The American Fly Fisher

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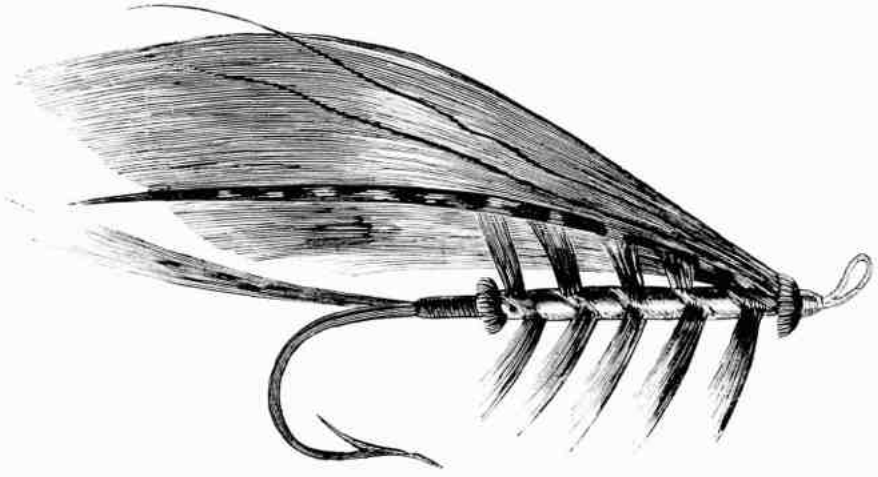

A Keene Issue

With the exception of George Beall's article on the Aragon, this issue of the *American Fly Fisher* is built around John Harrington Keene and his contributions to our angling heritage. Charles Hallock's piece, "The Ondawa," is relevant as it gives information about the Orvis tackle factory and Manchester, Vermont, and its environs at a time when Keene was a resident (September 1886), professionally associated with Charles F. Orvis, and regularly fishing the Battenkill (the Ondawa) with his "exact imitation" floating flies. Indeed, it would not be unreasonable to presume that Hallock met Keene, fished with him, and perchance even caught a trout on a dry fly. We included R. B. Marston's "Dry-Fly Fishing" (reprinted from the British *Fishing Gazette* and appearing in the *American Angler* in June 1885) because it is one of the earliest discussions of the topic to be found in American angling literature, second only to Keene's mention of it earlier in 1885. It not only clearly illustrates how far British dry-fly fishing techniques had advanced by the 1880s, it also is a good indication of the body of knowledge on the subject that Keene brought with him to this country in 1885. Marston became editor-owner of the *Fishing Gazette* (new series) in 1879, and as Keene (also involved in the founding of the "new series" in 1877) was a frequent contributor to this publication, I'm sure that both gentlemen were well known to each other and most certainly exchanged their views concerning the gentle art.

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On the cover:
Engraving of John Harrington Keene
from the October 1888 issue of Wildwood's Magazine

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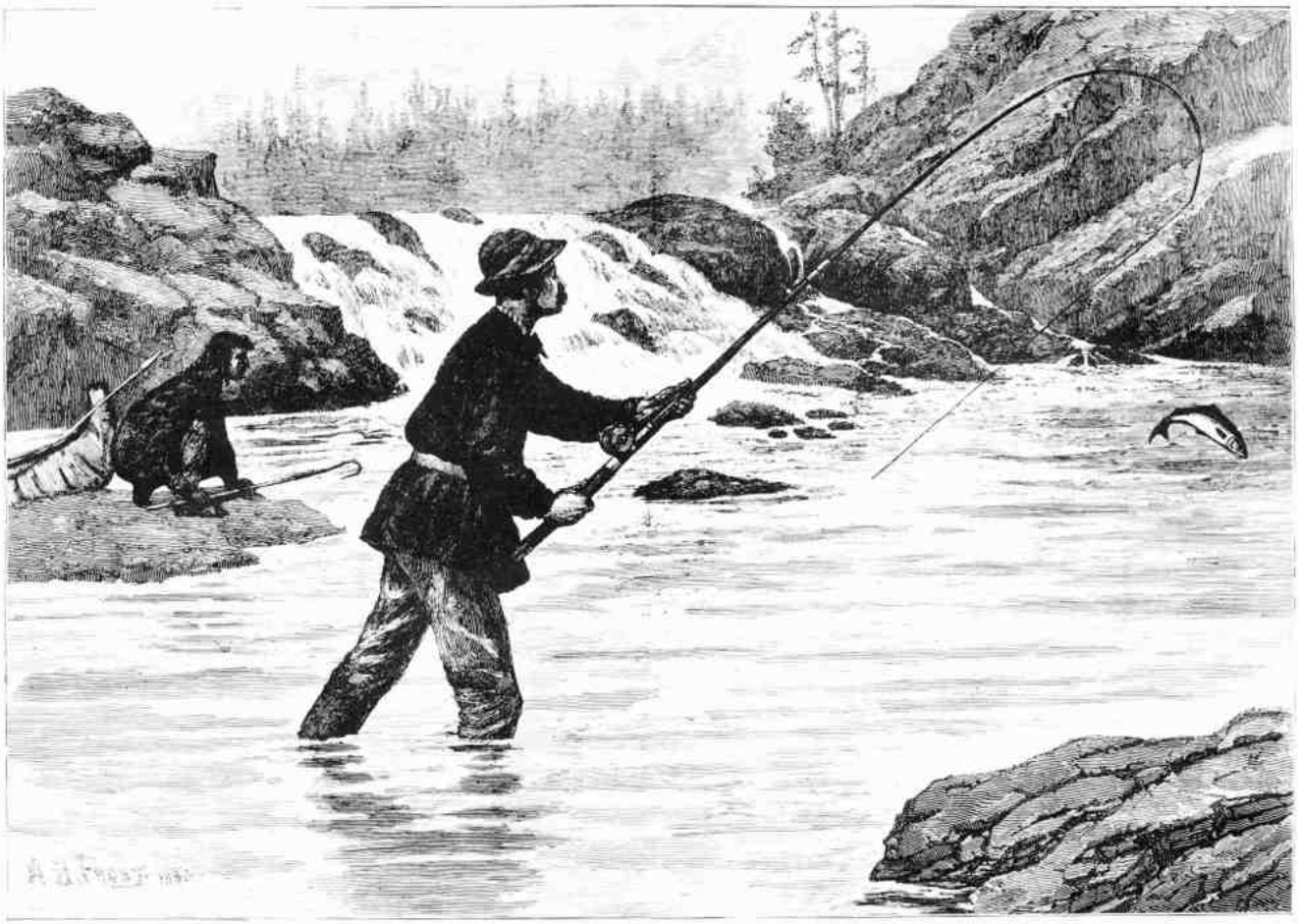


A poem by John Harrington Keene.
It preceded his article on "The Salmon"
in Wildwood's Magazine.

See here!—a faded, ragged, salmon-fly
  "Gitana," fitly named—a gypsy queen,
The body tinselled—gleaming silverly,
  The hackle—parrot green.

The wings—ye gods! what beauty 'erst—Macaw
  Sky blue, enclosed in tippets tawny red;
Beyond—to end of hook without a flaw,
  The jungle-fowl is spread.

And over all—a golden rain of rays,
  The topping droops, with fibres blue and red
From parrot's sword—at tail a topping's blaze,
  And ostrich herl at head.

Thus was "Gitana" when I made her first,
  A vision of delight 'neath spring-blue skies;
A poem bright of color all unversed—
  Empress of salmon flies.

And bright the morning on that crag-bound stream,
  In Scotta—rugged land of rock and fell;
When like a bar of light the fish did gleam,
  And rose with mightly swell.

Taking "Gitana" in her rich-robed pride,
  Whilst I, nerve-shaken, sought to stay his course—
As well try stay the torrents' mighty tide,
  Or rein the proud, wild horse.

Like arrowy lightning's flash he sped to deeps
  That hid the caverns of his fastness—there
Sharp juts of rock on rock lay piled in heaps
  To form the salmon's lair.

(Here in the sombre shadows, fathoms down,
  Sir Salmo Salar spoilt Gitana's dress
Rubbing his nose against his door-post brown,
  Till hook held less and less.)

At last, with furious rush and buoyant plunge,
  High out in air his burnished form he throws,
And falling on the line with mighty lunge,
  Free once again he goes.

And thus "Gitana," faded and undone—
  Unlucky nymph—recalls this summer night
A lusty wooer lured but all unwon—
  Her lover and his flight.

NOTE: *All reprints in the* American Fly Fisher *are faithfully reproduced, which means that spelling, grammar, syntax, capitalization, and punctuation appear as they did in the original format.* —E.D.

The Salmon

by John Harrington Keene

Fred Pond (pseud. Will Wildwood) published a series titled "Our Game Fish and Fishing" in his short-lived publication Wildwood's Magazine. *Part six of the series, "The Salmon," was written by John Harrington Keene and appeared in the October 1888 issue (vol. 1, no. 6). The same issue contained a memoir of Keene, written by Pond (see the* American Fly Fisher, *vol. 13, no. 1), and the steel engraving that we have used for the front cover of this issue. Much of the material that Keene used for the article comes from a chapter on the same topic in his book, the* Practical Fisherman, *published in London in 1881. The tone is very British. A few minor modifications were made, however, in deference to the American audience.*

I approach the subject of salmon fishing with considerable trepidation. When my eye travels over the pages of "Bibliotheca Piscatoria," and beholds the array of authorities on the subject, whose writings are for the most part the records of an experience extending perhaps over a generation, or even more, I am conscious of my own unworthiness to do justice to so great a theme. Yet will I not despair. My observation of the habits of fishes and my long experience of coarse fish and all other members of the *salmonidae*, together with a studious course of salmon angling, must be a sufficient justification.

So much for self, on which subject, as Lord Byron has remarked in one of his letters, "All men are fluent, and none agreeable." Now for the salmon. What says the earliest writer on fishing for this truly noble fish? Hear good Dame Julyana Berners (1496): "For by cause that the samon is the most stately fyssh that ony man maye angle to in fresshe water. Therefore I propose to begyn at hym. The samon is a gentyll fysshe, but he is comberous for to take. For comynly he is but in depe places in grete ryvers. And for the more parte he holdyth the myddys of it, that a man maye not come at hym. And he is in season from Marche on to Myghelmas. In whych season ye shall angle to him with theyse baytes, whan ye maye gete theym. Fyrste, wyth a redde worme in the begynnynge and endynge of the season, and also wyth a lob that bredeth in a dunghyll. And specyally wyth a soverayn bayte that fedeth on a water docke. And he bythith not at the grounde but at ye floate. Also ye maye take hym, but it is seldom seen with a dubbe at such time as whan he lepyth in lyke mannere as ye doo take a troughe or a gryalynge."

This is all Dame Julyana has to say, and, quaint as it is, it nevertheless is in the main evidently the outcome of experience. Barker, in his "Barker's Delight," says but little more even in 1655. This is his poetical version of the chapter he gives on *Salmo salar:*

Close to the bottom,
in the midst of the water,
I fished for a salmon,
and there I caught her.
My plummet twelve inches,
from the large hook
Two lob-worms hanged equal,
which she never forsook,
Nor yet the great hook
with the six-winged flye,
And she makes at a gudgeon
most furiously.
My strong line was just
twenty-six yards long;
I gave him a time,
though I found him strong.
I rould up my tackle
to guide him to shore;
The landing hook helped much,
the cookery more.

Remarkably unmelodious doggerel is this, but it is a curiosity in its way, for it cannot be said to be anything but a close paraphrase of the following. Certainly, here is an example of prose and "worse:"

"The angler that goeth to catch him with a line and hook must angle as nigh the water as he can with one of these baits. He mush take two lob-worms baited as handsomely as he can, that the fine ends may hang most of a length, and so angle as nigh the bottom as he can, feeling your plummet run on the ground some twelve inches from the hook; if you angle for him with a flie (which he will rise at like a trout), the flie must be made of a large hook, which hook must carry six wings, or foure at least; there is judgmente in making these flyes." This is all Baker says, and quite enough too. I simply quote these two monologues that the reader may contrast the state of knowledge then with what follows.

It has been said, and said wisely, that at the moment of the salmon taking the bait the actual culmination of all the difficulties of salmon angling ensues. The necessity of keeping one's vibrating nerves under control is the supremest of tasks when this moment arrives, and the result is ever one of two—either the fish is not hooked, or he is. If the former, there is a partial remedy in allowing the bait to remain perhaps some five seconds near the spot, when the fish may turn and take it; if the latter, the unalloyed pleasure of playing and ultimately conquering presents itself.

Before going into the widely extended subject of how these alternatives are realized, I will jot down one or two "notes" as to the proper method of striking a salmon. First, what say *the* tribunes of the

angling world? Mr. Pennell observes that the "art is to resist for a moment the inclination to strike, only for one moment, but long enough to allow the fish to take and turn down again with the fly, and then strike, if you will, not a slight, hesitating blow, like the tap of a lady's fan—for there is often a long line and a heavy strain on it between the salmon and his would-be captor—but a strong, steady, determined stroke, bringing the line up as flat as a knife and driving the tapering hook point well in to the barb." This method of striking of course arouses all the pugnaciousness—not fear—of the gallant fish, and then comes the brief contest, in which all the pleasures and doubts of hours and days seem compressed .

Now, what says Mr. Francis Francis? "Ten times more fish are lost from striking too quickly than from striking too slowly... If you strike and pull the fly away from him he goes down, disgusted with the rudeness of the gentleman who asked him to dinner and then snatched his dinner out of his mouth; you might almost as well have assaulted him with a fork, or, in other words, pricked him... Then some salmon fishers say you should not strike. Yes, I know that; but what they mean by striking is, you should not hit a salmon as if the roof of his mouth were a paving stone, or you were punching a whole flight of spinning tackle into a bony old pike, with a mouth like a quartz crushing machine... To hit a salmon violently, as you would a pike, is in some respects certainly not advisable, as you may force him into his most violent and dangerous action when he is best prepared for it and when, possibly, the guard is not the most suitable; whereas, by a gentler mode, not calculated to alarm quite so forcibly, the sharp edge of the steel may often be taken out of him, and you may negotiate your exchanges upon terms of more equality, in case the hooking place is broken water dangerous with sunken rocks or other obstructions, as it sometimes is."

Thus Mr. Francis, than whom there never was a more practical salmon angler. Yet notice the divergence of opinion between these two masters of the gentle craft. One recommends "a strong determined stroke, bringing the line up as flat as a knife"— whatever that may mean—"and driving the tapering point well in to the barb." These are Mr. Pennell's words. Mr. Francis, on the other hand, speaks with considerable uncertainty. "Ephemera," perhaps the most scientific salmon fisher that ever put pen to paper, says, however, "nothing more than a gentle stroke or short, sharpish pull, is necessary to insert in some part of the fish's mouth some part of the barb," and with him I agree, and these are my reasons: The salmon takes a bait in a widely different style to a trout. This impetuous fish literally jumps, darts, flies, at the bait, and it is either into the mouth and himself turned, or is forced away again by a volume of ejected water, instantly. In such case an almost instant strike is necessary. The case is, however, different with salmon. Its great bulk renders its movements, notwithstanding its gigantic strength, of a slower nature, and its run at the fly is in this particular vastly different to that of a trout. Moreover, it rises up under the fly and takes it, causing a break in the water, which is instantly immensely increased by the downward plunge, which raises the water, and causes it to assume a sort of swirling convexity. At this instant the stroke should be made, and made swiftly, but not with continued and even vigor. The strong determined muscularity of Mr. Pennell's stroke rouses the fiercest instincts of the fish if it hooks him, and often gives rise to a lot of unnecessary risk. Besides if, as is sometimes the case, the hold of the hook promises to be light and fragile, such violence will infallibly tear it out; and thus disturb the temper of a fish whose voracity might, in all probability, otherwise suggested his trying again to secure the bait. A side strike is often advisable, but this depends upon the circumstances under which the fly was taken.

I will now briefly treat on the selection of tackle and the methods of playing the fish when fly fishing is the style resorted to.

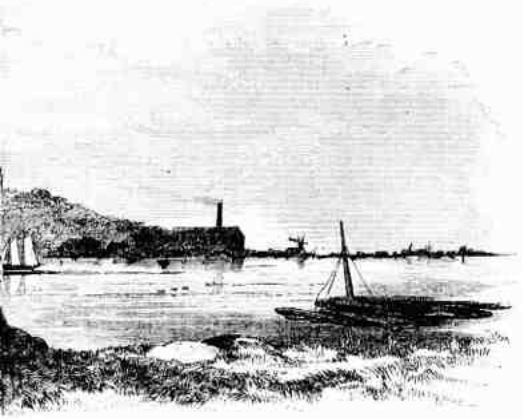
First, as to the rod. Opinions as to this indispensable part of the salmon fisher's outfit are as divided as those concerning the "strike." "Ephemera" says no rod should be longer than 17½ ft., and never less than 16 ft. Pennell gives the measurements of his rod, which was 18 ft. 6 in., and he says that "very broad waters sometimes demand a longer weapon." Francis puts it at from 16½ ft. to 21 ft. The Master of Lovat, he says, uses one 24 ft. long. For all ordinary usage, however, from 16½ ft. to 18½ ft. is ample length, and even a tall man need not necessarily use a 20 ft. rod because he is tall. Neither is it absolutely indispensable that a strong man use a long rod because he is strong. Yet some seem to go on this plan in selecting their salmon "pole." I am of opinion that a 16 ft. 6 in. rod is sufficient for any river, and as I am of about the average height (5 ft. 9 in.) of Englishmen and average strength, some criterion of the length suitable to himself by the tyro may be arrived at.

As to material of which the rod should be made, opinions, of course, differ again, but it seems that hickory and ash are put out of court by greenheart, which is at once a solid and elastic wood, reducible to the most whip-like proportions, and at the same time retaining all its toughness. This in turn is superceded by

the beautiful six strip glued up cane rod of America. The total weight of a greenheart 19 ft. rod should not be more than 3 lb., or an 18 ft. more than 2 lb. 10 oz., and of a split cane rod not more than half this and, even as some horsemen are said to ride several pounds lighter than their actual weight, *i. e.*, they seem so to the horse, so also a well-balanced rod, when taken in the hand, should not nearly appear its dead weight. The London makers manufacture some exceedingly neat and well-finished salmon rods of split cane and solid wood now, although in years agone a Castle Connell or Scotch rod was ever preferred. I most distinctly pronounce for a ferruled rod in preference to a spliced one. Every rod should have a few spare tops, in case of breakage.

Of the reel I have little to say. It should be a click or check, one made of brass, and bronzed. Its capacity ought to be equal to about 120 yards of line. The handle should be cone-shaped, and accurately fitted at its base to the winch plate, so that no line can possibly get round it and there remain. I am an advocate for placing the winch near the end of the butt, both on account of its weight tending by leverage to balance and so decrease the apparent weight of the rod, and because it is handier when a fish is hooked.

The line should be of silk, and contain from eight to fourteen strands, braided and tapered. I have one by me now which contains twenty-seven, but such a number is too great, for the reason that the friction in running through the rings soon cuts some of the strands, because of their fineness, and a frayed and disagreeable appearance is soon given to the line, besides the inconvenience of the additional weight caused by the increased amount of water it carries up with it. An eight strand, plain, whole-laid silk line—I say this because some cheap lines are hollow—well dressed, runs beautifully through the rings, and lasts, if properly treated, for at least three, and often more,



hard seasons. A tapered line is exceedingly pleasant, and undeniably an advantage. I always use one myself, and find its superiority consists in the greater ease with which it can be thrown, and the increased rapidity with which it can be reeled up. Three or four different sized lines should be in stock, to be utilized according to the state of the water and wind. A fine line cannot be got out satisfactorily against a stiff breeze, while a heavy one may; moreover, a fine line cannot be thrown so far as a heavy one, hence the desirability of a selection. The leader should be of gut, good round pliable gut, and consist at its upper part of three strands, loosely twisted, then of two, and finally of a yard length of fine, single, strong, well-tested gut. Its length ought to be quite 4 yds., and its knots and joints carefully made.

Another implement, which is of some importance, must here be noticed. I refer to the gaff. I confess to not liking the implement. It requires to have a straight sharp point, and a handle of, say 7 ft., made solidly but lightly. In using it the hook is cautiously brought in contiguity to the shoulder of the fish, and then a short sharp jerk fixes it in the fish. Many a good salmon is lost because of the repeated drivings, hittings, and plunges made at the fish by the clumsy attendant, and I have often wondered why some other means of securing the fish, of a more precise nature, has not been invented. A landing net made of plaited hard-dressed silk is, in my opinion, superior to the gaff. It must be very large, however, and that is the drawback to its use.

Having, then, described the rod and its attached tackle, the next thing demanding attention is the bait, in this case, a so-called "fly."

The supposition in reference to the salmon fly that it is an imitation of the dragon fly, humming bird, South American butterfly, and what not, is, without question, untenable. The varied and gorgeous fabrications of the salmon fisher are unlike anything in the heavens above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, and differ in their suitableness and killing power almost as much as they do in appearance. In one particular they are all similar; however, they are beautiful pieces of coloring, and that is about all that can be said in reference to their natural history.

Why a salmon takes such a meaningless bait I am not at all certain. Perhaps thinking it food, but that all fish are fond of, or attracted by, bright colors, I have not the slightest doubt. Experiments with an ordinary globe of gold fish will satisfy the reader that this is the case. The vision of a fish is of wide area, its perception is clear and keen, and altogether it may be said to rival the eyesight of the human being. This being the case, why should not colors be pleasurable to the denizens of the water as to ourselves? This is a consideration which probably has not occurred to many, but it is worth attention. We are so wrapt up in self that I am convinced our animals receive not one-tenth the observation and sympathy which is necessary for a proper knowledge of them.

The following flies are amongst the chief killers on all rivers where salmon "most do congregate." All of these have been used on the Restigouche or the Lower Natagliquhan and so may be accepted as suitable. I give the dressing, there being no particular need of keeping them secret, and shall be happy to put any reader in the way of getting them well and truly made. Of course there are local flies in existence which the visitor to any Old World salmon river should not ignore. Their name is legion in the British Islands, and even a list of them would manifestly be out of place here.

Prince William of Orange.—Hook 1-0; tail, golden pheasant, herl and Indian crow; body, in three sections, yellow, blue and orange ribbed silver cord, butted with black herl and Indian crow; hackle, blue (stained); wings, pheasant, mallard, swan dyed blue, yellow and red; wool duck topping over all.

The Butcher.—This fly is a general favorite. It will always kill where there are salmon. In the Awe, the Orchy, the Brora, the Nova, the Thurse, the Hemsdale, the Annan, and the Tay and Torridge, and one or two Welsh rivers, it is a prime favorite according to Mr. Francis. Tag gold twist and dark orange floss tail, one topping; butt, black ostrich herl; body, two or three turns of claret, ditto of medium blue, ditto red, and rest of dark blue pig's wool, broad silver tinsel; medium red claret hackle; gallina on shoulder; under wings a tippet and gold pheasant rump feather, over them strips of brown mallard, bustard, peacock wing, wood duck, and blue and yellow swan strips; black head.

The Silver Doctor.—Tag, silver tinsel; tail, gold pheasant topping, the turn of red crewel over the stump of it for the butt; body, silver tinsel; hackle, blue as before, with a brown hackle at the shoulder and a small speckled gallina over it; wing chiefly of pintail, with a few red and blue fibers and toppings over it; red crewel head. Size as before.

The Childers.—Tag, gold twist and golden colored floss; tail, a topping, some teal and tippet; body, yellow orange and dark red pig's wool, broad gold tinsel; hackle, dark red claret and bright blue on shoulder; wing, a good lump of whitish tipped dark turkey and strips of bustard and gold pheasant tail over it mixed with slices of blue, pale red, orange and yellow swan; head black.

Popham.—Tag, gold twist; tail, topping and Indian crow; butt, black herl; body, in three equal sections, butted with black herl. The first dark orange silk-ribbed fine gold tinsel, having Indian crow above and below; second joint of yellow silk, with ribbing and crow repeated; third, light blue silk, with ribbing and crow's feathers as before. Hackle, jay at throat only; wings, tippet, teal, gallina, golden pheasant tail, parrot, light brown mottled turkey, bustard, red macaw, yellow ditto, two strips brown mallard above surmounted by a golden pheasant topping; horns, blue macaw; cheeks, chatterer; head, black herl.

Silver Gray.—Tag, silver twist and yellow silk; tail, topping and unbarred summer duck; butt, black herl; body, silver tinsel (flat); ribs, silver tinsel (oval); hackle, a silver furnace (black center, white tips,) along body; throat, widgeon; wings, golden pheasant, tippet strands and tail, bustard, swan dyed yellow, gallina, powder-blue macaw, mallard brown, mallard gray and golden pheasant topping; horns, blue macaw; side, jungle fowl; head, black Berlin wool.

The following flies may be added to this enumeration: Jock Scott, Curtis, Fairy, Black Prince, Dandy, May Queen, Bluebell, Captain, Greenwell, Durham Ranger, Phoebus, Gitana, Stevenson, Baron, Major, Derby Orange, Mac Nicol, Champion, Benchill, Black Dose, Brittania, Black Dog, Chatterer, Taite's Fancy, Brown Eagle, Infallible, Black Ranger, Lion, Nepenthian, Thunder and Lightning, Dawson, Harlequin.

The art of "casting" a fly cannot be completely *taught* by word of mouth. I must presume in the following remarks that the angler I am addressing has *some* knowledge of casting a fly, say, for trout. For instance, he must be able to place his trout fly on the water without popping it nearly off behind him. No man should attempt a double-handed fly rod till he

can master the manipulation of a single-handed one. Such temerity would be absurd. Supposing, therefore, that he already knows something about it, I will proceed to describe the ordinary and best method—for there are more than one—of throwing the salmon fly.

First, one or two preliminary warnings. Do not try to get out 30 yds. of line at first. Try rather with about ten, and in course of time the other twenty may be added. Do not use more strength than is necessary in making a cast. It is a lamentable waste of muscular power, and, after a time, as painful as it is wasteful, to exert all your force till the sound of the rod rushing through the wind makes noise enough for a miniature hurricane. Really, the secret of fly-casting lies in doing as little yourself, and making your rod do as much, as you can. One of the advantages of the pliancy of a fly rod is its adaptability for this. The top of the rod and its immediate neighboring parts, and so on to the butt, are all intended to aid the propulsion of the fly through the air. It is deplorable, therefore, to see a man exerting his whole strength in a strong breeze to get out some twenty yards of line, and to observe his failure in the energetic movement of the rod's butt, and the general resultant "cussedness" of the fly. Finally, never be in a hurry to get your fly out where a fish has just risen—"make haste slowly" is a golden precept.

In throwing the salmon fly, take the rod in the hands, one above the other below the winch. In throwing from the right side, the right hand is to take the rod above the winch and the left below it. In making the left side cast, the positions are reversed; in fishing down a river, from the left bank, the right shoulder cast must be made, and *vice versa*. Of course, everybody knows which is the right and left bank of a river, looking down stream. For the sake of an example, I will suppose an angler fishing a stream down on the right. Of course, the left shoulder cast must be made, and I will further imagine cliffs or trees behind him. It is necessary that his cast shall avoid these, and this is how the thing is done: The rod is held aloft, with the left hand above the winch and the right beneath it as before noted; the left leg is placed forward, and the left side, of course, is toward the river.

The rod is then brought round, by, over, and beyond the point of the left shoulder. This will carry the line to its full extent upwards and over the bed of the river. When so extended, the point of the rod must be brought back a little in the direction the cast is to be made. Making use, then, of the left arm chiefly, the line is propelled forward by a motion given the rod, as though there were something in the air you wished to strike. You must not now bend forward with the rod, or its forward motion will be checked at a short distance if you do, but keep your position, letting the natural pliancy of the upper joints of the rod do their work, and the fly will then fall as it ought, *first* on the water, followed by the gut and the rest of the line. The left shoulder cast is made chiefly when the obstructions I referred to exist. I can see no reason why the right shoulder cast should not be also used if the bank be shelving and the posterior surroundings clear.

The right shoulder cast is made oppositely, of course. The positions of the fisher as regards his feet and hands are reversed, and a bold semi-circular sweep of the line as before, bringing chiefly into play the muscles of the forearm, is made. No unnecessary strength should be employed. The body need not be bent, except to relax the rigidity of the muscles set for the throw. The fly then falls lightly and without hurry upon the stream, and is followed by the line quite as lightly. These straight shoulder casts are invariably the best, as they make the least noise and disturbance of the water, and they are certainly the easiest for the tyro to learn.

The working of the fly for salmon after it has fallen on the water requires tact, and tact only. This can only be derived from experience. The more salmon one catches, and the greater the variety of rivers from which they are taken, the more likely is the angler to work his lure pleasingly. He will recognise similarities of stream, and other indescribable niceties which guide his eye and inform his perceptions of the necessities of the water and their hidden prizes.

In drawing a fly along the water let us consider its appearance. The weight of the current, as it meets the fur and feather material of which the lure is composed, must compress these. If, therefore, the fly be steadily drawn against the stream its collapse is complete, and the chief of its attractions are hidden, those on the body especially, by the closed wings, which become themselves also attenuated and by no means conspicuous. The chances of a salmon taking the trouble to surmount the strong stream and follow up a questionable bait shorn of half its attractions are also small. Rather is it likely that the fish will relinquish the pursuit disgusted. "Ephemera" details several observations which lead to the inference that this is precisely what the fish do when the bait is drawn through the water without pause at a swift rate of progress.

Obviously, therefore, the proper thing to do is to so manage it when in the water that its appearance will be as attractive as possible, and that its pace will not overcome the curiosity or desire of the salmon by reason of the trouble necessary to gratify it. For it may be safely presumed that fish like as little trouble as possible in the pursuit of their object. Perch will always take by choice a wounded or hooked minnow, and this is chiefly because the exertion necessary is less. The motion imparted by the skilled salmon fisher to his lure is a sort of sinking and drawing movement, the "sinking," of course, opening the hairs or feathers of the bait to their full expansion. A fish often follows the bait, and this sinking is frequently the means of overcoming the "dare not" which waits upon "I would," and so compasses the ruin of the lordly "fysshe."

Now, supposing you have risen and hooked your fish according to directions given about striking, the next question is how to play it. Of course, during the first rushes of a large, determined fish, it is absurd to try to stop it by any means of a really drastic nature. If it is at all advisable, for the sake of guiding the fish safely past a submerged rock or stump, I would recommend the rodster to use the butt; but ordinarily it is quite impossible to check it in its headlong rush. Usually it takes its way down stream, and this is always the best way for the angler, who should endeavor to keep up with it, never conceding one yard of line if his legs will obviate doing so. If he does so, and allows a long line to follow his fish, should the salmon turn and bolt up stream, the line lies looped in the water, and in all probability caught round all sorts of roots, branches, stones and stumps, of whose existence he has hitherto been in ignorance. Of course, the chances are, in such case, that the fish will sever connection without more ado. The right thing to do is to pursue the fleeing fish with all celerity, letting out just so much line as it requires, and will have, and no more. When the preliminary rush is over it will get more manageable, and now is the time to assert a little of your authority. If the fish shows a disposition to go over a fall or into a rapid or other place equally undesirable, where you cannot follow it, you must "butt" it. Do not do so, however, unless under the severest necessity. In this operation it is well not to present the butt too much in the direction of the fish, lest your middle joint snaps, as I have had one do, like a carrot. The only thing required is that the fish should be made to feel the check of the entire spring of the rod. This is done by placing the rod against the stomach, and holding it at about 45 deg. A little more force gradually applied will do no harm, but the idea of reclining the rod over the shoulder is absurd, and simply means breaking one's rod in nine cases out of ten.

I am no advocate for brutally skull-dragging a salmon because one happens to possess good and strong tackle. I hold with firm but light treatment, and consequently the butting business in my case is seldom put into practice. I think most unhesitatingly that it is unsportsmanlike to deprive oneself of the magnificent play a fine fish usually gives. In no case, how-

ever, should an inch of slack line be allowed if it can be helped.

A wonderful lot of dodges have these clever fish when hooked to aid them in breaking away. When one is lightly hooked I notice he generally rises, and shakes his head about on the surface of the water. If he be impaled securely, however, he usually begins to fight under water, and violent indeed is his fury. Not that his advent above water is never made; far from it. In nine cases out of ten this acrobatic business is gone through, and the only thing to do is to lower the point of the rod when he springs, so that the weight of the pulling fish may not tear out the barb. "I have sometimes hooked a salmon," says Fitzgibbon, "and seen him to my dismay throw, in rapid succession, several somersaults, 6 ft. high or more, and then with a species of ferocity plunge beneath the water, and there 'jigger away,' making the rod quiver as though he who held it were stricken with palsy. The somersault would be repeated, and finally the fish would have recourse to a lengthened rush. At length, after a protracted struggle, my quarry would yield and be bagged." This "jiggering" sensation is exceedingly unpleasant, and clearly shows that the fish has a good idea of how to get the hook out of its mouth by shaking and "champing" his jaws.

When a fish "sulks" there is only one thing to do—that is, wake him out of his bad humor as soon as possible by whatever means are the readiest to hand. Throwing stones at the spot of his going down, or even stirring him up with a long pole, may be resorted to. In general, however, *Salmo salar* may be roused by a few smart twitches of the rod's top, so as to make the barb of the hook felt. Be prepared for a determined rush, for a fish roused out of sulkiness is often excessively violent.

I will conclude this short homily on fly fishing for salmon by giving such directions as occur to me in connection with the most advisable way of fishing a salmon river, and where most fish are chiefly to be found. Always fish the water next you, then the middle, and then as far as you can throw without difficulty. Of course, there are often unconsidered trifles which seriously interfere with fixed rules, but either by wading or walking a stream a pool may be pretty nearly always compassed. I recommend the up-and-across throw, for it is just at the bend of the curve described by your bait when thus fishing that the fish usually takes one.

The best parts of the river cannot be easily detected to a certainty without recourse to the test of the rod. Some of the most likely looking spots are without fish, for some unaccountable reason or other, and *vice versa*. A guide is always a safe investment, and if he be a thorough angler himself so much the better. It is in that case infinitely better to trust to his judgment than your own. If one cannot be got, it may be taken as a general rule that salmon—Dame Berners notwithstanding—do not lie out in the broad stream. They may be passing, but their resting-place is never in the open water. Like trout somewhat, they are likelier to be lying behind or amongst large stones, and on each side of sharp currents. Of course, where the current is not rapid, they will lie, like any other fish, in any part of the water. The boiling water underneath weirs is not to their taste, but where it runs swiftly and smoothly away, there may a salmon be found. "Ephemera" says, "In the early spring months, when there is a succession of fine open weather, salmon are found in all parts of pools, heads and tails, and if in the latter locality there be a large block of stone, forming an easily stemmed eddy, they will be found in it; because it is at the same time a good resting place and a good feeding place. Salmon fight for such comfortable spots, the strongest and bravest taking possession of them, and when one fish is hooked and taken away another fish invariably fills the vacated locality. It is for this reason that a generally favorite spot is never without an aquatic tenant." And this is true of nearly all fish, and may be considered an axiom of unquestionable wisdom. "The best fish are found in the best places," no doubt in obedience to the majestic law of natural selection. §

Poetry Miscellany

by John Harrington Keene

Morning on a Trout Stream

Lo! in the east the opal light of day
  Spreads softly, silently, and almost awfully,
O'er all, its spiritual glory. Pearly gray—
  In palest radiance painting the dim sky.
Broadening to daylight does it grow and now
  Sweet bird-notes, twittered quaintly, break the calm,
Swelling anon to greetings loud that grow
  To choral music—Nature's matin psalm.

Now the lush meads with diamond dew-drops flash;
  And hark the gurgling brook! that all night long,
With voice untiring, and melodious plash,
  Has sung to the tired landscape its soft song!
Ever the same its gladsome chant is swelling,
  Gliding with joyaunce, flecked with light or shade;
Dimpling in glee, its crystal springs out-welling
  'Mid greening meadows or the bosky glade.

Lightly we wave our wand of magic spell—
  The dainty fly falls lightly on the stream,
Strange necromancy this, that can compel
  That sudden splash and living jewels' gleam!
Now curves the wand!—the quarry fiercely fights
  For freedom! As he leaps the morning sun
Illumines his bright sides with silvern lights;
  But soon his proud heart breaks—his race is run.

And like a high-born warrior he lies
  Clothed in an armor of the rainbow's hues,
A monarch of the stream! he gasping dies—
  A hero-spirit death alone subdues!
Anear the hermit thrush bewails his fate,
  With melancholy sweetness in her voice,
While we the victor joyously elate
  In the lark's skyward hymn of praise rejoice.

Night on the River

Night on the river! Oh a gracious time,
Wherein to search the hidden heart of things!
Rock-fortressed by volcanic might sublime,
The river floweth free and sweetly brings
Winged thoughts and hopes, and deep imaginings.

Night on the river! and the mighty hills
Stand grandly docile, guarding the soft scene,
Sovran yet silent. What a rapture thrills
The solemn quiet! Night, with saddened mien
And quiet steps, treads where the day has been.

The voices of the gloaming near and far
Proclaim the rising of the argent moon;
In brilliant glory shines the evening star,
The weird owl hoots, and loud the beetles croon;
High shrills with gladsome mirth the crickets' tune.

The stream is softly singing its own hymn,
Rippling and plashing o'er enameled stones;
Soft plumed moths flit through the twilight dim,
And sound with fluttering pinions, undertones;
Whilst swaying spearmint perfumed breathing loans.

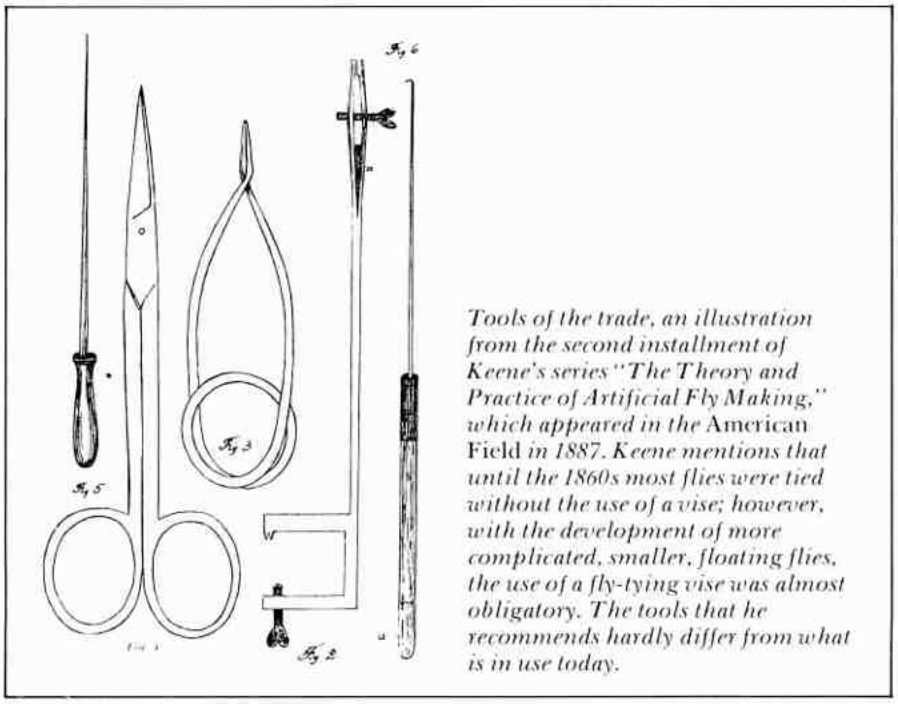
Anon a sudden splash most musical
Breaks the sweet cadence of the murmuring stream,
The spray drops flash like diamonds as they fall,
And by the risen moon, is seen the gleam
Of armored trout in symmetry supreme.

Ice-Fishing in Winter

Ho! Sing of your trout in the Spring betimes
  When birds are mating and leaves are green!
Ho! Sing of your bass in glowing rhymes
  When Autumn shines in her golden sheen!
But give me a Winter morn and ice
  On the frozen cove a foot or more,
And pike and perch that our lures entice
  To the holes we cut near the shelving shore;
    And klink! klink! klink! the chisel rings,
      And ice-chips twinkle and flash and fly,
    And loud and glad the fisher sings
      In the bright sunshine of an azure sky.

The glinting snow bejewels the brush;
  Still is the landscape, calmly grand;
We miss the song of the hermit thrush
  From the thicket near in this silent land,
But the prowling pike is fierce and bold,
  And our tip-ups dance in merry glee.
Though zero 'tis we heed not the cold,
  But hew at the ice right merrily.
    And klink! klink! klink! the chisel rings,
      The ice-chips twinkle and flash and fly,
    And loud and glad the fisher sings
      In the bright sunshine of an azure sky.

Away from the desk! Away from the mart!
  To the frozen cove from the fetid room
Where the bracing nerves and the bounding heart
  Shall paint the cheeks a ruddier bloom.
Come wield the chisel each hole to pierce,
  Then set the line with cunning fine.
Lo! here your guerdon—a pickerel fierce,
  Or giant perch on the speeding line!
    And klink! klink! klink! the chisel rings,
      And the ice-chips twinkle and flash and fly,
    And loud and glad the fisher sings
      In the bright sunshine of an azure sky.



Tools of the trade, an illustration from the second installment of Keene's series "The Theory and Practice of Artificial Fly Making," which appeared in the American Field *in 1887. Keene mentions that until the 1860s most flies were tied without the use of a vise; however, with the development of more complicated, smaller, floating flies, the use of a fly-tying vise was almost obligatory. The tools that he recommends hardly differ from what is in use today.*

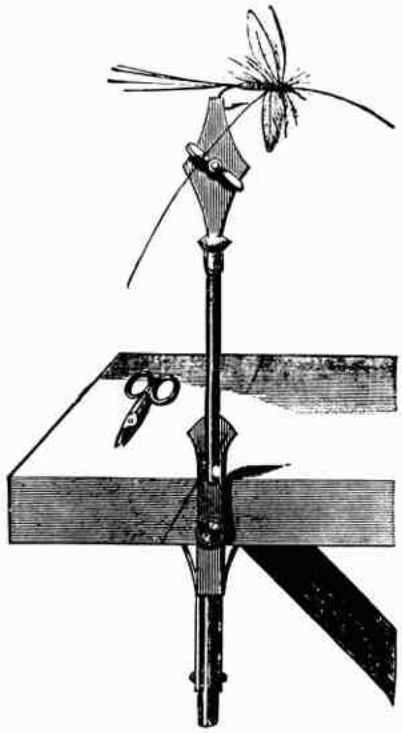
**Note added in proof: Since writing this piece, we have discovered several references to floating flies prior to 1885. Charles Orvis was advertising "cork body floating" flies in the* American Angler *in 1881. An article from the British* Fishing Gazette *on fishing with dry flies was published in the* American Angler *in 1883 (vol. 6, no. 17), and in 1883 Orange Judd Co. (New York) issued an American edition of David Foster's* Scientific Angler, *a British work that also described fishing with floating flies.*

Dry Flies on the Ondawa: The Tragic Tale of John Harrington Keene

by David Ledlie

Part II: The Flies He Fished With[1]

It was all there in black and white, replete with meticulously drawn illustrations by the author. Directions for tying all sorts of flies were given, including dry-fly imitations for mayflies and midges. Cork-bodied patterns, detached-bodied flies, flies with interconvertable bodies, double-insect patterns, a keel-type fly, and a beetle imitation tied with peacock herl and jungle-cock feathers were all described. But that's not all. Directions for fishing dry flies, a reasonably accurate account of the natural history of some aquatic insects, and detailed directions for tying fancy salmon flies were also mentioned. Not very unusual fare for a contemporary angling book or article of today, but extraordinary substance for a series of articles that appeared in the *American Angler* in 1885 and in the *American Field* in 1887![2] Their author, John Harrington Keene, who emigrated from England to this country in 1885, brought with him a thorough knowledge and understanding of British fly-fishing techniques, including the fine art of fishing the dry fly. To my knowledge Keene was the first to explicitly introduce the American angler to dry-fly fishing and to the method for tying dry flies.* In order to put this in proper perspective, I remind readers that it was not until 1886 that Frederick Halford, famed British angler, published *Dry Fly-Fishing in Theory and Practice*, the first book on dry-fly fishing. Readers of the *American Angler* in 1885 had already been apprised of this new technique by Keene. Furthermore, Keene introduced highly innovative patterns and tying techniques that only recently, through reinvention or rediscovery, have been accepted and routinely employed by American fly fishermen. Unfortunately for Keene and the American angler, his sage advice has languished unnoticed for more than a century. From the point of view of what he offered North American fishermen, and *when* it was offered, Keene deserves consideration as the most authoritative angling figure of America's Victorian era. He clearly overshadows the unduely revered and cannonized Catskill flytier, Theodore Gordon. But his impact, as was Gordon's initially, was minimal. The techniques that Keene espoused were originally designed for the capture of Britain's wiley brown trout. The relatively unsophisticated native brook trout of North American streams were not nearly as selective as Britain's *Salmo trutta*. Virtually any pattern of fly would catch a fish; moreover, the gaudy, snelled, Victorian wet flies were much more attractive to the American angler, much easier to obtain from local tackle dealers,



The fly vise in action. The illustration is from his book Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making *(1887). Note the almost-completed dry fly. It appears that the hackle has just been wound; trimming of the excess thread completes the fly.*

and much easier to tie. Besides, what self-respecting Yankee in his right mind wanted to be told how to fish by a stuffy, pompous Englishman. So while Keene's ideas were certainly very interesting, their implementation was not requisite for filling a willow basket with a mess of native brookies. Between the time of his arrival in the United States and his death in 1907, Keene published many articles and a book, *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making*, which went through three editions, all of which touted his innovative flies and fishing techniques.[3] But because of ill health, alcoholism, and a continued lack of acceptance by the American angling public, these efforts came to an end in 1904 with the publication of The Artificial Fly, a chapter in a volume of the *American Sportsman's* library series: *Guns, Ammunition, and Tackle*.

So with all this in mind, let's go back and examine in detail just what Keene was telling America's Victorian anglers. One of my goals is to convince you that he, not Gordon, should be considered North America's first guru of the dry fly, that subsequent to Thaddeus Norris and prior to Louis Rhead stands another name to be revered in American angling history, that of John Harrington Keene.

When Keene came to the United States in 1885 he was only twenty-nine years old, but he was a seasoned angler and an established angling writer. He had published numerous articles in British sporting periodicals (e.g., *Land and Water*, *Field*, and the *Fishing Gazette*), and in 1881 he published his first book, the *Practical Fisherman*. The book was just that: a how-to book that dealt with virtually all aspects of freshwater sportfishing. The natural history, the lore, and the methods of capture of British freshwater fish were covered. A substantial portion of the book was devoted to tackle and tackle-making, including a chapter on fly-making. Characterized by lofty, often pretentious Victorian prose, the *Practical Fisherman* offered the British angler a wealth of information about his sport—much of which had been borrowed, with appropriate acknowledgement, from the writings of some of Britain's more notable angling authors (Stoddart, Stewart, Francis, Pennell, etc.). The format and content of the book were very similar to Thaddeus Norris's well-known *American Angler's Book*, published in Philadelphia in 1864. In the *Practical Fisherman* the reader finds explicit mention of the technique of dry-fly fishing (i.e., the term dry fly was actually used) that Keene was to elaborate in his *American Angler* and *American Field* articles. Keene also mentions that he studied the life histories of mayfly nymphs in a small home aquarium. Studies of this type are usually associated with the modern angler-entomologists of the 1960s and 1970s!

I'm sure that at the time, Keene's *Practical Fisherman* had minimal impact on British anglers or British angling methods. Much of the material he covered had already been thoroughly discussed by Francis Francis in his articles in *Field* and in his *Book on Angling* (1867). Furthermore, the relatively sophisticated British angler was routinely inundated with similar material that appeared in other angling periodicals and books, and by 1880, dry-fly fishing in many areas of England was certainly de rigueur. In short, Keene's book was just another angling book. But germane to our discussion is the fact that with his extensive knowledge of British angling practices, as his book evinced, Keene had the potential to dramatically influence American anglers. With the exception of Richard Franck's putative stay in this country sometime in the latter part of the seventeenth century, Keene is the first established, professional British sport-angler and angling author to take up residence here for an extended period of time.[4] Furthermore, he did it at a time when British fly-fishing clearly was decades ahead of the state of the gentle art as practiced in North America. Here was a

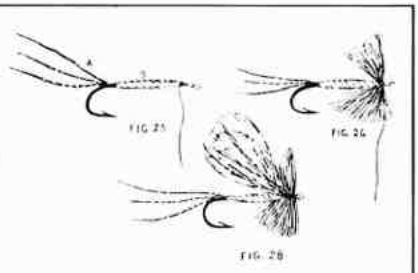


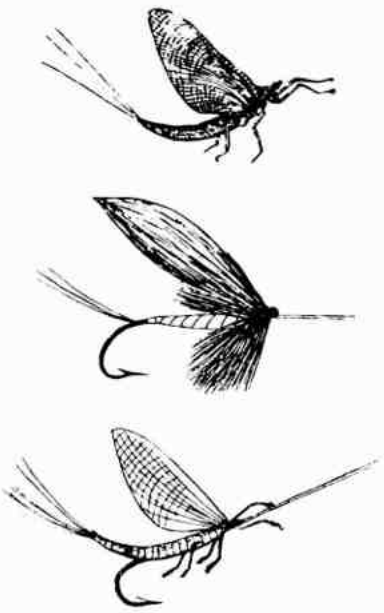
Illustration of the various stages of manufacture of the first dry fly to be seen on this side of the Atlantic. From the fourth installment of "How to Make Trout Flies," American Angler, *August 8, 1885 (vol. 8, no. 6).*

respected, knowledgeable angling writer and experienced fly fisherman whose favorite method of fishing was with the floating fly. I'm certain that he thought he could readily reestablish himself professionally in the United States; moreover, he probably thought he would have little difficulty in educating the American angler to the more subtle, more sophisticated, and more advanced fly-fishing techniques contemporary to England at the time.

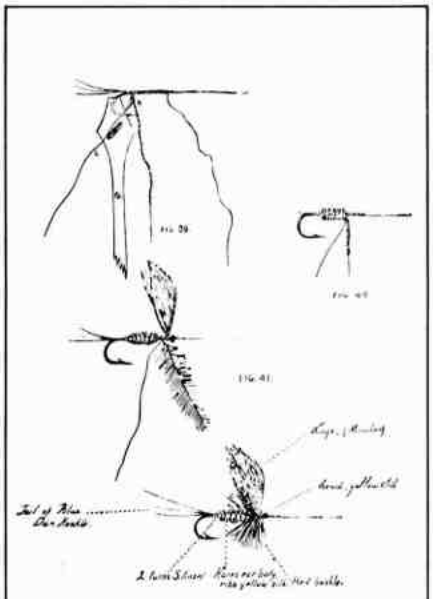
Keene arrived in New York City early in 1885 and lost little time in ingratiating himself with the local angling establishment. He made the acquaintance of William C. Harris, editor of the *American Angler*, and in the Notes and Queries section of the March 28, 1885, issue of the *Angler* (vol. 7, no. 3), Keene's name first apears with a short note titled "Breeding of Eels." After this debut, the floodgates opened and the ink from his pen poured forth. Including his initial piece, Harris published twenty of Keene's articles in 1885. Their subject matter was diverse: fly-tying techniques, fishing methods, and even directions for the manufacture of spoon baits, to name a few. Much of the material that Keene presented was new to the American fly fisherman, and in the May 16 issue of the *Angler* (vol. 7, no. 20, p. 308), history was made! In his article, "The Inner Nature of Fishes," after a lengthy discussion of vision as it pertains to fish, American anglers were explicitly introduced for the first time in an American publication to the technique of dry-fly fishing. Here, now, is the pertinent section of this landmark article that describes the method of fishing with floating flies, which to my knowledge has been overlooked for more than a century.

> I doubt not but that the necessity for the finest of tackle and closest of imitations of the natural insect on the trout streams of Great Britain is

Frontispiece from Guns, Ammunition, and Tackle *(1904).*
The flies were tied by John Harrington Keene.



An example of one of Keene's "exact imitation," extended-bodied, scale-winged flies (bottom) from the American Field, *April 2, 1887 (vol. 27, no. 14). The top illustration is the or "natural" fly, and the center is the "normal" imitation. Keene was the second author to give American anglers directions for tying extended-bodied flies (see text).*



A classical English, dry-fly pattern, one suggested to Keene by R. B. Marston (see text). Note the hare's ear body. Directions for tying this particular fly appeared in the August 15, 1885, issue of the American Angler *(vol. 8, no. 7).*

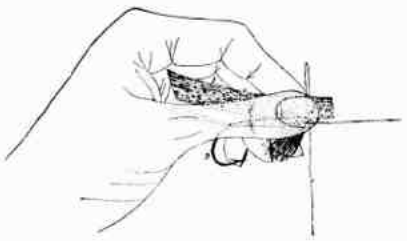
due to a like progressive evolving education which I may as well refer to in this section on sight (which is the chief sense of fish), thought it applies to all the other subservient perceptions. The earliest work on angling, in the English language, was that of the fair Dame Berners, in 1496, and it is too internally practical for us to doubt but that the drawings she gives of tackle are indeed representations of what caught fish in her day. Besides that the whole directions in the book are advocates of similar rough devices; yet fish were caught.

And further, on virgin streams, which yet exist, the comparative tameness and unsophistication of the fish bears out that the march of intellect in a comparative sense applies also to fish. The ancient angler would laugh to scorn the gossamer gut and accurately imaged fly of English Southern rivers and yet they at this day alone kill fish.

One palpable result of the education of the trout in English waters is the general adoption of the dry fly up stream fishing. The angler stalks his fish from behind him as he lies head up stream, and, drying the fly in the air, he places it just above the rising fish and lets it float, taking care that no movement is imparted to the bait. Now it is a fact that it is almost impossible to get good sport, especially amongst the big ones in any other way whatsoever. And why, you ask? Because, I reply, this style places the lure before the fish in the nearest possible approach to its natural way of sailing down stream after falling on the water or rising from it. "But," you object, "there is no imitation of the struggles of the insect in your style." "What struggles, good sir?" I ask. Those flies which rise from the water themselves are not afraid of drowning if the land flies are. In England they sail down with erect wings and immovably outspread legs and it is just because the floating fly does this that it is taken by the fish. Of course a hackle fly is looked on as a drowned insect by the fish and when they take it, it matters little how it is presented.

But there's more! "How to Make Trout Flies" was a five-part series that commenced in the July 18 issue (vol. 8, no. 3, p. 33).[5] The fourth installment of the series, in the August 8, 1885 issue (vol. 8, no. 6, p. 83), gave directions for tying a dry fly. After explaining how to tie a "plain-bodied hackle fly" (a wet fly), Keene begins the instructions for the floating fly.

> From the "great unwinged" lures of the trout fisher I must now pass to the domain of the difficult *winged* flies. The putting on of the wing is the *pons asinorum* of the tyro, but I will let him down easily to begin with by explaining the make of the easiest winged fly of which I know. This is the so-called May fly *(Ephemera vulgata)*, whose beautiful form is shown imperfectly at fig. 24. I suppose not even to American anglers need I rhapsodize over its efficacy as a bait for trout, so I will go on to speak of its imitation. There are many styles of this, but the one I give is a very good one in England and suits my educational purpose at this time.
>
> *Materials for May Fly.*—Clean wheat straw, three whisks of partridge tail feather, freckled breast feather of ginger color in place of hackle for legs, two feathers of mallard breast for wings. Red brown twist silk for ribbing. Hook long in shank and light in build.
>
> *Directions.*—First tie on the hook to a loop of gut; fasten off, having previously whipped in the three whisks (A fig. 25) Now take a piece of nice clean yellow straw and soak it a few minutes in warm water to soften it, then without splitting it carefully pare it with a sharp knife at each end till it tapers nicely and slip it over the loop of gut and if possible do this without splitting it. Then with some red brown silk waxed with the colorless wax attach it firmly by several turns opposite the point of the hook and wind the silk spirally, as shown at B fig. 25 up to the loop. Secure this end of the straw neatly, as shown, and the body is finished. Now take the breast feather and adjust it (fig. 26), as you have previously done in the case of the hackle fly and you are ready for the wings.
>
> The wings are formed from the breast feather of the mallard (wild duck) and fig. 27 gives a fair idea of the particular feather most suited to the purpose. Take it and rip it in about half and do the same by another for the other side. As this fly is intended to float it is advisable to fix the feathers with the concave side turning outwards, but care must be taken that this concav-



Keene's method of tying "laid on" wings, from the American Field *(vol. 27, no. 18). Keene did all the artwork for his many articles and books.*

ity is not too great or a very ugly appearance is produced. The appearance of this fly when finished is shown at fig. 28. This particular dressing is thus described:

Green Drake or May Fly—Body.—Wheaten straw ribbed with red brown silk.

Legs.—Freckled breast feather of ginger color.

Tail.—Three strands from partridge tail feather.

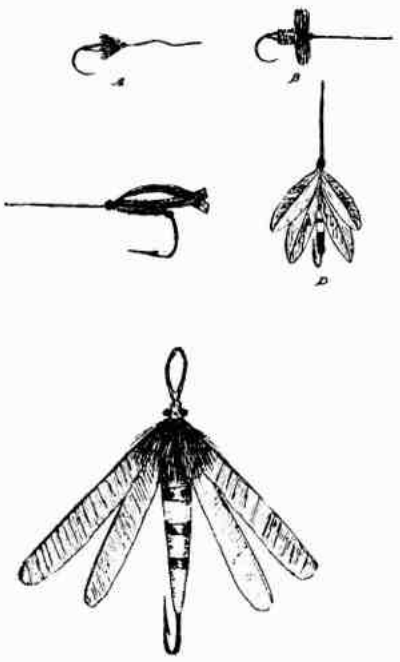
Wings.—Breast feathers of mallard.

In the fifth installment Keene stresses that he wants "the tyro to specially understand" how gut, extended-bodied, or detached-bodied, flies are made. To my knowledge, this is the second instance directions for tying this type of fly have been given in an American publication. Extended-bodied flies first made their appearance in American angling literature in an extensive footnote found in George Washington Bethune's edition of Walton's *Complete Angler* (1847).[6] In this same installment Keene also supplies instructions for tying the "classical" dry fly. A pattern suggested by R. B. Marston, editor of the British *Fishing Gazette*, was used as an example (see illustration). A second series on fly-tying, in four installments, commenced in the September 12, 1885, issue of the *Angler*. This time the subject matter dealt with methods for tying salmon and bass flies. Most of the material from these two series was gathered together and, after minor changes and additions, published in book form in 1887 as *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making*. Keene was a frequent contributor to the *Angler* in 1886, but there is nothing of a particularly new or innovative nature.[7] In 1887, in the *American Field*, he published another series on fly-tying. The dateline for all these articles gives Manchester, Vermont. By this time Keene had associated himself with Charles F. Orvis and was fishing his dry flies on the Battenkill—or as the Indians called it, the Ondawa (see Part I of this series). For a few years, Orvis sold Keene's salmon flies and his exact imitation flies. The series was a much-expanded version of his *Angler* contributions. In addition to describing the most original and unique fly patterns yet to come down the pike, he loudly and clearly articulated his philosophy of exact imitation.

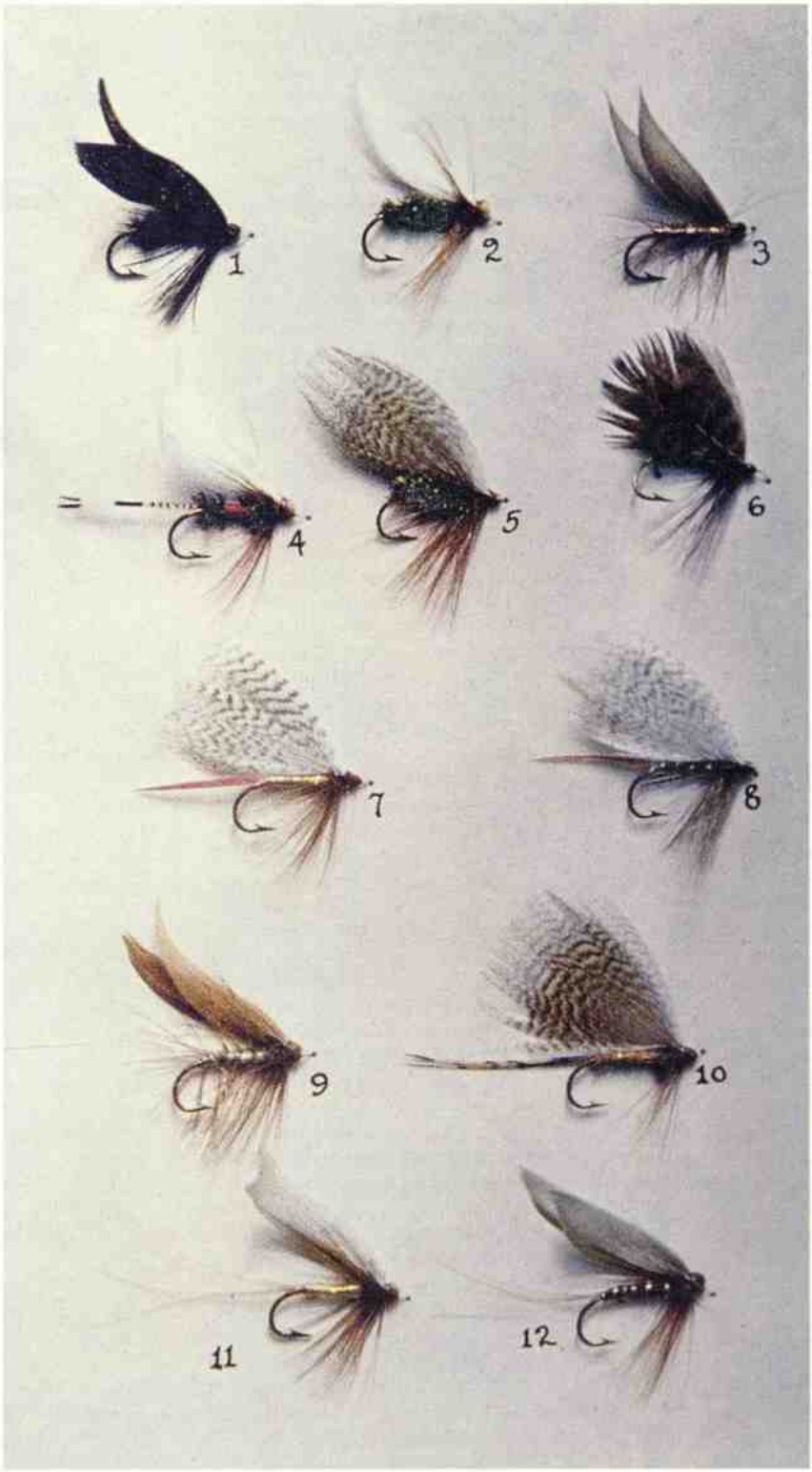
> Of course I do not claim originality in this exact imitation theory, but I do claim that in its practice I am the first to assert it with no uncertain sound and to accomplish it with certain success—by means of new materials and new methods of using old materials.[8]

The series began in the March 19, 1887, issue of the *American Field* and ended with the June 18 issue. There were ten parts and, my goodness, some of the material was extraordinary! After berating Cholmondeley Pennell (a well-known British angling writer) for repudiating the theory of exact imitation (Part I), giving the last word on fly-tying tools and materials (Parts II and III) and directions for tying classic fly patterns (Parts IV to VI), new ground is broken with his installments on the making of exact-imitation flies (Parts VII and VIII). Finally, here is what we mentioned earlier: "no-hackle," extended-bodied dry flies, terrestrial patterns for beetles and house flies (to be fished dry!), cork-bodied dry flies, double-insect flies, a keel-type fly, a reversed fly, a detachable, or interchangeable, body fly, and a new type of wing material for both wet and dry flies. All of the above are usually considered developments of the 1960s and 1970s. But by 1887, Keene had said it all! His beetle imitations were tied with jungle-cock feathers in a manner similar to that espoused by Marinaro in the late 1950s. His exact-imitation, no-hackle dry flies predate Swisher and Richards by almost eighty-five years, and his double-insect creations predate Bovino's copulating spinner pattern by almost ninety-five years.[9] The new wing material deserves further mention. Keene described it first in his book, *Fishing Tackle, Its Materials and Manufacture*, published simultaneously in London and New York in 1886. He describes the material again in Part VII of his series as apparently being very pliable and easily dyed, and we include it here.

> Now this material is no longer a secret and simply consists in the membrane which invests the scales of certain fishes. It is emphatically not the scale itself—but the membrane whose connection with the horny and calcareous part of the scale has been dissolved. I thus freely make this public statement for the reason which follows.
>
> A year or two ago a Mr. Mackee of Bohally Petlochy, Scotland, brought out and patented a Pike scale winged fly which simply consisted of the small cycloid scales from the belly of a pike as they were without radical alteration. Mr. Mackee did not attempt to color these scales, and the testimonials to the efficiency of the ordinary flies with "pike scale" wings came in very generously—from one quarter at least. They were beautifully tied, but the fault of the wings was a radical one. The horny and calcareous matter of the scale being present prevented them being more flexible than quill in the water, and the consequence was a very large percentage of fish were missed in striking. The fish, feeling the hard wing, blew out the fly instanter. If this was not the case with hard material, even quill and whalebone would be exceedingly useful for wings. And there was another objection: after the flies had been in use a little time the wing, from lack of flexibility, broke off.
>
> My discovery has been confound-

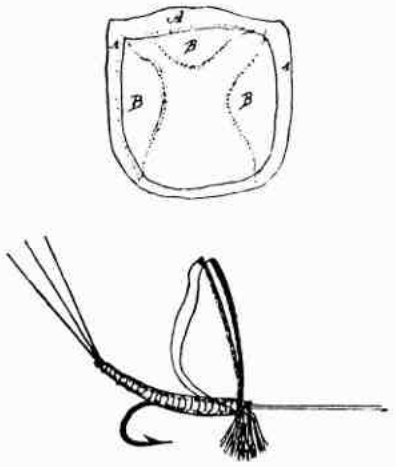


Various Japanese flies. Keene refers to these as "curious pieces of Japanese dexterity" in the May 14, 1887, American Field *(vol. 27, no. 20). Keene admired the fine grade of hackle and gut employed in the tying of these flies.*

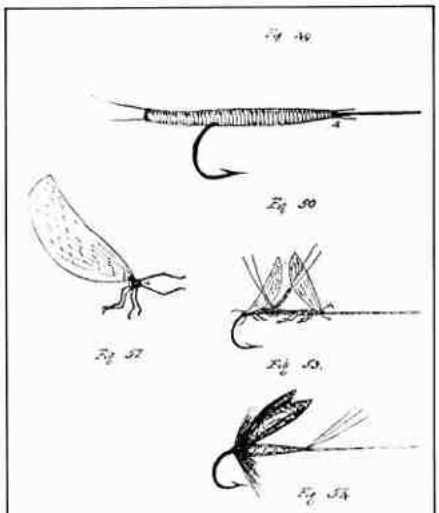


Although mostly British patterns, these flies, tied by Keene, are labeled as brook-trout flies. From Guns, Ammunition, And Tackle *(1904)*

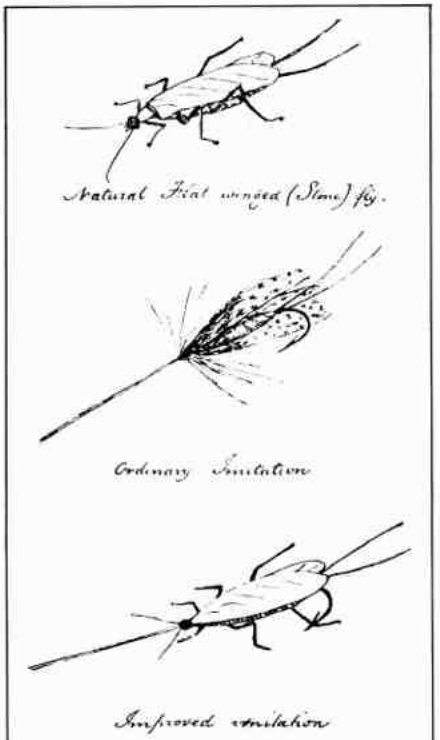
Bass and lake-trout flies tied by Keene. Fly no. 2 is the Cheney—designed by the well-known nineteenth-century angling authority A. Nelson Cheney. Fly no. 1 is the Moisic (Moisie) Grub. The fly was first tied by Henry Parkhurst Wells in 1887. Wells authored Fly Rods and Fly Tackle *(1885), the* American Salmon Fisherman *(1886), and* City Boys in the Woods *(1889). The first time Wells used the fly (on the Moisie) he caught four salmon ranging from 21 to 31½ pounds. From* Guns, Ammunition, and Tackle *(1904)*



Keene used the inner membrane of fish scales for tying his scale-winged flies (see text). As the illustration indicates, the area marked A *is removed first; areas marked* B *are then cut out; and the remaining material is folded and then applied to the hook. The second wing is applied in the same fashion. The completed fly is illustrated (bottom). Both illustrations are from* Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making *(1898).*



Some of Keene's more innovative creations: an extended-bodied, no-hackle fly with a detachable or "convertible" body (fig. 50 and fig. 52); a reversed fly (fig. 54); and a double-insect pattern (fig. 53). The convertible body was very versatile; one could imitate a plethora of insects merely by interchanging the head or the tail of the fly. Illustrations are from the American Field, *May 21, 1887 (vol. 27, no. 21).*



Scale-wing, "exact imitation" stonefly pattern (bottom). See the American Field, *May 14, 1887 (vol. 27, no. 20).*

ed with this "pike scale," and hence the above explanation.

But to resume. Take a piece of material (particulars for its preparation may be found in my book "Fishing Tackle, its Materials and Manufacture" (Ward, Lock & Co., 31 Bond St., New York) and fold it in two. Then cut out the two wings from it and adjust them as in fig. 33, and your exact imitation of an up-winged fly is made, with the exception of bending the legs into a natural shape, which is easily done with the pincers.

Beside its extremely natural appearance the great excellence of the above fly consists in its extreme durability. The ordinary fur and feather lure will "rag" to pieces in taking one or two fish, but if the gut-bodied, scale-winged fly is well made it will outlast four or five of the ordinary kind, and its cost in making is not more than one-third greater. Some good fishermen do not like the projecting or detached body, however, and unless one is instant in striking there may be a slight detriment existing in its hard texture, but in my own experience I have not demonstrated this to be a fact. The wing, though comparatively stiff and quill-like, when dry becomes pliable beyond belief immediately it is in use, owing to instantaneous absorption of water, and thus is exceedingly fly-like in texture. The body of the fly can of course be tied on the shank of the hook entirely, but there is some sacrifice of imitative nicety, and on the whole I prefer the fly to be made as I have directed.

And more still! In the second (1891) and third (1898) editions of *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making*, a lot of new material

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ENDNOTES:

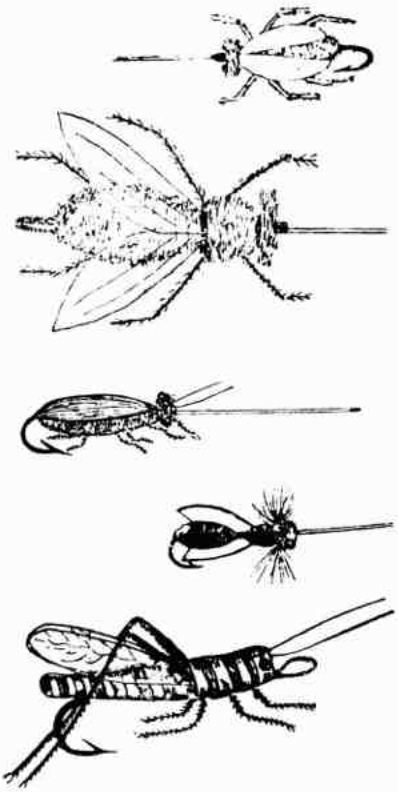
1. See *The American Fly Fisher* (vol. 13, no. 1, p. 8) for the first part of this series.

2. Keene's *American Angler* articles for 1885 appeared in the following issues: March 28 (vol. 7, no. 13, p. 199); May 16 (vol. 7, no. 20, p. 306); May 23 (vol. 7, no. 21, p. 323); May 30 (vol. 7, no. 22, p. 339); July 18 (vol. 8, no. 3, p. 33); July 25 (vol. 8, no. 4, p. 51); August 1 (vol. 8, no. 5, p. 65); August 8 (vol. 8, no. 6, p. 83); August 15 (vol. 8, no. 7, p. 98); September 12 (vol. 8, no. 11, p. 161); September 19 (vol. 8, no. 12, p. 177); September 26 (vol. 8, no. 13, p. 193); October 3 (vol. 8, no. 14, p. 209); October 10 (vol. 8, no. 15, p. 227); October 17 (vol. 8, no. 16, p. 241); October 24 (vol. 8, no. 17, p. 260); November 14 (vol. 8, no. 20, p. 305); November 22 (vol. 8, no. 22, p. 340); December 12 (vol. 8, no. 24, p. 371); December 26 (vol. 8, no. 26, p. 402). I was unable to peruse a complete set of 1887 *American Field* magazines; those of Keene's contributions that I found follow: March 19 (vol. 27, no. 12, p. 270); March 26 (vol. 27, no. 13, p. 293); April 2 (vol. 27, no. 14, p. 316); April 9 (vol. 27, no. 15, p. 342); April 16 (vol. 27, no. 16, p. 365); April 30 (vol. 27, no. 18, p. 422); May 14 (vol. 27, no. 20, p. 476); May 21 (vol. 27, no. 21, p. 500); May 28 (vol. 27, no. 22, p. 526); June 18 (vol. 27, no. 25, p. 598).

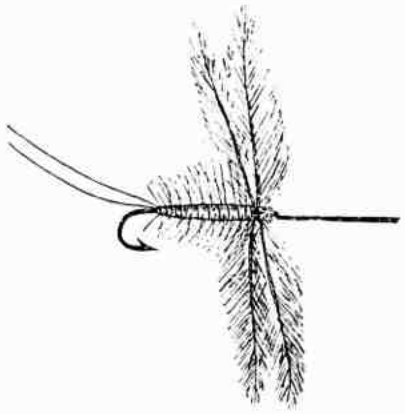
3. In addition to *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making* (1887), Keene published the following books: *The Practical Fisherman* (1881); *Fishing Tackle, Its Materials and Manufacture* (1886); *The Boys Own Guide to Fishing, Tackle-Making and Fishbreeding* (1894); *The Mystery of Handwriting* (1896); and *How to Make and Set Traps* (1900).

4. Paul Schullery recently apprised me that Richard Brookes, author of the *Art of Angling* (1740), spent some time in this country prior to 1762.

5. Austin Hogan was cognizant of Keene's series, "How to Make Trout Flies" (see *American Sporting Periodicals of Angling Interest*, 1973, by Austin Hogan), but evidently he was unaware of Keene's explicit



Various terrestrial patterns (from top to bottom): beetle; house fly; June bug; black ant with scale-wings; and a scale-winged grasshopper. The first two illustrations are from the May 14, 1887, issue of the American Field *(vol. 27, no. 20); the remainder are from* Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making *(1898).*



A spinner pattern designed to be fished as a dry fly. The body is made of dried husks of Indian corn. See Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making *(1898).*

A jointed-body, scale-winged dry fly from Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making *(1898)*

was added. Seven additional pages on dry flies were included: quill-bodied dry flies (perhaps we should call this a "Quill Keene"), what appears to be a floating grasshopper, and yes, even a floating spinner-pattern, among others. Both the second and third editions of *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making* were published by Forest and Stream Publishing Company. Keene touted his book in his many articles, and it was advertised extensively in *Forest and Stream*. Thus it must have been well known to the American sporting public. Finally, his chapter on the artificial fly that appeared in *Guns, Ammunition and Tackle* (1904), mentioned earlier, gives detailed description of dry-fly fishing methods. Keep in mind too that Theodore Gordon, who flourished circa 1890 to 1915, was beginning to champion dry flies on American waters (albeit a major portion of his proclamations and pronouncements appeared in the British *Fishing Gazette*). Yet the impact of all this on most American fly fishermen was scarcely felt, and the contributions of both men languished, lost in the dust and shuffle of time. Dry-fly fishing was not to become a universal fishing technique on this side of the Atlantic until just before and during the 1920s. Gordon was discovered and sanctified by John McDonald in 1947 with the publication of his book, the *Complete Fly Fisherman, the Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon*. Here Gordon is lionized as the American counterpart to Britain's legendary Halford. As to why Keene has never been fully recognized by angling historians for his remarkable contributions to American angling, the answer is quite simple—nobody ever took the time to look! His books and the periodicals containing his articles are now quite rare; our man Keene, the first to codify dry-fly fishing for American anglers, was easily overlooked.

It's an interesting exercise to peruse the covers of Dick Surette's *Fly Tyer* magazine, in business since 1978. Not surprisingly, many of the color cover-photographs of absolutely the latest in so-called new and innovative fly patterns are similar, if not identical, to the "exact imitations" tied by Keene nearly a century earlier. Ironically, Keene once quoted the noted French statesman Charles Talleyrand as having said, "Nothing is new but that which is forgotton." And so it goes.

So next June, when you step out of the Battenkill after that evening hatch of *Ephemera varia*, take a look upstream. Perhaps you'll see the shadowy figure with the well-trimmed mustache and the twinkle in his eye—casting effortlessly at the head of the next pool—the spirit of an Englishman who has returned to cast his flies on the Ondawa, seeking the recognition due him. §

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mention of dry-fly fishing found in "The Inner Nature of Fishes."

6. See "Origins" by Austin Hogan (*Fly Tyer*, 1978, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 4).

7. These articles may be found in the following issues of the *American Angler* for 1886: January 23 (vol. 9, no. 4, p. 49); January 30 (vol. 9, no. 5, p. 69); February 6 (vol. 9, no. 6, p. 81); March 13 (vol. 9, no. 11, p. 161); March 20 (vol. 9, no. 12, p. 183); May 22 (vol. 9, no. 21, p. 328); June 19 (vol. 9, no. 25, p. 388); June 26 (vol. 9, no. 26, p. 402); July 3 (vol. 10, no. 1, p. 3); July 17 (vol. 10, no. 3, p. 36); July 31 (vol. 10, no. 5, p. 69); August 7 (vol. 10, no. 6, p. 83 and p. 86); August 21 (vol. 10, no. 8, p. 117); September 4 (vol. 10, no. 10, p. 150); October 23 (vol. 10, no. 17, p. 258 and p. 260); October 30 (vol. 10, no. 18, p. 277).

8. *The American Field*, May 14, 1887 (vol. 27, no. 20, p. 476). See note 2 for a complete listing of Keene's 1887 *American Field* articles.

9. Jerald Bovino's "Sex Fly" appears on the cover of *Fly Tyer* (1981, vol. 4, no. 2).

10. I am greatly indebted to the following individuals, without whose generous help this project could not have been completed: Mona Beach, Brattleboro Retreat, Brattleboro, VT; Lila Bunnell, Winstead, CT; Warder Cadbury, Albany, NY; R. J. W. Coleby, Dumfriesshire, Scot.; Diana Digges, Commission of Historical and Architectural Preservation, Baltimore, MD; Marie Flagg, Brattleboro Retreat, Brattleboro, VT; Robert C. Friedrich, reference librarian, Queens Borough Public Library Long Island Div., Jamaica, NY; Catherine Kennedy, librarian, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD; Lefty Kreh, Cockeysville, MD; Clara Lamers, reference librarian, Long Island Historical Society, Brooklyn, NY; Philip McWilliams, Lewiston, ME; Frank Mikesh, Orinda, CA; Duncan Mirylees, local studies librarian, Guildford, Eng.; Francis O'Neal, reference librarian, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD; Robert Page, Greenwich, NY; Judy Rogers, librarian, Greenwich Free Library, Greenwich, NY; David Rose, Princeton, NJ; Paul Schullery, Livingston, MT; Henry Siegel, Goshen, CT.

The Ondawa

by Charles Hallock

Frederick M. Halfords's flies for dry-fly fishing. The plate is from Mary Orvis Marbury's Favorite Flies *(1892). The bottom three patterns are tied with scale wings and are similar to the "exact-imitation flies" that John Harrington Keene introduced to American anglers in 1887.*

"Ondawa" is the very musical name of a delightful trout and mill stream which threads the picturesque valley lying between the parallel ridges of the Equinox Mountains in Southern Vermont. It is the baptismal Indian name, with the soft cadence and flowing rythm of the current itself, as it winds through the meadows under the drooping alders; but a recent nomenclature has yclept it the Battenkill, from the name of a Dutchman who once shantied on its banks, and by the latter it is best known, and perhaps preferred. Yet you and I, good Angler, must know it only as the Ondawa, even though this recognition be as the simple reminiscence of a pleasant dream. I would as soon expunge the poetry from the primitive vernacular as wipe the sunflecks from the bosom of the glinting streams, or the silvery fleeces from the blue concave of the sky; for this wildwood poetry is the audible expression of nature in her serener moods, which we should be thankful is not always voiced in thunder and the earthquake; for in the archaic epochs this weird region of trap and granite was racked with throes, in comparison with which the whilom convulsion in New Zealand was a lullaby, and the local derangement at Charleston a passing twinge. There are few grander evidences of primordial tumult than those found in these ranges of the Equinox. But such disturbances seem altogether of the past never to recur again. Between the massive mountain ridges, which hem the valley in, there reposes a bucolic land which the tired denizens of cities have selected as a place of summer rest, where intrusion cannot come. Prevalent as misgivings may be with regard to those periods termed equinoctial, with some uncertainty as to their phenomenal outcome, they need not apply to that particular section of which the town of Manchester is the center, for it is certainly beyond the influence of any enthusement greater than tennis or the *res gestae* of tactical deportment. If we are to draw the "line" let it be at the Equator. The predicted perturbations of September have so far failed to disturb the serenity of the summer boarders. They all remain.

I cannot learn why these mountains are called Equinox. Certainly the diurnal divisions at this spot are anything but equal. The mountains tower so high,

from the September 25, 1886, issue of the American Angler

behind and before, in long drawn horizontal lines against the sky, that they lengthen the twilights and cut the daylight short. The morning shadows reluctantly withdraw to their feet, while those of evening fall athwart the valley two hours before the sun would set upon the true horizon. They run nearly due north and south, these mountains do, and are 2,500 feet in height, very impressive and stupendous, rugged with outcropping ledges of marble and granite, and seamed by landslides. They are so steep that a direct ascent is very arduous. When the sun is on the meridian it shines directly up the main street of Manchester, lengthwise of the valley; but its heat is modified by the umbrageous shade of maples and gigantic elms, some of which measure six feet in diameter at the base, while the glare of its marble sidewalks is tempered by the green turf which stretches from the conventional line of villas to the carriageway. The well-known Equinox House, which for more than thirty years has given character and feature to the burgh, is conspicuous for its length of facade and white Ionic columns, around which trees cluster munificently and cast a constant shade. There is a church with a spire, from whose belfry is swung occasional melody; a town hall, an engine house, a livery stable, and a beautiful rural cemetery where sojouners take their regulation promenade. A mile back from the town, under the mountains, is an artificial pond of nine acres, formed and stocked by the Orvis family for the pleasure of the hotel guests. These are the leading features of the place, with the mountains omnipresent, prominent and pre-eminent. There are two or three parallel drives, lengthwise of the valley, with occasional transverse wagon roads which cross the Ondawa, and the attractions for recreation of this kind are so general and ample that visitors keep their private carriages for constant use. Scattered about the vicinity are stock farms, poultry farms, sheep-ranges, creameries and quarries, and the country wears a conspicuous air of industry and respectability, spiced with comfortable competence. I take the pains to mention these little details, because, of some dozens of letters which emanate from Manchester every year, none have hitherto conveyed to me any definite idea of its appearance and belongings.

Goodly trout are taken from the pretty Ondawa in spring and early summer, and I dare say that the opportunities so abundantly afforded for testing the tastes and temper of these fish enable our old acquaintance, Orvis, to formulate the innumerable and diverse patterns of artificial flies for the tying of which he has become so famous. Of course your readers all know that the maker of the Orvis rods, reels, fly-books and flies, lives in Manchester, for his advertisement has been conspicuous in the columns of *The Angler* from its initial number, and I suppose he may be regarded as much of a fixture there as the Equinox Hotel, and perhaps the mountain itself. It afforded me as much surprise as pleasure to look through his factory. I confess I had small conception of the extent of the business. The machinery of his shop is run by a five-horse power steam engine, and is various in its applications to the several articles of an angler's outfit which are therein made. The mechanical precision with which the strips of bamboo are thereby cut to a taper, and all the various parts of each rod prepared and adjusted, account for their high degree of perfection. Granted that only the best materials are selected, the quality of the manufactured goods must be technically uniform —as much so as guns and watches which are made by machinery. Formerly this kind of work was a specialty in which he only could excell who had a natural aptitude and genius, so that it was almost impossible to make a bamboo rod equal to even a medium rod of wood. For this good reason Leonard long held a deserved pre-eminence. Now there are many rods of many makers, all good, and excelling in competition only where special materials, methods and devices are employed, which are kept trade secrets. In the fly department several ladies are employed. I know not how many distinct patterns are listed, but I find no less than 149 included in the exquisite colored plates of the Cheney-Orvis collection, while the trade catalog shows 210 trout flies, 107 lake trout flies, 49 black bass flies, and 24 salmon flies, to say nothing of miscellaneous specimens of all kinds of creatures, winged, hopping and creeping. The variety of materials which enter into the composition of these imitations and nondescripts is marvelous to contemplate—the tinsel, floss, feathers, fur and hackles, both domestic and imported —while the number and aggregate of lures which are incontinently crowded into the repertory of the latter day angler, are enough to appal a man of deficient memory and limited strategical powers. An angler of the old school may well despair when the diploma of the modern fishing school depends upon such qualifications as are involved in a thorough knowledge of these! "I go a-fishing" in these days implies or includes far more than was ever contemplated by Apostle Peter or his modern prototype, Prime. It is eminently suggestive of the old Richmond days of the rebellion when a basketfull of money was necessary to a modicum of marketing.

Silk-worm gut, upon which artificial flies are tied and from which leaders are made, is an important factor in the entomological laboratory. It is drawn from the common Chinese silk-worm and seldom exceeds eighteen inches in length, on which account from two to six lengths have to be spliced or knotted together to make proper leaders. This gut is chiefly imported from France at a large cost. Now, tackle makers are experimenting upon several American varieties of the silk-worm moth, whose grubs and cocoons are many times larger than the Chinese, to see if they cannot obtain something cheaper and of greater length. I have seen one variety of worm whose gut was drawn to a length of seven feet, but it lacks strength. I believe I am right in saying that strength is the only desideratum which remains to be supplied and I hope the indefatigable experimenter may be able to discover some kind of plant food for the worms which will toughen the silken fibre. Literally, this gut of the trade is raw silk in a solvent or viscous state. When a worm is ripe and ready to spin his cocoon the ends of two threads are seen to protrude from his mouth. The manufacturer breaks off the head of this worm and extracts from his body a convoluted bag, like the animal intestine called "colon"; then taking each end in the fingers of each hand he draws it to its greatest ductility, and then places it in vinegar to harden. It has a very thin membranous coating which being removed leaves the strand pure white. §

Right: Blue Duns (subimagoes) and spinners (imagoes). Dry-fly imitations from Frederick M. Halford's Dry-Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice *(London, 1889). Halford's books were the first British angling books to deal exclusively and explicitly with dry-fly fishing.*

Far right: British dry flies tied by George Holland. A hand-colored plate from the Book of the Dry Fly *(London, 1897) by British angler George A. B. Dewar. By the time Dewar had published this work, dry-fly fishing had spread from Hampshire chalk streams (e.g., the Test and the Itchen) to virtually all areas of England.*

Dry-Fly Fishing

by R. B. Marston

Marston's article on dry-fly fishing first appeared in the British Fishing Gazette. *We're not sure of the date. William C. Harris reprinted the piece in the June 27, 1885, issue of the* American Angler *(vol. 7, no. 26, p. 404). To our knowledge, it is the second explicit mention of dry-fly fishing in an American angling publication (Keene mentioned it first).* We are told by Marston how to splice our line to the leader, how to make the line float (using deer fat), how to minimize drag, how to "shoot" the line, how to fish a dry-fly both upstream and downstream, and how to fish the water. With the exception of nylon leaders and modern, floating flylines, dry-fly fishing today differs little from that described to anglers in "Dry-Fly Fishing" more than a century ago!*

We favor our fly-casting readers with a description of this style of fishing in the columns of the *Fishing Gazette* and written by its Editor, Mr. Marston, who says:

"Many readers of the *Gazette* have from time to time asked for particulars of this style of fishing; so I propose to give a few hints from my own experience, in the hope that others may do the same and supplement or correct my notes.

"It is quite a mistake to imagine, as some anglers do, that this fascinating style of presenting the fly to the fish is only useful on our Southern streams because it is chiefly practiced on them. I have found it answers equally well on such streams as the Dove, Wye, Yore, Rye, Coquet, Eden and other Northcountry streams; in fact, on any water where you see the fish feeding steadily on the natural fly floating down on the surface the dry fly will do its work.

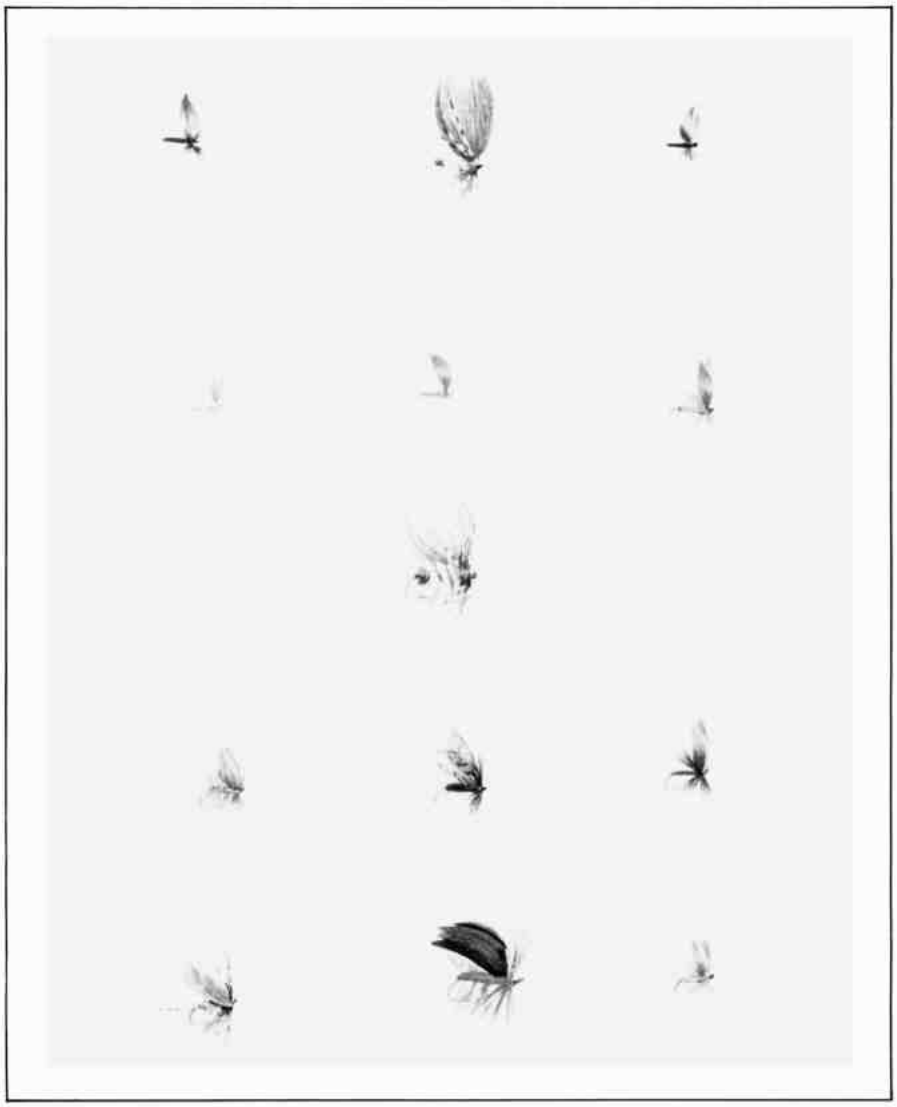
"The rod should be stiff and light. I have noticed that nearly all dry fly-fishermen invariably use stiff rods; in fact, they err on the side of over-stiffness in some cases, and give their wrist far harder work than is at all necessary. A tapered reel line, to which a tapered gut has been spliced, is what I prefer. I can strongly recommend anglers to adopt the plan of splicing a length of stoutish gut to the reel line, and fastening the cast to this with the ordinary waterknot. The line casts better, and if you want to wind up very short the splice passes through the rings easily. Another advantage is that if it is windy there is no knot for your fly to catch in. As you want your reel line to float so as not to drown the fly, procure a bit of red deer's fat and rub it on well to the last thirty or forty yards of your line; a piece the size of a big pea between a bit of washleather will be ample for one dressing. Not only does this simple plan make the line float wonderfully, but it also makes it cast better and run through the rings more easily. I have asked Mr. Wm. Mudford, of Tiverton, to procure some of this fat, and he has promised to do so; doubtless, in the season, any of the game dealers who sell venison could supply it.

"As a rule, one fly only is used, though it is just as easy to make two or three float as one. Almost any fly can be made to float; but the best for the purpose are those with divided upright wings, because they sit more naturally on the water and dry more quickly. I infinitely prefer flies dressed on eyed-hooks, because you

**Note added in proof: Since writing this piece, we have discovered several references to floating flies prior to 1885. Charles Orvis was advertising "cork body floating" flies in the* American Angler *in 1881. An article from the British* Fishing Gazette *on fishing with dry flies was published in the* American Angler *in 1883 (vol. 6, no. 17), and in 1883 Orange Judd Co. (New York) issued an American edition of David Foster's* Scientific Angler, *a British work that also described fishing with floating flies.*

can select your own gut and alter it in a moment; because they stand the rather trying drying process far better; and because the nuisance of a killing fly becoming useless because the gut at the head is cracked is entirely obviated.

"Having fastened your fly on, the next thing to do is to look for a rising fish, then get below him, and gradually let out enough line to enable you to drop the fly from one to two feet above him. If he is rising under your own bank, you have only to move your rod point slowly back so as not to pull on the line at all (if necessary, draw in a little line with the left hand), and the fly will come sailing over him like a natural insect. If he rises, strike rather sharply down stream so as to pick up the slack line as quickly as possible; if he refuses, let the fly float on for a few feet, then recover the line, and dry the fly preparatory to another cast. To dry the fly, you make half a dozen or so casts in the air without allowing the fly to touch the water; this flicks all the water out of it, and then you carefully drop it over him again. The first cast is the most deadly by far; but as long as the fish goes on rising you may get him to come at you. If it is a good fish, try a change of fly. If the fish is rising under the opposite bank, cast obliquely up to him, and take care to use more line than is actually necessary to cover him—*i.e.*, instead of fully extending your rod towards the fish, check it when the fly settles a foot above the fish, and then extend the rod towards the fly, holding it low down and a little down stream. By doing this you neutralize the action of the stream to a considerable extent, as the pull does not come on the fly until it has passed the critical spot. If you cast a fully extended straight line across a stream, the fly begins to drag almost instantly, and any drag is fatal (not to the fish) unless the fish are very green indeed, when they will often enough bulge our from the side at a dragging fly; then strike when you see the wave caused by the fish begin to subside. Chub and dace seem to prefer a fly which drags a little, especially when they are lying close in to the side on a shallow. In all cases when you can do so cast straight up to your fish. It often happens that you see a fish rising below you under your own bank, and the only way to reach him, on account of trees, grass, etc., is by a down stream cast. To put a dry fly over a fish by casting down stream is not a difficult matter. Get your distance by letting out line while you are making false casts in the air; then, when you judge you have enough line out to reach him, draw off another foot or two, make the cast so that the fly falls a foot above the fish, check the rod when the fly touches the water and before you have extended the rod fully, then drop the point and stretch the rod out towards the fish. In this way you get sufficient slack line to allow the fly to float without restraint over the fish. If he refuses you must draw the fly back very slowly for a yard or two before lifting it from the water, or you will startle the fish and effectually "put him down."



"If a fish is rising under the opposite bank on a broad piece of water do not make each false cast to dry the fly with the full line, as it tries the rods unnecessarily, and often scares the fish. In the first instance, to reach him, gradually let out line as you cast backwards and forwards in the air. If he refuses, draw down with the left hand a yard or two of line through the rings before you begin to dry the fly, then gradually let it out as before. In this way your line is gradually lengthening while the fly is drying, and there is no strain of pulling the line from the water. This plan is very useful when you want to make an extra long cast; you cast towards the fish with as much line as you can command, and have a little slack in reserve held between the rod and the right hand. Before the impetus on the line given by the forward motion is exhausted, you release the line, and the slack is drawn out by the weight of the advancing line, which would otherwise be checked and fall short. It is impossible to make an extended cast of this kind unless your reel line has sufficient weight and your rod is stiff enough to carry it. The line being taper, and the thick part, metaphorically speaking, miles away from the fish, there is no practical objection to a heavy line, and its advantages are unquestionable.

"One of the great advantages of dry-fly fishing is that the lure, being on the surface and not under it, the fish do not detect its artificial nature nearly so easily; consequently, with practice, you can kill rising fish on still pools in bright water when the wet-fly fisher would pass on to the next stream. I frequently use a dry fly in rapid, almost broken water over a rising fish; and if he won't take it dry there is no difficulty about trying it wet—and I certainly do not go the length of some dry-flyers, who, if they cannot find a rising fish, don't fish at all. §

Four Hundred and Fifty Years Later: Basurto's Aragon Today

by George Beall

The recent discovery of a Spanish angling heritage, completely unrelated to so-called British angling roots, by Richard Hoffmann (see the American Fly Fisher, *vol. 11, nos. 3 and 4) ranks high among significant contributions to sport-angling history. Ferdinando Basurto's "El Tratadico de la Pesca" (The Little Treatise on Fishing) was published as part of a much larger work, the* Dialogo, *in Zaragoza, Spain, in 1539. It documents an early angling tradition unknown until recognized and brought to light by Professor Hoffmann. The river Aragon, located approximately seventy-five miles from Basurto's home in Zaragoza, was surely fished by Basurto. George Beall, a resident of France, has fished the Aragon on numerous occasions and furnished us with his description of the river and its fishing as it is today—more than four centuries after Basurto plied its waters.*

What part of the world has escaped change since 1540? None, I think I can safely say; above all, certainly no European country. Although Basurto's "El Tratadico de la Pesca" (see the *American Fly Fisher*, vol. 11, no. 3) does not name any of the waters he fished except for the "eastern sea" (the Mediterranean), very likely they were in close proximity to his home in Zaragoza. Proximity was a prime consideration in those days of travel by foot, horseback, river barge, or springless carriage! There are many rivers within a hundred-mile radius of Zaragoza: big ones like the Aragon, the Gállego, the Segre, and the Cinca, all descending from the Pyrenees; the Jalón and a host of lesser waters joining the Ebro from the south; and the headwaters of the westward-flowing Duero (now Douro) and Tajo (now Tagus) in Old Castilla. The Gállego and Jalón were closest to home and must have received Basurto often; the Gállego today is so cut up by hydroelectric dams that the only trout fishing left is in the high headwaters. I visited the Rio Peidra, a tributary of the Jalón, a few years ago; it is a narrow weed-choked stream flowing through market gardens. The Jalón itself is lost in the tumult of nearby railway and highway traffic, pounding night and day between Madrid and Barcelona via Zaragoza.

Only two of the Pyrenean rivers in Spain have escaped the dam-builders: the Salazar and the Esca, both tributaries of the Aragon. The Aragon has only one dam and that for irrigation, not for electricity, a big difference as we shall see. I personally favor these free-flowing rivers, hence I know them best. The Rio Aragon, as far as I can judge, would still be recognizable to Basurto. The great oak forests, which lined its banks in Basurto's day, have long since disappeared and have been replaced by vineyards and scattered pine woods.

The Aragon is typical of the limestone rivers characteristic of the Pyrenees, that is, fast flowing and relatively weedless, unlike the limestone rivers in the eastern United States, such as the Letort. The headwaters are wild, narrow, wooded, and framed by spectacular towering cliffs and pinnacles. The few villages are perched on high ground, huddled around a massive church-fortress. On my first visit to the Aragon in the early 1960s, I encountered villagers wearing the traditional Aragonese bear-skin jerkin and leggings and rather provincial surroundings. Not today. Hecho, in the valley of the Aragon Subordán, now has two good hotels, discotheque and traffic problems. The rivers here are small, between thirty and fifty feet wide, consist of a succession of fast, broken pocket water and deep bend pools, and they veer back and forth from one side of the valley to the other.

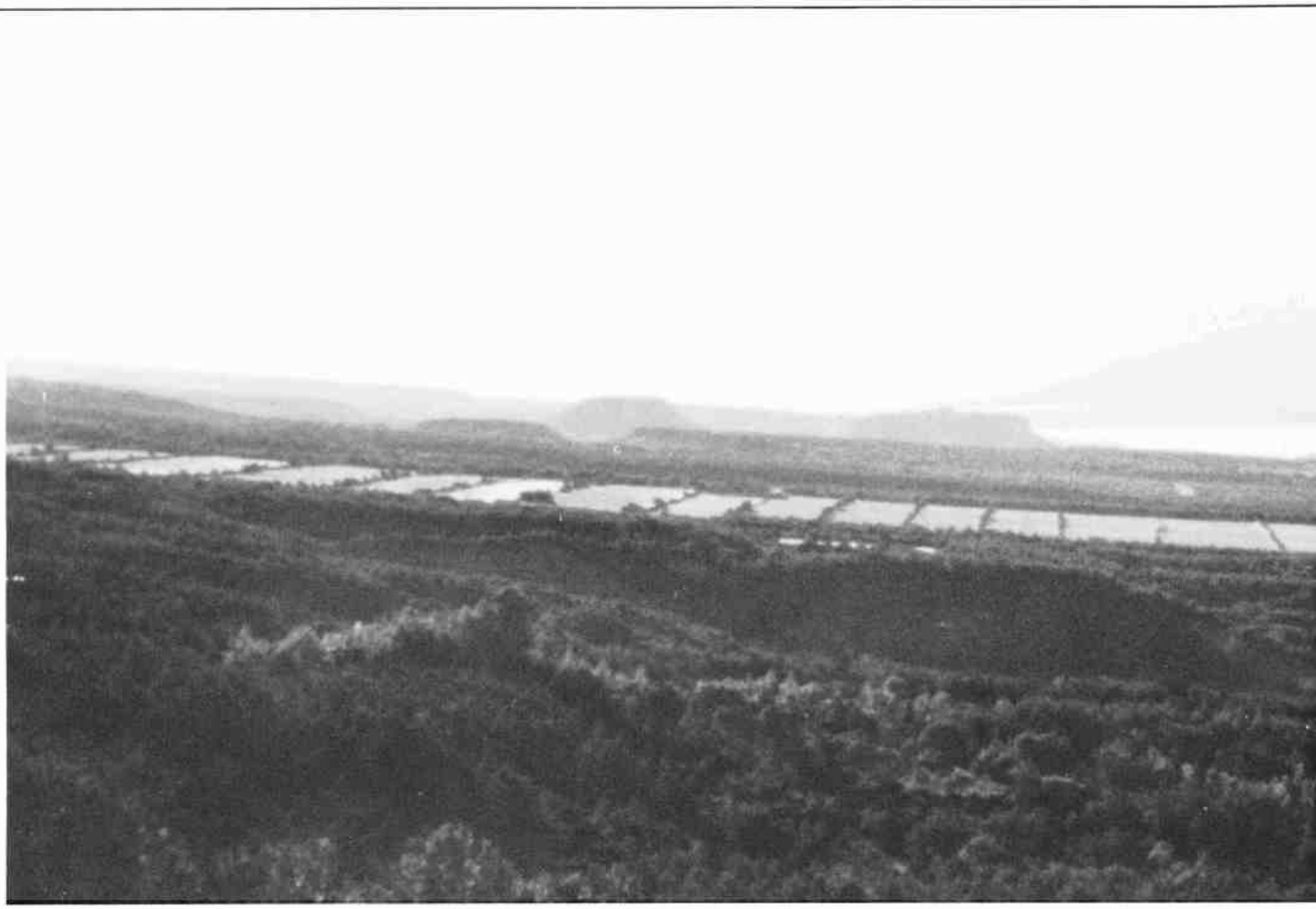
The main Aragon begins at the junction of the Subordán and the Aragon de Jaca and swells with the joining of the Esca, Veral, and Salazar. At this point the

The Rio Aragon as it appears today. Very likely, Basurto fished the Aragon in the early sixteenth century. The Aragon is typical of the limestone rivers of the Pyrenees region.

river is between seventy-five and one hundred fifty feet wide, shoaling over gravel beds and forming long pools against the high banks of alluvial deposits. It then flows into the long, narrow impoundment of Yesa, created in the 1940s for irrigation purposes. The outflow is from the bottom of the dam, is constant in volume and temperature during periods of normal rainfall, and is rarely roiled by the sometimes heavy but sporadic rains of the region. The stretch of river below the dam is a precious resource, and it is fishable when all the other rivers in the area are high and muddy. From Javier—birthplace of St. Francis Xavier, one of the founders of the Society of Jesus (or Jesuits) and a contemporary of Basurto—the valley narrows between rounded, vineyard- and pine-covered hills, then opens out at Sanguësa, where the Irati joins the Aragon. This is the threshold of the broad, flat Ebro valley. The main tributary of the Aragon, the Irati was once one of the best trout streams in the Pyrenees—and one of Hemingway's favorites. Today it is cut up into bits and pieces by hydroelectric dams; however, there are still some good sections of water near Aoiz in the lower valley. The valley below Sanguësa is the site of considerable industrialization. No doubt the river afforded good fishing in Basurto's time; there are still a few trout around Sanguësa.

I first fished the Aragon in 1961, on the Subordán and Jaca branches. The trout were numerous and active, but small. The fly hatches were excellent; but when I discovered the Salazar I quickly preferred it, as it held larger fish and moreover was an hour nearer my home. The fishermen I occasionally encountered were locals who fished with bait—worms, stonefly larvae, or caddis larvae—and sometimes a rare "sport" from Pamplona or San Sebastián fished with a spinner. Contacts with the local people were always friendly—a characteristic of the country people in Spain—and I often got worthwhile tips on where the fishing was good. I gathered from their curiosity about my tackle and techniques that fly-fishing was not a familiar practice in the region (nor for that matter, elsewhere in Spain at that time, aside from a few rivers near Bilbao and Santander). Later, the fly with a "water-bubble" float on spin tackle became popular; this and the spinner were commonly used, live bait being reserved mostly for high and colored water. Some years later, *cotos* (reserves) spread to the Pyrenees, and several were set up on the Aragon and tributaries. One result was that more city sports began to fish these waters, a phenomenon also related to Spain's increasing prosperity.

The *coto* (short for *acotado*) is a Spanish fisheries management system that has been very successful. Inaugurated by Franco, a keen angler, on the salmon rivers of Asturias, the system worked so well in spreading out the catch, conserving and increasing stocks, that it was gradually introduced all over the country. Briefly, it is a daily fee system for designated beats. There are fixed rod-and-creel limits and certain restrictions as to angling methods. Fees range from a very modest figure for local fishermen on their home waters to much higher costs for Spanish nationals, with the highest fees for foreign anglers. The local fishermen



Lake Yesa, formed as a result of damming the Aragon in the 1940s. The only dam on the Aragon, its tailrace affords excellent trout fishing.

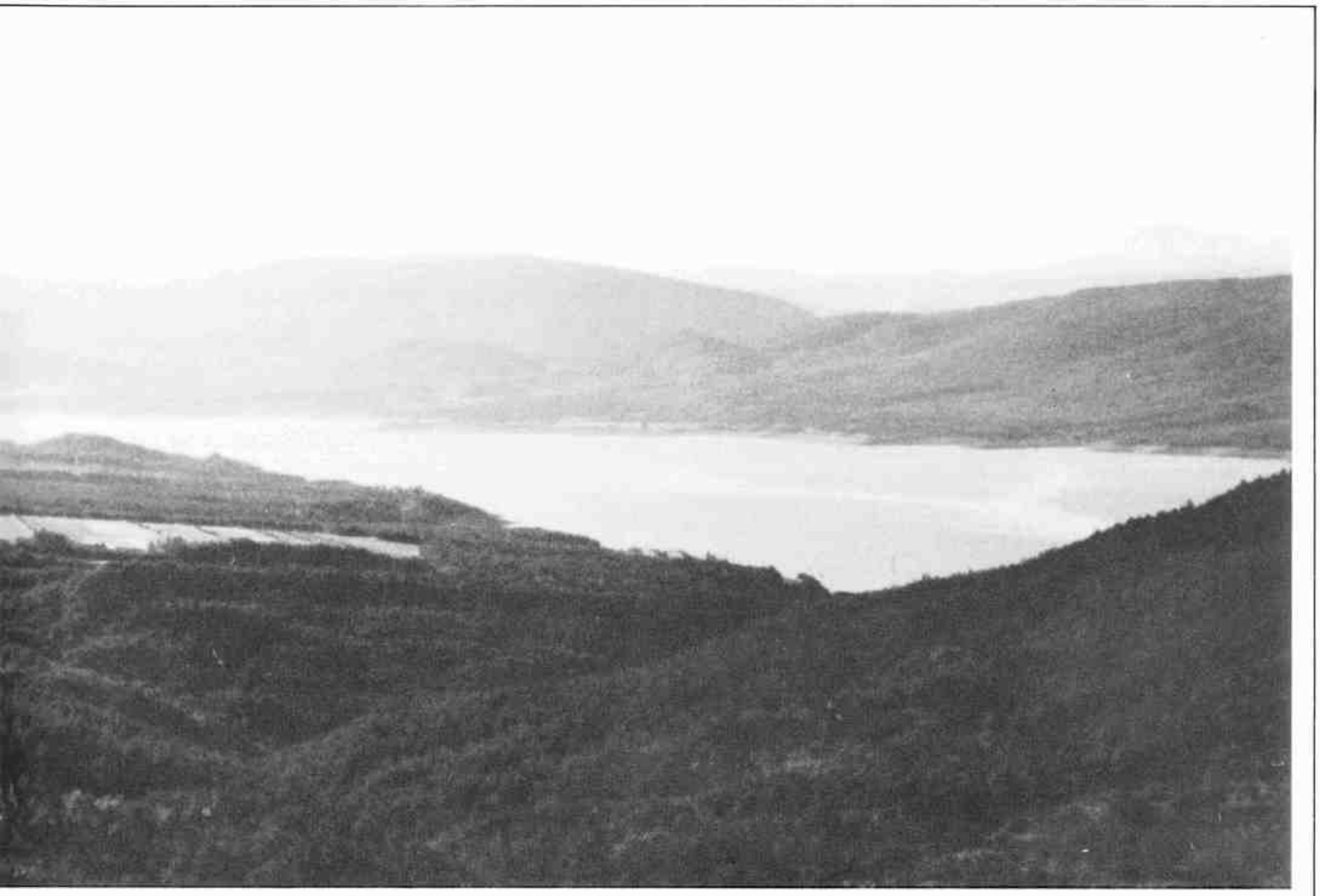
also have one day per week reserved for them alone. These measures have proven very popular among the locals as they benefit from improved fishing and do not have the feeling that they are being elbowed off their home waters by outsiders. In 1985, most salmon *cotos* were some fifty dollars per day for foreigners, trout *cotos*, ten dollars. These fees cover the operating costs of the Fisheries Service (ICONA) and the warden service. There is at least one warden per *coto* or some three to eight miles of river. You can be sure your license and permit will be checked every day on a *coto!*

The Aragon and its tributaries are noted for their abundant fly life. From March to June there are massive hatches of March Browns *(Heptagenia sp.)* and Baetids *(B. rhodani, B. vernus, and B. scambus,* among others); the Blue-Winged Olive appears from June to September; and the summer mayfly *(Siphlonurus sp.)* hatches in June and July. Stoneflies and caddis are plentiful as well. The *coto* of Javier on the Aragon, with its stable flow and temperature, is particularly rich in fly life—to say nothing of crayfish, snails, and baitfish. The hatches of an all-beige caddis in May and June must be seen to be believed. They provoke massive rises of the large trout common in this stretch; the sight of four-, five-, and six-pounders wolfing down these caddis always causes an attack of buck fever in me. These large fish are hard to fool. At the start of this caddis season they will readily be taken by a floater, but after a short time they seem to be interested only in the emerging pupa. I have found them almost impossible to catch at this time. Another hatch that brings them on in early summer is that of the ghost midge found in the weedy silt beds along deeper water. Enormous trout come in close to shore and cruise around right under your rod tip as they slurp down these pupae.

The Javier *coto* consists of open water with numerous long, broad pools, interspersed with long stickles over gravel beds. Wading is easy, although the bottom does get slippery from algal growth during warm weather, and so is casting. The bird life is fascinating: eagles, kites and other raptors, ducks, storks, and—among the smaller birds—the resplendent bee eater. I often cease fishing to watch these beautiful birds with their swallowlike profile and flight, gliding back and forth between the wheatfields or vineyards and their nestholes built in the sandy bluffs that overhang the big bends in the river.

The trout in these rivers are exclusively brown trout (Salmo trutta) a wild stock of what is called the Mediterranean strain. Their color is a pale gray-green ground, speckled with tiny blood-red spots. Their flanks are barred with four or five dark, vertical perchlike stripes or bands. I find them to be strong fighters and superior table fare.

These Aragonese rivers are filled with barbel, many of them reaching double-figure weight. But in spite of their sporting qualities, no one seems to bother with them; hence they proliferate unchecked. I would guess that it's their poor eating quality that makes them unpopular. They are a familiar sight to the Pyrenean fisherman, as they are found in all the larger, fast-flowing coldwater rivers of the area on both sides of the border. In my



forty years of trout fishing, I have never seen one rise or take an insect on the surface. It is possible that barbel pursue caddis pupae in their rapid ascent to the surface, but I have never taken a barbel while fishing pupa imitators for trout. Thus Basurto's remarks about barbel feeding on the "little white butterfly" in flight or on the surface leave me perplexed. Did he mistake trout and *boga* for barbel? It's easy enough to do, especially at dusk. During their spawning season (May and June), I have often seen barbel suddenly leaping en masse in quiet pools, an exhibition that ceases as abruptly as it began. The spawners are busy at this moment chasing each other back and forth through the shallow stickles where mating takes place.

The weather did not cooperate with my recent effort to identify Basurto's little white butterfly; strong westerly winds or thunderstorms every afternoon I was on the Aragon dispelled any hope for an evening hatch. In addition the terrible cold wave of January 1985 delayed many biological cycles by as much as two months. For example, wild mushrooms were four to six weeks late, and I learned after my return from the United States in October that the only emergences of *Oligoneuriella rhenana* observed on the waters where they usually occur in July and August took place in mid-September —two months late! I had originally thought that *O. rhenana* might be the fly Basurto identified as his white butterfly, but after examining a specimen, I think not. Basurto says the body color is yellow, while that of *O. rhenana* is grayish white; he also states that their emergence takes place on "- the large and greater rivers and the wide and deep flat sections -," whereas *O. rhenana* emerges from fast, boulder-studded rivers, usually of modest size. *Potamanthus luteus* seems a more likely candidate, for it has a yellow body and frequents large, slow-moving rivers.

Another enigma is Basurto's mention of the "four little horns" (antennae) on the butterfly. In his description of catching these flies (for bait) with a candle, he says that they fall with their wings "joined with one another [likely stuck together as a result of the heat from the candle] at the four horns they have...". I have not seen the original text in Spanish, which may contain the clue to this puzzle. The preceding quotation puts the four little horns together at one end or the other of the insect, that is, four cerci or four antennae. No Ephemeropteran has four cerci; many caddis flies have two highly visible antennae, as well as two fairly obvious labial palps just below them, but no caddis fly I know of fits the rest of Basurto's description.

Perhaps time will tell. The warden on the Javier *coto* of the Aragon assured me that there is a white crepuscular fly on the river, but not being an entomologist nor a fly fisher, he couldn't give me any details. It will be fun trying to solve the mystery! §

Born in Detroit, Michigan, and a veteran of such streams as the Au Sable and the Boardman, George Beall has resided in France since 1946. When not teaching or writing, he fishes the streams of western Europe, Canada, and New Zealand.

Books

Antique Fishing Reels: Your Illustrated Guide to Identifying and Understanding U.S. Patented Models Through 1920
by Steven K. Vernon. Stackpole Books, 1985, 192 pages (illustrated), $19.95

Interest in reel collecting has grown tremendously in recent years, yet surprisingly, there has been nothing published that resembles a standard text for collectors to turn to for information about their hobby. *Antique Fishing Reels* may fall short of being this standard text in some respects, nevertheless, it is the most thoroughly researched, articulate, and useful guide available to the collector that has been published to date.

The principle topic of Vernon's book is a history of the multiplying reel as described in U.S. patents through 1920. The development of various reel features is traced in separate chapters with the following headings: Brakes, Clicks, Drags, Frame construction and external features, Freespool clutches, Level-wind mechanisms, Machining and engineering features, and Quick-takedown features. In addition, there is a very good chapter on materials, which provides some background on the alloys and plastics used in reels, and an excellent chapter on the invention and early development of the multiplying reel, which discusses British origins of the multiplier and the earliest American multipliers (which were never patented).

The patents are introduced chronologically within each chapter, and a brief explanation of their improvements is made, usually together with a patent drawing or a photograph of the reel that shows the feature under discussion. The book is profusely illustrated, with 275 patent drawings and 125 close-up, black-and-white photographs, including some photographs by Vernon of the original patent models at the Smithsonian. These are particularly interesting. Some of the photos seem a little small (1½″ x 2″), but most are adequate and nearly all are of very good quality. A few, such as the Henshall-Van Antwerp photograph by Ron Gast, on page 28, are exceptionally beautiful.

Vernon has made an effort to simplify and standardize the terminology used in his description, and anyone who has suffered through the baffling technical language of some patents will appreciate this aspect of his work. Some of his descriptions get a little out of hand, however, such as this one on page 116 of an 1892 patent by Alphonso Boardman for an automatic freespool clutch:

> ...The main gear, which had a pin on its outer face, rotated loosely on a sleeve formed by the hub of a disc which covered the gear. The gear shaft, attached to the headplate, extended through the sleeve into a recess drilled into the inner end of the crankshaft. On the end of the crankshaft was a cam. A flange fixed above the cam formed another disc, with a 90 degree notch on its edge. A pin fastened to the hubbed disc protruded into the notch of the fixed disc. The hubbed disc also had a radial notch, in which a spring-mounted block slid. When the crank was turned, the notched disc on the crankshaft contacted the pin from the hubbed disc, causing it to rotate. Simultaneously, the crankshaft cam pushed the sliding block on the main gear and rotated the gear and, thereby, the spool....

Are you as bewildered by all this as I am?

Antique Fishing Reels is admittedly a selective guide to American reel patents. It focuses primarily on multiplying reels. Although it does contain much material on single-action reels, including fly reels and trolling reels, it contains very little on automatics, reel-in-reel combinations, or spinning reels. Vernon states that his intention is to include only the "more important and most interesting inventions" and that he has "limited the book arbitrarily to inventions patented in 1920 or earlier." By my count, this means that he discusses or otherwise mentions 270 of the approximately 450 U.S. fishing-reel patents granted through 1920—or about sixty percent. Some collectors are bound to take umbrage at some of his omissions, and others will lament that coverage ends at 1920. Between 1920 and 1940, more than 300 additional U.S. reel patents were granted. These included reels of Julius Vom Hofe, Joseph Coxe, Charles Pflueger, William Shakespeare Jr., and Arthur and Oscar Kovalovsky. But the truth of the matter is that Vernon does a highly creditable job of selecting and discussing those reel patents that are of most interest to the majority of collectors.

However, *Antique Fishing Reels* is marred by some more serious omissions than those mentioned earlier. When the chief source of information for this work is U.S. patents, there should be more detailed background on the U.S. patent system. This should include a discussion of assignments, renewals, patent pending marks, the duration of patents, a differentiation between design and mechanical patents, and instruction on how to order copies of U.S. patents. Information of this nature is imperative for the reader who wishes to study the original and complete patent specifications. Also, although one stated purpose of the book is to "give credit to the many unsung inventors whose imagination and engineering skills so improved the sport of fishing," we learn little about these inventors. Where Vernon does seek to add a biographical dimension to his work, he seems tentative. He speculates, for example, on pages 61 and 62, that there may be two reelmakers named Julius Vom Hofe, rather than confirming this fact: both Julius Vom Hofe (1837 to 1907) and his son Julius Vom Hofe (1871 to 1939) made reels. In a few instances, Vernon is wrong. For example, he states that A. F. Meisselbach "moved to Elyria, Ohio, where he continued to make reels well into the 1930's." A. F. Meisselbach died in 1927 and never lived in Ohio.

It is probable that *Antique Fishing Reels* contains more hard facts on pre-1920 American patent reels than any publication that has preceeded it or any that is likely to be published in the near future. It will certainly aid collectors in identifying these reels and in understanding their mechanical improvements. Vernon's book should also help collectors to appreciate the great variety and creativity of American reel disign. It could conceivably result in a new market for *patent reels*, which would be a pleasant change for this hobby that often seems to be exclusively preoccupied with premium quality or with *name* reels.

But collectors should be careful. This is not a basic text on the collection of fishing reels. It is a highly specialized work. You will not find a chapter on the care and display of reels, or a chapter on how to start a reel collection. There is scant information on the inventors or manufacturers of these reels, or whether a reel was a commercial success or failure. In addition, few details on model names, model numbers, or years of production are offered, and fewer details are given on how these reels were used by the sportsmen of the time. To some readers, Vernon's account of the evolution of patent reels will thus seem too monolithic and too technical. Its scientific viewpoint is too unremitting and blind to both the larger historical context and the great beauty that many of these fine old antiques display.

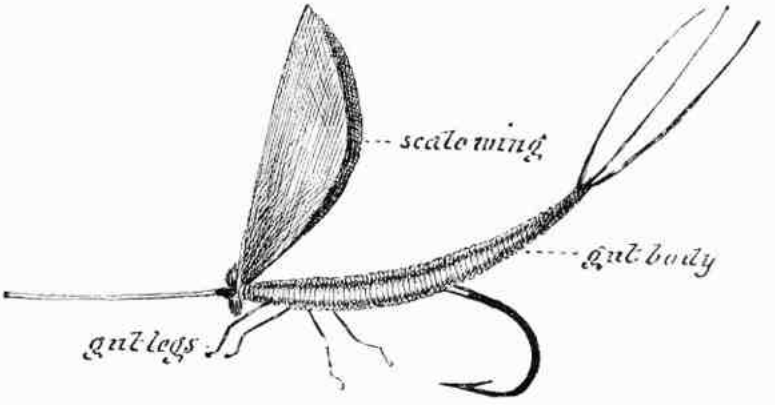
In spite of its specialized nature, reel collectors should not miss *Antique Fishing Reels;* it is a fine work that deserves and will repay close study. §

—Jim Brown

Notes and Comment

More on JHK

The following letter to the editor was published in the February 3, 1907, issue of *Forest and Stream*. We take the liberty to reprint this item because of its mention of—yes, you guessed it—John Harrington Keene. It also demonstrates what short memories anglers have.



To the editor:

I have a proposition to make to the serious anglers of this continent, particularly those who see in fly-fishing the highest phase of the art. It is this: For each angler to do something during the coming season toward the preparation and eventual publication of an angling entomology.

This appeal to my fellow-fishermen is the result of my own ignorance and totally ineffectual efforts to remove it. After graduating from worm to fly at an early age in New England, I learned, not a great while ago, the delights of dry fly-fishing in England, its mysteries being easily comprehended by means of the many books and papers on the natural insects of the streams, culminating in Halford's monumental "Dry Fly Entomology," a superbly illustrated work in which all the known ephemeridae and diptera of the English rivers, and also the artificial flies tied in imitation of them, male and female, are faithfully depicted. Returning across the sea I proceeded to spend parts of two summers in experimenting with dry fly methods in this province. The first necessity was, of course, the flies. I called on two of the best dealers in New York, two in Boston, and wrote to several others. "Oh, yes," was the common answer, "we have exact imitation flies," and they proceeded to place before me a collection of English dry flies!

Then they tried me with "gauze-wing" flies, "fluttering" flies, and what not, but, with the exception of India rubber insects and a caddis or stone fly, no answer was vouchsafed to my question, "What insect is this or that fly made to represent?" Like Faust, I searched and searched, not only in shops, but in American angling literature, but all in vain, for the result was like this: *nichts!* I therefore came to the natural conclusion that there was no American angling entomology, either in word or practice, and I thereupon hied me to the waters of Nova Scotia and selected from my English stock such specimens as most resembled the flies I found the trout feeding upon. Now, the results of my New World dry fly-fishing have, as matter of record, been quite unsatisfactory, not to say utterly abortive; but to draw any definite adverse conclusions in regard to the use of the dry fly from these experiments would be wrong, if for no other reason than that my flies were imitations, not of Nova Scotian, but of English ephemera. Furthermore, our far northern waters, where *fontinalis* likes a lively bug and is partial to bright colors, are not the best territory for such an experiment, which might better be tried in Pennsylvania or Connecticut.

Now, I may overstate the case when I opine that no amateur has ever seriously tried to lure the brook trout with flies tied in the exact semblance and size of the ephemera upon which they actually feed; secondly, that not one angler in fifty even takes the trouble to note what flies are on the water, but proceeds to run the gamut of his fly book until he has found a killer; and thirdly, that not one in two hundred can tell one natural fly from another after he has it between his fingers!

This is another way of saying that American fishermen care nothing at all for entomology; in fact, I have heard many of them say that, our trout being uneducated, such niceties are quite unnecessary. May be so, but until an American Halford appears to give us some American "niceties," it has certainly not been proved. Many of us strongly suspect the contrary. There is, however, no need to waste more words along this line. The men to whom I appeal will understand, and I hope appreciate, what I am driving at.

The question arises, How shall we go to work practically? The great angling republic of the United States and Canada is a vast country, and the preparation of an authoritative entomology must necessarily be the work of years, but all the more should we be up and at it. My idea is somewhat as follows: Let every interested angler provide himself with a magnifying glass, a few pins, a tiny bottle of chloroform and a few small boxes, those especially made for collectors being best. Let him capture, kill and bring back as many specimens as his time and enthusiasm will permit of the insects which he sees the trout to be actually feeding upon. But this is not enough; he must number his specimens and prepare (on the spot at the time of capture) a careful description of each, being very particular about color. Those who care to take any extra trouble can take along a small box of water colors and note with the description the exact shade of color of wings, etc. Each specimen should be marked with the date, country, county and water, as well as the time of day captured. Boxes of specimens, together with descriptive lists, each properly marked so as to avoid confusion, should then be handed in to some suitable and interested person, say the editor of *Forest and Stream*, who shall act as a curator of the collection, publishing the results from time to time, with suggestions as to what seems most to be needed in any given direction. In due time the first edition of an "American Angling Entomology" can be brought out, and meanwhile a stimulus will be given to such men as John Harrington Keene and other professional and amateur fly-tyers to produce a series of flies that should exactly imitate the insects fed upon by *fontinalis* and other American game fish.

Mr. Keene invented the scale-wing fly and, I understand, manufactured a great

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The following back issues are available at $4 per copy:

Volume 6,	Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4
Volume 7,	Numbers 2, 3 and 4
Volume 8,	Number 3
Volume 9,	Numbers 1, 2 and 3
Volume 10,	Numbers 1 and 2
Volume 11,	Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4
Volume 12,	Numbers 1 and 3

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number, but one hears little of them nowadays. I do not know whether they were imitations of any particular insects known to science, but suppose they were.

It will be necessary to have the specimens examined and named by competent entomologists, and individual collectors can greatly assist the work by submitting their own insects to good authorities and having them correctly named.

Undoubtedly there are very many American anglers who have for years been in the habit of observing the real insects on trout waters, and quite likely some of them may already have formed collections or at least made and kept notes of their observations that must prove of great value. It would be interesting and instructive to hear the opinions of these gentlemen.

It might not be a bad idea to form a loosely coherent, unorganized association of angling entomologists. I should be happy, for one, to contribute an annual membership fee to furnish the sinews of war, for instance, to provide a suitable cabinet in which to store the collections, etc.

Edward Breck
Annapolis, N.S.

Anna Keene, Fly Maker

We are grateful to Paul Schullery for supplying us with a copy of "Women Who Make Artificial Flies" *(Forest and Stream,* September 9, 1911, *vide infra).* Mrs. Keene outlived her husband by almost twenty-four years; she died a pauper on February 24, 1932. According to records at the Queens County Surrogate Court, Mrs. Keene died at a private hospital in Flushing, New York, of a contagious disease. All of her belongings were burned after her death because of the contagious nature of the disease (we were unable to determine specifically what the disease was; perhaps one of our readers has thoughts on this matter). A gold watch ("out of repair") valued at five dollars and a small house lot valued at one hundred and twenty-five dollars were her only possessions of value at the time of her death.

Women Who Make Artificial Flies

One of the first women, perhaps, to make flies in large quantities in America was Mrs. Carrie J. Frost, a Wisconsin girl. At first she began making flies for friends, as a sort of a side issue, and as her fame spread, orders increased, and in recent years she has conducted a large establishment of her own. She employs a large number of girls and women, all of whom she taught herself, and the flies supplied to the trade by her are well liked.

Another woman who makes flies as a business is Mrs. Anna Keene, of Queens, N.Y. She is the widow of John Harrington Keene, who wrote so many books and articles on fishing and rod and tackle making. Mrs. Keene is fond of fishing, especially fly-fishing, and takes lively interest in the success met with by anglers who fish with her flies, which are superb, especially those made for dry-fly fishing.

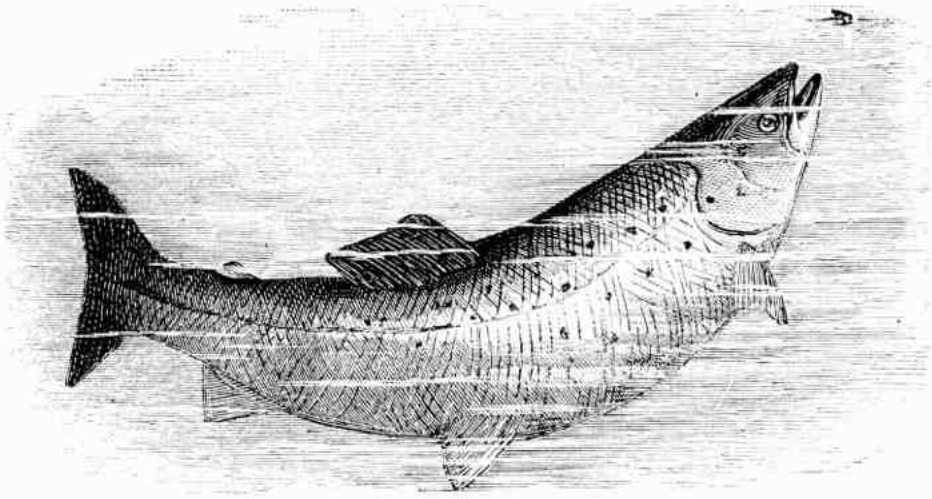
In Los Angeles lives still another woman who makes flies for a living. This is Mrs. Frances Brown, who, the Press says, is a widow and formerly a school teacher, who hit on the idea of preparing flies for the trout from the complaints of her pupils, who told how the fish ate the bait, but escaped the hook. She began by fashioning worms of silk, wool, thread, floss and chenille, and her wares were put on sale in stores dealing in sportsmen's goods. After a trial the fishermen came back enthusiastically for more, and several friends gave Mrs. Brown suggestions which enabled her to extend her business. Now she has a half dozen girls working for her, and even then she hardly can keep up with the orders. The bait is made so skillfully the oldest and wisest trout are deceived.

Checklist for *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times* Available

A checklist, compiled by John G. Vargas, for *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times* (1859-1902) by George Wilkes, may be obtained from the American Antiquarian Society (185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01609-1634). The eleven-page typed list contains a wealth of bibliographic information concerning this rare miscellany, which chronicled the latest in matters pertaining to the turf, field sports, literature, and the stage. Price, including postage, is six dollars and thirty-six cents.

American Fly Fisher to be Indexed and Abstracted

In case you hadn't noticed (see title page), the *American Fly Fisher* will be indexed and abstracted in *America: History and Life* and *Historical Abstracts.* These two publications, published by the American Bibliographical Center—Clio Press (ABC-CLIO), have more than 4,500 subscribers. These include many college and university libraries in the United States and the libraries of major institutions in other parts of the world. We join a list of more than 2,000 journals (in more than thirty languages) that are currently being abstracted by ABC-CLIO. Inclusion in these bibliographical works will serve to amplify our reputation and to attest to the seriousness of our endeavor.§



Who's on First

While comedian Bud Abbott knew who was on first, his sidekick and partner Lou Costello was totally baffled in the performance of their classic baseball routine. When it comes to dry-fly fishing, or for that matter any aspect of fly-fishing, we find it very difficult to state unambiguously who did something first. For sure, Theodore Gordon was not the first to fish dry flies on American waters. We have amply demonstrated *(vide ante)* that John Harrington Keene was using the technique on the Battenkill prior to Gordon's experiments in the Catskills. But was Keene the first to fish floating flies? We doubt it. It is inconceivable to us that the Yankee fly fisherman with infinite ingenuity at his disposal did not figure out, at an early stage of the game, that fish could be taken with a floating fly. He may not have explicitly codified his fishing method as dry-fly fishing or fished with a dry-fly-style fly. Explicit formalization of a technique—for example, the establishment of a dry-fly code—comes about when people write about it as such, as a clearly perceived formulation. It is then on record; it can be discussed, thought about, easily pointed to, and referred to by future generations. In other words, it is an obvious historical benchmark. John Harrington Keene's significance to American angling history is not that he did something first, but that he was the first to codify a technique. So historically speaking, when it comes to who was first, or who was on to it first, we're in Lou Costello's shoes. It is impossible to know for sure.