

**DRY-FLY FISHING FOR
TROUT AND GRAYLING.
WITH SOME ADVICE TO
A BEGINNER IN THE ART**

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Dry-fly fishing for trout and grayling. With some advice to a beginner in the art by James Englefield

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("RED QUILL").

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FOR

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BY

“RED QUILL”

(James Englefield).

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“FIELD” OFFICE, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

1908.

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO
SIR LINDSAY WOOD, BARONET,
AND IN MEMORY OF HIS BROTHER,
JOHN WOOD, ESQUIRE,
OF MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE,
MY MOST INTIMATE AND CONGENIAL FRIEND
AND ANGLING COMPANION
DURING THE BEST YEARS OF OUR EARLY MANHOOD.

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PREFACE, AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE greatest pleasure in life and perhaps the most lasting (next to that of doing good) falls to the angler's lot, who, having made fishing his hobby in early years, is content to ride it in easy stages through Nature's loveliest scenes by flood and field, until old age, often long past the Psalmist's allotted span when "his strength" is said to be "but labour and sorrow," comes to arrest his feeble hand, and to deny to his faltering steps any longer the power to pursue his fascinating art: but even then the retrospect of it all is a delightful memory to the very end of his days, and he almost hopes that as of yore the garden of Eden was watered by the four fair rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates to make it fruitful and perfect, so in the next world he may have enchanting streams to linger by.

It is often said that a poet is born a poet, with the music of song already in his soul which may develop to a lofty strain, and "wake to ecstasy the

living lyre," or the poetic element may remain latent only, "mute and inglorious." That heredity has little or no influence in the making of poets would seem to be proved by the fact that their sons and daughters so rarely inherit this peculiar gift of their parents. So also it is sometimes asserted that a successful brother of the gentle craft is a born angler; and in this case heredity may to some extent be answerable for it, for the love of sport in one form or another is a national characteristic of nearly all Englishmen, and at the present time fishing is by far the most popular of all pastimes. An enthusiastic angler is always a worshipper of the Great Creator in all his works, especially

Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
Amidst the verdant landscape flow;

and he is very often a minor poet at heart, or he likes to think so.

The writer's forbears were certainly good anglers, and he remembers many tales his grandfather told of his exploits in the river Loddon near Shinfield, in Berkshire, particularly one giving stirring details of the capture of a 28lb. pike on gut tackle—the single hook being baited with a large live roach. The fish was played from a 12ft. moderately stiff rod for about twenty minutes, and then, completely exhausted, drawn on its side to a smooth, gravelly shallow ford and there lifted out

bodily (for no help was near nor any landing net), viewed with trembling excitement, yet with rapture, as of a battle won, and then straightway killed. It was triumphantly carried in the fisherman's arms to the middle of Shinfield Common and there exhibited to the astonished villagers, who cheered, bore aloft the prize on a broken bough at the head of a procession, and escorted the victor home. All of whom, including wives and sweethearts, he then and there invited to come to supper off it next evening and make merry. It was a jovial party. He even told the names of some of the old songs which were sung after the repast—his own were "Old Rose" (which had been sung by his grandfather), "Barbara Allen," "Long time I've courted Nancy," and another whose title I do not now remember, but it commenced "'Twas down in Cupid's garden for pleasure I did walk," and was about the fortunate winner of a prize of twenty thousand pounds in a lottery (at that time a common venture in England, but long since made illegal) by a soldier, who had "gone to fight in Flanders" because his ladye love had refused him, but on acquiring this wealth, the song says:

Oh! then with gold and silver his clothes were laced
indeed,
And to old England he returned to his true love with
speed,
&c., &c.

The local fame of this day's sport clung to my grandfather for many years, and lived in his memory for life, giving him a high opinion of his own good fortune and skill.

He chiefly affected gorge-bait fishing (not then, as now, wisely and humanely forbidden in the Thames) in lakes and preserved waters, but on the Thames he was also noted as a good all-round fisherman. So also was his son, my father—angling was his favourite amusement on the Thames, and elsewhere, for he often went farther afield for his sport, and I was always his companion. It is no wonder, therefore, that at an early age I became initiated into some of the small mysteries and devices of the gentle art (a misnomer, surely, for some of its practices are very ungentle and, until the refining spirit of true sport with the angle corrects them, are decidedly cruel). At nine years old I was already a good gudgeon and perch fisher; indeed, when I was not quite seven I wandered from home for three miles to the river Lea to catch minnows, fishing with a red worm on a proper hook and line—contrary to the usual puerile form which begins with cotton and a bent pin.

Then for some happy years during my school days at Reading I had good practice in the river