

**THE ART OF TROUT FISHING ON
RAPID STREAMS: COMPRISING A
COMPLETE SYSTEM OF FISHING
THE NORTH DEVON STREAMS**

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The art of trout fishing on rapid streams: comprising a complete system of fishing the North Devon streams by H. C. Cutcliffe

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H. C. CUTCLIFFE

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COMPRISING
A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF FISHING THE
North Devon Streams,
AND THEIR LIE:

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PREFACE.

I HAVE been induced to publish a little work on trout fishing on rapid streams, such as those in the North of Devon, by the following reasons.

The style I practised in the North of Devon was one not commonly worked out, if known, in all its details, by the fisherman in that county.

The success which resulted from the practice of my System of fishing was more than ordinary.

The inquiries which were constantly made of me, when I was in England, led me to think that an exposition of my views of the art of trout fishing would prove acceptable and useful to my old friends at home.

The last has been really my chief motive in the attempt, as I fully believe, and sincerely hope that

I may be of some assistance by my writing, to those I have had the pleasure of knowing at home, as well as to many other brother fishermen.

For my incompetency for the execution of my desires, for the many errors in expression, and haste with which the type has been allowed to appear, I claim the leniency of my readers in their criticism, and trust that as I have set about my task with the utmost desire to exercise my feeble powers, to the furtherance of the sport of North Devonians, so they in kindly feeling, acknowledging the intention of the author, will less consider the rhetorical construction of sentences, than the practical matter contained within the work.

I may be allowed to explain that I commenced this work many years ago, and used to write a few sheets at a time, during a period I was prosecuting severe studies in London. Want of opportunity prevented my completing my design till I had been some time in India, but my duties there were of such an absorbing nature as to prevent my giving up the time and attention necessary to complete the work to my entire satisfaction. Indeed I found, on reading over the manuscript,

that the early sheets had been so written, that in order to work up the whole to a good or complete arrangement, I should have had to re-write them from beginning to end. In England this would have been no difficulty, but in India, where English writers are not for such purposes to be obtained, I had either to give up the idea of publishing, or to send to the press the manuscript as it was. Convinced that I had embodied in some form or other in the book all the knowledge I possessed that could be of any assistance to a fisherman, I determined to offer it to my friends in the hope that they would make kindly allowances for defects.

I feel sure that in perusing the work some will think me tediously prolix in one part, whilst others will consider me unsatisfactorily brief in another. The artificial fly fisher will think I have not written enough on his branch of the art, whilst the minnow fisher will complain that I have spun out worm-fishing and cut down minnow-fishing to an inadequate conciseness. To each and all I apologize, but at the same time beg them to understand that I have been en-

deavouring to expose a System of fishing, founded on certain known principles, of which the different modes of fishing, when considered collectively, constitute the practical art. Each subdivision of this art has been by no means written of as a separate and distinct treatise on the special subject; on the contrary, it has been only so dealt with as its relative importance and special significance, or distinct characteristics, have seemed to require. The whole taken collectively forms the System which I have practised; and I believe that if what I have written be carefully studied in all its details, tediously minute though they may at first appear, and my directions closely followed by the scholar, he will very soon fall into a style of fishing which will yield him unprecedented success. But I caution the beginner to be careful rightly to understand my expressions, or he will fall into sad disappointments. He must attend as much to the style of working the bait (for example) as the bait itself. Take the case of the gaudy artificial flies for upstream fishing: if he simply follows my instructions as to the manufacture of the flies, and thinks he can kill fish with them in any other

way than that I teach, he will find out too late his mistake. Let him learn the principles, then the mode of using the bait, and then the bait itself, and he will find my method the most reasonable, as it will be the most destructive to the trout.

I cannot conclude my prefatory remarks without a passing tribute of respect to the memory of an old and highly esteemed friend, the late Dr. THORNE, of South Molton; of his virtues generally, it would ill become me here to write—they deserve a higher eulogium in a more appropriate place, than I can give them, and will ever remain most highly respected in the memory of all who knew him. As a fisher of small, rapid streams, I never met his equal—his keen love of sport, his close observation of every minute detail in any way affecting fishing—his constant and earnest reflection on every circumstance connected with the art—his open candour of communication—and his persevering industry in carrying out his ideas, placed him, in my opinion, a King-fisher of small, rapid streams. From him did I glean my elementary knowledge of up-