

salmon kind, and so abundant were they that no inconsiderable part of the rent of the Sancer Mill, then belonging to the Stewarts of Blackhall,—an old family now represented by the highly respected Lord-Lieutenant of Renfrowshire, Sir Michael Robert Shaw Stewart, Baronet, of Blackhall and Argowan,—was paid in salmon caught in cruives set below the Linn, then and still forming the dam of the Sancer Mill, and which cruives the miller was taken bound in his lease carefully to maintain and uphold. So recently as the year 1815 we have fished and caught trout in the river near to the Old Bridge of Paisley, while in summer crowds of children were to be seen seeking health and recreation in its clear stream,—wading, bathing, and fishing. Below the town every boy in Paisley given to piscatorial pursuits, had a favourite place of fishing at one or other of the many “yetts” on the towing path along the east side of the river, where he set his lines in the hope of being repaid by a good string of eels and flounders, and occasionally a trout. Now, however, and for many years past, the stream has been a large and greatly polluted common sewer, into which every species of destructive or offensive ingredient, as well as the entire sewage of Paisley and the towns and villages further up, are allowed freely to flow. This most destructive change in the condition of the Cart, when looked at in connection with the present mortality bill of the town, is, beyond doubt, a matter for serious consideration, especially in view of that sanitary regulation and improvement which may possibly be applied in these days when the condition of towns and rivers has forced even the Government to adopt the phrase, *sanitus sanitatis*, as indicative of its policy.”

The whole subject of sewage-pollution in its effect on fish-life is a matter requiring thorough investigation. Such investigation might show surprising and unexpected results for at present the views of experts are somewhat contradictory. Thus while on the Thames the pollutions of the lower parts of the river, and the estuary, are said to deter the ascending fish, which linger at the mouth waiting for the coming of a purer current, yet the Tyne, which is even more atrociously polluted, does not deter the salmon and sea-trout, and as Professor Huxley in 1882 said: ‘It is difficult to imagine worse pollutions than those which are poured into the Tyne at Newcastle, yet the salmon run the gauntlet of the sewage, the chemical refuse and other abominations, in sufficient numbers to produce a large annual harvest.’

I notice in a report of H. M. Inspector of Fisheries for England and Wales, that sewage-pollution in a case reported upon had, it was claimed, caused the death of fish. The authority mentioned says in his report in 1892:

‘Early last year I received particulars of a large “Fordwich trout,” said to have weighed 26 lbs., which had been picked up dead in the River Stour, near Canterbury. The Conservators of this District have however, apparently given up as hopeless the task of protecting the river in consequence of the evil effects of the sewage of the city of Canterbury.’

The city of Canterbury has a very small population, and the alleged poisonous effects of sewage, should be even more extensively observed in the Humber, the Tyne and other large rivers which receive the refuse of populous cities like those of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and of the Durham manufacturing and colliery centres. Gottlieb Boccus in his “Fish in Rivers and Streams” published 60 years ago, speaks of the Thames and the Tyne and points out the special features of the latter river as a resort for salmon. He says ‘I will make a comparison of the Thames with the Tyne’; no salmon are now caught in the Thames, but though the Tyne has many alkali works on its shores from Newcastle downwards—and alkali is death to every species of fish—yet it abounds in salmon. How is it with these destructive manufactories on its banks, and in despite of the swarms of steam-boats and tugs ever passing up and down the river, it is still a good fishery? Why, simply because Salmon and all other fish, migrating from water to water, never stop on their way, but push forward, and that at a fast rate, till their intended journey, for which Nature prepared them, is completed for, as I have said, Salmon being very swift, soon pass through the water which is offensive, and then run for the pure springs fit for spawning.’