

A LAY OF LOCHLEVEN

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A Lay of Lochleven by William O' Ye West

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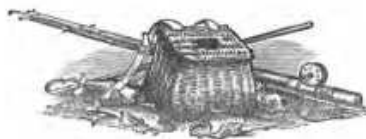
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WILLIAM O' YE WEST

**A LAY OF
LOCHLEVEN**

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OF
LOCHLEVEN.

BY
WILLIAM O' YE WEST.



"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

GLASGOW:
ROBERT FORRESTER, 1 ROYAL EXCHANGE SQUARE.

1887.

LOAN STACK

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY ROBERT ANDERSON, 22 ANN STREET.

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DEDICATED
TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE ST. MUNGO ANGLING CLUB,
GLASGOW,
IN APPRECIATION OF THEIR
MERITS AS ANGLERS AND THEIR WORTH AS MEN.



PREFATORY NOTE.



N explanatory note is due to any reader outside the circle to which this production is dedicated, and at whose instigation it is published, who may honour it with a perusal.

At the close of the fishing season, two years ago, the council of the Saint Mungo Angling Club, Glasgow, actuated by a desire to enjoy a rehearsal of the tough and tugging runs of that and previous years, arranged to hold during the winter season monthly meetings of the Club; and, to promote fraternal intercourse amongst the members, it was resolved to meet on the first Tuesday in each month.

As was anticipated, these meetings turned out to be both enjoyable and instructive. From the first they assumed a literary and critical character. Many papers of an exceedingly interesting and edifying import were read, on which each member was invited by our esteemed president, "Uranus," to offer his opinion.

While many papers very appropriately bore largely on the How, Where, When, and with What to fish, they were not necessarily restricted to the technicalities of the gentle art. The discussion of localities, tackle, the various kinds of lures and methods of fishing, frequently formed staple articles of supply; while imaginary, humorous, and descriptive papers were freely admitted: hence the appearance of the "Lay"—an original conception of an absolutely impossible occurrence metrically expressed.

Perhaps no body of men repairing to fish the prolific casts of Lochleven could be selected better able to bear the brunt of the imaginary blank chronicled in the "Lay" than the Members of St. Mungo. This Club includes in its membership some skilful, well-known veteran anglers—anglers who have for years footed the heather together, wandered amidst the quiet beauty of our haughs and glens, and by many a mossy-margined stream,

Wi' lairs whare fish can jouk and hide
Awa frae human ken;

and who, above most men, can in a very special sense realise and appreciate the full import of the utterance—

"We twa hae paidl't i' the burn
Frae morning sun till dine."

In addition to the epauletted old warriors, there are many others whose zeal and enthusiasm in the gentle art cannot fail to equip them as worthy followers of their seniors in maintaining the prestige of the Club and the reputation which some of these old warriors have so deservedly earned.

The St. Mungo compares favourably with any other club visiting this loch. In 1884 it ranked as the Premier Club of Scotland, having in an equal number of competitions captured a greater number and creeled a heavier weight of trout than any other club during that year, or for fourteen years prior to that date; while the "Jeems" of the "Lay" carried off the championship of Lochleven. These are achievements of which any club may justly be proud.

The "Lay" was a somewhat hurried production. It is not issued as a specimen of the quality of the papers read, but as a trifling conceit written to fill up the time of a meeting at which a very graphic and amusing paper was read by one of the most genial and gifted sons of St. Mungo. The writer was much surprised, if not flattered by its reception by the Club, who unanimously voted its immediate publication.

With much reserve, and a depressing sense of its manifold imperfections, he now complies with that request. Haunted by a dread of adverse criticism, he fears that in his rashness he has failed to act upon the wisdom of the old proverb that

"A man wi' riven breeks should sit still."

Whatever may be the fate of the "Lay," it has already been stamped with the approval and authority of the Club: it is published under its auspices. The writer clings to the hope that it may escape the "east wind" of withering comment—a wind which, with rare exceptions, chills the ardour, blights the sport, and quenches the hope of the angler—hope, the most lasting emotion which lingers in his heart.

By some the illustrations may be characterised as crude. Perhaps they are; and that an apology may be required for their appearance. It is permissible to state, however, that they are the productions of a novice, who, like the writer of the "Lay," makes no pretence to authorship in the line herein essayed.

It is hoped, however, that the portraits will not fail to lend a little attraction to the Lay, even at the risk of unkennelling the anonymity so jealously sought to be preserved. The reasons for this reticence about names will be as apparent to the outside reader as they are to the members of the "inner circle." Few men, and certainly few anglers, would care to confront such characterizations and maledictions, even although the imprecator was only a "portly fish."

The "Lay" is intended to point a moral, and the moral is uniformly applicable to angling, wherever and under whatever form it is followed:—

When balmy Spring your hopes high pitch,
And thrills your souls with angling itch,
All you who this true legend read
Of your intent let none take heed;
With soft and stealthy step draw near—
Beware of trouts 'neath tree and pier.

GLASGOW, *May, 1887.*

