



The . American Fly Fisher

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How're We Doin'?



No, we have not decided to run for the office of mayor of New York City, nor is Ed Koch contributing to this issue of the *American Fly Fisher*. What we'd like to know is exactly what you think of your publication, now that the new editors have a full year under their belts. We've tried to keep things balanced by offering a full range of articles dealing with the tackle, the publications, the people, etc., that are pertinent to an

understanding of our angling heritage. From our myopic and subjectively biased perspective, we see some obvious omissions: namely, articles on the development of fly patterns and fly-tying techniques, articles on western and midwestern angling, and articles relating to American fish culture. But there must be others. Let us know. How're we doin' in terms of content, direction, style, etc.?

We also invite our readers to submit manuscripts for publication. As we men-

tioned earlier, we are particularly in need of articles on fly-tying and fish culture. And certainly *someone* out there among our membership must have *something* to contribute on the history of fly-fishing west of the Mississippi. We look forward to hearing from you and wish you the very best for the new year.





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WINTER 1985 Volume 12 Number 1

On the cover (left to right): Stematz Yamakawa, Shige Nagai, and Miss Sharp. Yamakawa and Nagai were students at Vassar College when this photograph was taken (circa 1880); Sharp was either a fellow student or a young instructor. The two Japanese women, close friends of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lanman (see the American Fly Fisher, vol. 11, no. 3), were part of a group of young women sent to this country by Japan—for the purpose of obtaining a western education—shortly after the United States established diplomatic relations with that country. Perhaps it was Charles Lanman who introduced them to the sport of angling. Photo by Vail (Poughkeepsie)

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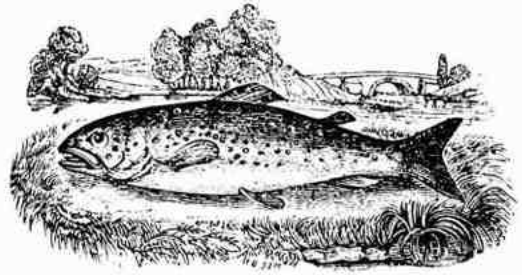
The American Turf Register



John Stuart Shinner, in his first issue of the American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine (vol. 1, no. 1, September 1829), speaks eloquently to the reasons for establishing America's first sporting periodical.



The want of a repository in this country, like the English Sporting Magazine, to serve as an authentic record of the performances and pedigrees of the bred horse, will be admitted by all, whether breeders, owners, or amateurs of that admirable animal. The longer we remain without such a register, the more difficult will it be to trace the pedigrees of existing stock, and the more precarious will its value become. Is it not, in fact, within the knowledge of many readers, that animals known to have descended from ancestry of the highest and purest blood, have been confounded with the vulgar mass of their species, by the loss of an old newspaper or memorandum book, that contained their pedigrees? Sensible for years past of the danger which in this way threatens property of so much value, and persuaded that it is not yet too late to collect and save many precious materials that would soon be otherwise lost, the subscriber hopes to supply the long looked for desideratum, by the establishment of The American Turf Register. But though an account of the performances on the American turf, and the pedigrees of thorough bred horses, will constitute the basis of the work, it is designed, also, as a Magazine of information on veterinary subjects generally; and of various rural sports, as Racing, Trotting Matches, Shooting, Hunting, Fishing, &c.



& Sporting Magazine

together with original sketches of the natural history and habits of American game of all kinds; and hence the title, *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*. It will of course be the aim of the Editor to give to his journal an original American cast, conveying at once, to readers of all ages, amusement and instruction, in regard to our own country, its animals, birds, fishes, &c. In the absence of domestic materials, the magazines received from abroad will supply an ample stock of appropriate matter.

Fortunately for us, Skinner decided to include angling topics, even though these were peripheral to his main interest, namely, the turf. The publication's life was relatively short, the last volume (vol. 15) appeared in 1844. It is from the *American Turf Register* that we get some of our earliest glimpses of fly-fishing in North America. We have been remiss in not reprinting articles from its pages more frequently and shall endeavor to rectify this unconscionable slight, both herein and in future issues of the *American Fly Fisher*. We are indebted to Lindley Eberstadt for his generous gift to the Museum of an essentially complete set of this very rare sporting periodical.

The following two articles are from the second and third volumes of the *American Turf Register*. The question is raised whether the Atlantic salmon of Maine can be taken with an artificial fly. This was a very controversial question among angling devotees of the early to middle nineteenth century [see for example Charles Goodspeed's *Angling in America* (1939) and Gleason's *Pictorial* (May 20, 1854)] and prompted lively correspondence from the readers of the then-current sporting periodicals.

TROUT FISHING

Augusta, Me. April 20, 1831

Mr. Editor:

Among the multitude of diversions, invented by man to banish ennui and engage the mind, the simple art of the fisherman disposes the soul to that quiet and serenity which gives him the fullest possession of himself and his enjoyments. It gratifies the senses and delights the mind. The scene, constantly changing, affords him a healthful and spirit-stirring enjoyment that is difficult to communicate, except to those who "seek that harassed race, peculiar in distress." I have thought that a few remarks on this subject (more particularly on trout fishing,) would be in season:

"For now each angler should his gear inspect,
From hooks and rods to landing-net."

Every man, who is a fisherman, has some private thoughts or rules, in relation to piscatory sport, which he will prefer and cherish in preference to the written maxims of the veteran anglers of the "olden time." I am as yet but little experienced in the "noble art," and, therefore, am but illy prepared to prescribe rules and maxims for others. I feel an ambition to know more of the secret of the complete angler, and should be happy to receive, through the medium of your valuable Magazine, such hints as to the best method of preparing lines—the most killing baits, in the different seasons—as also, the best seasons for both natural and artificial fly-fishing, and the flies adapted to the several months. In one word, to give us all the varieties

"Of the arts and shapes, the wily angler tries,
To cloak his fraud and tempt the finny prize."

Trout fishing has already commenced in this part of the country; in fact, I consider April (taking into view that the trout are far better than those taken in the autumn,) as the better season for this sport. It has been asserted, by some writers, that this fish, after leaving their spawn, in the autumn, pass the winter in the deep waters, grow sick, lean, and oftentimes lousy. It is true they pass the winter months in the deepest holes; but it is in those places that they receive that peculiar appearance and flavour which delights the eye and gratifies the palate of the *gourmand*. Every one who is acquainted with the peculiar habits of the trout knows that they are in season during the months of spring and summer, and that as the season advances they lose many of their good qualities. During the months of autumn, when they may be taken in great numbers, they are hardly worth the trouble. For the benefit of the angler who may visit this part of the country, on a fishing excursion, I will merely suggest, that, from the middle of May to the latter part of June he will find good sport. He should be well prepared with strong tackle, (our trout here are not small ones,) and a supply of flies, spare hooks, and lines. These latter cannot be procured here. The minnow and river smelts are the best bait during the earlier part of the season—grasshoppers in June and August, and brandlings, or almost any kind of worm or fly, are as sure bait for autumn fishing. The oak-worm in April, and the bob-worm, or red-head, in May and June, are, I think, preferable baits.

I notice, in the June No. vol. 1st, of your Magazine, that your correspondent, "Walton," wishes to know if the salmon is ever taken with the fly in this country, as in Great Britain. They have been taken in the Penobscot, about 18 miles from the sea, and, I presume, may be taken in any of the rivers in Maine. I have provided myself with the requisite tackle, and intend fishing for them in the Kennebec in



the manner above mentioned. They are abundant in all our rivers in June and July. I shall be pleased, at some future day, to send you a communication on fly-fishing for salmon, and hope to settle the question, as to its practicability in this country, as questioned by your correspondent, "Walton." I see no reason why the salmon should not take the fly* in the United States as well as in Great Britain.

Accompanied by a brother angler, I left here, on the 8th instant, for Belgrade bridge, about 10 miles distant. We were prepared with every thing requisite for killing trout. The roads being very bad, owing to recent violent storms, we were unable to arrive in season to fish. We found the stream much higher than usual, and much discoloured from the rains and breaking up of the ice in the pond. My companion predicted but poor sport. At day light, next morning, we commenced fishing, with, I must confess, but small appearance of success. The atmosphere was thick and hazy, with every indication of rain. These ill omens were, however, soon dispelled by my companion's landing a fine trout. I immediately opened the fish, and found a number of smelts, which we used as bait, and found them preferable to the oak-worm, with which we had commenced fishing. I would here recommend to those who wish good sport, to follow this example, and use the same, or nearly similar bait as that which is found in the fish. After spending the day very pleasantly, we returned to Augusta with *twenty-three* fine trout, weighing from 2½ to 4 lbs. each, and of an admirable quality.

I left Augusta yesterday, at 1, P.M. in company with a gentleman who has, indeed, no pretensions to a knowledge of the "noble art." We arrived at Belgrade at half past 2, P.M. My companion preferred fishing for perch. There were four or five trout fishers at the bridge at the time of my arrival. To show the fickleness in the

taste or appetite of the trout, I will merely say that I caught five trout, which were all that the company caught, which was owing to my using an oak-worm* for bait. The others used minnows, worms, &c. My companion caught 58 perch, large and small. The trout weighed, on an average, 2½ lbs. We left Belgrade (after a fine supper of trout at the tavern,) at 7, P.M. for Augusta.

I shall continue to visit the trout streams, which abound in this state, from time to time, and will communicate to you the result of my excursions and the condition of the spotted finny tribe.

I regret that I could not send you one of the lake trout which Mr. H— promised you. The winter snows did not admit of my visiting Moose Head Lake during the past winter, or you certainly would have received one of the lake trout, packed in ice. The pledge shall be redeemed next winter.

J.R.P.

*Natural or artificial

FISHING TACKLE²

"Around the steel no tortured worm
shall twine;
No blood of living insects stain my line.
Let me, less cruel, cast the *feathered*
hook,
With pliant rod, across the pebbled
brook;
Silent, along the mazy margin stray,
And with the fur-wrought *fly* delude
the prey."

We have lately had an opportunity of examining a box of fishing tackle, sent, as a token of friendly remembrance, by the Hon. Mr. Vaughan, to Gen. Gibson of our army.

We all recollect Mr. Vaughan, the minister from the kingdom of Great Britain

to the government of the United States—his amiable deportment, his frank and unassuming manners, his various intelligence, and his elegant hospitality. We do not say that he was the most popular minister that ever represented the court of St. James in our country; but we are quite sure that one more popular never filled the place. His departure was a source of much regret, and has left a blank in the society in which he moved, and where the kindest feelings are still cherished towards him. We hear, with much satisfaction, that his health, which had seriously suffered in our country, has, since his return to his native home, become perfectly restored.

We could not omit the opportunity of paying a passing tribute of respect to one who, with the generous heart of a sportsman and philanthropist, combined so many other titles to the esteem of all who knew him.

But to the *fishing tackle*! It consists of a very superior collection of *reels, lines, flies, baits and hooks*; sent so appropriately to one who has given the *coup de grace* to many a noble trout. We have examined it carefully, and may safely affirm that we never before saw any thing of the kind at all comparable with it. Some of the hooks are of a singular, and to us entirely new form, and we doubt not admirably adapted to their object.

Among the flies, is a complete series of the *Irish salmon fly*, and all of a most killing aspect. Fishing for the salmon has not, we believe, been a successful sport in our country. We have heard of a few attempts in the waters of Maine, where this fish is so abundant, but of no success. Those with whom we have conversed on the subject, could not recount a single instance in which this noble fish had been known to rise and strike at a fly. But we think if he is to be induced, it is by some

such tempting lure as is to be found in this admirable collection.

The trout flies, too, are to all appearance the *very thing*.

"So just the colours shine through every part
That nature seems again to live in art."

There is in this assortment of tackle, also, a series of *trolling* baits and lines—the latter wired near the hook, to protect them from the teeth of the voracious pike. This tyrant of our streams, concealed in his sedge bed, and poised for the onset—watching with savage eagerness the silvery-scaled minnow moving gently before him, knowing not that it is barbed at all points—but, darting upon the innocent prey, finds, too late, (what many have found before him) that "all is not gold that glitters."

We doubt not that the *rock* would rise at these flies, and we are surprised that this delicious and gallant fish has been so much neglected by our sportsmen. His attack is as fierce as that of the pike, and his game as true. If his habits were more studied and experiments tried, we venture to predict, that rock fishing here would rival that of the salmon in England. It is also an abundant fish in all our waters, and to be found at all seasons. We know that he yields great sport to the troller, but we wish to have him tried with the fly at the falls of the Potomac, where this fish takes a trolling bait so greedily.

And here, gentle reader, if we had a pencil that would faithfully depict our "imaginings" for the engraver, we would have him present to your view a genuine disciple of old Izaak Walton—something over six feet "in his stockings," with a countenance of cast iron, with which nature, in a modest mood, vainly intended to encase and keep out of view her exquisite interior workmanship. But a spirit

naturally brave, placid and benign, like his, will animate and soften the roughest exterior, and thus display itself unconsciously to the eye of the observer; as does the industrious bee, who fancies his labours are concealed as well as protected by a hive of glass.—Behold this veteran of the angle seated on a rock, amidst the foaming waters and deafening roar of the cataract.—He rises slowly upon his feet, and with motion deliberate and graceful, throws his line over his head, letting his fly light gently in the eddy, about forty feet below. He eyes the glittering floating bauble with apparent unconcern. But in an instant the water is ruffled—the bait disappears—the whizzing of the reel re-sounds through the air. His eyes sparkle with delight and anxiety—he checks—the fish is hooked,

"And downward plunges with the
fraudful prey."

And now the contest begins.—How the fish darts, and struggles and leaps. Now running upon the line—now dashing off again to its extremity, as if to snap it by the effort. But all in vain—the elastic rod breaks the shock and brings him again to the surface.

"Now hope exalts the fisher's beating
heart,

Now he turns pale, and fears his
dubious art;

He views the tumbling fish with
longing eyes,

While the line stretches with
th' unwieldy prize;

Each motion humours with his steady
hands,

And one slight hair the mighty bulk
commands;

Till, tir'd at last, despoil'd of all his
strength,

The game athwart the stream unfolds
his length."

We draw our readers' attention to the sentence "*He eyes the glittering floating [our emphasis] bauble with apparent unconcern*"—perhaps a dry fly, or just literary license? §

1. *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* (1831), vol. 2, no. 9, p. 457.
2. *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* (1832), vol. 3, no. 5, p. 236.



Title page from the *British Sporting Magazine*

Goose Trees and Burbots: Richard Franck's *Northern Memoirs*

by Anne Imbrie



Charles Goodspeed in his scholarly, well-researched book, *Angling in America*, referred to Richard Franck as "the best seventeenth-century exponent of fly-fishing in England," and Eric Taverner writes of Franck in his Lonsdale Library publication, *Salmon Fishing*, "Franck is the first true writer on salmon-fishing and the angling world had to wait a considerable time before the next [writer] appeared. His *Northern Memoirs* [1694, and republished in 1821 with an introduction by Sir Walter Scott] is full of good things covered over by some intolerably bad philosophy and often presented in foolishly pedantic and complex language." Some of the "good things," in addition to the fly-fishing methods employed for the capture of *Salmo salar*, include a description of the salmon fly and an enumeration of the fly-tying materials contained in Franck's "dubbing-bag." More intriguing to us than his expertise as a fly fisherman and flytier, however, is the probability that Franck practiced the gentle art in this country sometime between 1660 and 1687—perhaps he was America's first fly fisherman!

In 1687 Franck published *A Philosophical Treatise of the Original Production of Things*. According to the title page, it was "Writ in America in a Time of Solitudes," and printed by John Gain. In 1708 (the year of his death as given by the *Dictionary of National Biography*), Franck anonymously published *The Admirable and Indefatigable Adventures of the Nine Pious Pilgrims, Devoted to Sion by the Cross of Christ; and Piloted by Evangelist to the New Jerusalem*. The title page states that it too was "Written in America..." (For an excellent discussion of Franck and his American connection, see *Angling in America*, by Charles E. Goodspeed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939.) So here we have a knowledgeable, sophisticated fly fisherman residing in North America sometime in the latter half of the seventeenth century. It is inconceivable to us that he missed the opportunity to tempt one or another species of the finny tribe with one of his feathered creations during his sojourn in America. It would be most interesting to try to ascertain the location

and tenure of Franck's residence in North America. But what of Franck's merit as a writer? Characterized as pedantic by both Goodspeed and Taverner and generally maligned by others we know who have read him, we thought it would be appropriate to present an essay that speaks to Richard Franck's literary talents. Anne Imbrie graciously agreed to review Franck's *Northern Memoirs* for us. Her thoughtful, entertaining critique of Franck and his writing follows.

In his *Northern Memoirs*, Richard Franck has created an odd mixture of theological speculation, political judgment, travel narrative, and fishing-manual instruction. Because at least three of these subjects deeply interested the seventeenth-century Englishman—I leave it to the reader to determine which three—we can recognize the author immediately as a man of his times. The literary value of Franck's work, however, remains dubious. Like its more successful forebears, William Samuel's *The Arte of Angling* (1577) and Isaac Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653), *Northern Memoirs* is a dialogue, its principal voices being Arnoldus (Franck's spokesman) and Theophilus (his friend and initiate in the art of fishing). Franck, however, unlike Samuel and Walton, never fully realizes the value of his chosen form to vivify character and to suggest the civil exchange of ideas toward the discovery of truth. Franck's characters remain flat representatives of the author's ideas, and his mixture of subjects is imperfectly accommodated to the dialogue form, which throughout seems only a weak effort to make the matter more entertaining. Here we find none of Walton's decorous stylistic polish, nor Samuel's lively colloquialism and character development. Nevertheless, the text offers considerable historical interest and provides as well—perhaps even better than the old master himself—practical information on the varieties of fish in the rivers and lochs of Scotland and the means for catching them.

We know little of Franck beyond what the autobiographical comments in this book tell us. He was born in Cambridge late in the reign of James I (which was from 1603 to 1625), living, as he says, to

see five English kings on the throne (James I, Charles I, James II, Charles II, William III); he died in 1708. He apologizes for the "rough draught of a martial pen" and complains of his "slender education."¹ Apparently, he lived part of his adult life in Nottingham, whose waters and "virtuosos of the rod" he clearly knows from long personal acquaintance. His political experience is equally clear. A fierce opponent of Charles I (see pages 43ff.), Franck served as a trooper in Cromwell's army (the prefatory poems identify him as "Captain"), doing battle against the very country he later visits on his extended fishing trip. Although *Northern Memoirs* is riddled with the traditional enmity the Englishman feels for his northern neighbors—a distaste Samuel Johnson would later develop to an even greater intensity—Franck nonetheless laments the military excesses committed against the Scots under Cromwell's rule (see pages 234ff.) and thus suggests the limits of his chauvinism. Like many of Oliver Cromwell's supporters, Franck sought temporary refuge in America following the Restoration, if we accept that his theological treatise *Rabbi Moses* (1687) was really "Writ in America in a Time of Solitudes," as its full title tells us.

Assigning a precise date for the composition of *Northern Memoirs* is complicated, because the author apparently tinkered with the text considerably in the long years between its composition and its publication. Theophilus mentions that Arnoldus "writ [his] book in 58, and spread the net to 85" (page 286). Indeed, escape from political turmoil in England provides the reason for the tour Arnoldus and Theophilus undertake in Scotland, a reference that might argue for a time of composition immediately following Cromwell's death in early September 1658. Franck, however, nowhere alludes to the death of Cromwell, whom he names one of England's great heroes in a panegyric late in the text (see page 286). Such a momentous event would surely have merited mention by an ardent Cromwellian, had the text been composed after Cromwell's death. In addition, autumn seems an unlikely time to begin a tour of the chilly north. It is likely, then, that *Northern Memoirs* was written earlier in 1658, but the fishing

trip itself was taken at least a year before; the references to political difficulties may have been added later, or they may indicate more generally an intensely political climate from which Franck might have wanted a vacation. At any rate, the book did not appear until 1696, its publication no doubt delayed because of the many political references that surely would have placed the author in jeopardy. Franck's use of initials to identify the principal figures only thinly disguises them.

§

We find in Franck's *Northern Memoirs* what we are likely to find in any subliterary text produced in a great literary age: certain stylistic features, even thematic content, that we associate with the great writers of the day, but here, translated through and transformed by the author's essential mediocrity. Franck's diction, for example, like his great contemporary John Milton's, is extremely Latinate. But because Franck has an imperfect sense of decorum—the appropriateness of style to subject—his linguistic virtuosity seems little more than pedantry and is inadvertently comic at best. Exercise “extimulates” the stomach, and fortresses are “innoculated” to the air. Arnoldus never leads his friend, Theophilus, he “manuducts” him. Franck commits frequent redundancy as well; nature, for example, has “bounds and limits,” and various features of the landscape or the weather “prognosticate signs.” The descriptions of the landscape, in fact, which might otherwise distinguish this text, seem either clichéd or unintelligible and hardly suggest the author's precise observation: “at those knotty descents, Neptune careers on brinish billows, arm'd with Tritons in corslets of green, that threatens to invade this impregnable rock, and shake the foundations, which if he do, procures an earthquake” (page 110)—the confusion in the verb forms obscures the sense. In this landscape, streams always murmur, Aurora blushes fairly, Zephyrus breathes softly, the sun “shades his beams in Thetis lap, and the purple pavillion of night overspreads the creation” (page 138).

Despite Franck's apologies for his unpolished style, a common enough rhetorical protest among even the most effulgent writers of this century, he clearly takes both delight and pride in his purpled prose, judging from the frequency with which he exercises it. The virtuoso figure, by the mid-seventeenth century, had become a recognizable type, and perhaps Franck fancied himself one of this literary brotherhood as well as a virtuoso of the rod. Occasionally, at least, his Latin researches pay off in the form of etymological puns and word play, as in the adroit phrase “without exorbitant desires, we should shine like the stars”

Northern Memoirs,

Calculated for the

Meridian of SCOTLAND.

Wherein most or all of the Cities, Citadels, Sea ports, Castles, Forts, Fortresses, Rivers and Rivulets are compendiously described.

Together with choice Collections of Various Discoveries, Remarkable Observations, Theological Notions, Political Axioms, National Intrigues, Polemick Inferences, Contemplations, Speculations, and several curious and industrious Inspections, lineally drawn from Antiquaries, and other noted and intelligible Persons of Honour and Eminency.

To which is added,

The Contemplative & Practical Angler, by way of Diversion. With a Narrative of that dextrous and mysterious Art experimented in England, and perfected in more remote and solitary Parts of Scotland.

By way of Dialogue.

Writ in the Year 1658, but not till now made publick,
By Richard Franck, Philanthropus.

Plures necat Gula quam Gladius.

L O N D O N,
Printed for the Author. To be sold by Henry Mortlock at
the Phenix, in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1694.

Title page from the rare first edition of Richard Franck's *Northern Memories*, 1694. Courtesy of the Yale University Library



Loch Awe, Scotland. From Hofland's *British Angler's Manual*, 1848 edition

(page 7), and in the rather more clumsy axiom, "an old proverb is a good premonition, and a timely premonishment prevents a premonire" (page 258). Similarly, his frequent reference to the "polite sands" of Scotland seems a misapplication of the word *polite*, until we remember that in its root sense, it simply means 'polished,' as a stone or a grain of sand might be. His pride in his own linguistic ability evidently leads him occasionally to consider the verbal curiosities of the Scots as well, as for example, in his explanation of the word *comer* to denote the sociable Scotswoman; the Scots prefer this term to the more derogatory *gossip*, Franck tells us, because Scotswomen *covee together* for talking rather than drinking (page 91). The origins of the English word *gossip* are obscure. The word originally signified a godparent and may be a corruption of *God's sib*, meaning 'God's kin,' or earthly representative. Franck's account of the word here provides evidence for an interesting and common folk etymology: that the word derives from the imperative *go sip* and thus implies a connection between a loose tongue and strong drink. Franck allows that *comer* may simply be a euphemism for the Scots' tendency to "drink till they sigh to do penance for their sins."

More often than not, however, Franck's pride in his own words precedes a fall

into obscurity and sometimes telling error. In explaining the origins of the word *Tipprofin*, the name of a small village, Franck recounts the sad case of a Catholic priest who fell into a bog near this place; despairing of rescue, the priest began shouting *de profundis*, the words of the Psalmist. The cry aroused the locals to pull him from the bog. Franck, however, so bowdlerizes his Latin that he ruins his tale. *Tipprofin*, conceivably a homophone for *de profundis*, cannot be heard at all in Franck's faulty version of the Latin phrase: *ex profunditatibus* (page 155).

Many of Franck's favorite metaphors will sound familiar to readers acquainted with other seventeenth-century writers. Like Andrew Marvell, whom Franck names one of the English heroes (although for political, not poetical, reasons), Franck favors elaborate mathematical and scientific metaphors. Even more, he relishes musical metaphors and often develops them into metaphysical conceits like those we find frequently in the works of Donne and Herbert. Thus the angler "loves no musick but the twang of the line; nor any sound, save the echoes of the water; no rest nor pause, but impatient till they bite; no flats nor sharps, but solitary pools and rapid streams; no beats nor shakes, but struggling and strangling; and, in short, no close except that of the panier" (pages 122–23). Franck

controls the conceit less adeptly than the masters; its parts are inconsistently apt. Similarly, in one of his theological discussions, Arnoldus argues that "though sin untune the strings of the soul, yet sin cannot unstring the soul; the faculties are left still, though in such disorder, that all the wit of man can no more tune them, than the strings of an untun'd lute can dispose themselves for harmony, without a skilfull musician's hand" (page 132). Although the theological point all but disappears in this fine distinction, the use of the metaphor closely resembles Herbert's lament for his own soul "untun'd, unstrung," which later will "a broken consort raise / And the musick shall be praise." Franck finds his favorite images among the stars, a source of contemplation that stimulates his most luxurious writing. The following passage illustrates the uneasy conjunction of his favorite metaphors—scientific, musical, and geographic—in a typical theological discussion (page xxxi):

To study contemplation is the high way to heaven, where the suburbs consist of a divine composition, and where you may read by those oracles the stars, the beautiful order of celestial bodies, and the greater and lesser world all harmony; for heaven and earth are correlates, which duly to contemplate, poises our passion, and baffles our pride; which necessarily pursues the footsteps of generation, as naturally as rust follows copper, which without dispute is the death of the compound.

In his attitude toward nature generally, Franck again exemplifies seventeenth-century man. Although the better-known writers of the period, especially Milton and Donne, may have developed the idea more artfully, Franck's notion was commonplace that nature was "a large and legible folio to write by . . . the great and stupendous volume of creation" (page xxx). The accommodation of his descriptions of nature to the Protestant compulsion to read and interpret rightly the "Book of Creatures" may, indeed, account for the peculiar generalizing in which Franck engages.

Although Franck's descriptions of nature do not seem carefully detailed, the author's attitude toward direct observation and experience as the source of his authority perhaps most identifies *North-eastern Memoirs* as a late-seventeenth-century text. On this basis Franck compares his work with that of Isaac Walton, whom Franck disparages for telling a "tedious fly story, extravagantly collected from antiquated authors . . . whose authority to me seems alike authentick, as is the general opinion of the vulgar pro-

phetic; for neither all nor one of them [bookish authorities] is an oracle to me, experience is my master, and angling my exercise" (pages xxxvii and xxxix). Accordingly, he approves the testimony of Isaac Owldham, George Merrils, and John Fawlkner, "whose experiences sprung from the Academy of Trent" (page xxxvi). Franck never misses an opportunity to dig at Walton, recounting at one point an actual argument he had with him, after which the older man cited his bookish authorities and "huff'd away" (page 177).² Of course, for Isaac Walton, whose ties remain strong to the Renaissance humanist tradition, truth and authority derive from learning and inherited wisdom, even as literature can grow from other literature perhaps more than from direct observation of life. The "modern" seventeenth-century man, however, taking his cue from Bacon (whom Franck cites approvingly) and others, displaces inherited wisdom in favor of empirical examination and experiment.

Over and over again in this text, Franck justifies his observations with the rhetorical phrase, "if eyesight be evidence," fully expecting his reader to affirm the validity of experience. This attitude, as much as his theological connections between piety, patience, contemplation, and angling, provides the philosophic basis of the work, and determines its distinguishing features. In this way, *Northern Memoirs* stands in ironic relation to Walton's more artful *Angler*. As in the earlier work, Franck's instruction develops through a journey. While Walton's journey out from London and back is imaginary, Franck's is the actual record of a journey through the cities and hills of Scotland. As such, the book serves both as a travelog and fishing manual, and the cities are often described in minute detail—clearly the result of personal observation. Nonetheless, Franck's work implicitly suggests the dangers of accepting direct, empirical observation for truth, illustrating the axiom, "as a man is, so he sees." A practical and military man right down to his toes, Franck's main interests are in the commercial markets and military fortifications he observes, making for much less lively reading than one might hope for, given such a promising subject as a tour through Scotland. Had the same subject been taken up by Walton, whose feel for the natural elements and creations of man seems far more profound (despite—or perhaps because of—the obvious artifice and "learning" of *The Compleat Angler*), the story would have been far more gratifying to thoughtful readers. Walton, more than Franck, illustrates the Renaissance paradox to which Franck himself often refers: what is most artificial will often seem most natural, because

A
Philosophical
TREATISE
 OF THE
ORIGINAL
 And
PRODUCTION
 OF
THINGS.

Writ in AMERICA in a Time of
Solitudes.

By R. FRANCK.

L O N D O N,
 Printed by John Gain, and are to be sold by
S. Tiamus at the *King's Head* in Cornhill: and *S. Smith* at the *Prince's Arms*
 in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. 1687.

Title page from A Philosophical Treatise of the Original and Production of Things, 1687, by Richard Franck. Courtesy of the Yale University Library

careful artifice can imitate nature to the life.

Clearly, then, Franck's insistence on the validity of direct experience runs him into trouble on occasion and results in some unintentional humor as well. His impulse, for example, to include all the details of his experience undermines the reader's interest in the bits of local color Franck provides. These embedded narratives would insure engaging moments in the text, were the author capable of more artful selection of his details. But Franck can mar a curious tale just in the telling of it. His account of the stupid tailor of St. Johnston (who was convinced he had found a stone that would render him invisible and therefore strode naked through his village, to the great amusement of the locals)—potentially a delightful story and a good illustration of the Scot's indulgence in practical jokes—falls flat (pages 149ff). Similarly, when the ale wife of Forfar sues Billy Pringle because his cow drank all the beer fermenting in her backyard, Franck's version distributes the amusement over too many details, and the joke lacks punch (page 185ff).

For the seventeenth-century reader assured of the value of empiricism ("Believe it that will, refute it that can; I know no better evidence than eyesight," page 168), two tales in particular would excite special interest. Pitloil, rumored to be the habitat of witches, is among the stops along Arnoldus's journey through Scotland. "Whether there be or be not such mortal demons," Arnoldus wisely—like a good empiricist—suspends his judgment (page 159). In telling, however, of an earlier adventure in that area, Arnoldus assumes what he might otherwise prove and thus provides the reader with a clear example of the *post hoc* fallacy underlying all such superstitions. Although Arnoldus obviously believes himself to have been the victim of witchcraft, he just as obviously lacks empirical evidence for his conviction. Had the legend of the Loch Ness monster been current in Franck's day, he would no doubt have claimed the evidence of eyesight as demonstration; as it is, he notes the existence of a strange "floating island" in that northern lake, but also

provides a rational explanation for it (page 196).

Even more curious is his account of the famed "barnacle goose." Like many of his contemporaries, Franck believed that this goose grew on trees. She is hatched by a pine tree and suspended from its branches, where she hangs by her beak "immature and altogether insensible" (page 210). Deciduous, like leaves, these geese drop off the trees in October, when "to so many as providentially drop into water, protection is immediately sent them to live; but to all others as accidentally encounter dry land, such I presume are doom'd to die without redemption" (page 211). Here, the higher form of life literally grows out of the lower. Although Franck admits that some may doubt the existence of such a creature, he insists adamantly that he has actually seen them: "But if eye-sight be evidence against contradiction, and the sense of feeling argument good enough to refute fiction, then let me bring these two convincing arguments to maintain my assertion; for I have held a barnacle [sic] in my own hand, when as yet unfledg'd, and hanging by the beak" (page 210).

Barnacle geese, of course, actually do exist, being a variety of black goose common in the Scandinavian countries. The notion that they grow on trees probably developed from the vague likeness of the *gooseneck barnacle*, which attaches itself to driftwood. The fabulous creature created considerable problems of classification, whether fish, fowl, or plant. A prelate in the twelfth century, for example, banned the eating of barnacle geese during Lent because he thought them fish. In 1645, Sir Thomas Browne doubted the existence of "bernacles" or "goose trees," but left it to other researchers to disprove the myth. At about the time Franck himself was writing, a German Jesuit, Kaspar Schott, following a genuinely scientific method, demonstrated that barnacle geese, like all other geese, were hatched from eggs. But the fabulous story hung on. As late as 1677, the Scottish Royal Society—relying, perhaps, on emphatic "first-hand evidence" like Franck's—reaffirmed their existence. Perhaps Franck, then, should not be blamed for his credulity, although we

must chuckle at his "empirical" insistence.³

Patience, of course, is the angler's virtue. The fisher-reader will eventually find reward for his—or her—patience. Oddly enough, one of the prefatory poems to this volume insists that Franck's work will have special appeal to the ladies because "Here's nothing to offend their eyes or ears, / Nor fill their tender breasts with dismal fears" (page xlvii). Throughout the book, Arnoldus provides Theophilus with the traditional advice to the angler found in every example of this genre. That the angler must study patience; that he must be a pious soul; that he must appreciate the company of nature in his solitude—these admonishments we would expect, and we find them in abundance, although so mixed in with other matter as to seem too incidental. Neither does such traditional matter require the author's personal experience. In the closing section of the book, however, in what seems to be an appendix, Franck's interest in direct observation provides the angler with considerable practical information and guidance. Here, Franck lists virtually every species of fish popularly sought, describes each in detail (giving both physical descriptions and information on their habits and haunts), and meticulously explains the best baits and flies for catching them. In this section he also drops the pretensions of metaphor and theological speculation and simply gives Theophilus the explicit instruction he has promised all along. Franck's was the first of such books to describe salmon fishing in Scotland; he was the first, as well, to name the burbot, a fish found commonly in the waters of the Trent. His accounts of salmon fishing and trout fishing, with bait and artificial fly, validate his claims to authority on the subject, even today. I suspect, all things considered, that if Sir Isaac "huff'd away" from his argument with Richard Franck, he left feeling bested by the superior practical angler. §

For Anne Imbrie's previous contribution to the American Fly Fisher see "The Art of Angling" (vol. 10, no. 3).

1. Richard Franck, *Northern Memoirs, Calculated for the Meridian of Scotland... To which is added The Contemplative and Practical Angler*. Reprint. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1821), pages xii and xxiv. All further citations are from this edition, indicated parenthetically in the text. My thanks to David B. Ledlie for the loan of this book. The full title should be enough to discourage the casual reader: "Wherein most or all of the Cities, Citadels, Sea-ports, Castles, Forts, Fortresses, Rivers, and Rivulets, are compendiously described.

Together with choice Collections of various Discoveries, Remarkable Observations, Theological Notions, Political Axioms, National Intrigues, Polemick Inferences, Contemplations, Speculations, and several curious and industrious Inspections, lineally drawn from Antiquaries, and other noted and intelligible Persons of Honour and Eminency. To which is added The Contemplative and Practical Angler, by way of Diversion. With a Narrative of that dexterous and mysterious Art experimented in England, and perfected in more remote

and solitary Parts of Scotland. By way of Dialogue."

2. Franck's animosity may have derived in part from a sense of rivalry; but the enmity was surely partly political as well: Walton, of course, was a Royalist.

3. Browne's account appears in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Vulgar Errors* (1645). For further information on the myth of the goose tree, see Ernest Ingersoll, *Birds in Legend, Fable, and Folklore*. (London: Longmans, 1923), pages 64–66.

The Red Trout: Profile of a Rare Gamefish During the 1930s in Quebec

by Ed Davis



Sometimes we forget to look directly back over our shoulder and examine things that occurred during our lifetimes. To us they seem of little consequence, that is, mundane. But we must not forget that what we do now is history for future generations, and we have an obligation to accurately record for posterity our recollections about times and events, while the details are still fresh in our minds. Ed Davis's piece, "The Red Trout," recounts for us what angling was like for him in Quebec in the 1930s. We are told of the tackle, of the fly-fishing techniques, and of what is now a rare subspecies of the char family, *Salvelinus marstoni*—the Marstone or red trout. He has preserved for us and our progeny a small, yet significant, piece of recent angling history, and for this we are grateful.

The view through the small leaded panes of glass in the library is midwinter. Patches of snow contrast with the dark, somber tones of the landscape, and I reflect upon times of the calendar more appropriate for fly-fishing. Other days, some vintage years, each detail is clearly recalled. These reflections and some recent experiences have many pleasurable highlights, but like many memories, they are occasionally tinted with nostalgia.

There was a time when I was not certain about fly-fishing. Not certain, that is, until I inherited a cane rod. The occasion for inheritance constituted a memorable fourteenth birthday. Five Hendrick-

sons in a Wheatley fly box accompanied the fly rod. The Hendricksons had been dressed to the original pattern; I recognized the original dressing during later years. The pattern included tails from the crest of a golden pheasant, almost colorless transparent hackle, and wings fashioned from wood duck.

"The rod and silk line go with the Hendricksons," my father said, before he smiled and added, "Release all of the small ones unharmed, and retain enough trout for the one table."

Looking back after fifty years' experience with the fly rod, I realize the wisdom of those words. The subspecies of trout that inhabited the nearby waters that provided for so much pleasure during the 1930s are rarely mentioned in current angling literature. I refer to the red trout (*Salvelinus marstoni*) of the southern Quebec watershed. These magnificent game fish, keen to accept the dry fly and the streamer fly, are now rare.

Anglers with a sense of adventure and curiosity about the history of the red trout may marvel that it is one of very few subspecies of char that have survived in isolation since the Pleistocene glaciation. Two other examples of relict char that have also survived are the Oquassa trout, now almost extinct in northwestern Maine, and the aurora char, seldom found in the Wilderness Lake country of Ontario.

We may call the *S. marstoni* the red char of Quebec. Since the glacial period, the red trout has survived and evolved in isolation as an important glacial relict. This char is characterized by approximately twenty gill rakers, sixty-four vertebrae, and forty pyloric caeca (see



(left to right) Frank Charles, a two-day legal limit of *S. marstoni*, and the author

Kendall 1914, Vladykov 1954, and Quadri 1974). It is possible that this subspecies of char represents an *S. alpinus* dispersal from northern Europe via the Atlantic Ocean, probably with the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), and the smelt (*osmerus eperlanus*). (See *Chars*, A systematic review by R. J. Behnke, ed. by Eugene K. Balon.)

Quebec red trout are distributed around Quebec wherever suitable waters can be reached from the early postglacial seas. The red trout is not found in Ontario. It does not exist south or west of the line of the Nipissing Great Lakes outlet via Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa River.

Adventure with the author, if you will, into that region of lakes that are located north of the St. Lawrence River, approximately one hundred twenty miles northwest of Montreal, and into a sparsely populated region that—in the main—consists of small farm communities with names such as Brebeuf and Vendee. These tiny villages are just beyond the end of the Canadian National Railway's (C.N.R.) line (at the village of St. Remi). This region, the Papineau-Labelle county of Quebec, is comprised of rolling hills and mountains. The roads during the 1930s were quite rough; they consisted of gravel over logs, and when traversed by car, one experienced the "washboard" effect. Lac Cameron was at the end of the road in that area of the county.

By fortunate circumstance, I was raised in a milieu of fly fishermen. One of our family friends was a contractor who had built a house on Lac Cameron. Building a house at this location was a considerable achievement. A large lake, with

almost twenty-three miles of shoreline, and a road in poor condition, made building quite difficult. The road circumnavigated less than three miles of the shoreline and provided access to about four farms and ten cottages on the shore of the lake. Lac Cameron was renowned for smallmouth black bass, northern pike, and pickerel. The attraction for us, as fly fishers, centered upon three small lakes (Little Trout Lake, Munroe Lake, and Big Trout Lake), beyond the mountain ranges surrounding Lac Cameron. During the nineteen years of fly-fishing for *S. marstoni* in these three lakes, I met only three fishermen who were previously unknown to me, two of which were local game wardens.

Little Trout Lake

Little Trout Lake was reached by first traveling to the south of Lac Cameron by boat, and then hiking for twenty minutes over a mountain. This lake, almost elliptical in shape, was full of red trout. On one occasion I caught the two-day legal limit by 10:30 a.m. And not infrequently I have taken two 1½-pound fish together: one on the tippet fly and one on the dropper fly. We occasionally carried a lightweight canoe into Little Trout Lake and therefore had the opportunity to explore all of the shoreline. Without a canoe, raft, or inflatable boat, fly-fishing was restricted to a long tree trunk, with a platform built at the end of the trunk. This arrangement accommodated the use of the fly rod, if only in a small part of the lake area. When fly-fishing from the tree trunk or platform, as a rule we used a more powerful fly rod. Today such a rod would be classed as a #7 or #8 weight. During those days, we used a silk line designated as *HDH* for the 5½-ounce, 9-foot cane rod. Eighty- to ninety-foot casts were not uncommon with such equipment; such casts require less effort today, however, because of improved equipment for casting. The silk line was ideal for fishing wet flies, including streamer flies, but it did not float very long. It was important to have a well-dressed spare line on an extra reel if dry-fly fishing was anticipated. We dressed our fly lines, almost without exception, with Mucilin. Gut leaders were used exclusively. During the 1930s, Wheatley produced a fly box with a top compartment for leaders. I generally soaked my gut leaders overnight in a glass tumbler, on the mantle of the fireplace at the house on Lac Cameron. But for purposes of transporting the leaders to the trout lakes, the gut was placed between two wet felt pads. The leaders were generally tapered to .011 or .012 inches diameter.

Little Trout Lake was nestled in the mountains. The central area of the lake

was sixty to one hundred feet deep, and second-growth timber grew to the shoreline—except at the outlet. Many deer were observed drinking at the outlet during early morning arrivals at this lake.

Small stickleback minnows were occasionally observed in this lake, along with the usual leeches, tiny green frogs, and—during August—grasshoppers blown into the lake. Once, we even saw a caterpillar epidemic. This latter phenomena is worth some elaboration. Arriving early one morning at the lake, we discovered that the trees surrounding the entire lake were covered by green caterpillars who were in the process of eating the leaves. All of the rises we observed were close to the shoreline of the lake. On that morning we had portaged a birchbark canoe, and when Frank Charles and I explored the shoreline, it became obvious that the trout were feeding voraciously on those caterpillars that had dropped off the foliage overhanging the lake. We selected two green-bodied streamer flies from which we removed the hackle, wings, and tails. The two-day legal-possession limit of trout was quickly obtained. There were, needless to say, a large number of red trout released on that day.

Even though our knowledge of entomology was minimal, the plentiful supply of *S. marstoni* and, very often, their intensive proclivity to feed, resulted in well-above-average catches.

Munroe Lake

The late 1930s was a very early, formative time in my life—long enough ago that I am left with the impression the trout season opened in the region I write about on April 15. There were some years, I recall, when the ice was not out of Lac Cameron. When such conditions prevailed, there was virtually no access to Little Trout Lake. Winds from the north or northwest pushed and piled the ice at the south side of Lac Cameron. No flat-bottom Versherres-type boat could possibly negotiate such obstacles. The only option, then, was Munroe Lake. Picture a sparkling sunlit morning during early spring, and walk with us through the hills along an unused logging trail, now barely discernable as a footpath. Patches of snow and violets abound in the sheltered places. Thirty-five minutes of hiking were required to reach Munroe Creek. The creek, an outlet of Munroe Lake, eventually flowed into Lac Cameron. Leaving the trail at the creek, it was necessary to circumnavigate a swampy area in order to reach a length of shoreline characterized by large, flat, gently sloping deciduous rock. These shale-like sloping rocks functioned as excellent casting platforms. It was one of the few

areas on the shoreline not overgrown with trees and brush. The major diet for the trout in Lake Munroe were leeches, dragonflies, and damselflies. Our knowledge of entomology precluded the discernment of midge pupa or other nutrition. One of the interesting features of Lake Munroe was that during a period of many years of fly-fishing there, nearly every red trout weighed approximately ¾ pound. These trout were characterized by orange-tinted ventral fins, and iridescent gun-blue dorsal surfaces. Their table quality was superb and, as one who has lived and fished on our beautiful West Coast, I rank them equal to the qualities of fresh sockeye salmon.

Big Trout Lake

Hindsight predisposes me to remember this lake as the most beautiful and productive for red trout during two decades of fishing and exploration in the area. I have enjoyed fishing lakes and trout streams in the southern Quebec watershed, including those lakes situated in the Singer Reserve in the area of Montpelier, Quebec. (The Singer Reserve contained at least nine lakes. One could fish within the reserve after obtaining a permit from the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Singer, at this time, used a wood base for their sewing machines; the reserve was a source for the wood.)

It is now many years since I have fished Big Trout Lake. It is normal, I suppose, to want to go back, but I know that the experience would give far less pleasure than my memories of this lake. There are roads now through what was once wilderness, and cottages are being built. I know nothing about the quality of the water today, but during the late 1930s we had samples of the water tested in Montreal. The water, at that time, was safe to drink. My last journey to Big Trout Lake was at dawn during the second week of June. I recall the mist-wreathed image of Munroe Lake on my left and the patches of moss along the trail—softer than a Persian rug. The area was reminiscent of the Scottish Highlands. There was ash-colored lichen, and in the forest grew silver birch, cut-leaf maple, and pine. At times there was no discernible trail. One made certain to retain the south shoreline of Munroe Lake on the left until the trail, past the lake, sloped downwards. Suddenly, at the floor of a small valley, the decline leveled off and the marshland appeared. It was necessary to cross the marsh by balancing oneself and walking from log to moss-covered log in order to reach dry land. There was no allowance for error. One slip could, at the least, result in a sprained ankle. One moved slowly and carefully here, aware of the objective close at hand. After climbing



*Fly casting from the tree trunk
at Little Trout Lake*

one last small mountain, one reached the valley that holds Big Trout Lake.

There were places on the north shore of this lake that allowed sufficient space for the backcast, and there were two wadable areas. We had spent two consecutive days the previous spring building a casting platform constructed of logs. This arrangement, unfortunately, had a lifespan of only one year. The winter ice had taken its toll of this ambitious undertaking. Usually we fly-fished with three flies. A dark fly on the tippet, a medium shade of fly at the first dropper location, and a light fly (perhaps Yellow Sally) for the hand fly. The flies were positioned approximately four feet apart. If *S. marstoni* showed a preference for one fly, that fly would be fished as a single. When trout were surface feeding, they were taken with a small wet fly, usually light colored, dressed to float in the surface film. The small wet fly was often touched here and there with oil of citronella. This oil was also used as one of the ingredients of our fly repellent. The gut leader was drawn through a felt pad that contained Mucilin, except for the last two feet of gut nearest the fly. During later years, two

streamer flies proved very effective. These were the Harlequin and Trout Fin. The silk fly line of the day was fine for fishing the dry fly, but not for extended periods. False-casting failed to dry the line sufficiently after it became saturated with water. Even the best of cock hackle we had access to did not measure up to the specially raised hackle of today. Very often, elk hair was used for the tails of dry flies to aid floatation. When diagnosis of the riseform indicated trout feeding on the surface, we fished a dry fly. Patterns of the day included the Black Gnat, Pale Evening Dun, Jenny Spinner, and the Blue Upright. We used leaders made from silkworm gut material of approximately 3½ pounds test. This material was often referred to as *fina*.

During the late 1930s I acquired a 9-foot cane rod made by S. Allcock and Company, Ltd., of Redditch. Designated as The Conway model, this rod was characterized by stiffer middle and tip sections than rods I had previously used. It could carry a longer line and made for improved casting of the dry fly.

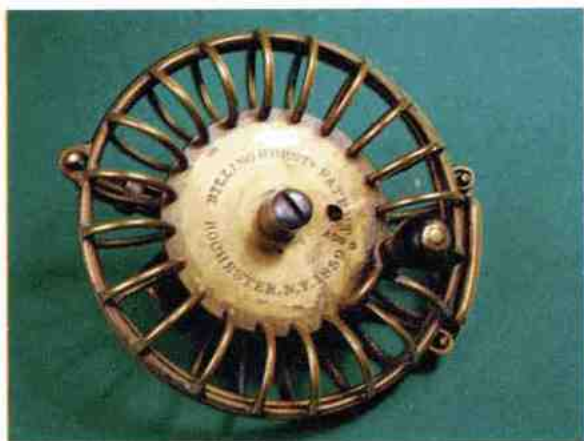
The magic of *S. marstoni* during May and June was always accompanied by

hoards of black flies and mosquitoes. Survival depended upon an effective repellent. I offer the recipe of the day:

oil of citronella (Burgoynes)	½ ounce
cedar wood oil	¼ ounce
spirits of camphor	¼ ounce
white petrolatum	2 ounces

Melt the petrolatum and add the other ingredients; place in a jar on ice or in very cold water. Stir until thickened. May be used as brilliantine for the hair.

The populations of red trout have been severely depleted since the 1930s; I cannot, unfortunately, offer a recipe or formula for their restoration. Looking back, with all of the disarming simplicity of hindsight, I am reminded of what can be lost. That we should preserve the treasures we possess and presently enjoy cannot be overemphasized. Our links with the past—and these links include the red trout—can be tenuous. The future for the fly fisher, indeed the heritage of the fly fisher of the future, is inescapably linked to what we preserve today. §



(left) A Billingshurst reel with its characteristic inscription

(below left) The Fowler Gem. It was manufactured between 1872 and 1875.

(below right) Clinton's nickel-silver reel



Side-Mount Fly Reels:

by Jim Brown



When it comes to discussing the fine points of early American fly tackle, we readily admit that this is an area in which we have little expertise. We are thankful that when we get in over our heads on tackle-related matters, we can rely on the likes of Ken Cameron, Mary Kelly, Martin Keane, and Jim Brown to come to our rescue. The aforementioned individuals have made extraordinary contributions to our current knowledge of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American fly-fishing tackle. All have generously given of their time to the Museum, and all have written significant, well-researched articles for the *American Fly Fisher*. We are pleased to welcome Jim Brown back to our pages.

His accompanying article on side-mount fly reels and their makers fills an important gap in our knowledge of the development of the American fly reel.

William Billingshurst, Alonzo Fowler, Charles Clinton, August Meisselbach, Albert Pettengill, Elmer Sellers—do you recognize them? This list includes a gunsmith, a dentist, an inventor, a machinist, a toolmaker, and a pharmacist, who were also six of America's most talented reelmakers. They were responsible for creating and perfecting a unique style of reel: the side-mount fly reel.

The side-mount reel takes its name from the fact that it is mounted horizon-

(right) The Sellers Basket reel. It was being sold as late as 1947.

(below left) The Meisselbach Amateur. Note the petal-shape perforations in the side plate.

(below right) Side-mount and top-mount Pettingill reels



American Classics

tally (literally on its side) rather than vertically, as are most conventional fly reels today. The horizontally mounted reel now survives only in the modern automatic fly reel, but during its heyday in the late nineteenth century, it was a very popular single-action fly reel. It was patented by William Billingshurst and subsequently modified and refined by numerous other tackle makers.

William Billingshurst (1809 to 1880) was a well-known gunsmith. In his Rochester, New York, shop he manufactured muzzle-loading rifles; he gained quite a reputation for his target rifles. He also is credited by many as being the inventor and maker of the first American fly reel. His horizontally mounted reel design was patented in 1859 and con-

tinued to be sold until the mid-1880s.¹ Billingshurst's first reels were made of brass wire and castings assembled in such a manner as to allow air to dry the silk fly lines that were in use at the time. Their unique appearance has prompted some collectors to refer to them as "birdcage" reels. Billingshurst's reel featured a folding handle that allowed the reel to be carried in the angler's pocket or kit. By the 1870s, Billingshurst was nickel plating some of his reels. Billingshurst also produced a limited number of nickel-silver models that most certainly commanded a higher price and were sometimes offered as prizes in casting tournaments. His reels were usually marked with a neat circle in which was inscribed "Billingshurst's patent, Rochester, N. Y.

1859 Aug 9." The reel enjoyed such popularity and such a long production period, it seems to have prompted many imitators to issue similar birdcage-style reels. The majority of these imitations were not signed by their manufacturer. The two most common sizes of the Billingshurst reel were 3 inches and 3½ inches. The small one was advertised as being suitable for trout, while the large reel was generally employed for bass or other warm-water fish.

Alonzo H. Fowler (1825 to 1903) may well have met Billingshurst and certainly must have known of his fishing reel, for in the 1860s Fowler lived and worked in Rochester, New York. Fowler was a dentist and an angling enthusiast known to have built fly rods, and in 1872, he

secured a patent on a strikingly new design of fly reel that was to become known as the Fowler Gem. The Gem was made almost entirely of hard rubber, molded in the shape of a doughnut! This material allowed for an extremely lightweight design: 1½ ounces for the 2½ inches diameter, 40-yard size and 2½ ounces for the 3½ inches diameter, 60-yard size. (The small trout-sized Billingshurst weighed 3½ ounces.) I would guess that because of its extremely light weight, the Gem must have enjoyed considerable popularity. Where are the Fowler reels today? It seems that few have survived because a fishing reel constructed almost entirely of hard rubber was too fragile to withstand the knocks of ordinary use.

The earliest Fowler Gem, like all Billingshurst reels, lacked a click mechanism. It was possible to tighten the center screw on both of these reels in order to produce a drag effect, but this technique was far from satisfactory. By 1875, Fowler advertised in *Forest and Stream* that he was improving the Gem, and although the exact nature of his improvement is not spelled out, it now seems clear that he added a click mechanism to his reels that year. The latest year I have found the Gem advertised is 1882.²

Dr. Fowler spent his last years practicing dentistry in Ithaca, New York. In fact, he had moved to Ithaca in 1875 before his improved Gem was marketed. It is possible that Charles M. Clinton (1834 to 1909) met him during this period. Clinton was a well-known inventor and longtime resident of Ithaca. He is remembered primarily for the Clinton sewing machine and the Peerless typewriter. He also had many lesser inventions: he designed all the tools used in the Ithaca Calendar Clock Company; he patented a marine calendar clock, a self-dumping horse rake, a vegetable slicer, a railroad indicator, a grain binder, an indicator for water meters; and he improved grain mills and many dental appliances. He is known to have assisted many fellow inventors in perfecting their ideas. Some collectors and historians have speculated that Clinton helped Fowler improve the Gem reel and then made additional improvements of his own that were incorporated into the Clinton fishing-reel patent of October 29, 1889. While we may never know for sure whether Clinton worked with Fowler on improving the Gem, there is little doubt that the Clinton reel bears an uncanny likeness to the Fowler Gem, which indicates a considerable familiarity with the Fowler product.

The Clinton reel differed from the Fowler Gem in several respects. First, it was constructed of nickel silver. (Some had nickel-plated aluminum spools to help reduce weight.) Second, it had an internal mechanism instead of an external gear like that of the Gem, which

could easily damage a costly silk line or gut leader. Finally, it had a clever self-lubricating oil reservoir, intended to reduce bearing wear. Clinton's reel was made in only one size: 2½ inches diameter, 3 ounces in solid nickel-silver or 2 ounces with an aluminum spool. It is, perhaps, the most beautiful of the side-mount reels and a fit culmination of Fowler-type design.

A. F. Meisselbach Manufacturing Company of Newark, New Jersey, is remembered today as a large mass producer of inexpensive fishing reels of various types. August Meisselbach (1865 to 1927) and his older brother William (about 1847 to 1919) started business in 1886 in a small machine shop at 13 Mulberry Street in Newark. Their first fishing reel was a primitive-looking side-mount model that became known as the Amateur.³ August F. Meisselbach received United States patent no. 336,657 on February 23, 1886. The patent described a horizontally mounted reel composed of little more than two sheet-metal side plates pinned together to form a spool, which turned an upright axle. The side plates were ventilated to allow the line to dry; but unlike the simple circular perforations used by Fowler and Clinton, Meisselbach used stylish, petal-shaped cutouts to ventilate his reels. He may have been the first American reelmaker to use this flower motif. The Amateur was not as primitive as it might have seemed. For instance, there was a counterweight on the spool, which functioned to make the reel's bearings wear in an even manner and allowed for smooth operation while surrendering line to a running fish. It also had either a depressable drag-lever brake or an exterior click mechanism that provided further control over the angler's line. The early click mechanism used by Meisselbach suffered the same shortcoming as Fowler's: the line sometimes caught between the pawl and ratchet. Meisselbach's click was one of the earlier *adjustable* clicks, however, and if the angler so chose, the pawl could be disengaged to create a free-running spool.

The Amateur was an inexpensive, nickel-plated brass reel made in large quantities until 1920. It came in two sizes, 3 inches and 2½ inches, and with either the depressable drag lever or an exterior click mechanism. There were a total of four side-mount models: no. 2, 3 inches with drag; no. 3, 3 inches with click; no. 8, 2½ inches with drag; and no. 11, 2½ inches with click. While the drag-lever models were made until 1920, the click versions were made only until circa 1895.⁴

By the late 1880s, the top- or vertically mounted reel seems to have become the reel of choice for most anglers. It was easier to play a fish from a top-mounted reel, and although it is difficult to say

exactly when this practice became general, it is probably safe to assume that the advantage of this mode of operation became increasingly evident to the majority of anglers toward the end of the nineteenth century. Yet the side-mount reel stored line as well as any other style of reel, and it may have had a certain feel or balance that its devotees found lacking in the vertical-mount reel. The center of gravity of the side-mount reel was much closer to the rod grip, and this too might have been judged by some as a more stable rod-reel combination.

Whatever the reasons, some tradition-minded anglers continued to prefer and use the side-mount reel even when it was falling from fashion. Albert N. Pettengill (1837 to 1903) recognized this division of taste, and in early 1887, he patented and released to the general public his Mohawk reel. The Mohawk was a nickel-plated brass reel, 3 inches in diameter and with an internal click mechanism. It lacked some of the refinements of Meisselbach's Amateur, yet owed much to it in terms of general configuration and style. Pettengill, a toolmaker and sometime gunsmith of Ilion, New York, designed the reel so that it could be used, in his words, as "either a side reel or a top reel." By this Pettengill presumably meant that the angler could exercise an option with a single reel—at least this is the suggestion of the patent—yet in practice his reels were manufactured either as *side* reels or *top* reels at the *manufacturer's* discretion. The side-mount style was designated model no. 2 and the top-mount style was model no. 3. Pettengill's Mohawk reels were marked in several ways. Sometimes the word Mohawk and the model number appeared on the foot. Often, "April 26, 87" was stamped in very small characters on the frame. Occasionally Pettengill's name was stamped in the center of the reel.

By the turn of the century, the golden age of the side-mount fly reel had come to an end. After 1900, Carlton Manufacturing Company, Rochester Reel Company, Goyle Reel Company, and Bronson Reel Company all manufactured side-mount fly reels, but these were all inexpensive copies of earlier designs.

But the story does not end here. Elmer J. "Doc" Sellers (1861 to ?) of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, was granted a United States patent for his invention called the "Basket reel." This birdcage-style reel resembled the Billingshurst reel, and it is described in admirably straightforward fashion in Sellers's patent of February 13, 1934:

This invention relates to a fly casting basket reel, the general object of the invention being to provide means whereby the line can be very rapidly wound upon the reel and

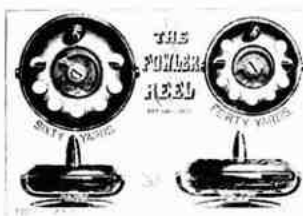
when so wound, will quickly dry as it is exposed to the air and sunlight and also to provide a reel which lies close to the pole and occupies but little space so that it can be carried in the pocket of the user.

Sellers was a pharmacist who operated a drugstore in Kutztown. Like many small-town store owners, he carried a wide variety of merchandise, including some sporting goods, and in later years, his own Basket reel. Some old-time residents of Kutztown still remember seeing Doc Sellers's Basket reel displayed in his store window on Main Street. Sellers's reel was not merely a local phenomenon; it was advertised nationally in the *Sporting Goods Dealer* until at least 1947.

Sellers must have known of the Billingshurst reel, for the Basket reel appears to have been a conscious attempt to improve Billingshurst's design. The small wooden handle of the Basket reel folded tightly against the body of the reel (just like the Billingshurst) so that "it can be carried in the pocket of the user." The Sellers handle, however, had a sophisticated locking mechanism, so the handle did not fold in at an inopportune moment as sometimes did happen with the Billingshurst. Also, Seller's reel had an adjustable on-off click mechanism, which the earlier reel lacked. It is interesting to note that the click button was located exactly opposite the handle, where it could also serve as a counterweight. The Basket reel had an attractive agate line guide to help prevent the fly line from becoming damaged. And finally, the ribs of the Sellers reel were not individually soldered to form the spool but were cast or pressed in a solid piece and then machined out to reduce weight. This resulted in a lighter-weight reel that was sturdier and more durable. The Sellers Basket reel is believed to have been made in only one size: $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter and 4 ounces, in either natural or chrome-plated brass. Some examples are fully signed with Sellers's name, place, and patent number, while others lack these markings. This is one reel that is so distinctive, there should be few problems in identification even if the reel is unsigned.

To the modern eye, certainly, these side-mount reels must seem to be odd or even awkward creations, poorly suited to the practical needs of anglers. Yet they possess an unmistakable charm, if only as reminders of an earlier age. Even though history had levied a harsh verdict on the utility and efficiency of this style of reel, we should recognize that the efforts of these highly skilled inventors and craftsmen resulted in objects that reflect a thoughtfulness of design, a keen sense of craftsmanship, and an enduring beauty—all of which rightly set them apart as American classics. §

Advertisement for the second Fowler model



1. There remains considerable and justifiable debate on this point. Certainly there were multiplying reels patented in America prior to Billingshurst's design (John A. Bailey, 1856, and Edward Deacon, 1857), which could have been used in smaller sizes by fly fishermen of the period. Indeed, the term *fly reel* seems to have come about later in the nineteenth century. Prior to this time at least, most reels were used for any purpose their owners saw fit. Generally speaking, however, these early multiplying reels developed into what we now refer to as bait-casting reels, whereas Billingshurst's reel—lightweight, and with a single-action, contracted spool—developed into the modern fly reel.

2. The 1882 Abbey and Imbrie catalog lists only the improved model (Gem) with click, and it is tempting to think that after 1875, Fowler no longer produced the earlier nonclick version of his reel. Recently, however, an undated broadside surfaced, by Fowler and Tisdell, that throws this conclusion into doubt. It advertised "Dr. Fowler's hard rubber reel, with or without click." The click reels sold for \$4.25 and \$4.75 (depending on size), and the nonclick reels sold for one dollar less. Judging by this, there was a period of overlap of click and nonclick models. But for how long? Were the earlier unimproved models being discounted in order to remove them from stock entirely? Or, was Fowler merely

adding the click assembly to an existing inventory of reels to suit customer preference and pocketbook? It's an unsolved mystery that makes precise dating of Fowler reels most difficult.

3. The original model name of the Amateur was Gogebic. This name was used almost exclusively for the first few years the reel was available (1885 to 1888). I don't know what the word means, where it comes from, or how it is pronounced. When the more expensive expert series of Meisselbach reels were introduced (1888 and 1889), the Gogebic became known as the Amateur and continued to be called the Amateur until about 1920, when it was dropped from production. The model names were never actually marked on the Gogebic/Amateur reels, rather there was usually stamped on the face of the spool the following three patent dates: "Feb 23 - 86, Nov 23 - 86, Feb 5 - 89." An early reel may have only the first, or the first two dates, and a very early Amateur would likely be marked "Pat Ap'd For." I have occasionally seen them entirely unsigned as well.

4. The dating of these reels is an empirical matter—a puzzling out of patent information and advertising. Few click versions of the Amateur were advertised after 1895. It seems that when Meisselbach applied in July 1895 for what would become the January 14, 1896, patent, they redesigned their click reels so that the ratchet gear was situated on the back of the reel. There is no reason why this could not have carried through to the Amateur series of reels, but apparently it did not. Perhaps in order to keep the Amateur selling as inexpensively as possible, Meisselbach was committed to eliminating manufacturing steps reserved for his more expensive Expert, Featherlight, and Allright series of reels. But for whatever reason, from approximately 1895, the Amateur became a nonclick reel.

For Further Reading:

Readers may wish to examine in more detail the patents cited in this article. Copies can be ordered from the Commissioner of Patents, Washington, DC 20231, at a cost of one dollar each. Requests must include the patent number:

Billingshurst, William	Rochester, NY	August 9, 1859	no. 24,987
Fowler, Alonzo H.	Batavia, NY	June 18, 1872	no. 128,137
Meisselbach, August F.	Newark, NJ	February 23, 1886	no. 336,657
Pettengill, Albert N.	Ilion, NY	April 26, 1887	no. 361,890
Clinton, Charles M.	Ithaca, NY	October 29, 1889	no. 413,774
Sellers, Elmer J.	Kutztown, PA	February 13, 1934	no. 1,947,141

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For Jim Brown's previous contribution to the *American Fly Fisher*, see "James J. Ross's 1869 Patent Fly Reel" (vol. 11, no. 2).



The influence of Grasset's style is evident in this poster designed after Rhead's return from Paris in 1894

Louis Rhead's First Career *by Lynn Scholz*



We recently published a checklist of articles by Louis Rhead that appeared in *Forest and Stream* (see the *American Fly Fisher*, vol. 10, no. 2). While in the process of preparing this list, we chanced to make the acquaintance of Lynn Scholz, who is currently writing a book-length biography on Rhead, which she hopes to have published in the very near future. We were fortunate in being able to persuade her to write a shorter biographical sketch on Rhead for the *American Fly Fisher*. Her piece, which follows, deals primarily with a lesser-known side of Rhead—that of a successful commercial artist. We remind our readers that Louis Rhead gave us our first angling entomology (*American Trout Stream Insects*, 1916) and was one of the most innovative anglers of his day. Overly criticized by subsequent angler-entomologists because of his lack of taxonomic rigor, Rhead has never received the acclaim he so rightly deserves.

The HISTORY of OVER SEA By WILLIAM MORRIS



With Illustrations and Decorations
by LOUIS RHEAD
R. H. RUSSELL NEW YORK

The History of Over Sea, 1902,
was Rhead's last fully decorated book
done in the style of William Morris.
Courtesy of Library of Congress

According to a family anecdote, we have a wife's jealousy to thank for Louis Rhead's interest in fishing, an interest that burgeoned in the latter half of his life. A head taller than her husband and

A dapper Louis Rhead was thirty-eight when this photograph was taken. It originally appeared in A Collection of Seventeen Photographs of Posters Designed by Louis Rhead (New York: A. B. Bogart, 1896). Courtesy of Library of Congress



seven years his senior, Catherine Rhead is said to have been jealous of the comely models who routinely posed for her artist-husband during the 1890s. So, as the story goes, she did all she could to encourage him to get out of the studio and on to the streams.¹ At the time, Rhead was one of three American poster artists most in demand during a period when advertising posters could be seen in every shop window and collecting them was a veritable craze. During his career, he managed to blend his skills in art with a love of fishing, much to the benefit of those who share his love of angling, its art, and its literature.

Today Rhead is well known to scholars of turn-of-the-century decorative art.² Portions of his work are usually included in published studies of the decorative arts, but nowhere, to our knowledge, has the entire body of his work been recorded as a whole. It is unfortunate that of Rhead's artistic accomplishments, his angling art seems to have been ignored as a subject for serious scholarship. It is by far his most decorative, and it seems to embody the most creative pleasure; some consider it to be his best. Now, almost sixty years after his death, I would like to place his angling art in proper perspective within the broader context of his entire body of artwork and in relation to the world into which he was born.

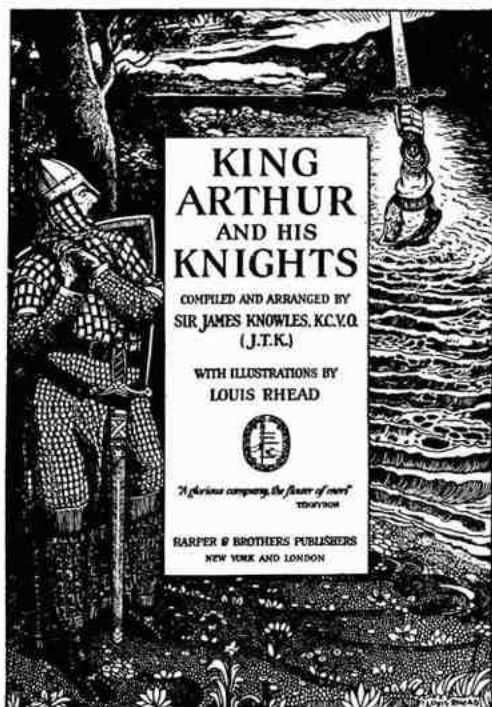
Louis John Rhead was born in England on November 6, 1858, at the height of Britain's industrial revolution. He was born in Staffordshire in the town of Etru-

ria, one of the six early townships that now comprise Stoke-on-Trent. The area continues to be the center of the British ceramic industry, as it has been since the seventeenth century. It was a matter of course that local children would work in the ceramic industry, most at tortuous or even dangerous jobs that were associated with working the clay and tending the enormous kiln fires. Only the most gifted might escape these hardships and attain the respected, and far safer, positions of china painter, china gilder, or artist.

Louis was the third of eleven children of George Woolliscroft Rhead and Fanny Colley Rhead. Both were from self-made families. Little is known of Fanny's family, but George's family operated potteries in the area for three generations and introduced significant, new technology for the ceramic industry.³ George chose to work as a ceramic artist. On his marriage certificate, dated 1854, he recorded his age as twenty-two and his profession as china gilder, a highly specialized craft for one so young. It involved the application of gold leaf to ceramic pieces in their final stage of production. He practiced at a number of potteries and rose to the highest position in the profession, that of ceramic artist. In addition, during the 1870s, he taught night classes in design and drawing to aspiring day laborers at several of the area's schools for science and art training.⁴

In the industrial communities, the work ethic was instilled early. From about the age of eight, all the Rhead child-

ren attended their father's art classes at night, and by their teens, they were also holding jobs at the potteries. Such an early transition from childhood's relative freedom to the discipline of industry did not come easily for Louis. Regular impoundments in the studio were required in order to compel him to produce the designs that would satisfy his father.⁵ Whether a testament to his father's improving financial situation or to some special talent, Louis was sent to Paris in 1872 to study with the artist Gustave Boulanger, with whom he studied for three years and where he learned how to draw the human figure. Only thirteen when he left for Paris and, he confessed, still more inclined to play than to work,⁶ he returned home at sixteen more mature and better prepared for a life of serious business. The order of the day was the same as that for his brothers: enrollment in night art classes and a daytime job at Minton's, where Louis worked as a china painter.⁷ This arduous schedule was not unusual for art-inclined workers. For the Rhead children, however, the regimen served the larger purpose of preparing them for admission to the National Art Training School in South Kensington, London, reputed to be the best school in England for an applied-arts education. Each year forty paying students were admitted, as well as from twelve to fifteen students with full scholarships awarded by the government to regional winners of a national competition.⁸ Louis competed unsuccessfully for one of these scholar-



(left) Inspired by the medieval subject matter, Rhead modified his children's book style (see illustration at far right) for this work and returned temporarily to his Morrisonian style of twenty-three years earlier.

(below) Rhead often signed his posters with this decoration.

(near right) The sin of "Cursing" from the Life and Death of Mr. Badman, published in London in 1900. His books of this period dealt with moral or religious subjects.

(far right) A typical example of the style Rhead employed in illustrating children's books. The illustration is from Harper's 1914 edition of Hans Anderson's Fairy Tales.



ships in each of the three years following his return from Paris.

During two of these three years, life proceeded smoothly enough for Louis. But in 1877, his brother Frederick was fired from Minton's for taking art materials home from work. The indiscretion came to light when Fred won a prize in the national art competition for a plate decorated at home with a shilling's worth of secretly formulated clays that Minton used in their superb *pâte-sur-pâte* pieces.⁹ In their pique with Fred, Minton's also fired Louis (in 1878) on a trumped-up charge.¹⁰ After leaving Minton's the boys easily secured new employment with Minton's chief rival, the Wedgwood Pottery. Fred was already recognized for his extraordinary artistic talent; in addition, he brought to Wedgwood knowledge of several of Minton's most closely guarded ceramic techniques.

Of the eleven Rhead children, most of the nine who survived infancy followed their father to become artists and five achieved considerable renown. The eldest, George Woolliscroft, was a well-known painter and etcher in London, who became associated with Ford Maddox Brown and other Pre-Raphaelite painters;¹¹ Frederick Alfred remained in Staffordshire to become an outstanding ceramic artist and art director, author of several books, novels, and even operas, as well as an accomplished illustrator; Louis John emigrated to America, where he concentrated on the book arts; and Alice Maud Mary and Fanny Woollis-

croft were both painters and ceramic artists about whom less is known. The Rhead children were, in short, far more than mere survivors.

The break with his first childhood employer in 1878 marked the final stage in Louis's early education. By the spring of 1879, he had won a scholarship to South Kensington, and in the fall he matriculated, joining his brother George, who had won a full scholarship the year before. The school records from 1879 to 1881 confirm that both Rheads were exceptional students—particularly Louis, who won the school's highest annual award each of his two years there, as well as a number of national competition prizes.

The Rheads could not have been in London studying the decorative arts at a more exciting and propitious time. Throughout England, older ideas about art were now being seriously challenged. New theories, new critics, and new design groups abounded; the period saw the culmination of attempts to define a new aesthetic appropriate for the industrial world. Louis and George were in London at the height of what has been called "the aesthetic movement," about which one contemporary magazine of this period declared:

There has never been since the world began an age in which people thought, talked, wrote and spent such inordinant sums of money and hours of time in culti-

vating and indulging their tastes.¹²

Had the Rheads arrived at South Kensington any earlier in the school's history, they would have found a very limited curriculum that could only have prepared them for a return to the confines of pottery factories. But by this time, the distinction between the 'fine' arts of the academy, and the 'decorative' arts of industry had completely lost its relevance. When the Rheads attended South Kensington, the faculty of the school had been thoroughly infiltrated by some notable English and French artists. The art director at the time was the successful neoclassical painter Edward Poynter, who was later knighted and elected president of the Royal Academy. Jules Dalou, the French sculptor, was on the faculty, as was his countryman Alphonse Legros, an etcher.¹³ Also associated with the school was William Morris,¹⁴ who for almost twenty years had been setting the standards for "modern" design and "good taste" in furnishings, fabrics, and wallpapers.

In the spring of 1881, when he finished at South Kensington, Louis went to Devon for a summer of sketching and painting. On his return, he studied independently, working up his sketches into paintings. He may have also taken private lessons with Frederick Leighton,¹⁵ then president of the Royal Academy. During this time, he supported himself with piecework ceramic decoration for his former employers, the Wedgwoods.

OF MR. BADMAN



CURSING

As the forest evening, we sit in some rocky hollow, we are delighted with its gloom, as if it had the power to be so; we are startled, however, when we find the ground, as if it were alive, has been the scene of some terrible deed. (Hawthorne, 47, 50.)



"NOW WE WILL HAVE A STORY, AND THE TREE CAN LISTEN TOO!"

They were able to entice him back to the Staffordshire plant only briefly in 1882.¹⁶ Apparently, a career in the potteries, even as a distinguished artist, was not what he had in mind. In fact, he was planning to complete his art studies in Rome, when the London representative of the New York publishing house of D. Appleton offered him the position of art director in New York City. Despite his reluctance to delay studies in Rome, the prospect of working for one of America's largest publishers was sufficiently tempting. In the fall of 1883, at the age of twenty-four, Rhead embarked for New York City.

In 1884, within a year of his arrival, he married Catherine Bogart Yates, the widow of a medical student from a wealthy Schenectady family. The fringe benefits of his marriage were American citizenship, a young stepson, Stephen Yates, and what appeared to be an ample means with which to establish himself in a new country. The Brooklyn Bridge had just opened, and the Rheads settled in across the river in what was then called Flatbush. They lived on Ocean Avenue, overlooking Prospect Park, and remained there for forty years.

Rhead's inherent enterprise must have facilitated his adjustment to America. He had, after all, achieved a great deal just to get to New York, and his animated personality suggested a resolve to go even further. By one account he had "a quick, nervous, but very pleasant manner of speaking,"¹⁷ and another reported that he was "of the tireless type: where he is, there

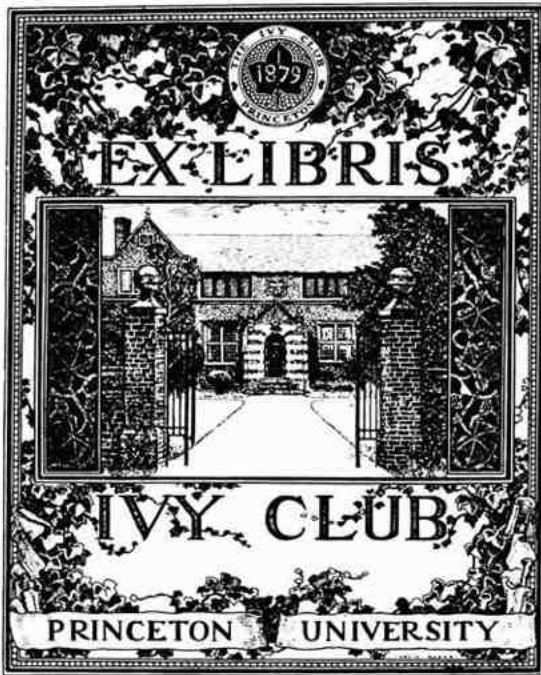
all day long the tide of battle rolls, and the result of his strenuous endeavour is success."¹⁸ Certainly to his former countrymen, he seemed totally acclimatized; the eminent British art critic Gleeson White wistfully wrote that Rhead "has caught... a mood of enterprise which is peculiarly American, and has dared to experiment."¹⁹ It is amusing to note that a number of interviewers (who could not have been aware of the work of Freud or Adler) associated his drive with his physical stature, which could hardly escape notice; one reported that he was "somewhat below the medium size,"²⁰ a generous statement indeed, as he was barely over five feet tall.

Rhead worked at D. Appleton for six years, but apparently the anonymity and limitations of in-house artist did not satisfy him. From his first years in New York, he developed an active private practice, supported by the momentum of the "aesthetic movement," which had America as much in its grip as it did England. Reinforcing his desire to promote his private artwork was the loss of his wife's inheritance at the hands of dishonest executors;²¹ he no longer had the option of getting established at a more leisurely pace.

By his own account, Rhead's earliest American work consisted of articles on household design for various New York and Boston magazines.²² He also exhibited paintings at such local shows as those of the Brooklyn Art Association and the National Academy of Design.²³

Though much of his work in this period was a throwback to student days, he did make valuable contacts in the publishing community that substantially affected the future course of his career in America. Notices of his work started to appear regularly during 1887, just before he left Appleton's to set out on his own. In that year he joined the Grolier Club, a new, but prestigious, association of bookmen and the best imaginable source of contacts for future business. His designs for the bindings of several books, executed by the New York bookbinder William Matthews, earned him a good deal of attention,²⁴ as did his regular submissions of interior decorations to the annual exhibits of the Architectural League of New York, beginning in 1888. In the same year, Rhead's decorations for needlework projects and paint-it-yourself ceramics appeared in almost every issue of the *Art Interchange*, a New York weekly. Also in 1888, William Evarts Benjamin's short-lived periodical the *Book Lover* appeared.²⁵ From the first issue, it sported a Louis Rhead cover design and frequent illustrations of Rhead's latest bookplate designs that were available for purchase through the magazine. Bookplate design was a successful sideline for Rhead until well into the 1900s. He was considered one of the country's best bookplate designers during this period, and in 1907 a small volume dedicated to his work was published in Boston.²⁶

At the close of the 1880s, America made a tentative entree into what is called the



poster period of the 1890s. The period started quietly with a few publishing houses (led by Harper Brothers) that recognized the advertising effectiveness of the colored posters of France. In 1889, Rhead landed two American poster commissions. He did not, however, anticipate the commercial potential of this relatively new poster art, and in 1890 he left with his family to live and work in Paris. How long he had intended to stay is unknown, but after seeing a major show of posters by the French artist Eugene Grasset, he returned to New York with great excitement. Grasset's work was highly decorative and suggested new potential for posters as an art form. Rhead said he emerged from the April Salon de Cents show "an entirely changed man."²⁷ He hurried to finish all his current projects, and by June 1894, he was back in New York.

Thus began the most successful period in Rhead's career. Within twenty-four hours of his return, he had sold a poster design, and in the six months remaining in 1894, he produced more than ninety posters, most of which sold readily to such magazines as *Harper's Bazaar*, *Harper's Magazine*, *St. Nicholas*, *Century Magazine*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Scribner's Magazine*. By January 1895, his first major exhibition opened at the Wunderlich (now named Kennedy) Gallery in New York. It was the first one-man poster show ever held in America, and it created quite a stir. The *Critic* commented: "The artistic poster which has

for some years been in existence in Paris has now made its appearance in New York."²⁸

Although Rhead regarded the show a financial failure, it catapulted him to the forefront of poster artists in America. In November 1895, Rhead won the gold medal for the best American poster design at the first international poster show, held in Boston. At the same show, the gold medal for best foreign design was presented to Rhead's inspirator, Eugene Grasset.

For the next two and a half years, every major city in the Western world—as well as minor ones—organized poster shows in which Rhead's work was prominent. He was given three one-man shows in Europe: in London, at the St. Bride's Foundation Institute in 1896 and 1897; and in Paris, at the Salon des Cents in 1897. In response to the Paris show, the French art journal *La Plume* commented that Rhead's posters could be surpassed by those of no other artist, including France's three most popular: Cherét, Grasset, or Lautrec.²⁹

Posters appealed to Rhead as much for their moral potential as for their aesthetic qualities. One art historian explains: "It is not surprising that [Rhead] succumbed to the spell of Gasset. Both men had deep roots in the art and philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelites and both were motivated by strong ethical considerations."³⁰ In the 1880s, color advertising posters had been synonymous with gay, often bawdy, scenes of Paris nightlife. The appeal of

Grasset's posters to Rhead was the use of the idealized, neoclassic figures—fully clothed and engaged in more thoughtful pursuits. Thus, in June 1895, Rhead published an article entitled "The Moral Aspect of the Poster." He also launched a series of lectures that spoke against lewdness in poster art. He preached that poster artists had a moral responsibility "to make men and women think of life as not a silly dream but as earnest and sublime."³¹ He felt that the mass appeal of posters necessitated this special responsibility.³²

In thousands of the homes of the poor these posters are the only pictures they have to adorn their dwellings, and even in well-to-do households young men and women preserve what they call a pretty girl and hang it up in their den or chamber.

While these sentiments may sound patronizing and naive to modern ears, they were perfectly reasonable for their day. They were from Rhead's upbringing, the echoes of the evangelical art critic John Ruskin and of the designer-turned-socialist William Morris, who thought that the quality of life could be improved through art.

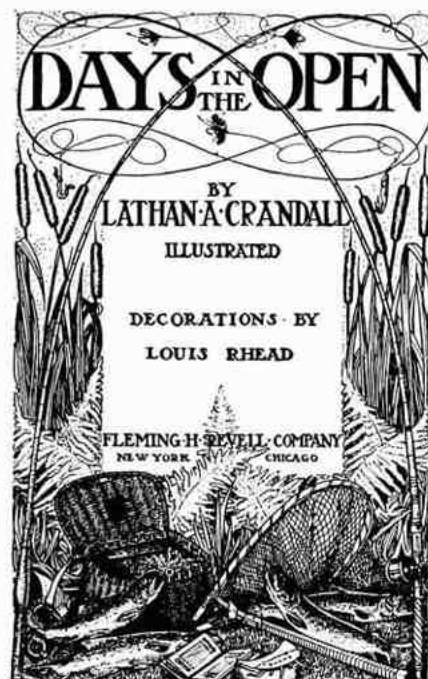
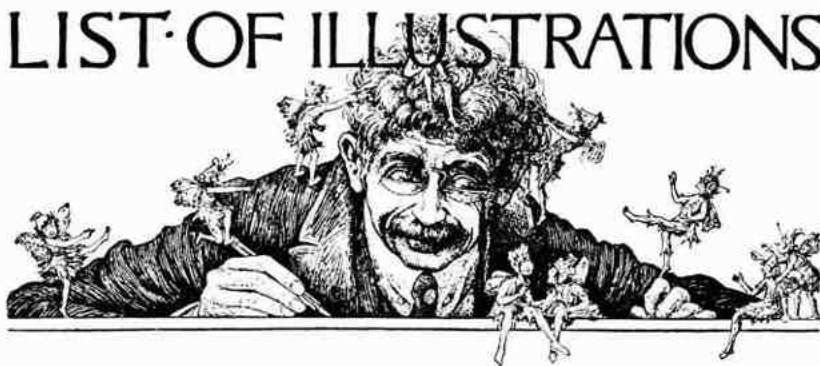
Related to these moral convictions was Rhead's passion to share his special skills and opinions on all aspects of contem-

(left) Two examples of bookplates that were designed by Louis Rhead. Shir-Cliff's bookplate combines the style of Rhead's book illustrations with that of his posters.

(below) A particularly charming self-portrait of Rhead from Hans Andersen's *Fairy Tales*, 1914

(right) Rhead always took great care when designing decorations for angling-related publications.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



porary aesthetic life This was evidenced by Rhead's production of a steady stream of how-to articles and letters to the editor. Initially, these may have served the purpose of self-promotion, but even long after he was well established, he continued to publish his comments in a variety of publications. He appears to have been motivated by generosity and a genuine belief that people might benefit from his ideas.

The intense demand for new poster designs from publishers, manufacturers, and collectors could not be sustained forever, and by the end of 1897 the frenzy of the poster craze had substantially subsided. Rhead then turned his attention to book illustration. The period of illustrative work that followed must have been a very pleasurable time for Rhead, for he was then reunited in work with his brothers George and Frederick for the first time since leaving England. Family relationships were very important to Rhead. He maintained contact with his family through frequent visits to England. He appears to have been very fond of children, and relatives who might otherwise have been too young to remember the occasional visitor, recall "Uncle Lou" vividly and with warm feeling. Rhead developed an especially warm relationship with his stepson, Stephen Yates (Rhead and his wife never had children of their own). When Stephen was fourteen, Rhead sent him to Paris to train as an artist.³³

Between 1898 and 1902 a number of

small publishing houses, those with aesthetic aspirations, commissioned much work with The Brothers Rhead, as the various combinations of Louis and his two brothers were popularly called. Their first fully decorated books were published in 1898: with George W. Rhead and Stephen Yates, Louis illustrated an R. H. Russell edition of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*; and all three brothers illustrated the Century Company's *A Pilgrim's Progress*. Louis illustrated six more books published before 1903. Of these, the three most ambitious and beautiful also involved the brothers: with George, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* and William Morris's *History of Over Sea*; and with Fred, *Robinson Crusoe*.³⁴ All his illustrated books in this period shared historical or moral themes, and all were influenced by William Morris's Kelmscott Press style. Morris's book style was characterized by embellished initials, heavy type derived from medieval calligraphy and early printing typefaces, wide border decorations encompassing the text, and numerous flat illustrations in which line, as opposed to shaded volume, was the chief element. The style is reminiscent of medieval manuscripts, German woodcuts, and early printed books.³⁵

Soon after 1900, style shifted away from such highly decorated books, and many of the smaller publishers of the 1890s disappeared because they could not compete with large firms. R. H. Russell, who had used Rhead for five books in as many

years, was bought by Harper Brothers in 1903. Rhead illustrated many of Harper's popular children's books and adjusted his style to one less decorative. Between 1902 and Rhead's death in 1926, sixteen of Harper Brothers's popular Juvenile Series had Rhead illustrations, and for *Robin Hood* he also wrote the text.³⁶ *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Heidi*, and *The Deerslayer* were among the books he illustrated in this series.

At forty-three years of age (in 1901), Rhead became interested in angling art. It is not known if he began fishing as a child in England, but Rhead has written that he first started fly-fishing for trout between 1888 and 1890.³⁷ Until 1900, when a small news item appeared in a Chicago art journal reporting that Rhead was in Canada sketching land-locked salmon,³⁸ however, there is no evidence that he associated his new recreation with his livelihood. The outcome of this excursion was Rhead's first exhibition of fishing subjects, entitled *The Fighting Ouana-niche*, which was held at the Frederick Keppel Gallery in New York in January 1901 (exactly six years after his momentous New York poster show). From what must have been an uncertain foray to determine whether he could sell paintings with angling subjects, he took off, once again, into this new work with the "full-tilt" enthusiasm that characterized all of his ventures. In the last twenty-six years of his life, in addition to producing steadily for *Harper's*, he contributed an

LOUIS RHEAD, ARTIST
AND ANGLER, DEAD
Exhausted Recently by Long
Struggle In Capturing a
30-Pound Turtle.

ILLUSTRATED MANY BOOKS

A Prolific Writer on Angling and an
Inventor of Lures for Game
and Fish.

Louis Rhead, artist and angler, died suddenly of heart disease early yesterday at his home in Amityville, L. I.

Too much exertion is believed by Stephen Yates of Setauket, L. I., stepson of Mr. Rhead, to have brought about his death. About two weeks ago Mr. Rhead set out to catch a turtle weighing thirty pounds which had been devastating trout ponds on his place, Seven Oaks. After the turtle was hooked, it put up a fight for more than half an hour. Although Mr.

Rhead was successful in the end, he became exhausted. A short time later he suffered from his first attack of heart disease. Yesterday's was the second.

Mr. Rhead was born in Etruria, England in 1857 [1858], and received his training at the South Kensington School, London. His father, George Wollinscroft Rhead, was a well-known artist, and Louis Rhead's eleven brothers and sisters were also artists. One of them, George, achieved fame for his stained-glass windows.

Made Name as Illustrator.

With his brother Frederick, Louis Rhead came to this country in 1883 to become art manager for D. Appleton & Co., publishers. Soon the brothers achieved standing as illustrators of books and magazines, doing a number of fine volumes together under the name, "The Brothers Rhead." Louis Rhead also painted in oil and water colors, exhibiting in American and European galleries. He received a gold medal in Boston in 1895 for artistic posters, and a gold medal at the St. Louis Exposition, 1904.

Mr. Rhead devoted part of his time to illustrating the Louis Rhead series of

juvenile classics (Swiss Family Robinson, Gulliver, Grimm, Anderson and others). He also wrote much on hand-made lures and flies for game and fishing, contributing to newspapers and magazines, and was himself an inventor of such contrivances.

In recent years Mr. Rhead had illustrated a new book for children annually. Last Christmas his sixteenth was published by Harper & Brothers, Cooper's "Deerslayer." One of the children's books in the Rhead series he wrote himself, "Robin Hood." Sherwood Forest, scene of Robin Hood's exploits, is not far from Rhead's boyhood home. Mr. Rhead also wrote several elaborate works on angling.

Fished From His Back Door.

For years his artificial fishing bait has been used all over the country by anglers. Two years ago he bought a small property at Amityville, drained it scientifically for angling purposes and created a series of pools and a stream, stocking them with trout. He fished almost literally from his back door to the time of his death.

Funeral services will be held on Sunday at 2:30 P. M., in St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Amityville.

extraordinary amount to the know-how, art, and literature of American angling.

Even a summary of the highlights of angling works is impressive in its scope. In 1902, the year after the Keppel show, Rhead's first angling book, *The Speckled Brook Trout*, was published. It was produced by his favorite publisher, R. H. Russell, whose record of aesthetic contributions to American publishing assured the book a high, if not the highest, place among the most beautiful books in American angling literature. Rhead contributed several chapters to the book, as well as being its editor, illustrator, and artistic director. Three years later, his second book was released: *The Basses, Fresh-Water and Marine* (a sequel to *The Speckled Brook Trout*, and the second of what he hoped would be a series—all with the same high standards for beauty and information). Again, Rhead was the editor and illustrator; the major part of the text was written by William C. Harris and Tarleton Bean, with ancillary chapters by Rhead and James Cruikshank.

Also in 1905, he won another gold medal, this time at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis for a series of fish paintings that were included in the exhibit in the Palace of Forestry, Fish and Game. In 1907 and 1908 he wrote two more books on fishing: *Bait Angling for Common Fishes* and *The Book of Fish and Fishing*. His most ambitious work, *American Trout Stream Insects*, was pub-

lished in 1916. This book discussed the results of his seven seasons of fishing in the Catskills, where he collected and studied the insects that constitute the major part of a trout's diet. It included accurate color illustrations of these insects (taken from his paintings). It was America's first angling entomology.

Years of studying the habitats of sport fish combined with his training in art to lead him into entrepreneurial activities, at which he became quite proficient. He designed and manufactured flies and lures, which he sold from his home and through the New York City tackle firm of William Mills and Sons, who continued to sell them until the 1940s. He wrote about his lures in his last book, *Fisherman's Lures and Game Fish Food*, published in 1920. His business line expanded to include custom taxidermy and the sale of hand-tied gut bait-casting rigs. When he "retired" to Amityville, Long Island, at the end of 1924, he built on his property a series of ponds for the rearing of trout. He then offered, in addition to custom paintings of fish, "expert advice on how to acquire, construct and maintain a private trout preserve for pleasure or profit."⁹

Rhead died suddenly on July 29, 1926; he had suffered a massive heart attack brought on by a lengthy struggle with an enormous thirty-pound snapping turtle that had taken up residence in one of his trout ponds. §

ENDNOTES:

1. Marion Yates Crockett, interview at her home, September 1982.

2. *Decorative or applied art* is design that is purely ornamental or that enhances items of everyday use. The terms are also applied to a host of arts (or crafts) considered less creative than such traditional, academic art forms as painting or sculpture (often called *fine art*).

3. Chris Watkins, William Harvey, and Robert Smit, *The Shelley Potteries: The History and Production of a Staffordshire Family of Potters* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1980), 25. Hereafter referred to as *Shelley Potteries*.

4. Information about the local schools of art was found under the Science and Art Department of the Committee of the Council on Education's *General Register, Newcastle, Staffordshire, School of Art* (1874-1878) and annual reports of same (London: various years).

5. Arthur Stedman, "Louis Rhead, Medalist, Being a Short Account of this Remarkable Decorative Artist," *Poster Lore*, 2 (February 1896), 42-46. Hereafter referred to as LJR.

Unless otherwise noted, biographical material is found in this and two other sources and will not be cited further: W. H. Shir-Cliff, "Something of Rhead," *Ex Libris*, 1 (April 1897), 233-235. Hereafter referred to as SOR; and *A Collection of Book Plate Designs by Louis Rhead* (Boston: W. P. Truesdell, 1907).

6. "Picture Gallery of the Streets, a Talk with a Designer of Art Posters," *Westminster Budget* (June 26, 1896), 5.

Rhead's own bookplate. It was occasionally printed on birch bark and was included in Daniel Fearing's collection of angling bookplates that was exhibited at the Grolier Club in 1911.

Author's note:

This article marks the midpoint of research on a biography of Louis J. Rhead and a catalog of his art, writings, and "inventions." Much research lies ahead, the most difficult of which will be locating additional material. My task will be greatly facilitated if readers will share with me the locations of letters, original art, and other unique Rhead material. I can be reached at 5410 Macomb Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20016; telephone 202-966-7555.

Lynn Scholz is an avid fly fisher who has spent the major portion of the last four years researching the life of Louis Rhead. She is a former member of the board of directors of Trout Unlimited and is currently involved in restoring and renovating her home in Washington, DC. She holds a masters degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania.



7. *The General Register, Newcastle School of Art* (1875-76).

8. For information about the National Art Training School in South Kensington, and national awards to art students, see the annual reports of the Science and Art Department of the Committee of the Council on Education (London: 1875-1881).

9. Watkins, et al., *The Shelley Potteries*, 26. In *pâte-sur-pâte* decoration, the design is painted onto a darkly colored ground in successive layers, using a fine dilute of white clay. Images on the surface stand in bas-relief as successive layers of clay accumulate. The ground color shows through the translucent china clay in proportion to the buildup. Extremely detailed and subtle images can thus be created.

10. *Ibid.*, 49.

11. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed in 1848 by three young art students: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Millais. Their pact was a protest against the current British art and against their academic training. They were inspired by the preachings of the young art critic John Ruskin, who emphasized that art should be drawn from nature, recorded in faithful detail, and that the subjects of art should express personal moral belief. Their work combined realism and symbolism and was characterized by strong moral "stories" and extremely bright, clear colors. Their work constituted one of the few distinctive styles in nineteenth-century British painting, most of which was characterized by neoclassical or history painting. See Quentin Bell, *A New and Noble School* (London: MacDonald, 1982).

12. *Furniture Gazette*, 1876, as quoted in

Elizabeth Aslin, *The Aesthetic Movement* (New York: Excalibur Books, 1981), 13.

13. Louis J. Rhead, "The Industrial Arts in America," *World's Work*, 7 (November 1903), 1426.

14. *The Twenty-Sixth Report of the Science and Art Department of the Committee of the Council on Education* (London: 1879), 541.

15. Stedman, I.J.R., 43.

16. Letters from Louis Rhead to Godfrey Wedgwood, 1881-1882, The Wedgwood Archives, University of Keele, Keele, Staffordshire.

17. Stedman, I.J.R., 47.

18. Shur-Cliff, SOR, 113.

19. Gleeson White, "The Posters of Louis Rhead," *The Studio*, 8 (August 1896), 158.

20. Stedman, I.J.R., 47.

21. Marion Yates Crockett, interview, see note 1.

22. Letter, Louis J. Rhead to the editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, dated November 12, 1888. Albert Duveen Collection, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

23. Clark S. Marlor, *A History of the Brooklyn Art Association* (New York: 1970) 312; and Maria Naylor, *The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record 1861-1900* (New York: Kennedy Galleries Inc., 1973), 781.

24. Brander Matthews, *Bookbinding Old and New: Notes of a Book Lover, with an Account of the Grolier Club* (London and New York: G. Bell & Sons, 1896), 143, 145.

25. *The Booklover*, published in New York by William Evaris Benjamin. It ran from November of 1888 to January 1890.

26. *Collection of Bookplate Designs by*

Louis Rhead (Boston: W. P. Truesdell, 1907).

27. Stedman, I.J.R., 45.

28. *The Critic*, no. 675 (January 26, 1895), 70.

29. *La Plume*, 7 (October 1895), 458.

30. Edgar Breitenbach, "A Brief History," *The American Poster* (New York: October House, 1967), 12.

31. Louis J. Rhead, "The Moral Aspect of the Poster," *The Bookman*, 1 (June 1895), 314.

32. *Ibid.*, 312.

33. Marion Yates Crockett, interview, see note 1.

34. John Bunyan, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (London: W. Heinemann, 1900); Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (New York: R. H. Russell, 1900); and William Morris, *The History of Over Sea* (New York: R. H. Russell, 1902).

35. For a complete discussion of the style and further examples of Rhead's book design, see Susan Otis Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris* (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1977).

36. Louis J. Rhead, *Bold Robin Hood and His Outlaw Band: Their Famous Exploits in Silverwood Forest* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1912).

37. Louis J. Rhead, "Best Flies for Brook Trout," *Outing* 47 (March 1906), 808; also, a letter from Louis Rhead to Daniel Fearing, dated Dec. 22, 1915 (Fearing Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University).

38. Advertising Department, *Brush and Pencil* (April or May 1900), 19.

39. Advertisement in *Forest and Stream* (August 1925), 501.

Books

A Summer on the Test

by John Waller Hills. Reprint of 1930 edition: Nick Lyons Books/Winchester Press/Andre Deutsch, 1983, paperback, 271 pages (illustrated), \$9.95

Where the Bright Waters Meet

by Hary Plunket-Greene. Reprint of 1924 edition: Nick Lyons Books/Winchester Press/Andre Deutsch, 1983, paperback, 210 pages (illustrated), \$9.95

The British chalk streams must hold the record for waters that have been heard of by more people, yet fished by fewer than any other trout streams in the world. We are constantly confronted, in the angling press, with references to them. So much happened on them, so many authors developed their dual crafts of writing and angling along them, that our debt to these little streams is huge. For those who find that much of their enjoyment of fishing is vicarious anyway, it's hardly of great significance whether they will ever fish the Test or the Itchen. They especially—but by no means exclusively—will be grateful for the re-publication, in the format of affordable paperbacks, of *Where the Bright Waters Meet* and *A Summer on the Test*.

Though they are indeed minor classics, I doubt that a great many American anglers will want to wade through either of these books all at once. I am constantly reminded, while reading them, of the old saw about Americans and Englishmen being people "divided by a common language." Readers not already familiar with differences in language may struggle now and then to maintain interest. Vicarious fishing, to be enjoyed, must relate to our own experiences, and in these books the parade of unrecognizable plants, unfamiliar fly patterns (Orange Quill, Sherry Spinner, Houghton Ruby, Yellow Boy, etc.), and other things that make British fishing different will be too much for some readers.

Both are hospitable, chatty books. Plunket-Greene's book, first published in 1924, is more or less about a tributary of the Test called the Bourne. He is a cheery, engaging writer who lets on immediately that he is in no hurry to instruct or get to any particular conclusion. It is alarming to have the riverine hero of the book, the Bourne, killed off early on; it is as disconcerting as if Louis L'Amour killed off one of his cowboy heroes on page seven and left the other characters to wander along for three hundred pages trying to get by as best they can. The Bourne is resurrected somewhat at the end, though, recovering from

various problems well enough to promise some better fishing in the future. Plunket-Greene occupies much of the book fishing other waters in Great Britain and Europe and telling nice stories about fishing companions and singing experiences (he was a famous performer in his time).

Hills is, of course, fairly well known to American readers for his historical studies on angling. *A Summer on the Test*, also first published in 1924, examines the seasons of the river in great detail, recounting the capture (and, bless his heart, escape) of scores of trout. There is much about hatches, water conditions, flies to use, and the like. As in any good fishing book, there is a lot of talk of the puzzles of hard fishing: fish in difficult positions, insects that seem unsusceptible to imitation, quirky currents that foil the best presentations. This is all good fun, but I wish Hills had resisted the temptation, in 1930, to add seven chapters to the second edition; the celebration was long enough in 1924. But I suppose the serious chalk-stream angler, or the most hopeful chalk-stream dreamer, will be grateful for as much of this material as can be had.

Both Plunket-Greene and Hills have wit and a disarming forthrightness about their own mistakes; after reading the exploits of America's super-anglers for a few years, one feels disoriented by famous fishermen who make this many mistakes.

Both books have introductions by Antony Atha. I did not find them especially useful, either for information or interpretation. I'm suspicious of introductions that quote the book they introduce and seem to have little information that I will not later find in the text. Both Plunket-Greene and Hills are historic enough to require some introduction: when they lived, what they did besides fish, what they are thought to have contributed, and so on.

But the important thing is that the books are back, readily available for those who have only heard of them up to now. Let's hope for more of these reprints. §

—PAUL SCHULLERY

Notes . . .



Editor's Note

Some members will no doubt remember when it was hoped to have the Federation and the Museum join in building a facility in West Yellowstone. For those who missed earlier reports, in 1983 the Museum's officers deemed the West Yellowstone location impractical for a year-round museum operation and decided the Museum would provide the Federation with representative exhibits in the new facility, rather than establish headquarters there. Word from West Yellowstone is that all were very pleased with the high quality of the Museum's exhibit there last summer. Congratulations are in order to the leadership and membership of the Federation on the opening of their impressive new center, a major step in their growth. Both the present achievement and the future realization of exhibit potential will benefit the fly-fishing community as a whole.



Corrigenda

Some apologies are in order. In the *American Fly Fisher*, vol. 11, no. 3, we incorrectly referred to Dorothy McNeilly as Charles Lanman's grandniece. She is, in fact, Lanman's great-grandniece. In vol. 11, no. 4, p. 19, we inadvertently gave the date of the first edition of Norris's *American Angler's Book* as 1867. The correct date is 1864. On page 21 of the same issue, George Perkins Marsh's name was incorrectly given as George Perkins March. §

and Comment



Letters to the Editor

Paul Schullery responds to Conrad Voss Bark's letter that appeared in vol. 11, no. 4, of the *American Fly Fisher*.

To the Editor:

I'm aware of Jack Heddon's writings on the evolution of the floating fly/dry fly (I referred to them in my article on the Bitterroot episode), and I appreciate Mr. Bark's additional comments on the subject. My own attempts to show that North Americans were intentionally floating artificial flies have appeared in several articles, most notably "On Gordon's Ghost," in *Rod & Reel*, July/October, 1982.

As Mr. Bark points out, there is a difference—or rather several differences—between making a fly float and creating a dry fly in the modern definition. I discussed this briefly in the article on the Bitterroot and more thoroughly elsewhere. I think, however, that the definition is an artificial and sometimes restricting philosophical construct that may cause us to underestimate the significance of pre-Marriot/Halford attempts to float flies. Indeed, Halford and his cronies perfected most of the modern fly-tying technique for dry flies, in part because their equipment permitted them to do so, as Mr. Bark notes, when such advances would have been impossible or much more difficult in earlier times. That does not mean that earlier generations of anglers were somehow lower forms of human beings because they made their flies float by other means. Halford apparently wanted to think so.

The important point, I think, in any discussion of the history of floating flies, is that for centuries observant anglers have realized that fish do indeed feed on flies that are either partly or mostly poking out of the water, and have further endeavored to imitate those flies by causing their artificials to float. I think it could be argued that Halford and his crowd, for all their refinements, actually had a limiting effect on the overall progress of the floating fly because they

required it to meet such a very narrow definition. It was left to Americans to develop and popularize most of the other types of floating flies, (minnows, bugs, animal-hair flies, and so on) that fish also feed on. Because I saw the Shields experience on the Bitterroot as an example of a practical angler making his fly float (rather than as an example of a well-read angler self-consciously mimicking Halford), I was careful to refer to the flies as *floating flies* rather than dry flies.

On the other hand, as I pointed out in "On Gordon's Ghost," a good many American anglers were aware of Halford's writings, and his flies were commercially available in this country in the 1880s, well before Gordon supposedly brought them to the New World. Mr. Bark is absolutely right in saying that Americans were fishing floating flies long before Gordon began to write, and it is also true that they were fishing Halfordian dry flies before Gordon, as well. Both William Mills and Orvis were selling Halford-style dry flies in the late 1880s.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reconsider G. P. R. Pulman's famous remark that is reputed to be the first complete description of fishing the dry fly. It is the one point on which I most disagree with Mr. Bark's note.

John Waller Hills, in *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout* (1921), is probably most responsible for current disregard of all pre-1800 references to floating flies and is certainly most responsible for establishing Pulman as the first to fully describe the dry fly. Pulman's first edition of the *Vade Mecum of Fly Fishing for Trout* (1841) contained the following passage:

If the wet and heavy fly be exchanged for a dry and light one, and passed in artist-like style over the feeding fish, it will, partly from the simple circumstances of its buoyancy, be taken, in nine cases out of ten.

Hills found this almost good enough to meet his Halfordian standard of what makes a dry fly, but not quite. It lacked what he called the "finishing touch." As near as I can gather from his discussion, the finishing touch was the intentional drying of the fly. He found that touch in the third edition (1851) of Pulman, where the following passage is found. Read this carefully; very few people have:

Let a dry fly be substituted for the wet one, the line switched a few times through the air to throw off its superabundant moisture, a judi-

cious cast made just above the rising fish, and the fly allowed to float towards and over them, and the chances are ten to one that it will be seized as readily as the living insect.

Hills then comments: "This is the earliest mention I know of the intentional drying of the fly."

But John, that's not what he said, is it? As Mr. Bark points out (and as Jack Heddon has noted elsewhere in discussing early fly lines), it is *line*, not the fly, that is being dried here. Pulman is doing what he did in the 1841 edition: putting on a fresh dry fly. With a fresh dry fly, what need is there to dry it out anyway? He then says that we should dry our line by false-casting (to use the modern term) a few times.

Hills put it in print, and since then countless authors, some of them very good, have slavishly repeated it. But it just isn't there. Pulman is not talking about drying the fly with false casts. It wouldn't surprise me if he did so, but he doesn't say he did.

But that's not all that bothers about the credit given Pulman. I'm bothered that we assume he did it first just because he wrote it first. We assume too much, because, as Mr. Bark points out, earlier writers were floating their flies also. Because they did not give detailed accounts of the process, are we allowed to assume they were too dim-witted to see the obvious value of false-casting?

Moreover, Hills and later writers most likely read their own definitions into Pulman's description. He used the words *dry fly*, but he did not necessarily mean anything as formal as we do today. If he said use an *old* fly, or a *small* fly, or an *ugly* fly, we would not assume the words had special meaning. Yet we assume that he said *dry fly* with the same concept in mind that we have now. That is an unwarranted assumption, but it's typical of the backward, incautious way the history of fly-fishing has been approached. I don't think Pulman considered *dry fly* a term when he said it. I think he considered it a noun with an adjective. I think that's clear from the first edition, where the two words are not even combined.

So there it is. My thanks to Mr. Bark for inspiring this outburst. I have read other of his writings and enjoyed them very much.

Paul Schullery
Livingston, Montana

P.S. I would also recommend that Mr. Bark read Ken Cameron's excellent analysis of early floating flies, "The Dry Fly and Fast Trains," from the *American Fly Fisher*, vol. 10, no. 1.

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The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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Museum News



A sampling from our recently acquired Cushner Collection

Museum Acquires Cushner Collection

During the mid-1970s, one of the most celebrated and widely shown collections of fly-fishing memorabilia was that put together by William Cushner, a professional framer who then lived in Manhattan. Much to the dismay of many American fly fishers, in 1978 Cushner moved to Nova Scotia with his collection. We are delighted to report that, through a long-term option-purchase agreement, the Museum has acquired this collection lock, stock, and hackles. It is without question the largest and one of the most significant additions to our collection in our seventeen-year history.

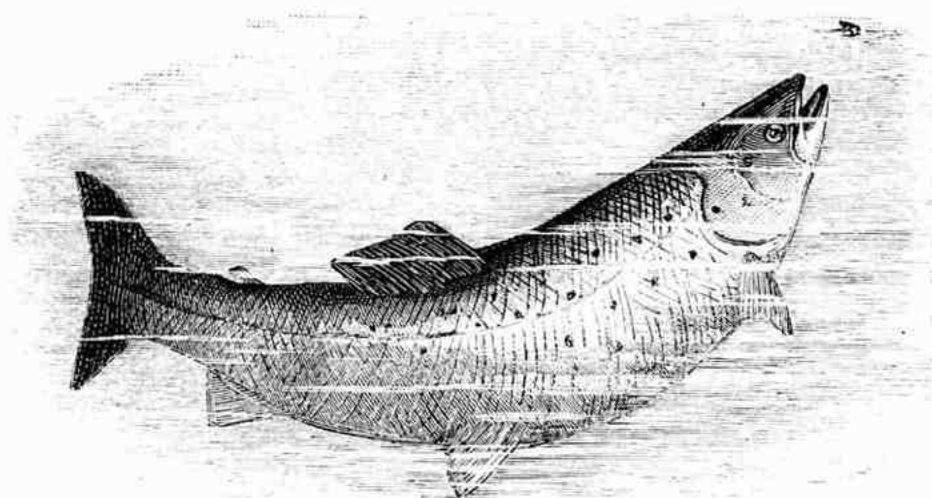
In the late 1960s, Cushner was working as a professional framer in his Lower West Side studio. His clients included a number of prominent artists, major magazines, and advertising agencies. He also was then—as now—involved in making three-dimensional constructions for wall hanging. As fine art, his constructions were exhibited in New York's Whitney Museum and elsewhere. With the encouragement of such anglers as Herman Kessler and Charles DeFeo, Cushner became intrigued with framing historic flies and artwork together—three-dimensionally. Word of his fine, growing collection spread, attracting material from other fly and art collections to his studio. Cushner also traded for or bought addi-

tional material, framing it all with his incomparable skill.

Original art—such as an Atherton tempera painting—or reproductions—such as a signed Pleissner dry point—are framed along with original flies by both nineteenth-century and modern masters. Gordon, La Branche, Hewitt, Flick, Darbee—the list reads like a cross section of American fly-fishing history. The collection consists of two hundred and sixteen such framings, plus a variety of unframed inventory, including two fly-tying vises reputed to have been used by Theodore Gordon.

Of special interest to us is that this collection fits so well into our evolving National Exhibit Program. It's possible, and immediately practical, to display thirty pieces here, forty pieces there, and sixty pieces somewhere else, as we increasingly seek to broaden our exhibition activity around the country. Sixty of these framings were displayed in Seattle during February in a showing sponsored by Eddie Bauer, which company is also sponsoring a San Francisco showing in early March. And, of course, highlights from this collection are also a feature at our Manchester galleries.

We'll have more information for you on our Cushner Collection in a subsequent issue, as well as other exciting news on recent acquisitions. Meanwhile, members and guests are encouraged to visit us in Manchester to view this extraordinary work.



Say Cheese



We have found that one of the most difficult tasks your editors face in preparing an issue of the *American Fly Fisher* is finding suitable illustrations for the articles we publish. This is especially true for articles dealing with twentieth-century fly-fishing. In many instances the illustrations we wish to use for these articles are copyrighted, and while we can usually obtain permission from publishers to use these items, often the cost is prohibitive. A further diffi-

culty is that the permission process sometimes takes months. In order to help rectify this situation, we would like to enlist the help of our readers. Send us your photographs! We are interested in photographs (slides or prints) of fly fishermen and any other angling-related subjects (rivers, camps, tackle, etc.). They should be appropriately documented; that is, date, place, and identity of subjects should be indicated. We stress that photographs from *all* time periods are valuable to us and will considerably

enhance the Museum's permanent photograph collection. So, when you get a moment, check that old attic trunk, the bottom drawer of the desk, or the family photo album for something that you think might be of interest to us—and send it along. Photographs should be sent to the Museum, care of the editor. Thank you for your assistance in this very important project.



