

FISHING.—No. I.

Now that we are within measurable distance of plying once again, what Izaak designated "the gentle craft" ought we not to bestir ourselves and have a good overhaul of our paraphernalia? Where ought this to be done? Why of course in our particular Sanctum, it is far too important an affair for the vulgar—that is those who are not fishermen at heart—to gaze upon—and what sort of room should this same sanctum be? For answer I will give a description of an ideal one I have in my mind's eye—

An old Spanish proverb says "it is not always May," so that when the fisherman is laid by the heels by rheumatism, his proper place is home, and the sweetest spot,—his study—should be his resting place and should be furnished for comfort and not for show. This must be essentially a man's sanctum. The other sex, even the dearest of it, should only be admitted on sufferance, and should they even hint at "tidying up a little dear" they must be at once rigorously treated.—We men never invade boudoirs, though we might perhaps be edified with a little bit of scandal if we ventured to do so. And as we hold as sacred their part of the premises, we have a perfect right to demand unrestricted domestic reciprocity—

My ideal study has two windows, one looking on to an old fashioned flower garden,—no green-houses or obstructions of that kind, for a true fisherman glories in nature pure and simple—while from the other a glint of the stream is occasionally caught, the sight of which causes one to build castles in the air of the three and four pounders, he is going to lure from its depths on the opening day. There are two book cases in this room: you must always have plenty of books in a study, it looks more cheerful, and without them you would be as one who plays Hamlet with no Hamlet in the castle. One case should hold a good assortment of sporting books, the other general light literature, whilst on the table should be strewn the current magazines, directory, and a railway time table. Among the books that ought to be in the first case, is Venables to represent the ancient literature on fishing, Markham a little later, Day still later, and then a few of the modern authors.

I cannot pass Day's name without one word to his memory. I was but a boy when I first saw him: was arguing with Frank Buckland on the species of some fish, when waxing very warm, he finished up by saying "Well, Buckland, you may be right, but hanged if I think you are!" (Cheeriest of good fishermen, "may the turf lie lightly over him.") But to return to the table, the more untidy that is, the more comfortable the room is likely to be.

Two chairs are alone allowed in this room, and when I say chairs, I do not mean things that you are afraid to sit upon, and that when in the middle of an exciting fish tale, you give a tilt backwards, deposits you with scant warning under the table. No, the chairs must be deep, warm and soft, and in fact inviting looking. A rack for rods and guns is of course a necessity, the former should always be laid horizontally, or suspended from a nail, for if put perpendicularly in a corner they are sure to warp. This same corner tho' is the place for landing nets, gaffs and walking sticks. The room would not be complete without some pictures, good prints for choice then, and Landseers at that—old fashioned sporting prints in black and gilt frames also look very well—on the mantel shelf may be placed two or three old fashioned Japanese cups and saucers, on which are painted impossible looking fish, which help to decorate the room. Some men think it a *sine qua non* that they should have monstrosities in the shape of stuffed fish in glass cases, stuck about the place: this is a very great mistake, for unless a fish is very well stuffed—which is not done once in a thousand times—it is far better to have none at all. My experience has taught me that there is only one fish that ought to be stuffed, and that is a good old fashioned pike of about 10 lbs., and that should be done by a good cook with veal stuffing, and served hot with *Sauce Tartare*.

One of the finest Thames trout I ever saw, after going through the ordeal of stuffing, and being laid to rest in a glass case, was

simply unrecognizable, reminding one forcibly of a plethoric alderman after a city feed. We must not forget the favourite fox terrier, or spaniel, which lies upon the hearth rug, awaiting patiently the confidences he knows we shall give him. To sum up all, the whole room should be in harmony, old fashioned books, and old fashioned things, generally, come more natural to the true fisherman's tastes, than new fangled adornments.

And now for the fly book, let us overhaul that first! "Ah, Jack, my little dog, do you see that crumpled little dun, that's what I killed the big trout on. Didn't he fight? No use now tho', so into the fire with you. Ah, here's my own old familiar Jock Scott, you shall yet lure another good one to basket and eventually to the pan. Hullo! all the salmon flies want touching up; I must have daylight for that tho'—oh, hang it all, all this gut is rotten; never mind, you've done good service, and now away with you. But now, Jack comes the tug-of-war, how will all those salmon casts, for which I paid so much, turn out. Did I not wrap them in wash leather, and protect them with carbon and put them away carefully in a tin box? I fear to open it, but there, it must be done. Hurray, Jack, they are safe, no moth there, my boy; a good soaking and they will be as good as ever. Now, my trusty green-heart, out you come; I warrant you're all there;—yes there's a ring wanted; right, we'll settle that now,—where's the silk and bees wax? so, that's done, top joint a bit warped, so we will just tie a heavy weight on and hang it up in the kitchen for a day or so. And now for you, my split cane, you disreputable looking little villian, you look as if you had been out on the loose all the winter: I will give you a coat of my own particular varnish to-morrow, "plase the pigs."

What, my doughty champion, with whom I've landed those big pike, and those sulky barbel, do you too want attention? Yes, so you do, those ferrules are a bit loose, they'll get right enough tho', if I remember to dip the rod in water the first day I go out. I'll just rub a little vaseline over you male ferrules just to prevent your sticking—of course all the pike tackle is in a tangle, oh I remember, the last day I was out those blessed pigs took liberties with the tackle box—Gimp all rotten; couldn't expect anything else—Now Jack to set everything in order; not as women kind love to do, in the absence of the owner, with the result as to the tackle of chaotic tidyness, and as to the angler swear words and base ingratitude—Now Jack to bed, to dream of tomorrow, the first day of the season.

WALTER LEIGH.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

A very interesting meeting of working men was held in Cheltenham lately, for the purpose of discussing the question "why don't working men go to church?" We should like to give a full report of the speeches, as they were all good, and real practical points. We must, for want of space, content ourselves with a few selections:—

It having been arranged that, although there was "a chiel among them takin' notes," the names of speakers should not be published, a working man, whom we will call No. 1, at once rose and very clearly and forcibly put his views before the meeting. "I am," he said, "a Church of England man, and the clergyman of my church is, I think, the best in Cheltenham—that man is the vicar of St. Mark's. So you see in what I am going to say I am not going to speak against my own clergyman, but what working men think about the Church generally." No. 1 then went on to give what he said he believed to be some of the reasons why working men don't go to church. The clergy, he said, were as a rule out of touch with working men in social and political matters. The Bishops voted against the extension of the franchise to working men. Bishops and clergy gave the cold shoulder to labour movements, and when Jos. Arch tried to lift the agricultural labour to a higher level of pay and position the Church of England was against him and those who worked with him, and what had been done was done in spite of rather than because of the action of most of the clergy. Then charity was not justly distributed. People who went more or less regularly to church were well looked after by the lady visitors, while the most de-