

SALMONIA:

OR

DAYS OF FLY FISHING.

IN

A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS.

WITH

**SOME ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF FISHES BELONGING
TO THE GENUS SALMO.**

BY AN ANGLER.

[*Sir Humphrey Davy*]

—“*Equidem credo quia sit divinitus illis
Ingenium.*”

FIRST AMERICAN FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

**PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY AND LEA—CHESNUT STREET.**

1832.

**W. MERRIAM AND CO. PRINTERS,
Brookfield, Mass.**



W. MERRIAM AND CO.
PRINTERS
BROOKFIELD, MASS.

TO
WILLIAM BABINGTON,

M.D. F.R.S.

THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE DEDICATED,

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF SOME DELIGHTFUL DAYS PASSED IN HIS

SOCIETY,

AND IN GRATITUDE

FOR AN UNINTERRUPTED FRIENDSHIP OF

A

QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

PREFACE.

THESE pages formed the occupation of the Author during some months of severe and dangerous illness, when he was wholly incapable of attending to more useful studies, or of following more serious pursuits. They constituted his amusement in many hours, which otherwise would have been unoccupied and tedious; and they are published in the hope, that they may possess an interest for those persons, who derive pleasure from the simplest and most attainable kind of rural sports, and who practice the art, or patronize the objects of contemplation, of the Philosophical Angler.

The conversational manner and discursive style were chosen as best suited to the state of health of the Author, who was incapable of considerable efforts and long-continued attention ; and he could not but have in mind a model, which has fully proved the utility and popularity of this method of treating the subject—*The Complete Angler*, by Walton and Cotton.

The characters, chosen to support these Conversations, are—**HALIEUS**, who is supposed to be an accomplished fly fisher ; **ORNITHER**, who is to be regarded as a gentleman generally fond of the sports of the field, though not a finished master of the art of angling ; **POIETES**, who is to be considered as an enthusiastic lover of nature, and partially acquainted with the mysteries of fly fishing ; and **PHYSICUS**, who is described uninitiated as an angler, but as a

person fond of inquiries in natural history and philosophy.

These personages are of course imaginary, though the sentiments attributed to them, the Author may sometimes have gained from recollections of real conversations with friends, from whose society much of the happiness of his early life has been derived ; and in the portrait of the character of HALIEUS, given in the last dialogue, a likeness, he thinks, will not fail to be recognized to that of the character of a most estimable Physician, ardently beloved by his friends, and esteemed and venerated by the public.

He has limited his description of fish to the varieties of the Salmo most usual in the fresh waters of Europe, and which may be defined as a genus having eight fins, the one above the tail fleshy, and without spines.

It is to be hoped M. Cuvier's new work on fishes will supply accurate information on this genus, which is still very imperfectly known.

Laybach, Illyria,
Sep. 30, 1828.

CONTENTS.

FIRST DAY.

Vindication of fly-fishing—Poem in praise of Walton—Distinguished anglers—Fishing, a natural, philosophical, and scientific pursuit—Scenery—Fish possessed of little sensibility—Praise of fly-fishing—Field-sports related to natural history—Proposed fishing excursion—Comparison of a river to human life Page 13—29

SECOND DAY.

Trout fishing—Flies—May-fly and gray drake—Alder fly—Object of fishing—Escape of a fish after being hooked—Sense of smelling in fish—Baits—The natural fly—Pricked trout—Local habits of animals—Trout of the Colne—Throwing the fly—Trout described—Spots on trout—Perch—Anecdote—Haunts of trout—Evening fishing—Management of a fish when hooked—Flies of different seasons—Fishing season—Difference of the gillaroo from trout—Diminution of flies in some rivers—Gillaroo trout found only in Ireland—Par or samlet—other varieties of trout—Dr. Darwin—Ex-

periment on trout by Mr. Tonkin of Polgaron—Cause of the varieties of trout—Mule fish—Crossing the breed—Impregnation of the ova of fish—Experiment of Mr. Jacobi on this point—Causes that hasten or retard the maturity of the ova—Why fish approach shallows to spawn—Admiration of the designs of Providence Page 30—91

THIRD DAY.

Morning fishing—Effect of shadows in fishing—Anecdotes illustrating the effect of sunshine—Swallows 92—98

FOURTH DAY.

Scenery—Loch Maree—Eagles—The inn—The river Ewe—Sea trout—Poaching highlander—Salmon—Cause of fish being drowned—Salmon—Death by suffocation—Nature of pain—Instances of death without pain—Sea trout—Crimping—The dinner—The double snipe—Value of temperance in eating and drinking—Wading in boots a bad practice—Salmon and trout compared—Varieties of salmon 99—132

FIFTH DAY.

Salmon fishing—Produce of a morning's sport—Rivers of Norway and Sweden—English rivers—Salmon rivers—Scotch rivers—Irish rivers—The Sabbath day—Instincts—Instincts to animals what revelation is to man 133—170

SIXTH DAY.

Flies—Hooks—Salmon of the Ewe—Sense of smelling in animals—Salmon fishing with pars—Food of Salmon—Indications of rainy weather—Omens Page 171—191

SEVENTH DAY.

Grayling—Anatomy of the grayling—Grayling fishing—Scenery—Habits of the grayling—Grayling rivers—Baits for grayling—Generation of eels—Migration of eels—The conger eel 192—225

EIGHTH DAY.

Scenery—Natural history—Origin of the common house fly—Bees and ants—The libellula—Ephemera—Michaelmas daisy—Humble bee—Thoughts on death, suggested by this insect 226—249

NINTH DAY.

Fishing for hucho—Hereditary instinct—Causes of variety in trout—Salmo hucho—Taking a salmo hucho—Resemblance of the hucho to trout—Interior of the hucho examined—Habits of the hucho—Pleasure of angling—Cockney fishermen—Lame boy and his boats—Amusements—Sea serpent—Kraken—Mermaid—Austrian method of conveying fish—Education—The press—Effect of continuous fishing—

Difference of rivers—Angling for frogs—Water ouzel— —Umbla—Laveret—Organization of the hucho—Craniology —Fat and flesh of the hucho—Naturalization of fish—The Traum—Colour of water—Colour of the ocean—Waterfalls —Reflections—The late Mr. B. West	Page 244—308
---	--------------

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Estimable mention of Dr. Wollaston—On the supposed cross breed of the par—On the scolopax	309
--	-----

The only difference between the par and common small trout is in the colours, and its possessing one or two spines more in the pectoral fin. The par has large blue or olive bluish marks on the sides, as if they had been made by the impression of the fingers of a hand; and hence the fish is called in some places *fingerling*. The river and sea trout seem capable of changing permanently their places of residence; and sea trout appear often to become river trout. In this case they lose their silvery colour, and gain more spots; and in their offspring these changes are more distinct. Fish, likewise, which are ill-fed remain small; and pars are exceedingly numerous in those rivers where they are found, which are never separated from the sea by impassable falls; from which I think it possible that they are produced by a cross between sea and river trout. The varieties of the common trout are almost infinite; from the great lake trout, which weighs above 60 or 70lbs., to the trouts of the little mountain brook or small mountain lake, or tarn, which is scarcely larger than the finger. The smallest trout spawn nearly at the same time with the larger ones, and their ova are of the same size; but in the

large trout there are tens of thousands, and in the small one rarely as many as forty,—often from ten to forty. So that in the physical constitution of these animals, their production is diminished as their food is small in quantity; and it is remarkable, that the ova of the large and beautiful species which exist in certain lakes, and which seem always to associate together, appear to produce offspring, which, in colour, form, and power of growth and reproduction, resemble the parent fishes; and they generally choose the same river for their spawning. Thus, in the lake of Garda, the Benacus of the ancients, the magnificent trout, or *Salmo fario*, which in colour and appearance is like a fresh run salmon, spawns in the river at Riva, beginning to run up for that purpose in June, and continuing to do so all the summer; and this river is fed by streams from snow and glaciers in the Tyrol, and is generally foul: whilst the small spotted common trouts, which are likewise found in this lake, go into the small brooks, which have their sources not far off, and in which, it is probable, they were originally bred. I have seen taken in the same net small fish of both these varieties which

were as marked as possible in their characters:—one silvery, like a young salmon, blue on the back, and with small black spots only; the other, with yellow belly and red spots, and an olive-coloured back. I have made similar observations in other lakes, particularly in that of the Tarun near Gmunden, and likewise at Loch Neah in Ireland. Indeed, considering the sea trout as the type of the species *trout*, I think all the other true trouts may not improperly be considered as varieties, where the differences of food and of habits have occasioned, in a long course of ages, differences of shape and colours, transmitted to offspring in the same manner as in the variety of dogs, which may all be referred to one primitive type.*

* I have known the number of spines in the pectoral fins different, in different varieties of trout; I have seen them 12, 13, and 14: but the anal fin always, I believe, contains 11 spines, the dorsal 12 or 13, the ventral 9, and the caudal 21. The smallest brook trout, when well and copiously fed, will increase in stews to four or five pounds in weight, but never attains the size or characters of lake trout.

Mr. Tonkin of Polgaron put some small river trout, 2 1-2 inches in length, into a newly-made pond. He took some of these out the second year, and they were above 12 inches in length; the third year, he took one out that was 16 inches; and the fourth year, one of 25 inches: this was in 1734. (*Carew's Survey of Cornwall*, p. 87. Lord de Dunstanville's edition.)

PHYS.—I am somewhat amused at your idea of the change produced in the species of trout by the formation of particular characters by particular accidents, and their hereditary transmission. It reminds me of the ingenious but somewhat unsound views of Darwin on the same subject.

HAL.—I will not allow you to assimilate my views to those of an author, who, however ingenious, is far too speculative; whose poetry has always appeared to me weak philosophy, and his philosophy indifferent poetry: and to whom I have been often accustomed to apply Blumenbach's saying, that there were many things new and many things true in his doctrines; but that what was new was not true, and what was true was not new.

POIET.—I think Halieus is quite in the right to be a little angry at your observation, Physicus, in making him a disciple of a writer, who, as well as I can recollect, has deduced the *genesis* of the human being, by a succession of changes dependant upon irritabilities, sensibilities, and appetencies, from the *fish*; blending the wild fancies of Buffon with the profound ideas of Hartly, and thus endeavouring to give currency to an absurd romance, by

mixing with it some philosophical truths. I hope your parallel will induce him to do us the favour to state his own notions more at large.

HAL.—Physicus has mistaken me; and I will explain. What I mentioned of the varieties of dogs as sprung from one type, he will, I am sure, allow me to apply, with some modifications, to all our cultivated breeds of animals, whether horses, oxen, sheep, hogs, geese, ducks, turkies, or pigeons; and he will allow, that certain characters gained by accidents, either from peculiar food, air, water, or domestic treatment, are transmitted to, and often strengthened in the next generation; the qualities being, as it were, doubled when belonging to both parents, and retained in spite of counteracting causes. It will be sufficient for me to mention only a few cases. The blood-horse of Arabia, is become the favourite of the north of Europe, and the colts possess all the superior qualities of their parents, even in the polar circle. The offspring of the Merino sheep retain the fineness of their wool in England and Saxony. Poultry, bantams, tumbling and carrier pigeons, geese, ducks, turkies, &c., all afford instances of the same kind; and in