

again he levelled the pistol, and taking more critical aim, the cork flew off, leaving the bottle unbroken. The third shot was a repetition of the first, and Fred was now ready to enter the lists. The rifle was his favorite weapon, and he handled it off-hand, but his use of the pistol was marked by less confidence and more care. Steadily he raised his arm, carefully he took aim and fired—the bottle was broken in the middle. It was replaced by another, and again Fred exhibited great care in his shot, and the broken neck of the bottle showed that his aim was correct. Another bottle shared the same fate, but the cork alone had not been touched, so Charles was adjudged the successful competitor this time.

"Now," said he, "I have three shots left; with the first I will take off the neck, with the second break the bottle at the middle, and with the third displace the bottom from the stump."

None of us believed that this boast would be made good, and we all gathered round to mark the result. With the quickness of snap-shooting he raised the pistol and fired—away went the neck of the bottle; apparently without moving arm or hand, again the pistol was discharged, and the headless bottle, struck about three inches from the top, was reduced to a very small remnant, presenting but a very diminutive mark for the last shot. This time, raising the pistol with some care, and dwelling longer than usual, he fired; to our surprise and gratification the bottom was struck so near the stump that it was not only shivered, but every piece scattered, not a particle remaining in its place position. This splendid shooting rather surprised our canoe-men, who longed to see such skill exercised on deer or moose, and excited Fred's ambition by describing a favorite haunt of these animals—Miramichi Lake—about ten miles further up the river.

It being Jim's turn to arrange the bill of fare and look after the dinner of the day, he, having finished his article in the *Atlantic*, proposed to Fred to join him in a walk up an old lumber road and get a brace or two of partridges, and perhaps a hare, to vary our dishes at that important meal. Accordingly, loading their guns and lighting their pipes, they sauntered into the woods, following a road used by lumberers, along the sides of which the partridge loves to bask in the sun and roll in the dust of decayed logs and stump. Charles joined Harry in the dining-room, an open shed of bark, shaded from the sun by small trees planted along its four sides, intending to take a lesson in the mysteries of fly-dressing, as he was deep in the intricacies of a "bug" of which he had great hopes in the evening.

"Harry," said Charles, "as we go down stream this evening, and shall have no time to linger at table, I will now hear your lecture on loops *versus* lengths, if you have no objection."

"None in the world," said Harry, "as I can talk and dress flies at the same time. But first there is another matter to which I would call your attention—the great error that most

fly-dressers make in whipping the gut to the hook; they place the gut *underneath* the shank of the hook, instead of on *top*. If you will reflect a moment you will see the impropriety of this mode, and the great advantages of placing it on the upper side of the hook. You must remember that the point of the rod is at a considerable elevation above the hook when it is in a fish's mouth, and that the strain is always *upward*; the consequence of this is, that if the gut is whipped on underneath, it brings it in constant contact with the end of the shank, which soon cuts it, or so frays it that the first heavy strain is sure to part it. By adopting the other method we avoid this danger, for the strain is always pulling the gut clear of the hook. I think I need say no more on this subject, and I hope you will, in future, adopt this latter mode, it being incontestably the best."

"Well," said Charles, "I never gave the matter much thought, but it surprises me that this objectionable mode is almost universally adopted. I shall henceforth discard it, and follow your practice. But let me hear your objections to gut lengths."

"Tell me first," said Harry, "why you object to loops?"

"Oh they are so troublesome, and occupy so much time in changing flies, that I find lengths more convenient."

"That is because you do not manage them rightly. Is this your only objection?"

"It is the principal one, and perhaps the only one I can urge."

"I will show you when we are fishing this evening," said Harry, "that, properly managed, your objection is groundless, and will now give you several good reasons why I prefer loops and discard lengths. The first is that loop, of double gut, is doubly strong at the very place where the greatest strength is required—the point of junction between hook and gut. In using lengths, the gut, where it joins the hook, by constant bending is soon frayed, and is constantly growing weaker. The loop, being of double gut, does not bend at the point of junction, for that point is the very strongest in your whole leader, and consequently the last to break. Who ever saw the loop worn off a fly till it was thoroughly used up? But how many scores of good flies are rendered useless by being severed close to the hook, while they are, in other respects fit for further service? My second reason is that lengths are more expensive while less efficient. My third, that flies on loops are much more nicely kept in the book, and my fourth is that nothing is more slovenly than for a good angler to fish for salmon with gut lengths, when flies on loops can be had. If your grilse, this morning, had been hooked on a fly tied on a loop, he would now be snugly in pickle and ready for the smoke house to-morrow, instead of roaming about with your hook in his mouth, suffering pain, and perhaps doomed to starvation. I would further observe that my remarks about whipping