

facts of national importance. The Own Correspondent of to-day is far less an impersonality than was his predecessor even of twenty years ago. That change in the literary likings of the public, which is marked by so decided a preference for the objective, has affected even him, and he now writes less as a politician and more as an observant traveller; and, so doing, writes more acceptably to the public. The change has not at all lessened the perils of his vocation. The search after interesting detail leads him to face dangers of every kind. On the theatre of war he will pass hours or days under fire; he will join any expedition, whatever the risk, finding compensation in the material he can collect for perils however great. The advantage of this to the general public requires no pointing out. We do not so much *hear* of the stirring events which take place abroad, as *see* them through the optics of the correspondent. We travel with him on his devious round, and share the excitements of the way; while, knowing everything through his minute and faithful reports, we need not accept his conclusions, because he furnishes us with the means of arriving at our own.

The responsibility of the correspondent has vastly increased of late years, and as one result the post has been filled by men of a higher class. It is recognised that, to a great extent, it is they who furnish the materials for future historians; and it is felt, therefore, that they cannot be too diligent in the collection and verification of facts, or too scrupulous in literal adherence to the truth. The value set upon these communications was illustrated during the Crimean war, by the eagerness with which the despatches of Mr. Russell were expected, and the unabating interest with which they were devoured. No man who sets about writing the history of that war could get on without these documents, which contain living pictures of everything of note that occurred, but which the newspaper correspondent alone chronicled on the spot. The same gentleman, it will be remembered, accompanied the North American army in its campaigns against the South, until he was stupidly dismissed by the commander-in-chief. He was further present at Sadowa, where it may be said he was almost the only man who viewed that tremendous battle in its entirety, and where, with an observation more than lynx-eyed, he took in the details of that famous description which we all remember, and which has since become the basis of the Prussian history of the campaign.

In the matter of correspondence from abroad the illustrated newspapers are often at a double charge, inasmuch as they have to send out a pictorial correspondent as well as a literary one. The artist imperils himself quite as much as the writer, and at times even more, because when he is busy with his sketch he remains a fixture, and is for so long a mark for any keen-eyed rifleman's aim. The late Mr. Julian Portch, a young artist of great promise, used to narrate some striking bits of adventure which were parts of his experience while he was sketching at the siege of Sebastopol for a pictorial paper in London. One day he was in the trenches, getting on with a full-page picture. He sat on his camp-stool, and as he looked down into the besieged city he could watch with his glass the movements of a little man, who, at the head of a party of gunners, directed the charging of a huge mortar, which, every time it was fired, sent a thirteen-inch shell right up into the trenches of the English—a distance of near two miles—the little man always adjusting the piece for the aim, and firing it himself, not without some rather theatrical antics and airs of defiance. When the mortar was fired the men in the trenches would look out for the

projectile and mark the direction it took, and, of course, those who were in its vicinity when it was near would betake themselves to the holes and shelters provided for them, and there remain until it had burst and the danger was past. One morning, while busily touching up his work, P. was startled by loud shouts of "Jemmy! Jemmy! Singing Jemmy!" uttered close to his ear. He immediately sprang up, knowing that Singing Jemmy was the monster shell, so called from the hissing noise it made in rushing through the air. In his haste to get out of its way, he rushed, headlong almost, into another man's hole, mistaking it for his own. He had hardly got himself snugly ensconced when the right owner of the refuge rushed at it too. There was barely room for one person, and there was no time to seek another shelter, for Jemmy was singing disagreeably near overhead. The soldier jammed himself close to the artist to shelter as much of his person as possible. Down came Jemmy, and burst with a roar that well-nigh deafened them, and in bursting threw up, together with a volcano of mud, a huge fragment of something which struck the soldier heavily in the back. The poor fellow turned white as a sheet, and then of a livid hue, and would have fallen had not P. caught and supported him. On looking for his mortal wound, however, all the damage that could be discovered was confined to his garments, to which the muddy soil clung in a mass; the fragment which had struck him was nothing more than a portion of the sod torn up by the bursting shell, and which, though it had almost knocked the man's breath out of him, had really done him no injury beyond the momentary, though terrible, fright it had occasioned him. The incident, though treated at the time with some levity, was remembered as a providential escape, and shows well the perils sometimes undergone by "Our Own Correspondent."

SALMON AND TROUT EGG COLLECTING.

BY FRANK BUCKLAND.

I AM happy to find that the new and important science of fish culture is attracting increased public attention in England. I am always pleased to take any opportunity of making the matter better known among my countrymen, and therefore gladly pen the following remarks.

Fish culture is of two kinds. Firstly, it consists in allowing the fish, salmon especially, to have their own way, assisting them over weirs, through mills, and other obstructions, and then preserving them against poachers by means of water-bailiffs and river-watchers while they are making their nests in the small tributaries of the main streams. Secondly, salmon and trout may be cultivated artificially, that is to say, their eggs may be taken from them, and hatched in troughs, in running water, under the superintendence of man.

After many years' careful observation, I have no hesitation in saying that the natural mode of cultivating a river (especially in the case of a salmon river) will be found far to supersede the artificial mode. The latter, nevertheless, is of the greatest possible service when the former cannot be put into execution, and it also enables us to transport large numbers of salmonidæ, packed in the form of vivified eggs, for very long distances, when it would be utterly impossible to convey the living fish themselves. The transport of salmon to Australia is a good case in point.

The eggs of the fish are the hard roe, and each fish carries an amazing quantity of eggs. In the herring, for instance, I find that there are no less than 19,840 eggs;

in the mackerel, 86,120 eggs: so that the reader will have the satisfaction of knowing, when he or she eats a hard-roed herring for breakfast, or a hard-roed mackerel for dinner, that he or she will have destroyed the above numbers of herrings or mackerel, as the case may be.

The salmon and the trout, on an average, carry one thousand eggs to the pound of weight; that is to say, if a trout weigh one pound, it would carry about 1,000 eggs; if a salmon weigh twenty pounds, it would carry about 20,000 eggs; and yet, so many are the enemies of the young salmon and trout, both in the egg and infantile state, that it has been calculated (from the Tay fishery returns) that in order that *one fish* shall be caught in the net, from one to three thousand eggs must be laid by the parent fish.

The principal dangers to trout eggs are floods, which sweep away and destroy the nests of gravel in which they are laid; mud, which covers them up; ducks, which destroy them by thousands; the parent fish themselves; besides many insects, to which they are dainty morsels. The water ousel, or water crow, is said to eat these eggs. I feel convinced it does nothing of the kind. It is purely an insectivorous bird, and its business on the salmon nests is to destroy the insects that eat the eggs. It is, in fact, as clever policy to shoot the swallow for flying over the turnip fields, in order to eat the insects that destroy the turnips, as it is to shoot the water crow. The swallow does not eat the turnips; the water ousel does not eat the salmon eggs; both birds eat pernicious insects.

We are enabled, by the means of fish artificial culture, to preserve the eggs from many of their dangers; but before we can do this we must *get the eggs*; and this is a very difficult task. Many good folks would really seem to imagine that salmon and trout eggs can be as readily taken from the parent's nest as hen's eggs can be from the hen-roost, and they feel annoyed if they do not get their promised supply of eggs; let me, therefore, explain a few of the difficulties of egg collecting. In the first place, the fish must be caught; and my experience tells me forcibly that the fish have great objections to be caught. Again, they make their nests and lay their eggs in the depth of the winter, and often when it is excessively cold. I have frequently, when egg collecting, come out of the water with my net, and, having laid it on the bank to drain off the water, have found that in a few minutes it would become frozen as hard as the wire netting used to fold sheep. No one, therefore, should think of undertaking the task of egg collecting if he cannot stand cold. This work, moreover, is so uncertain, that the *master must do it himself*, or it will not be done at all. Gamekeepers and water bailiffs are good sort of fellows, but they do not care to work six or eight hours over their hips in a rapid stream, with the water a little above freezing point. Nor are they energetic enough, in the first place, to recognise, and secondly, to hunt for one particular trout, upon obtaining whose eggs the success or failure of the day's sport may depend. Moreover, a great deal of patience and ingenuity must be set to work to catch the right kind of trout.

I generally begin my work as soon in the early morning as it is possible to get the men together. I never think of walking up the bank of a river; for the trout, in clear water, are excessively artful and shy, and if they saw me, or heard footsteps, they would be off in a moment. Having ascertained where the best spawning bed is in the river, I walk near to it, and then, getting close to the bank, go on my hands and knees, and peep over to see what is going on. If there are a good number of fish at work on the bed, I signal to the keeper

who is on the other side of the stream; he then throws me a rope across, and I gradually drag the net right across to my side. Please remember that the first net should always be drawn across the stream *below* the fish; if drawn across above them, it is apt to belly out, make mud, and disturb them. The net below being fixed with the greatest possible care and celerity, I haul the second net across the river above the fish; this done, I rest a minute previous to commencing serious business. The best thing to do next is to take a run and jump right into the middle of the river, all among the spawning fish. In a moment they fly all over the place, and the chances are that half of them are in the net before they know that anything is wrong. On one occasion, in this manner, I caught thirty-six trout in the lower net and twenty-one in the upper, and in an hour or two after arrival at the river side we had filled our cans with eggs and were on our road home again. This, however, was a piece of good fortune which occurs very, very seldom; more often than not, one has to walk miles and miles all day long, and perhaps not get more than three or four thousand eggs after all.

One of the most curious things about trout egg collecting in the winter is the enormous number of male fish, compared to females, caught in the net; there are always seven gentlemen to one lady, and often the proportion is even greater. There are two reasons for this: first of all, nature seems to have ordained that there shall be more male than female fish; and, secondly, the male fish are certainly more silly than females, for the instant a splash is made in the water the males charge, all steam up, right into the net, and there kick and struggle like brave fish. The females, on the contrary, slip away somehow.

Having caught the main body of the fish from the spawning bed, the next thing I do is to go into the water to see what I have caught in the net. The engraving (from the pencil of Mr. Briscoe) will give some idea of the scene. We have just got a netful of fish, and the man on the right-hand side is going to take them out; that man is your humble servant in his winter "get up." The figure by the tree is my trusty assistant, Neville, all ready with the egg cans and spawning-tins; the people in the distance are beating the river to drive down any fish that may have escaped the net. The state of the trees will indicate the time of year. In the distance can be seen Lord Portsmouth's mansion at Hurtsborne Park, Hants, and the waterfall at the end of his lordship's beautiful lake.

As I said before, I am sure to find a large number of males in the net, and comparatively few females. Leaving the captured fish safely in the net, where they will not die whilst in the water, I at once institute a search for the ladies. Walking *up* stream, I go into the weeds which grow between the nets, and, baring my arms, bring my hands gradually together with the fingers outspread; in a minute or two I am pretty sure to touch the back of a trout with the tip of one of my fingers. At this moment great caution is necessary, or the fish will be off like lightning. I then catch the fish; but how this is done I am not going to tell the reader, for if I were to tell him I doubt if he could (like playing the fiddle) do it without much practice.

Having searched all the weeds, I then search under the hollow banks—a pretty sure find for fugitive fish; the "bolt-bolt hole" of a water-rat, situated under the water level, is a very favourite place for a frightened trout, as she will often run her nose quite into the hole, with just only her tail protruding; this, however, is quite sufficient for me: if I can only feel her tail she is

generally mine. This searching for lady trout which have hidden themselves is the coldest part of the work, as one is very often tempted, in order not to lose a fish, to lower oneself so deep that the water runs down over the waterproof dress.

way. This archway was scarcely large enough to allow a man to pass up; it was half full of water, and, as we could not quite close the hatch above, a constant stream of water was running through. Knowing that, if I did not get these fish, we should go home without any eggs,



TROUT EGG COLLECTING.

I will here describe the proper dress, viz.: a pair of indiarubber overalls,* reaching up to the armpits: these are drawn over the usual attire; woollen socks are worn over the feet, and a thin pair of boots. It is a great mistake to wear thick boots; they should be, on the contrary, very light, as it may be often necessary to run a hundred yards at full speed. It is a bad plan to wear thick flannel: if you go in head over ears it will hold the water all day; thin flannel can be easily wrung out. I have made it an invariable rule the last five years, to anoint myself, before going out in the morning, from head to foot with scented hair oil; I took this hint from the Esquimaux, who use oil largely in their fishing excursions. I carry with me a small bottle of this oil, and when about to get a trout from a rat-hole, or other deep place, give the arms and hands a good rubbing with it. It is to the use of this oil that I attribute my perfect immunity from rheumatism or colds; it prevents the warmth of the skin escaping into the water. The work all done, I sometimes make my toilet in queer places: in a stable, or under a hedge; once in an open trap, on a bleak Hampshire common, the horse galloping as hard as he could, so as to catch the last train for London. It is a very bad thing to use any spirits while at work, but a glass of very hot grog when the work is over is most acceptable. Never forget a sealskin cap lined with wool: it keeps off the snow from the ears. It should come low down on the neck, and is as warm wet as dry.

Very often the waterproof dress is of no service whatever. On one occasion, when collecting eggs near Winchester, we were not quick enough with one of the nets, and a whole shoal of trout went up underneath an arch-

I went up into the hatchway and succeeded in catching some eight or nine very large fish. I found the fish with their noses pressed hard against the hatch by the sides of which the water was coming; and every time I caught a fish, was obliged to come out again, and then go in for another. The only fear I had was that some one might open the hatch; I therefore ordered my man to sit on the hatch, with strict orders to allow no one to move it until I had finished my work. I got a fine canful of eggs from these trout.

The reader may ask what I do with the trout when I catch a great number at the same time. I have a net made with three hoops of cane; the net is fastened round these like a bag, and its mouth is drawn up and secured by means of string. This kind of net is generally called a "hoop net," but my man has christened it a "crinoline" net. When the fish are caught in the net, I fasten the "crinoline" on to my waist, keeping its mouth open with a stick; as I take the fish out of the meshes of the net I put them in the crinoline, and, as they are in the water, they will live there for any number of hours, and are always available when wanted. I have often carried fish for half a mile or more in the crinoline, walking up the bank of the river, and dipping the fish very frequently into the water; it is also possible to keep them all night by tying the net to a tree, and keeping it in a deep hole. The old-fashioned way was to carry tubs in which to put the fish; but these tubs were clumsy, heavy things, and the fish apt to die in them, whereas, in the crinoline net, you can always give them fresh water by the simple process of putting the net in the river.

When I am in quest of the larger game, viz., salmon, the work is more severe than with trout. Not many months since, having obtained permission to collect eggs

* I can confidently recommend the waterproof garments made by Cording, near Temple Bar.

in a river in Wales, I was delighted to see some twelve or fourteen salmon on the spawning-bed. Please recollect this was not a brook, but a moderately sized river. With considerable difficulty I managed to get the net across the river, and while so doing, to my horror, a horse came from a field opposite and walked across the ford, disturbing the salmon considerably, and sending one or two into the net. Everything being ready, I and my good friend John Lloyd, Esq., jun., of Brecon, a most energetic conservator of the river Usk, jumped into the ford, and instantly away they went, the whole shoal of salmon, down the river, and crash into the net. They came with such force into the net, and the stream was so strong, that the men holding the net on the other side called out for assistance. They managed, however, by belaying the rope round a tree, to hold on. It was perfectly impossible, we found, to drag the net to the shore. There was nothing, therefore, left but to go into the river and take the fish out one by one. I took out several salmon, which were no good to me, so let them go; and at a most terrific pace they *did* go when once loose. At length I saw a monster of a salmon in the net—a 24-pounder—and was determined to have her; so, getting her into my arms, I allowed her to kick for a while. When a little quiet and faint, I carried her to the shore in my arms like a child. My friend was there already, seated in a chair ready to receive her, with a sheet round him, in order to hold the fish without knocking her scales off. We ultimately returned her to the water, and she swam away as lively as could be. Just as I was letting her go, however, she turned round and hit me as smart a slap in the face with her tail as ever I received from a feminine—lady or fish; but I did not grumble, because I deserved it. The family of this fish, amounting to some 20,000, were all hatched out and turned into the Thames. If they are grateful fish, they will come back again. I carried them that night, starting from the station in Wales at half-past four on a winter's evening, and arriving in London the next morning at a quarter to six. I was thankful that I managed at all, as it was the night of a memorable snowstorm, which carried away all the telegraph wires, and nearly stopped the traffic on the Great Western.

Salmon require a very large "crinoline," and they are a much more delicate fish than trout to keep alive. I therefore sometimes "tether" them if I want to keep them any time. I pass a piece of thick but soft string through one of the gills, and tie it loosely, so as not to interfere with their breathing. Having found a deep hole under a bank, I then slip the fish in, and tie the other end of the string on to a bough. The fish will generally stay quiet all night, and are easily caught again the next morning. On one occasion, being hard pressed, on the Tuam river, near Galway, I put string, in form of reins, on to three salmon, and drove them more than half a mile down the river. They were, however, awkward things to drive, as they would every minute turn round and look me in the face, after the fashion peculiar to leaders of the tandems which we used to drive at Oxford. But I brought ten salmon alive, in a huge box, to Galway, by car and railway. This was about as hard a day's work as ever I went through; but we got nearly a quarter of a million salmon eggs to lay down in the troughs.

When the eggs of the salmon or trout are brought home, I treat them with the greatest possible care and attention. From about the middle of December till towards the end of January, by going to the Royal Horticultural Gardens, South Kensington, the reader will be able to examine the way in which the trout and

salmon eggs are hatched out; and my man, Neville, will be happy to show the various stages of the development of the fish. By the kindness of the French Government authorities at Huningue, I also receive a supply of French eggs. I send them British eggs in return. In this museum will also be seen many drawings and models connected with fish culture, both of the sea and rivers, and also casts of the largest specimens of oceanic fish (including a small whale and a big shark) that have been lately brought to the London market, and for the loan of which I am much indebted to the chief London fishmongers, especially Messrs. Gilson and Quelch, of Bond Street, Grove, of Charing Cross, and Charles, of Arabella Row. These casts and preparations I have made with my own hands, and entirely at my own personal expense.

LIFE ON AMBA MAGDALA, THE STATE PRISON OF ABYSSINIA.

II.

ABYSSINIA has for many centuries been the theatre of bloodshed and spoliation; a country where might was right. Scarcely has a certain individual, pretending to be a lineal descendant of Solomon, the King of Israel, by the Queen of Sheba, through their son Menilech, succeeded in raising himself to the throne of Ethiopia, when factions start up on every side; and the envious, and the *soi-disant* patriot, haranguing the ignorant and credulous populace on the wrongs to which their country is subject, induce them to join the standard of rebellion. The monarch becomes cruel as his power increases; he imposes an enormous tribute and kills his subjects at pleasure. The consequence is that he becomes weaker, and the most insinuating and boldest of his antagonists, by degrees more powerful, until the latter feels himself at last strong enough to offer battle to the sovereign, who of his great army having but a handful of troops remaining, must flee and die in obscurity. The usurper next wages war against those who, rebels like himself, still aspire to the crown, prevails, and places them one after another on the fortress, there to forget their ambitious dreams. These may be said to be dangerous to the State. They have been so under the old *régime*, but may, with certain privileges and immunities, prove the prop of the realm, and the strength of its owner. The high officers and braves of the defeated pretenders enter the service of the recognised monarch, who, fearing their influence and power, conveys them in chains to their former masters, to converse on by-gone happy days, and recriminate in turn.

Next, some of the oldest and most tried followers of the new King are added. They were first his equals, then his tools, and are now the shadows of his former poverty. The King's brain is turned by the dazzling height. As an old toy is spurned by a child, so these must vanish from his sight. Thus the fortresses were filled with inmates; thus Magdala was peopled.

It is a sickening sight to stand at sunrise on the gate of the jail, and see ex-princes, governors, and the great of the land, passing out of the inclosure to their respective houses—those who have been accustomed to govern large provinces in their own right—who have enjoyed every luxury which riches could procure; the gray-headed, the youth, and the boy, all march in one long file, with their heads nearly parallel with the knees. There will never be any change for them until they are laid in the grave. Others—the poor soldier, who