

**THE ANGLICAN FRIAR,  
AND THE FISH WHICH HE  
TOOK BY HOOK AND BY  
CROOK: A COMIC LEGEND**

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The Anglican friar, and the fish which he took by hook and by crook: a comic legend by A. Novice

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**A. NOVICE**

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THE  
ANGLICAN FRIAR,

||

AND

THE FISH WHICH HE TOOK  
BY HOOK AND BY CROOK.

A Comic Legend,

BY

A. NOVICE, A.F. & F.

Dedicated to all Lovers of Angling.

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LONDON:  
J. AND D. A. DARLING, 126 BISHOPSGATE STREET.

1851.

With the facts I relate,  
 Which, with truth I may state,  
 Occurred at some long bygone date.  
 You must know that I love,  
 All amusements above,  
 To arise ere the sun  
 Has his day's work begun,  
 And roam to some river,  
 Who'll kindly deliver  
 Up his subjects to fate  
 For a little ground bait.

Oh! how often my slumbering dreams have been  
 broke

By the thought I'm too late, and I've suddenly woke  
 To discover 'twas dark, and have dozed off again;  
 But the dose to repeat, hope for rest being vain.

I in fancy have fished in most curious places—  
 Down a coal-hole, in areas, and off cellar bases;  
 Where the queerest of things you can name I have  
 caught, or

As I dropt down my line, has retreated the water.

Now that angling's a passion to me appears plain,  
 Which amounts to disease if a tight hold it gain;  
 It may oft be relieved by right treatment, perhaps,  
 But then, sooner or later, there's sure a relapse.  
 Standing out a whole day, from its dawn until night,  
 In a good drenching rain, without even a bite,  
 Is a capital thing for just cooling the brain,  
 Though time still will revive—and it warms up  
 again.

It is contagious, too, for a brother it caught,  
 As he slept in a room where my tackle was brought ;  
 He was up with the lark, and my top joint had  
     broke  
 Ere the 'larum had rung, which the family woke.

Let me see, it is now about five years ago,  
 When, admiring the Irish and blarney,  
 I packed up all my traps, and my tackle also,  
 And set sail for the banks of Killarney.  
 I had heard of the lovely and beautiful views  
 Which adorned the fair Emerald Isle ;  
 So as long as I'd time I resolved to roam through,  
 And admire what had made Nature smile.

My feelings, as the sea I crossed,  
 Are distant from the tale ;  
 Suffice it that I suffered loss—  
     'Twas not a pleasant sail.

My rising thoughts unable to control,  
 I drowned my sorrows in the waves that roll ;  
 The sickly waves a tribute would demand,  
 Nor gave me rest till I obeyed command.

With much delight I traversed o'er  
 The land of Pats and praties,  
 And mourned to note from what I saw  
 That indolence their fate is.  
 A pipe stuck easy in their mouth  
 For mind and body food is ;  
 Their dress, I must say, is uncouth,  
 For it next door to nude is . . . .

I'm speaking of the lower sort,  
Not so bad are their betters ;  
Though some, who wealth find ready wrought,  
Rest in luxurious fetters.  
And have they been for ever so ?  
Industrious, were they never ?  
Some things I've seen would p'rhaps say, " No,  
As now they were not ever."  
But think not, reader, I intend  
To write on why and wherefore ;  
I know not what these folks will mend,  
So cannot tell you therefore.  
(Though industry in some to plant  
I tried, and put in training ;  
But soon they cried, " O mend-i-cant ! " —  
So beggars are remaining.)  
Nor is it now my wish to write  
On Ireland's beauteous scenery ;  
Though filled with rapture and delight,  
I'll spare you what I've seen ; or I  
Might fill a dozen pages quite,  
Describing lakes and greenery.  
No ; such is not my present plan,  
On angling turns my story :  
The pleasures of a fisherman  
I soon shall lay before ye.  
By some mishap at Hull or Cork,  
My tackle was mislaid ;  
So fate did inclination baulk,  
And sport some days delayed.  
I just had purchased, all quite new,  
Of flies a complete set ;



And though I had my rod, 'tis true,  
I would not fresh ones get.  
I'll wait, thinks I, and roam about,  
Though some days it may cost.  
I'll find the lucky places out,  
So time will not be lost.  
By telegraph's electric wire,  
Or steam, I'll let them know  
The place to which I'd fain desire  
These luckless flies should go.

'Twas on a morn as bright as fair  
As any time, or anywhere,  
Mine eyes have ever seen ;  
For bright and cloudless was the sky,  
And blue as any maiden's eye,  
Where tears have seldom been.  
It made my heart with pleasure beat ;  
A lightness seemed to raise my feet,  
And bear them forth to roam,  
Ere yet the morning meal was laid,  
To ramble down a mossy glade  
Some many miles from home.  
Then climbed I up a dew-bathed steep,  
Just on the other side to peep  
And see what might be there.  
By tangled branches grasped right close,  
Above impediments I rose,  
And, lo, a valley fair !  
Where, 'midst the shade of drooping trees,  
All quiv'ring in the morning breeze,  
Appeared a glitt'ring stream,

Which ran for miles, than gold more bright ;  
Refulgent with the source of light,  
    The waves like diamonds gleam.  
Impelled I rushed like some wild deer,  
And bounding o'er each bramble near,  
    Like torrent's fearful course,  
Was forced to run a whole field's length  
Before expended was the strength  
    Of gravitation's force.

When at the water's side, I found  
An aged man, who gazed around  
    Half terrified, to see  
If some mad bull approached that way,  
Or steam-engine had gone astray ;  
    And stared surprised at me.  
I bowed to him, and begged, polite,  
His pardon for the sudden fright  
    Which I, unconscious, gave.  
" It was the beauteous scene which made  
Me scamper down so wild," I said ;  
    " For which I pardon crave.  
For, like yourself, I love the sport,  
And 'twas this sparkling stream which brought  
    Out hitherward my feet.  
What numbers, sir ! what splendid trout !  
You must have early sallied out :  
    Such sport I seldom meet !"  
" A stranger, then, you are," said he ;  
" The fishes here bite mostly free,  
    They love the gaudy fly.

But scarce an hour I here have been,  
And hooked the few that you have seen  
    For breakfast. By the bye,  
I very nearly had forgot  
That time for me will tarry not,  
    That hour is drawing nigh.  
But, sir, with pleasure, if you love  
The sport, I'll show you where they rove,  
    For often here am I ;  
And every nook and hole I know,  
Which any time you please I'll show :  
    My house you yonder spy."  
I, thanking, praised the old man's skill,  
Though, as I viewed him nearer still,  
    I deemed him younger far  
Than I at first beholding thought ;  
'Twas care, not age, had deeply wrought  
    The wrinkle-furrowed scar.  
But though erect as poplar straight,  
He bent not 'neath the crushing weight  
    Of Time's remorseless might.  
Yet few and scanty were his locks,  
Which were than Shetland's rill-bathed flocks  
    Longer and purer white.  
A sudden int'rest in mine eyes,  
Which unaccounted will arise  
    Ofttimes within the brain,  
I felt tow'rds him, and longed to know  
What circumstance had made him so—  
    If grief, or wearing pain.