

FISHIN' JIMMY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649308057

Fishin' Jimmy by Annie Trumbull Slosson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON

FISHIN' JIMMY

FISHIN' JIMMY

BY

ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON

AUTHOR'S EDITION

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1907

KC.5027



41*316

COPYRIGHT, 1889,
BY
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & CO.

COPYRIGHT, 1896,
BY
ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON

FISHIN' JIMMY

I

IT WAS on the margin of Pond Brook, just back of Uncle Eben's, that I first saw Fishin' Jimmy. It was early June, and we were again at Franconia, that peaceful little village among the northern hills.

The boys, as usual, were tempting the trout with false fly or real worm, and I was roaming along the bank, seeking spring flowers, and hunting early butterflies and moths. Suddenly there was a little splash in the water at the spot where Ralph was fishing, the slender tip of his rod bent, I heard a voice cry out, "Strike

him, sonny, strike him!" and an old man came quickly but noiselessly through the bushes, just as Ralph's line flew up into space, with, alas! no shining, spotted trout upon the hook. The new comer was a spare, wiry man of middle height, with a slight stoop in his shoulders, a thin brown face, and scanty gray hair. He carried a fishing-rod, and had some small trout strung on a forked stick in one hand. A simple, homely figure, yet he stands out in memory just as I saw him then, no more to be forgotten than the granite hills, the rushing streams, the cascades of that north country I love so well.

We fell into talk at once, Ralph and Waldo rushing eagerly into questions about the fish, the bait, the best spots in the stream, advancing their own small theories, and asking advice from their new friend. For friend he seemed even

in that first hour, as he began simply, but so wisely, to teach my boys the art he loved. They are older now, and are no mean anglers, I believe; but they look back gratefully to those brookside lessons, and acknowledge gladly their obligations to Fishin' Jimmy. But it is not of these practical teachings I would now speak; rather of the lessons of simple faith, of unwearied patience, of self-denial and cheerful endurance, which the old man himself seemed to have learned, strangely enough, from the very sport so often called cruel and murderous. Incomprehensible as it may seem, to his simple intellect the fisherman's art was a whole system of morality, a guide for every-day life, an education, a gospel. It was all any poor mortal man, woman, or child, needed in this world to make him or her happy, useful, good.

At first we scarcely realized this, and

wondered greatly at certain things he said, and the tone in which he said them. I remember at that first meeting I asked him, rather carelessly, "Do you like fishing?" He did not reply at first; then he looked at me with those odd, limpid, green-gray eyes of his which always seemed to reflect the clear waters of mountain streams, and said very quietly: "You would n't ask me if I liked my mother—or my wife." And he always spoke of his pursuit as one speaks of something very dear, very sacred. Part of his story I learned from others, but most of it from himself, bit by bit, as we wandered together day by day in that lovely hill-country. As I tell it over again I seem to hear the rush of mountain streams, the "sound of a going in the tops of the trees," the sweet, pensive strain of white-throat sparrow, and the splash of leaping trout; to see

the crystal-clear waters pouring over granite rock, the wonderful purple light upon the mountains, the flash and glint of darting fish, the tender green of early summer in the north country.

Fishin' Jimmy's real name was James Whitcher. He was born in the Franconia Valley of northern New Hampshire, and his whole life had been passed there. He had always fished; he could not remember when or how he learned the art. From the days when, a tiny, bare-legged urchin in ragged frock, he had dropped his piece of string with its bent pin at the end into the narrow, shallow brooklet behind his father's house, through early boyhood's season of roaming along Gale River, wading Black Brook, rowing a leaky boat on Streeter or Mink Pond, through youth, through manhood, on and on into old age, his life had apparently been one long day's