

**LONG CASTS AND SURE  
RISES: BEING A  
COLLECTION OF ANGLING  
"YARNS" AND EXPERIENCES**

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Long Casts and Sure Rises: Being a Collection of Angling "Yarns" and Experiences by Edgar S. Shrubsole

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**EDGAR S. SHRUBSOLE**

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LONG CASTS  
AND  
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*Being a Collection of Angling "Yarns"  
and Experiences.*

BY  
EDGAR S. SHRUBSOLE.

REMINGTON AND COMPANY, LIMITED  
LONDON AND SYDNEY.

1893.

To the members of the  
Fruidly Angler Society  
with the best wishes of the Author  
Edw. S. Shrubsole

*Long Casts and Sure Rises.*

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THE STORY OF  
MAD MADGE AND THE PHANTOM  
ANGLER OF BROADYKE DAM.

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In the winter of 18—, at the hearty invitation of a very old friend, I spent a holiday in the extreme northern part of Blankshire, a wild and rugged district. Through it flowed a magnificent trout stream, which, with its many rippling tributaries, provided excellent sport during the summer months for the angler who could put up with the long walks over extremely rough ground that were necessarily entailed in getting at the best parts of the stream.

I had previously visited the stream upon trout-ing bent, and had thoroughly enjoyed a week amidst scenery of the most delightful description. Very frequently, indeed, my piscatorial efforts were suspended; often enough, just as I had made a cast over a rising fish, involuntarily my attention was taken from the fly that had alighted upon the surface of the stream, and became rivetted on the majestic surroundings. One day I traced the course of the stream for

several miles, and arrived at an immense dam that extended the whole width of the valley, truly a remarkable specimen of engineering skill, of man's persistent efforts to convert Nature's available formations to his own purpose.

The immense buttresses of smooth concrete, the main structure of the same material, and the massive sluices, windlasses, handrails, and accessories of wrought iron (painted, of course, the orthodox reddy-brown colour) at once convinced me that I had arrived at one of those necessary productions of civilisation—a reservoir. I noticed on the left side of the valley a winding pathway, with here and there a few primitive steps roughly formed where the character of the ground permitted it; and, resolved to have a look at the immense sheet of water that must be above, I clambered up the valley-side. It was a terribly tough job; but when I reached the top I was amply repaid for my trouble. Stretching before me—its upper end lost in the distance—was an imposing sheet of water, the appearance of which can only be expressed by the word—grand! On two shores the banks—which had originally been the valley-side—were covered with trees and bushes of varied foliage. The hills on either side—imperceptibly reduced in height by the formation of the reservoir—looked down in quiet majesty upon the troubled waters; for I must here remark that, although below the dam I had hardly felt a breath of air in motion, above quite a strong wind was blowing, and miniature waves lashed the shores of the lake, and again and again dashed at the structure that held the vast volume of water back.

From below, the dam had impressed me with its commanding appearance; here, its gigantic proportions were more clearly discernible, and a mighty structure it was! Of course, one of the first thoughts that struck me was, the reservoir *must* hold some big trout. I knew the 10ft. 6in. fly-rod which I had with me was of little or no use to fish such a large sheet of water; and I had to be content with an inward resolve to pay the reservoir another visit when I was properly equipped.

Time was flying on, and I turned away to retrace my steps. When I reached the dam the afternoon was far advanced, and now the evening was drawing near. Then for the first time it struck me that I must be some miles away from my friend's house. I "backed" at the idea of walking through the valley by the way I had come, so I looked round to see if there was any indication of a road leading in the desired direction. Following some wheel-ruts leading from the dam I presently struck one: rough and uneven; but still a road. I had not gone far before I reached a small cottage, in the doorway of which stood a woman, past middle age, neatly but poorly clad.

"My good woman, can you direct me to H——?" I said, mentioning my friend's house. To my surprise she answered my inquiry after the same manner as the one-eyed Irishman answered the O'Flannigan—by asking another.

"Have you been fishing?"

I answered in the affirmative, and then repeated my inquiry.

"They are devil's fish up yonder!" she said.

I did not think proper to dispute this remarkable



statement, but politely once again asked for the information I needed.

"They are DEVIL'S fish!" she shouted, and went in and slammed the door.

I thought her proceeding peculiar; as it was, there was nothing left for me but to continue my way along the rugged road. Another half-a-mile brought me to a way-side public-house. I did not stay to wonder what demand there was for a public-house in such an out-of-the-way place. Lifting the latch, I entered, and found myself in one of the old-fashioned rooms, with sanded floor and rough deal tables and forms, that are familiar to anglers who fish in quiet country districts. Apparently I was the only customer, and it was some time before even I could get served. After repeated hammerings with my landing handle, a lad of about fourteen appeared, and I ordered a small Scotch whisky.

"We ain't got no whisky!"

"Then bring me a pint of ale."

After some delay it was produced—a splendidly-conditioned beer, served in a clean earthenware mug.

"Where is your father, my lad?" I queried.

"Out at work on the farm."

"Mother at home?"

"No: she's gone to the village."

"Any brothers or sisters at home?"

"Ain't got no brothers or sisters."

"No one at home but yourself?"

"No, no one!" Then, after a pause: "Bin fishin'?"

I nodded.

"Then you want some more beer!" and he

took up my mug and departed, to return soon with the measure re-filled. I resumed the conversation.

"Am I right for H——?" He nodded.

"How far is it?"

"Under four mile."

I finished my beer, and turned to depart. Suddenly I thought of the elderly woman I had seen at the cottage door,

"Who lives in the cottage up the road?" I queried.

"Oh! that's Mad Madge. 'Ave ye seed her?"

I replied that I had seen her; but I could gain no information from the lad other than that "She'd lived there for ever, and was mad and 'orrid!"

So I resumed my walk to H——.

It was dark when I reached my friend's house, and he was getting a bit worried about my long absence. I told him the little I had to tell, and then we had dinner—a good hearty dinner. Over our pipes that evening I learned that the reservoir contained some *pike*, but few trout. When I asked my friend how he could account for that, he remarked:

"Oh! probably at some time a few pike have got in in some way, and they have gradually increased the while the trout have been exterminated. That is *my* theory. Some of the inhabitants have another; but, as that has to do with Mad Madge's history, I must hold it over until to-morrow evening. It's too late now for a rather long tale. Have a turn at the pike to-morrow. I have some rough tackle you can use. You might run against a large trout with a live

bait, and, if you do, you will admit that uglier specimens never existed than those of Broadyke Reservoir. *That* also has to do with Mad Madge's tale. Now, you have a treat in store for to-morrow evening."

The reader will gather from this that I had been questioning my friend about the strange character I had seen that day. All the information I got that evening, however, was contained in the above remarks. I went to bed and dreamed of leviathan pike and enormous trout that were hideously ugly. But the stay with my friend was brought to an abrupt conclusion. Next morning the post brought a letter informing me that I was wanted at home on urgent business matters. There was nothing for it but to go. My friend drove me to the nearest railway station; soon I was being whirled to the south, and my day among the pike at Broadyke Reservoir and the history of Mad Madge had to stand over.

We all know that *the* time for pike fishing is during the winter months. When therefore, my friend repeated his kind invitation the following winter, I availed myself of his offer, and spent my holiday at his house. I had an idea somehow that I could manage to capture some of those big pike, and looked forward to several profitable days. I took with me an array of spinning-flights, paternosters, and live bait hooks, and (on the off-chance of getting them there alive) several dozens of splendid live dace.

Arrived at the end of the railway journey, I found my friend walking up and down the platform, stamping his feet the while; for it was a bitterly cold day. To my delight the baits were