; they are not only for the practical fisherman, but by their good looks and high state of finish must commend themselves to the most *dilettante* exponent of the art.

One word as to reels. There cannot be a doubt but that there is a vast improvement yet to be made in reels, tho' even if they have not kept pace with rods in improvements still they are far ahead of the old fashioned windlasses we formerly had. One I remember so well; remember, did I say? It haunts me rather. It was a miserable abortion called a "A Multiplier." The only multiplying it ever did was that of "cuss words;" whoever invented it must have suffered agonies on his death bed at the thought of leaving such a monstrosity behind him. The reel I prefer is a combination of the "Nottingham" and the ordinary plain check. By the "Nottingham" I mean the large open reel with which one can cast the bait direct from the reel. For ordinary fishing I would advise a reel of $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 4 in. diameter, this increased diameter of the axle giving a more rapid winding-in power than smaller patterns of reels. For salmon fishing pure and simple there are many kinds. The best I have come across for boat work is "Mallock's Sun and Planet" Reel. This is a check reel, but its beauty is that until the handle is taken hold of the line runs out without any movement of the handle, so, that when trailing, the rod can be left resting on the bottom of the boat, without any fear in the case of a "run," of any contact between the reel handle and the luncheon baskets or other *impedimenta*, which often causes one of those sudden checks which bring disaster in their wake. The best reel I ever saw was one made of aluminium, made after this pattern, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, weighing under 3 ozs., price £1 per ounce. Just a little too steep for ordinary individuals. There is no doubt but that the greater proportion of salmon fishermen overdo it in respect to the weight of their reels. Of course this to a great extent is on account of the extra cost of the lighter ones. It must be remembered the reel has to be supported at arm's length, when every ounce tells during a day's fishing. Therefore it is essential that the reel should be as light as possible. One of the most perfect and beautiful reels I ever saw was one made by Mr. C. Orvis, Manchester, Vermont, U. S. A. This reel has an extraordinarily narrow barrel, and the side plates perforated for lightness. Having a great diameter, it allows the user, if a fish "runs," to wind up fast enough to prevent the evils of a slack line.

Gaffs and Gaffing.—There is one great flaw in the ordinary gaff. It is that the screwed in gaff is liable to turn in the socket, by

which means the fish is invariably lost. To remedy this Mr. Pennell got a steel rivet driven *right through* the gaff ferrule and the screw of the gaff itself, the pointed end screwing into the opposite side. This makes any turning or twisting impossible. It is really wonderful how difficult it is to become a first class gaffer, it seems an accomplishment not within the scope of the uneducated man. Mr. Pennell writes of a man he had with him on many a fishing excursion, Timothy by name,

"The wily Tim with dextrous gaff
Tries hard to cut the line in half."

Tim not only succeeded in doing the above, but also by "dextrous movement" (vide Artemus Ward) succeeded in bringing the gaff point into contact with the flank of his master's bull-dog. Had it not been for the above mentioned flaw in the gaff, whereby it twisted round and released our canine friend, the consequences might have been serious for Mr. Tim. Gaffing in really rapid water is not only an artistic but also a physical difficulty, for many is the man that having gaffed a salmon, which in angling parlance was not half dead, has not quite met with a watery grave, but has had a cold bath for his pains. I can speak feelingly on this point, for the first salmon I ever gaffed, or rather didn't gaff, brought about this order of things, and in the beginning of March too,—Ugh! wasn't it cold! I have given two or three standard rules, as to gaffing fish, which I hope will stand the novice in good stead.

(1) Never put the gaff forward till you mean business, and never make half attempts, as by these you only scare the fish.

(2) *Ordinarily* never attempt to gaff a fish more than a foot below the surface, or until it is fairly beaten. The best position is when he is broadside on.

(3) The proper place to gaff is between the head and the back fin.

Now, having caught our fish, the next thing is the carrying of them home. For this purpose I think a bag is far preferable to a basket. A "Freke" bag is as near perfection for this purpose as any. For this country one of the following dimensions would be suitable. About 1ft. 7in. long, and 14 inches deep, weight not to exceed 1 lb. 10 oz. The shoulder-strap—or webbing, better still, leather saddens—should be quite 2 inches wide, so that it will not cut the shoulder. This bag should be *mole double*, that is, there should be two bags, buttoned together at the sides for choice, one bag of strong water proof cloth for the fish; the inner one, with the mouth open, which will close when on the back, for lunch and tackle, or of course, if necessary both may be used for fish. The only reason anyone can quote for preferring a basket to a bag, is that having caught nothing the latter does "give one away so!"

I must confess I much prefer fishing from *terra firma*, but there are times when one is compelled to wade. This being the case the use of waders becomes a necessity. I know there are many blooded young fishermen who disdain to wear such things, but the day will come, when "wild youth's past," and the veteran is reminded by the twinges of rheumatism, lumbago, and other "ills that flesh (anglers) is heir to," of the fool-hardiness of his youth. It is extraordinary what a man will do when he has a salmon on "heights and depths," have no fears for him, he will negotiate places at this time, that would make him shudder to look at in cool blood. I remember a tale told of a gallant major, a great admirer and absorber of "Potheen," which he used to carry in a soda water bottle. Once whilst following a fish that was dashing down stream he successfully cleared a post and rail fence, but this feat cost him rather dear, for the aforesaid soda water bottle, flapping about in his tail pocket, jerked up and knocked him in the mouth, knocking out two of his front teeth. The language used was a thing to be remembered, or better, to be forgotten. Let me advise those who wear waders, to be sure to have on good thick stockings underneath. All water proof garments become more or less damp from repressed perspiration, therefore they should be dried after use; the best way to do this, is to fill the garments with warm barley, which shaken out directly it begins to cool, or the mischief commences over again.

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