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## FISHING. No IV.

Before commencing to speak on Fly fishing, I think for practical purposes it would be better if I spoke *seriatim* of the articles we use for the purpose of catching fish in this—or any other—way. The remarks I make in any of my articles, are really practical, and being so I shall be only too willing to answer any questions of that nature,—through the correspondents' columns—but I do most distinctly bar any argument with a pure and simple—Simple in two renderings of the word—Theorist. Of all Theorists, the Fishing Theorist is the worst.

To return,—Firstly, experience has taught me that there is more done in respect to catching fish, by the hook, than by any other part of one's gear. I hear some one smiling audibly, and saying to himself "of course there is, how the dickens could he catch them without it?" I am satisfied! He has had his little joke, but let me just remind that addle pated young man that I am now taking the paraphernalia of fishing *tout ensemble*. Hooks have gone through more radical changes as regards make and shape than any other part of the angler's gear. I have a sort of idea that the first hook I ever saw was represented in bone. I did not happen to be about just at the time it was in use, but still during my experience this improvement has been so great, that now I fail to see how any further improvements can possibly be made on the last issued pattern. For this the fishing community at large are greatly in the debt of Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell, the best practical fisherman England has ever produced. No doubt but that with a large fortune at his command, he is in a position to catch more fish than his less fortunate friends, but there has never been a man who spent his time and money to such an extent for the good of the brethren of his craft. But to return to the hook. There can be no doubt, but that the metal eyes now in use, are far away ahead of the old way in which we attached the gut to the hooks. The fact is by using the eye loop attached to the hook without any extraneous aid, in the way of waxed binding, which was there is no doubt, will wear off after a certain time, thereby allowing the binding to loosen, which is sure to happen when the biggest fish is on. Taking this view, I would advise the use of those hooks with the eyes *turned down*. The preference I give to the eyed hook, as against the "lapped on" one, is more patent in Salmon than in Trout fishing.

All Salmon fishermen know full well that their fly bill is an item in their year's expenditure, and each fly they lose is something out of their pocket, and also they know that if they preserved their flies, as I have recommended in a former article, they would last for two or three seasons, whereas by using the old fashioned attachment they often have no fly to preserve. There can be only one set off against the above advantages for this method, and that is the attaching the gut to the eye. There are so many knots known to fishermen, that this objection amounts to really nothing at all. It may seem a very trivial matter whether a hook has a *turned up* eye or one that is *turned down*. But there is after all a great deal in this; Mr. Pennell shows not only practically, but also mathematically, that you can strike a fish with greater success, by the latter: for this reason, that with the former the line could not be exactly in the same level with the shank of the hook, while with the latter it would be in exactly the same plane.

As to the best shapes of the hook to use, it is very difficult to give an idea on paper, but there is one of which I would say to my readers "Beware," and that is an exaggerated "hog-back," a hook beloved of makers, and one which causes the use of many bad words by the users. Theorists will tell you this selfsame "hog-backed" shape abortion "has wonderful holding power." Practical fishermen retort "what on earth is the good of that, if

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you don't hook your fish?" Very true this is too, forgiving all this holding power, it lessens the chance of fairly hooking, while the chance is that you only just prick your fish. Again with a *very* round bend you stand all chances of hooking your fish, but then another difficulty arises, "can you keep him there?" Thus it is the happy medium between these two hooks that you want to strike, for the two objects you have in view are in the first place to hook your fish, and secondly to keep him there.

Next in importance to the hook comes the gut. One standard rule by which to select, is to pick out the *longest, roundest and most transparent*. In the present day it is a very difficult thing to get a cast which combines all these qualities: even in London, you have to pay an awful price for such a one, but still it must be remembered that should you be lucky enough to become the possessor of one that "fills the bill," then by taking ordinary care of it, you need not want another for seasons, for the breaking *dead weight* of such gut should be from 12 to 16 lbs. Might I here suggest that not one-third of my readers really know from whence this *good* gut emanates, "Would it," in the language of that Attorney-General—I forget his name—who appeared in the famous Tichborne trial,—“Would it surprise you to hear that it is to the otherwise insignificant silk worm we owe this commodity?" Yet it is a fact.

I am very much afraid that we in Halifax will have to content ourselves with a much inferior article. There are so many different knots to be tied, that in these short articles, and without diagrams it would be useless for me to attempt to describe even one, so I leave that entirely in the hands of the experimenter. The question has often arisen, should gut be stained or not? I, myself, think it should, though I fear I am running contra to more experienced men than myself; but perhaps having found this staining so useful in coarse fishing—that is for roach, perch and pike—in England, I may be prejudiced. One reason I have for staining is that with new gut there is a certain amount of glitter, but this can also be counteracted by rubbing it lightly with fine emery paper, which will effectually take off the gloss. For the length of the casting line I should advise about 3 to 3½ yards, for the double handed rod with three flies, as used in the large rivers of Scotland and Ireland. But I have always considered it nonsense to fish with more than two flies, therefore the cast may vary in proportion.

Two flies are far more easily worked, and you stand a far better chance of their both being in the water at once, but still at the same time in a large lake, fishing from a low boat, a first-class man may be able to use three with success. From the gut we get to the line. This question has been so thoroughly threshed out by far abler men than I can ever hope to be, that I can only give my personal opinion, to be taken for what it is worth. It seems to me that the question simply becomes is it to be hemp or silk. For my part I have found them answer equally well, given the same dressing, and the same perfect make and shape; and by shape I mean that they should both taper thicker from the end to the point which will come nearest to the top of the rod, when making a cast. This taper will consist say in a salmon line of about 15 yards, it then should taper back again about the same