

AN ANGLER'S HOURS

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An angler's hours by H. T. Sheringham

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H. T. SHERINGHAM

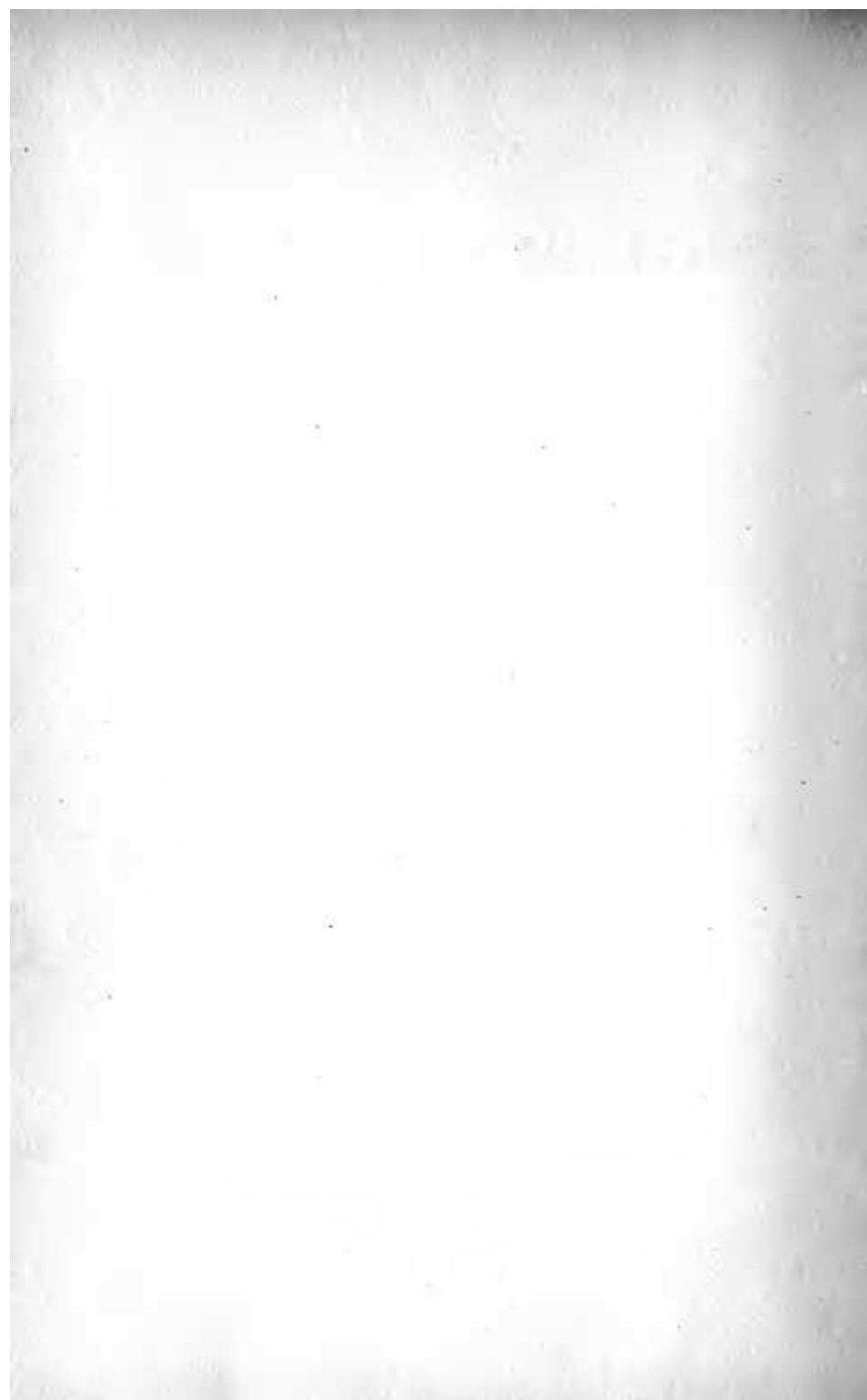
**AN ANGLER'S
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BY
ugh
H. T. SHERINGHAM
" ANGLING EDITOR OF 'THE FIELD' "

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TO MY FRIEND

THE EDITOR

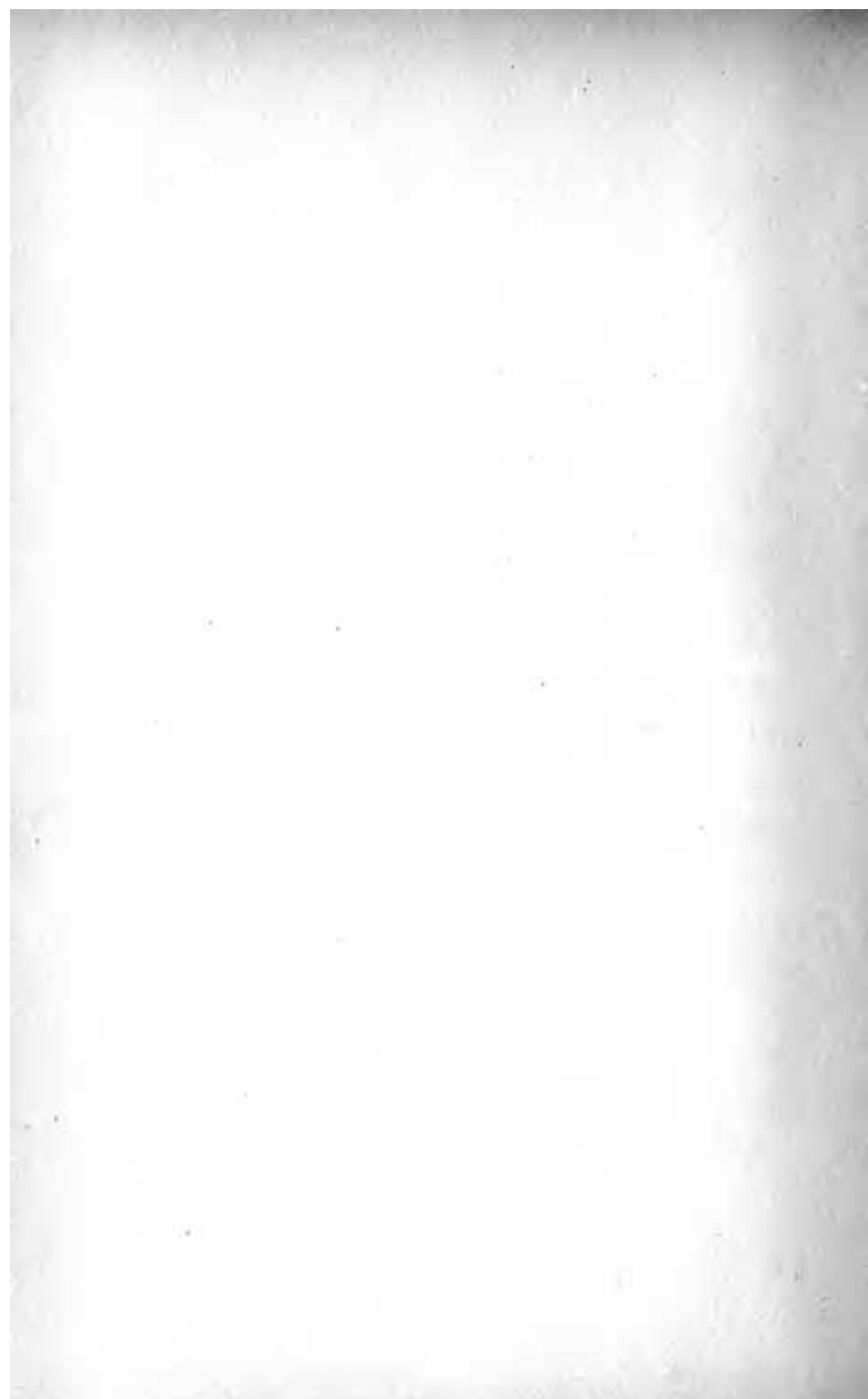
OF

“MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE”

*Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inanes,
Culpabit dorsi, incomptis adinet atrum
Transverso calamo signum; ambitiosa recidet
Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;
Arguet ambigue dictum; miranda notabit.*

HORACE, *Arts Poetica.*

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INTRODUCTORY

THERE are several reasons why this preface is not more apologetic than it is. Authors have for so many centuries been in such transports of glad apology, and have displayed so curious an ingenuity in expressing that diffident but hopeful emotion that, search as I will, I can happen on no set of phrases that looks original—even to myself. Yet I willingly concede the rightness of the apologetic mood in an author, and especially in this author, and I have large sympathy with those critics who will be unable to see the necessity for this volume. They will be unable to see it for a very proper reason — there is no necessity.

I cannot plead the urgency of friends for its production. One's friends, every man's friends, are nowadays too busy commencing author themselves to be solicitous in the preliminaries of alien publication. With the results it is different. There is much kindly and mutual reading ; there is exchange of candid opinion ; and quite a fortunate number of authors would be justified in stamping John Grolier's excellent motto, *et amicorum*, on the binding of their own works. This is all passing pleasant, but it robs me of a possible excuse.

Nor can I urge any high purpose which might at the first seeing lend dignity to the book and wrap it in some faint mist of necessity. There is practically no purpose and, I hope, no exhortation. Words of counsel may, I am afraid, be met with here and there. But, as a friend about to publish once said to me (and it is surely

a memorable saying), it is the hardest thing in the world for an angler to refrain from giving good advice. Angling, however, has an advantage over life in this respect: good advice has a definite place in its scheme of things, and is not always unwelcome. The man who can tell us where to fish and wherewith earns our thanks, and not, as would be the case if he suggested a change in habitation or deportment, our frown. Therefore I plead guilty to the words of counsel, and without claiming for them any value as counsel, I dare to hope that they are quite innocuous as words. So at the worst they should meet with indifference.

Even at the best they could not give any weight of necessity to the book—they are happily too few and unimportant for that—and I am confronted once more with the lack that will be plain to the critics. It might, perhaps, be possible to argue