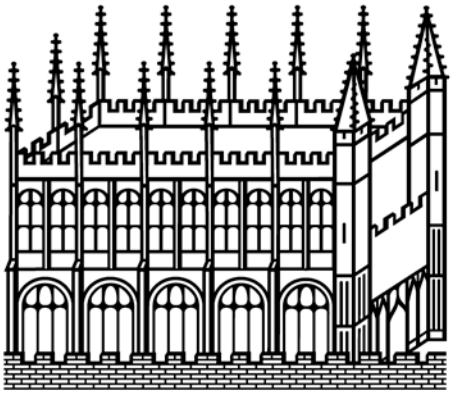

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TWO MONTHS IN BRITTANY

WITH MY

KNAPSACK AND FLY ROD,

BY

GEORGE HARRISON,

LATE

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES OF THE NOTTINGHAM INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION.

LONDON:
BEMROSE AND SONS, 21, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND IRONGATE, DERBY.

Dedicated to the Piscatorial Society.

Gentlemen Brother Anglers,

Thirty fishing seasons have come and gone since that old time when, in conjunction with a few valued friends (alas! how many are gone to their long home), we laid (what has since proved) the firm foundation of the Piscatorial Society.

By the recollections of those old days when we fished every swim, deep, and weir between Richmond Bridge and Henley, and every hole from the Rye House to Temple Mills; when we whipped every scour and bend in the sparkling Wandle, the many-branched Colne, the sullen Mole, and rapid Stour; by the many happy times we have angled together "in December's frost or July's sun," standing on bank or sitting across the well of our punt; by the well-filled pannier, the weary plod home, the battle fought over again when "thrice we slew the slain" round the convivial board; by the remembrances of all these, I dedicate this small work to my comrades of old, with a view of demonstrating that at a moderate distance and

within the compass of moderate means, fresh fields are open for the enjoyment of the "gentle art."

Oh! the gallant fisher's life,
It is the best of any;
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,
And 'tis belov'd by many.

That many may still have health and strength to avail themselves of the few hints thus thrown out is my most fervent hope, and that this little book may be a useful guide to the younger members. With every good wish for the present well being and future prosperity of the society,

Believe me, Gentlemen brother-fishermen,

Very faithfully yours,

GEO. HARRISON.

The Poplars, Melbourne, near Derby,
April, 1868.

TWO MONTHS IN BRITTANY, WITH MY KNAPSACK AND FLY-ROD.

THE noble Prioress of Sopwell, Dame Juliana Berners, in giving her reasons for publishing the "Boke of St. Alban's" in a large volume instead of a small treatise, says, "And for by cause that this present treatyse sholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle persone which wolde desire it, yf it were emprynted allone by itself and put into a lytyll plaunflet; therefore I have compyled it in a greter uolume of dyuerse bokys concernynge to gentyll and noble men, to the intent that the forsayd ydle persones whyche sholde haue but lytyll mesure in the sayd dysporte of fysshynge, sholde not by this meane utterly dystroye it." The high-born and learned lady, could she re-visit this earth, would find a vast revolution in ideas and feelings from what they were in her days (the latter part of the fifteenth century, just previous to Columbus's grand discovery), when literature was exclusively in the hands of those who lived in what would now be called "good society," and of the clergy. Or, coming down to a later date, in Dr. Johnson's time, when an author would be kicking his heels in the ante-room of some noble patron of letters for hours, begging for permission to dedicate his work to him; but now when the denizens of Bohemia

are a recognized power in the state, all and sundry who rush into print—be it in a "grete uolume," or a "lytyll plaunflet," whether it is from the hands of the heir of McCullom More as "A Trip to the Tropics;" or from the pen of your slave, descriptive of "Trout Fishing in Brittany"—all must submit to the same ordeal at the hands of a well-read and for the most part an intellectual public. For ourselves, we are not possessed with the fears of Dame Juliana, either as to the smallness of this little work, or the mischief that will accrue to "fysshynge," through its finding its way into the hands of our fellow-countrymen of low estate or no estate; for we feel assured that, if they should be tempted across the channel by it, they would forgive all faults of composition, in gratitude for the pleasure they would enjoy in the sight of a new and beautiful country, a primitive people, unlike, in habits, language, and even dress, anything to which they have hitherto been accustomed; and where, having gentlemanly tastes (which means, *inter alia*, a weakness for the gentle art), they can, without let or hinderance, throw a fly in some of the best trout streams on the Continent, amidst the finest scenery in Europe.

The ancient Duchy of Brittany, the Armorica of the Romans, is as yet little known to the generality of the travelling public. Although it is by no means the least interesting portion of the European Continent, so celebrated in tradition, song, and ballad, it has been without a line of railway until within these last three or four years, and has not yet been spoilt by the influx of wealthy English travellers. In dress, in manners, even in language, it is not much altered from that time when Froissart wrote of the glories of the celebrated Breton warrior, Bertrand du Guesclin,

and immortalised the exploits of Joan of the Torch; abounding in old chateaux, each with its popular legend, it contains also the site of many an old battle-field, where the day has been won by the cloth-yard shafts of "merrie England;" interesting to the archæologist from the number of its Druidical remains, and the splendour of its Christian monuments; twice in the possesion of the English crown during the warlike rule of the Plantagenets; with many a lay of King Arthur, Merlin, and the worthies of long forgotten days; it is the especial home of the artist and poet, and, from its physical conformation, the very paradise of the fly-fisher.

A glance at the maps of the five departments which comprise the ancient duchy of Brittany, viz., Isle et Vilaine, Cotes du Nord, Finistere, Morbihan, and Loire Inferiore, will show that, running from east to west, there is a mountainous ridge, a kind of back-bone to the country, which, starting a little to the north of Rennes (the capital), is known, as far as Bourbriac, as the Montagne de Menezhaut; from thence, unfolding itself into two great arms, and still keeping the same course; the one on the north being designated the Montagne d'Arree, which slopes down into the estuary of Chateaulin, a little to the south of Brest harbour; the other, the Montagne Noires, running down to the shores of the Baie du Douarnenez, so celebrated for its sardine fishery, still further south.

From this mountain range—not unlike Dartmoor and Exmoor on the opposite coast—numberless streamlets arise, which, gradually assuming pretentious proportions as they roll over their limestone beds, and displaying in their pellucid depths, spotted beauties which would make the mouth of

"Old Izaac's" ghost water, finally debouch into the Channel, away to the northward, or into the mighty Atlantic in the west. As there are no mining or smelting operations to any extent, such as destroy the fish to an incredible degree in Devonshire and Cornwall, all these Breton rivers abound in trout, and many of them with salmon; and with the same care exercised over them, as with us, in the removal of obstructions to the annual migration of the fish, and attention to their preservation during the fence-months, they would become a source of great wealth and profit to the country.

Knowing Brittany well; having lived there, and consequently having formed a number of friendships in the country, we determined on another visit there. In April of the past year, quitting the quietude of Robin Hood's county, we journeyed per Midland *via* Derby, Birmingham, Bristol, and were finally deposited at the Weymouth station of the Great Western Railway, some time about 10 p.m.; having all the belongings in a knapsack, with fly rod in hand, strolled leisurely along the handsome Esplanade down to the Quay, where, moored alongside, lay the Cygnus mail boat; we stepped on board and dived down into the after-cabin, where, after discussing divers creature-comforts, solid and fluid, which the long cold ride rendered particularly agreeable, we coiled ourselves away upon one of the sofas, and were soon in the land of Nod. Awakened to a sense of the actual by the beat of the paddles a few minutes after six in the morning, when, coming upon deck after an introduction to soap and water, &c., we met the Skipper on the bridge; greetings passed—Captain F. is a very gentlemanly man—it was a splendid morning, a smart breeze from the

south'ard of west, and the sharp vessel flying out of the harbour, soon left Portland roads on her starboard quarter. Behold us out in the open channel; a little sea on, she heels to port; Skipper *loquitur*, "You've got your sea legs on? Good. Never unwell? Better. Step upon the bridge and look about you. Breakfast, four bells, sharp; never mind the hubbub below, 'tis the usual vocal music upon these occasions, with an accompaniment of hand basins; they are offering up a morning sacrifice to his watery godship. That new work, eh! on the right? For the defence of the Roads; that will be the most complete horse-shoe fort in the kingdom; casemated and bomb-proof, twelve 200-pound guns in the casemates, four heavy guns in the gorge, and quarters for two hundred men. See the sister fort at the end of the breakwater."

The sun rises high in the heavens; the gallant vessel cleaves her way through the glistening channel. The glorious spring morning, the crisp dancing waves, the rushing through the strong saline air, acting upon one like magic, making the spirits rise involuntarily.

Two bells in the afternoon; we are off St. Peter's Port in that pretty island, Guernsey. Ease her! We are alongside the pier, exchanging passengers and heaps of baggage. Numbers of "Commercials" who do business for the nation of shopkeepers, have come here, perhaps, from Southampton, over night, have finished their affairs, and are off and away to Jersey; where, if the breeze holds, we shall be about 4.30. It freshens, and before the time stated, we are opening up one lovely bay after another, as we run down the shores of the beautiful little island-garden, Jersey. There's St. Ouens! now we pass Brelarde; here we open

St. Aubin's; there is Elizabeth Castle; and as it is now nearly flood, we steam right into the little port, and warp alongside the pier. A parting bow to the Skipper. Looking at that vast pile of trunks, boxes, perambulators, &c., we bless our stars that such *impedimenta* are not among our belongings—especially the wheeled variety—pick up our knapsack and step ashore (undismayed by a strong division of touters), although for our part we never feel ashore in Jersey; 'tis but a fisherman's walk, one step and overboard. Here is a choice of hotels—Yacht Club, Southampton, York, Union; all good, all reasonable, English fashion. Pomme d' Or, equally good, reasonable, and so on, French fashion.

St. Helier's, Jersey, is now a large and populous town; and, judging from the constantly increasing number of houses and inhabitants, a prosperous one, and a very pleasant place for a summer sojourn. It is a free port, consequently no custom-house dues are collected; but the island authorities, having been in communication with some of our municipal big-wigs, have become inoculated with a rage for improvements, and have, by these means, largely increased the hitherto small taxes; Jersey is, therefore, by no means the very cheap place it was formerly. The failure in the fisheries which of late years has been experienced, not only in the whale-trade in the arctic seas, but among the cod-fisheries on the banks of Newfoundland, has produced great changes here, and all along the coast of France, as fishing was one of the principal industries of the island. St. Helier's is a good basis of operations for a summer tour. A small steamer, "The Comet," leaves here about every other day, for Granville, in Normandy, distant some thirty miles, from

whence you can visit Avranches, and the famous old feudal fortress of Mont St. Michel. There are also vessels every day for St. Malo (45 miles; return tickets, 2nd class, 7/6), a very ancient, but very dirty, city. We used to give the palm in that respect to Lisbon. There are two first-class hotels, the "De la Paix," and the "Hotel de France." The latter was once the abode of the christian philosopher, M. de Chateaubriand, who sleeps on a small island at the mouth of the harbour, where his tomb can be seen. They show his bed-room at the hotel, where, for a consideration (as old Trabois hath it) you can sleep. There is a station of the Western Railway, and you can get to Rennes in four or five hours for the same number of shillings—money which will be well laid out. A small steamer runs up the river Rance to Dinan, one of the most beautiful situations in western France, where a whole colony of English have settled down, with their well-defined lines of class demarcation, as is usual with our well-beloved countrymen (aye! and country-women too), wherever resident. You may cross the harbour to the pretty little village of Dinard, where there is a correspondence with Dinan by a well-appointed diligence, which sets you down at the Hotel de Bretagne, just outside the walls, on the Brest road. The river Rance, which runs through the town, takes its rise in the mountain range already spoken of, near Colince, and flows in a northerly direction by St. Jouan de l'Isle and Evran to Dinan, where it becomes navigable. From thence it debouches into the Channel at St. Malo; a great length of water, and there are fish in it, but being in such close contiguity to large towns, and easily accessible to our countrymen, who come in crowds to the Channel Islands in the summer, we'll e'en make another start.

You can rough it a little? Good! You arrive in Jersey, say, for example, on Saturday; sometime about high water on Sunday night or Monday morning, there are two cutters which sail from St. Helier's for Pertrieux (a small port, about 70 miles to the west of St. Malo) for oxen, pigs, poultry, butter, eggs, and other creature comforts for the supply of the island; and, *en passant*, from this little port alone, the certified value of such produce amounted in 1865 to fifteen million francs.

You would like a sail! Here's the Telegraph, under the veteran Bertrand, to whom the dangerous passage between here and the French main is so familiar. The old salt has been on the station many years, and speaks English when he is in the humour, which is but seldom. The other craft is the Eclipse—Captain Chevalier, as good a seaman as ever trod a plank. They are sister vessels of 60 tons each, well manned, well found, and splendid sea-boats, carrying 60 bullocks down below in their holds, all through the dangerous gales of the past winter, and regularly doing the passage without the loss of a beast. The Telegraph, eh? Well, here we are on the pier, 12.15 a.m., Monday morning; the fresh breeze is rattling over the house tops, and blowing off the shore. "Fair wind and plenty of it, Captain Bertrand." "*Oui, oui, Monsieur.*" "Ah, ah," *sotto voce*, by ourself, "we'll talk to you by and bye." We go below into the little cabin, stow away the traps, and relate a little incident which happened to us on board, *depuis long temps*, to the assembled company. Skipper remembers (of course), and a bottle of Schiedam ratifies an alliance. Who are all these people in such funny white caps, petticoats, and little shawls all alike? Breton higglers returning, after disposing of their

butter, eggs, and other goods. We will come upon deck again, not liking the preparations below—ladies being tucked up in their berths, each with a rug, a rosary, and a hand basin. Ahem! two reefs in the mainsail, and the jib stowed. Never mind, the wind is right aft; so we warp out, and clear the pier head; ease off the sheet, and head away S.W. Now you really know what the poetry of the sea is; on board a steam vessel all is prose. The buoyant little vessel cleaves her way through the phosphoric sea, verily like a thing of life; bounds over the waves with such a hoist that you feel as if you were being lifted over the British Museum, but does not take a drop of the seething boiling water aboard. Here, hold on by the weather back-stays, and don't let go, or you'll find yourself against the lee bulwarks, with a crash that will be anything but pleasant, even if you don't go overboard bodily. There away upon the port beam is the light ship on the Minquiers, and upon the bow, the lighthouse on Cape Frehel. As day breaks, you plainly see the dangerous nature of the navigation in these waters. No wonder that the privateers of St. Malo, and, indeed, those of the whole Breton coast, made such fortunes out of our merchantmen during the long wars with Napoleon; for what vessels could follow those long, low, fast-sailing and heavily-armed luggers through such a labyrinth of rocks, shoals, currents, and quicksands as we see all around us? Consequently they ran out into the Channel, where they plundered the quiet trading-vessels, and then ran back for their holes, where no vessel drawing above twelve or fifteen feet of water could follow. We are now opening the Bay of St. Brieux, where, at one time, they had a great trade with Newfoundland, which is now all

gone. Here were also large oyster beds, sending millions of the delicious bivalve every year to Paris. They have eaten them all up, and there are no more to be had. At 6.30 we are off the little harbour; not water enough though to take us in. Out boat! and near twenty miserable passengers enter, not much improved in their personal appearance by the night's passage; they have travelled fifty miles, however, in six hours. Not even water enough for the boat; so we broach to in the breakers, and ship *such* a sea! We have no objection to a cold bath, quite the contrary, but infinitely prefer it *sans chemise*. Ladies squeal; one jumps overboard up to her waist, the rest are carried ashore like bundles of wet linen, on the shoulders of the boat's crew, up to the small custom-house, where there is a little scene. A stout Breton is being overhauled, even to his shirt and stockings; civil officer looking at our knapsack, politely enquires, Has Monsieur anything to declare? Monsieur, (laughing at the poor fellow so sharply handled, who is declaring at concert pitch that, by Notre Dame, he not only has nothing contraband, but never had) like Lord Burleigh, shakes his head; and then, without even looking at the contents of our knapsack, officer laughs in return, and raising his cap, says "Bon jour, Monsieur! Bon voyage." We elevate our felt hat, bow, and are free. Let us saunter leisurely along the strong-built stone pier to Hotel Talus, where dry clothes and a good breakfast will restore the equilibrium.

Portrieux is a small, uninviting sea-side village, with nothing in the world to keep it alive but the weekly departure of the cutters with live stock, and the visits of Breton families during the summer season, for sea-bathing. Having

friends here, we remained all night, leaving the place by a small diligence next morning, at six o'clock, for St. Brieux (12 miles), the capital of the department of the Cotes du Nord. This is a large and handsome city of from twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants; it contains the residences of the prefect and the bishop; and possesses museums, learned societies, reading rooms, and all the other amenities of high class civilization. The cathedral is a very ancient, but, to our mind, a very ugly building, externally and internally; and there are barracks where a regiment of infantry is usually quartered. There are several very good hotels here; we usually go to the Croix Blanche, a very excellent house—good beds, liberal table, and moderate charges, as is the case generally all over Brittany. Breakfast costs one-and-a-half, to two francs; dinner two, to three francs, cider or wine included; bed seldom more than a franc; service *a discretion*, say half-a-franc. But, when staying any length of time at one hotel, an arrangement is generally made for from four to five francs per diem, which includes everything. St. Brieux, like most of the French ports on the Channel, is about two miles from the sea, where there is a small village, Legué, at the mouth of the small river Gouet—a pretty little stream which runs down from the mountain range away to the southward. There are trout in the stream, but its nearness to a populous town prevents its fishing being of much account. St. Brieux is a first-class station on the Western Railway, a continuation from Rennes to Brest. The next station westerly is the small town of Chatelaudren (7 miles), on the river Leff, which also rises among the hills, forms a considerable lake to the southward of the town, and then, some miles below, runs into the

river Trieux. There is abundance of small trout, and as there is a comfortable hotel in the place, a halt of a day or so would not be amiss. M. Souvestre, in his work upon the Ballads of Brittany, relates a sad story about Chatelaudren :—"Sometime about the close of the last century, a young engineer was paying his addresses to a beautiful and charming young lady in the town; and one day, having to go into the country on professional business, he bade adieu to his *fiancé* and gave her a rose. In the night a violent storm arose, the rain poured down in torrents, and the lake mentioned burst its banks; and the water pouring down on the devoted town, carried all before it. On the return of the lover, he found nothing but sorrow and desolation; the body of the poor young lady was picked up some distance below the town, with the rose still in the bosom of her dress."

Some years ago, happening to be here on a Sunday afternoon, a fete day, we had the opportunity of seeing the usual *al fresco* ball in the market place. The orchestra consisted of two bagpipes—or, as they are called here, *binious*—and a drum. Though the rain poured down, the Breton *paysans* were not to be deprived of their fete, and danced away under umbrellas, singing the while the popular air, "*Je suis un natif de Finistere.*"

Some eight miles away, still west, is our present terminus by rail, at the beautiful old town of Guingamp, upon the river Trieux, in a charming country; it is a market town of some 8,000 inhabitants, the residence of the Sous-Prefêt, and, next to St. Brieux, the principal town in the Cotes du Nord. The grand old cathedral was built by Charles de Blois, who was buried here after his defeat and death at

the decisive battle of Auray, in 1364,* which, after twenty-four years of war, settled the succession to the duchy in favour of the De Montforts. When the troubles of the great revolution came upon Brittany, the monks of Guingamp removed the bones of their founder to the beautiful little church of Le Grace, about three miles away, where the relics are shown to this day, in an oak and glass case, with an elaborate description engraved on a brass plate. It was our good fortune, once upon a time, to reside here; and the view from our windows (upon Mount Bariel) was magnificent, with a panorama unequalled. The river Trieux is here a considerable stream, running right through the centre of the town, and crossed by two stone bridges; its source being L'Etang Neuf, in the Bourg of Plessidy about seven miles off, among the hills of Cornouaille. It becomes navigable at Pontrieux, ten miles lower down by road, and then forms a noble estuary, as it flows under the beautiful suspension bridge at Lesardrieux; it empties itself into the Channel at Paimpol, giving the angler some twenty miles of fishable water. Some two years since, a length of about three or four hundred yards of the river, between two mills, was dragged, when three salmon from seven to ten pounds, twenty brace of good trout, and the enormous quantity of nine hundredweight of dace, were taken. Some years back, one evening, in fishing close to the town, with the grey drake for our tail fly, we had a great take of dace, and nine of the best fish were taken out of our basket and weighed in the adjoining mill, where they bumped down nine pounds

* The incident from which Sir Walter Scott took his description of the death of Marmion at Flodden Field.

(French). Spirits of the founders of the Piscatorial Society, what would you have said to that?—the venerable Rowdon, the genial Sandall, the good and gentle Barth—all, alas! gone to their account these many years; Harry Dean would not have believed it had he weighed them with his own hands! The trout are earlier in the Trieux than in most waters with us. The spring following the little incident above related, we killed three dozen trout on the 4th of March, all good fair fish. Guingamp would be a good halting-place for the wandering fly-fisher. There are two excellent hotels in the town—Hotel de France and Hotel de l'Ouest—the proprietors of which will enter into arrangements by the week or month on (to us) moderate terms. Their respective *tables d'hote* are good and ample, and respectably attended; you can either sleep at the hotel, or hire a room elsewhere, which some people find more convenient. There is a very good market on Saturdays for everything—cattle, sheep, pigs, grain, and every description of farm and garden produce, with a good supply of fish, especially the shelled variety. Each article, animal as well as vegetable, is sold by weight, which, like the currency, is on the decimal principle, very plain and simple both to foreigner and native. The scales and weights are public property; the municipality sending a person to attend, to whom you pay a *sou* on getting your fair weight. The taxes for local purposes are levied by the town council in the shape of an "octroi" duty upon every article for consumption which enters the town—(I was much surprised once, upon entering Rouen, at my bag being looked into at the Octroi Bureau, for game)—and this is devoted to paving, lighting, cleaning, &c., the government finding the police, both horse

and foot. This being the head-quarters of the *arrondisement*, the commanding officer (a captain) is resident here.

While upon this subject, let me say that the administration of the French laws is perfection itself. The highways all over the country, although under three different authorities, are excellent, as every traveller will testify. The Government looks after imperial routes, the department after others, and the *commune*, or parish, after the rest. In England there is great misapprehension respecting the game laws in France, which are, in fact, much more strict than ours. You can preserve, if you like; but the opening and closing of the season is in the hands of the Prefect, who issues his notice, on the representation of the farmers, generally between the 20th and the 27th of September, for what they call the *chasse couchant*—shooting only, and a month later for the *chasse courant*, which includes hunting. The wolf, wild boar, stag, roebuck, fox, hare, &c., are hunted in cover, with harriers or fox-hounds; men being stationed in the rides, or alleys, to shoot the animals as they pass. Both seasons close at the end of January, and, outside of these two periods, you cannot shoot a sparrow in the fields without subjecting yourself to a fine; moreover, while the earth is covered with snow, shooting is expressly forbidden. How different to England, where any prowling vagabond who can beg, borrow, or steal a gun during a hard frost, when the earth is white with snow, steals out and shoots every living thing; the consequence of which is, that from the absence of small birds, we have a plague of slugs the following summer. Another thing which conduces greatly to the comfort and health of all French towns is the fact that women of improper character are not allowed to promenade the streets under any

pretext whatever; they and their houses being, as they ought to be in this country, entirely in the hands of the magistrates, doctors, and police.

Guingamp, from the Breton words *gwen* (white, as in Welsh) and *gamp* (a room or chamber), is a place of great historical interest. It was the property and residence of the Pontheive family, the walls of whose strong castle still remain; and a delightful public walk has been made on the site of the house and grounds. There it was that the independence of the ancient duchy was merged in the kingdom of France by the marriage of Anne, daughter of Francis II., Duke of Brittany, to Charles VIII., at Touraine, in 1491. Few pages of history have more of the air of romance than the story of the Duchess Anne, who was only in her twelfth year when her father died, broken-hearted by the ill success of his struggle with France for national independence; and her little court was soon distracted by the intrigues of rivals for her hand. D'Albret, one of the Navarre family, whom she called an ugly old man, attempted to carry her off by force, but she was rescued by the celebrated Count Dunois, and rode off on the crupper of the count's war-horse. (Dunois is one of the characters in Sir Walter Scott's "Quentin Durward.") Her hand was also sought by the Emperor Maximilian; but the French troops pouring into the country and taking by assault all the strong places—Pontrieux, Brest, Concarneau, and Guingamp—the poor duchess was obliged to yield, after vainly soliciting the aid of England's king, the Seventh Henry (Richmond), who had been received and protected by the Duke Francis, her father, during Richard the Third's short and troubled reign. So much for gratitude.

We also have received a queen from Brittany, by the mar-

riage of Henry IV. (Bolingbroke) with Joan, widow of John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany. Henry, when banished along with the Duke of Norfolk from the field of the *non stricken* duel at Coventry by Richard II., had found refuge at the Breton court; and poor Joan, after her husband's death, when Queen Dowager of England, had the children of both husbands arrayed against each other on the field, at Azincourt, Henry V. taking among his numerous prisoners the son of his father's widow, Arthur, Earl of Richmont, whom he kept in close confinement. It will be seen how the history of both countries is interwoven during the middle ages, and the soil of Brittany is classic ground to the English student.

Guingamp is a first-class station on the continuation of the Western Railway from Rennes to Brest, and is about half way (eighteen miles) between St. Brieux and Morlaix. Looking at the map, the reader will observe that it is about the same distance from a number of pleasant little seaports to the northward—Paimpol, Treguier, Lannion, &c.; and, as there are a great variety of interesting rides and walks in its neighbourhood, is a very desirable place in which to set up one's *lares* and *penates*.

Every town and village has its "pardon" or fête, during the year. Guingamp has two—the Fête Dieu, at the latter end of May; the Fête of St. Loup, on the first Sunday in September. The first is entirely of a religious character: a grand mass is performed in the Cathedral, at the close of which a procession is formed, with military music. The town authorities appear in full costume, and the maire and council in their robes. The clergy, in their splendid dresses, and choristers, in white, chanting, carry the host. But the

most interesting feature of the fête was presented by the Sunday-school children, all in white, the members of each division carrying a small flag; and as every separate division had ribbons, &c., to match the colours of their little flags—and there were nearly a thousand of them—the effect was really beautiful. The procession perambulated the town, after forming in the Place, and halted at all the religious houses. The crowd in the streets knelt as the Host passed, but foreigners were simply expected to uncover.

The Fête of St. Loup is a jollification, or holiday, to which people come from all parts of the country. It has been my fortune to be present on two of these occasions, and there must have been ten thousand people present. A meadow in the outskirts, on the road to Pontrieux, is lent for the occasion, within which an orchestra is raised, and decorated with evergreens, flowers, ribbons, and colours, as only the French can. A space is then roped off, admission to which is by ticket, at the alarming price of five sous (twopence halfpenny), and dancing is then the order of the day, from three o'clock in the afternoon until six, about which time all go home to refresh, headed by the band, and dancing every step of the way. They assemble again at eight: this time in the *Place*, where a similar orchestra has been erected, the charge for admission being as before. Here dancing is kept up until half-past eleven or twelve o'clock, every thing being conducted in a very proper and decorous manner. The same thing is repeated on the following day (Monday), and although there were not more than two or three *gen d'armes* present, I never saw a drunken person, or heard an improper observation. People of all classes mingle indiscriminately. Noblemen, bankers, gentle-

men of landed estate, tinkers, tailors, and candlestick-makers mingle with numbers of soldiers, both officers and privates. One gentleman whom I saw dancing and crossing hands with a private in a cavalry regiment, was a Count of an ancient Breton family, one of whom carried the standard of St. Louis in the Holy Land. The popular dance is the "Derober." A ring is formed; five hundred couples stand up and join hands. The music strikes up; each couple then turn to the right face and march, or rather trip, to the measure, and, at a particular part of the time, *pousset*. During this figure it is proper and allowable for the gentlemen who are not dancing to walk up, and, saluting the fair one, to take possession. Hence "*De Rober*," (to rob.) But this can only be done once during the dance. It has a very pretty look, and a deal of laughing takes place at the involuntary change of partners, as all are subject to the same rule; and the peasantry really dance very well, and keep excellent time. I subjoin a few lines by a fair relative, who was present, descriptive of the scene:—

LA FETE DE ST. LOUP.

What stirs, to-day, the quaint old Breton town;
Whose ev'ry stone could tell some legend rare—
Guingamp, the ever sparkling Trieux's crown,
Its richest gem that proud Cathedral fair:
Gift of fierce Charles de Blois, the warrior bold,
Who fell on Auray's hard contested field.
Death's hand unclenched that banner from his hold,
Which he, to other foes refused to yield.
On Guingamp's tranquil bosom Charles was laid,
Till restless France in social earthquake heaved;
Then shaven monks his whitened bones conveyed
Where peaceful Grâce the relics safe received.

Thro' ancient town, and shady market-place,
Noting the carved Italian fountain clear;

The horse bells, making musical each pace;
The women's high white caps, of muslin clear.
In short dark skirts, black stockings, tightly drawn,
They walk, and talk, with knitting pins in hand;
And, on the padded head, aloft is borne
Sweet Breton butter, ever in demand.
But, on this autumn Sunday, Silence reigns;
Summoned by Pleasure's all suggestive nod
From distant hamlets, thro' the fields and lanes,
Peasants in varied costumes hither plod.

"St. Loup"—the gayest fête of all the year,
That rich and poor have met to celebrate!
Terpsichore, presiding goddess here,
Hath loving subjects whom she rules in state!
A grassy meadow, shady, cool, and green,
Affords a ball-room where she holds her court;
The band, raised high behind a leafy screen,
Their liveliest strains with constancy report.
But, hark! they now strike up the national dance—
"Derober" named (right well, as will be seen)
Gallants, with hat in hand, their claims advance,
Bowing, as Frenchmen do, with graceful mien.

Now sways and wheels about a dancing line,
Obedient to each wave of music's staff;
Soon must monsieur his *chère amie* resign
To one who seizes chance with nod and laugh,
The waiting rival long has mark'd the pair,
Till *balancez* unlinked the arm-knit chain.
He taps monsieur, and bows to lady fair,
Then forward march the new join'd pair again;
The pretty Bretonne laughs, and glances kind
At him left plundered of his chosen girl,
The rivals glance resentfully behind,
And mute defiance at each other hurl.

But now, the music, with one long-drawn sigh,
Arrests "Derober" in its full career;
With band at head, the dancers homeward hie,
To meet round many a board of right good cheer.
Tongues, by politeness check'd, now patter free--
The afternoon's adventures all relate—
With gestures, strongly mark'd, 'tis plain to see
The conversation will not soon abate.
But up! away, again sweet music calls!
The evening dance, and fun, have yet to come,
And on the Place where moonlight calmly falls,
From gathering crowd is heard a distant hum.

Dancing proceeds within a rope-girt ring;
  Beyond, the trees, deck'd in soft coloured light,
A circle form; like rainbow glittering,
  Or sentinels who chase dark-hooded night.
The lofty-gabled houses, nigh at hand,
  Whose hoary heads the by-gone centuries crown,
In sullen majesty appear to stand
  And gaze upon the revels with a frown.
Fast whirls the dance! but, Englishman take heed!
  No senseless drunkard marred th' *alfresco* ball,
No lady, by intemp'rate word or deed,
  Was forced, abash'd, her eyelids to let fall.
* * * * * *
Alas! that thro' our else most happy land,
  Intemperance with its fiery blasting breath
Should stalk, and with its scorching murd'rous hand
  Smite wretched victims to an early death.
Farewell to Guingamp, one last lingering look
  We took of thee from bold St. Leonard's crest,
The loveliest, clearest, page of beauty's book,
  Enriching eye and filling heart with rest.
No more in squirrel-haunted wood I stray,
  Climbing its hilly sides with vent'rous feet,
Nor watch the trout in Trieux leap and play.
  Farewell, old Guingamp, we no more may meet.

KORRIG GWEN.

And now, buckling the straps of my knapsack, fly-rod in hand, I marched off from Guingamp, leaving on my right, the Western Railway, which, passing through Belle Isle en Terre (where there is capital trout fishing, with a good sprinkling of salmon), proceeds on its way to Brest, via Morlaix. I started S.W., and breasting the hill, passed St. Croix, with its old abbey, now a farm house; and still ascending, after leaving the river on my right splashing and dashing in the sun-light, I passed the fine old chateau and woods of Bois de la Roche. Ah, me! what agreeable reminiscences of cock-shooting do those woods bring up; as for hares and rabbits, the very idea is suggestive of a noun of multitude. We reached the rather large town of Bourbriac after a toilsome walk of four leagues, every yard of it

up hill; and here I threw away the cross-strap of my knapsack, finding that it, not only pressed upon the chest, but impeded my breathing. While upon this subject permit me to say, gentle reader, and possibly follower, that, for every ounce above eight pounds, suspended from your shoulders, you ought to be prosecuted under a separate indictment for cruelty to animals; eight pounds is the *ultima thule*, every grain beyond which is a delusion and a snare.

Bearing in mind the remarks of that eminent philosopher, Sam Weller, touching "Adwice gratious coves," we just offer (under our breath) the following as to the necessary outfit for such an occasion—a light felt hat with a broadbrim (a "Panama" is better, but good ones are expensive); an entire suit of tweed—I prefer the shepherd's plaid—all wool if you love me; knitted wool socks, and strong waterproof laced boots, well nailed; light check Macintosh knapsack, with side pockets; and your light waterproof overcoat strapped on the top. The knapsack to contain extra pairs of trousers and boots (indispensable), two shirts; night ditto; two pairs of socks; half-a-dozen collars; a tie or two, and pocket handkerchiefs; these, with writing materials, your brushes and combs (no sensible man uses razors now-a-days), winch, fly-book, map, and small field-glass in your pocket, and your fly-rod in hand, you can march from Dan to Beersheba independent of all the world. The present Sir Robert Peel, when lecturing in the Town Hall, Birmingham, a few years since, said that every necessary for a travelling pedestrian was comprised in a pocket handkerchief, a pair of socks, and a bundle of cigars. Sir Charles Napier (the Indian general) was also very decisive in his denunciation of a superfluity of baggage.

And now, gentle reader, having accomplished half our day's work, we will take our ease in our inn, and fall to ravenously upon some *crèpe* and cyder, topped up with the universal *demi tasse et petite verre ;* and our outward and inward man being refreshed and comforted, "Hurrah ! for the road !" We proceed along the lonely mountain road, scarcely seeing house or human being until we arrive at Querien, a mere cluster of hovels, with a decent auberge, where, as they were prepared for my coming, a decent dinner, a fair bottle of Bordeaux, and (what you will always find in Brittany) a good bed, compensated for a long and toilsome walk. The next morning I was joined by my friend, a Notaire from a distant village, who was accompanied by the rector of his parish, and M. M—, the Maire of Magoire, and we started (intent on a raid among the trout) for the head waters of the great river Blavet, which rises in the range of mountains here ; and, after running many leagues in a south-westerly direction, finally, at Hennebon, it enters the estuary, which forms a portion of the imperial port of L'Orient on the Atlantic.

The Notaire, M. L——, and myself, are friends of long standing ; he is no fisherman, being much more familiar with the *Code Napoleon* than with either Walton or Cotton. I found out the Rector to be a most courteous and accomplished gentleman and scholar, a distinguished member of the French Archæological Society, who has contributed many valuable papers to that learned body, and personally examined a good many of those curious Celtic monuments the *munhorres,* which lie broadcast in the neighbouring department of Morbihan, from whence he has exhumed many valuable objects of antiquity (among others a chieftan's gold torc, which he presented to the Museum of St. Brieux). He is

also possessed of great conversational powers, and, to sum up, a thorough sportsman. Our mutual friend, the Maire, was a jolly dog, a good shot, and a first-rate fly fisherman; although his get-up would have caused a sensation in the streets of Winchester. The top of his fly-rod being broken, I observed him and the man who drove them splicing it with whipcord, which they had unlaid and waxed for that purpose. *Ca ne fait rein*; he could kill fish with it. We started for the river a-foot, as no carriage could proceed further in that direction. The jolly Maire and myself proceeded to the upper part; the Rectoire and the Notaire went down, and so we parted for the day.

I have fished in Connemara, and in North Wales, where the walking to and fro has been of the roughest. I have been some distance up the Peak of Teneriffe, and the Corral of Madeira; I found the road between Valparasio and Santiago none of the smoothest; and have shot redlegs in the numerous *borrancas*, or ravines, which run from the Andes to the Pacific, near Coquimbo; but never had such a walk as on that day; through a perfectly wild country, literally up hill and down dale; great blocks of granite littered about, and on the sides of the steep hills, occurred those treacherous dark green spots, in which you are up to your waist in no time; dykes running hither and thither, in all directions, with unsound foothold for yards before you came to their banks.

But what says Dame Berners, "The angler atte the leest hath his holsom walke and mery at his ease, a swete ayre of the swete sauoure of the mede floures that makyth him hungry." "And if the angler take fysshe, surely thenne is there noo man merier than he is in his spyryt." Well, the

sequel will show that we were, not only very hungry but, in high spirits. My jolly friend knew the country well, and kept a-head with his short pipe, uttering his cheerful *Ca ne fait rein* at every little stumble, and, after pulling me out of divers quagmires which did not improve my personal appearance (all Rimmel's shop would not have sweetened me) we, after some four or five miles, came upon the river, which is here a mere brook. I found the flies; and, as it was a bright clear day, with the wind a little to the west'ard of north, we fished with the same fly, red palmer, with gold twist, for my stretcher; black hackle, with gold twist, for the dropper; the Maire would only use one fly, in consequence of the narrowness of the stream; it did not much matter, for, as we went down, the river opened out considerably in places, but the fish all rose at the tail fly. We could only fish until five o'clock in consequence of the distance, over which we had to return; and the badness of the roads, although we fished down much nearer to the auberge than when we started. Meeting the Rector and my friend, we took stock. The strap of my fishing basket had felt red-hot for some time, and as a very singular coincidence, the Maire and myself had exactly fifteen brace of trout a-piece. I lost my last fish, and cast of flies as well, to a two pounder, who insisted upon taking three or four turns round a bulrush; and, although his worship, with much volubility and more anathemas than I can remember, with the butt of his rod explained to the spotted "*vilaine*" that he ought to come ashore, he wouldn't and didn't, and we left him. The Rector, had only taken five brace, but my friend explained that at certain hours—See little book? All good Catholic priests, &c., &c.

Well, we had a remarkably pleasant day, and I returned with my friend to his house, and dined and slept. A good basket of trout was sent to my friends in Guingamp by him, as he was driving over, and, after paying a visit P.P.C. to his Reverence, with whom we had a pleasant chat and a clinking of glasses, I started once more en route for St. Nicolas du Palem—this time along the mail road—consequently, a much better one than that between Guingamp and Bourbriac. My route lay by way of Plessidy, and passing L'Etang Neuf, the source of the Trieux, I was now to the south'ard of a spur of the Black Mountains, with the river Blavet winding about on my right, between two mighty ranges of hills. A good road, but lonely and desolate. Ah me! we often hear wine merchants speaking of the aroma and farewell of some particularly fine wine. I can't say much about the aroma, but the farewell of the upper waters of the Blavet will remain on my piscatorial palate for a long time to come. Therefore resolving to try the noble river further down where there was a greater extent of water, I marched off, and, descending into the plain, fixed my quarters, after a pleasant walk of five leagues, at St. Nicolas du Palem, a clean quiet little town with some 1,500 inhabitants, purely agricultural. Two small hotels are under the same proprietor, therefore it cannot be invidious to remark that the Hotel Joannic has good beds, a liberal table, and is very reasonable; and, while upon this subject, let me say that at the *table d'hôte* there is not that feeling of isolation as under the same circumstances at home.* In France, at

* Mr. Emerson Tennent, in his "Belgium," says "To the prevalence of *Tables d'hôte* in every town and village on the Continent must, no doubt, be ascribed much of that social feeling, and easy carriage, which cha-

the different hotels, the *pensionnaires*, and other *habitués*, will enter into conversation with a stranger; the great majority are gentlemanly, well-informed men, who seem to enjoy a bit of sport, and it is astonishing how "horsey" our gallant and volatile neighbours have become.

Getting what information I could from parties who knew the country, and trusting to my map for the rest, I left the town by the Carhaix route, and crossing the little Risseaux of Picardie, abounding in small trout, I tumbled (as they say here) upon the Blavet at the two bridges, about two miles from the town, and a more likely spot for the gentle art you would not wish to see. From the upper stone bridge, on the main road to the lower wooden structure, on the little communal route, the river forms something like the letter S; consequently, plenty of broken water occurs, and lots of fish, good ones too, as I soon found out. The day was rather against me; bright and sunny, with only an occasional cloud; water very clear; wind, the cruel wind, blowing fresh from the N. of E., not altogether an unmitigated evil, because the course of the river being S.W., it was at my back; so, putting to, with very fine tackle, a splendid bright red palmer, with gold twist, and a yellow dun (the breadth of water not admitting of more than two flies), and, straightening out my line by half-a-dozen casts in the smooth water above the upper bridge, I came gradually and quietly down before the wind into a swirl caused by a bend in the

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racterize the people of almost every country in Europe, except our own. Being frequented by persons of all ranks they lead to an assimilation of manners and of taste, which must be conducive to general refinement; and by an interchange of opinions, and a diffusion of intelligence, during the two or three hours of daily intercourse, they must contribute to a diffusion of information and a better understanding between all classes."

stream, and dropping my tail fly within a foot of the weeds that were switching about in the strong current. A splash! distinctly visible above the rush of water; that instinctive twist of the wrist which we all know, but cannot describe. The vaulting into the air of a silver body, not once, but again and again, and you are aware that at the end of your long line is a splendid fish. Up with the top of the rod; reverse the rings, and give to him with rod and wrist, but no line; for I was on a tongue of land, cut off from the main by a deep creek, with the arch of the bridge below me, so trusting to the goodness of my tackle, I hold steadily on, getting a few turns of the winch as the rushes became less furious. At last have the satisfaction of guiding my fish up the creek, and standing between him and the outlet. There was his broadside, half in and half out of the water, as he lay panting on the shallows. I walked into the water, and, gently inserting my hands under him, heaved him out on to the grass in the meadow; and took breath, and looked at him as he sighed his life out. Beautiful fish! splendid condition! two-and-three-quarter pounds French. I continued down stream; lost one fine fellow by being hung up round the roots of a tree, but saved my flies. Killed three-and-a-half brace of fine fish between the two bridges. The water was so very clear that, seeing some rises below, I cast over some palms growing in the river. A ring! a strike! a resistance! but, comparatively, not that active kind of opposition to one's wishes that one likes; rather a sort of dogged, passive, "shan't come ashore," and you know that you are linked to the Cockney's friend, "the silver dace," and you kill him. Now here is a piscatorial riddle. How is it that you never take dace and trout alternately? But,

once in among the dace, it is dace to the end of the chapter; at least, that is the result of my fishing experience. Trout and dace in the same water keep apart, and Anglers must have noticed that certain parts of a good trout stream are infested—(the word is used advisedly)—by dace, who, even when the trout are rising, do not take the same fly. There are the same conditions of water, to all outward appearances, and the dace are infinitely too large to be killed and eaten by the trout; large though the latter may be. One can understand the matter in the case of pike, or large perch; perhaps Mr. Frank Buckland would resolve the question. Well, this is a digression. I went down stream further still, and, wherever cover could be found to cast from, and a ripple to throw into, it was a rise and a fish—nothing but those (no bad language if you please); well, those wretched dace; and always at the yellow fly. One or two flies were lost, but were replaced by the same kind, and it would have been easy to have filled a basket with good fish of the kind—half-pound and three-quarters; I think there were none above that, but it is a guess, as they were not weighed. At this time I was four or five miles from home, and dinner would be ready at seven; so with a weakness for fresh trout, and some anxiety to show a really good dish of fish, I left off shortly after five, and, leaving twenty-three dace, of the weight described above, at a cottage, where they were received with many protestations of gratitude (as I supposed) in the choicest Breton, wended my way townward, with trout sufficient for the whole *table d'hôte*.

The fish naturally produced a discussion at table, and a sensation; and I accepted the offer of a resident official of the French Government to show me a better part of the

river. (Should this meet his eye, as he can read though not speak English, I beg to tender to that gentleman my warmest thanks for his courtesy and attention to a stranger). We started after breakfast the following morning, this time up stream; and Mr. H——n departed to his professional avocations, leaving me at a mill. The river here, between two mills, from four to five miles from St. Nicolas, if it had nothing else to recommend it, it is of surpassing grandeur; the stream rushes down between the mighty hills of several hundred feet in elevation; the action of the elements has, during many centuries, washed from the summits of the mountains, on either side, enormous blocks of granite, which, rolling down, have fallen into the bed of the river. In some instances, these obstructions prevail so much that you can hear the rush of water, but cannot see it; in others, they form channels and dams, and large open bays, where the water foams and dashes, and ripples; each separate bay, if you can only get a fair cast, being like a small preserve, where you are sure of a fish, and a good one. You want no water-bailiff or keeper here, it would be impossible to net it, and it must be a secure harbour and breeding place for the trout; and here, for several miles, you have it all to yourself, not a house, not a human being to be seen; the hills clothed to the very summit in the golden flowers of the gorse and broom; the silence so complete that you can hear the shrill cry of the buzzard, as he poises himself in mid air against the back ground of ethereal blue; while below is the Blavet, battling the granite, age after age. The sport here was excellent; a light hand, good flies, and keeping out of sight as much as possible (for a trout has a wholesome dread of a closer contemplation of the animal "Man") will be sure

to conceal the bottom of your basket, and if we could only prevail upon our opposite neighbours to throw in again all small fish, the good results would soon be very apparent; however, with all the advantages, there is one drawback, which is casting from a large block of granite in the middle of the river into the bay below you, the fish must invariably be drawn against the current; you cannot go down to him, *ergo* he must come to you, and, if he is a good fish, it is a difficult and tedious process, as I found to my cost, losing several fine fish through my inability to shift my position, after having hooked them. A good basket of trout was the result of this day's fishing—five-and-a-half brace; all good fish; none under half-a-pound, and, to my inexpressible relief, never saw a dace all day long.

The following day was wet; consequently no fishing. We may sum up by saying there is not a better station in all the Cotes du Nord, for the passing Angler, than the little town of St. Nicolas du Palem; it is easy of access by way of Jersey, St. Malo, Rennes, and St. Brieux; thence by courier every day with the letter bags from the railway station of the latter town, and possessing, besides the main river, the Blavet, three fishable rivulets, one to the north and two to the southward of the town; there is also very good shooting in the neighbourhood. I remained a day or two here to see the great annual cattle fair, and being joined by my friend, the Maire of M——, with whom I had fished at Querien, he was good enough to point out the humours of the fair. There were five hundred yoke of such bullocks as one does not often see in these times; splendid clean-built animals, averaging 120 lbs. per quarter, when cut up, and costing 800 francs the pair; these were all bought up by agents for the

Jersey dealers. The amusements consisted of the usual variety of shows and booths, and the inevitable dance right out in the main road, to the music of two bagpipes and a tambourine. On my first arrival at the hotel, a double-bedded room was allotted to me, with the understanding that the second bed was not to be let; however, on reaching home, on the eve of the fair, I found a strapping Norman cattle-dealer in the other bed, the girl declaring that he *would* go, "*coûte qui coûte;*" besides he was, as sailors have it, "very much by the head." I declined to suffer such companionship, and one of the *habitues* of the house, overhearing my "woes and dangers," immediately took me off to his (in this case) *dulce domum*, where a well-furnished chamber and an excellent bed was placed at my service. Many thanks to you, kind-hearted and jolly M. Z——! But rest was as far off as ever. My host's housekeeper was just saying to me that I should, at all events, have a quiet night's rest away from that noisy hotel, when—enter upon the scene, M. Z——, and our friend M. H——; we must clink our glasses —we must expatiate upon the enormities of that drunken Norman—we must sing. M. Z—— sang a good song. M. H—— sang a good song. This shall be the last bottle, "*sur ma vie!*" . . . . That housekeeper was not a true prophet; but, again, many thanks to you, jovial and kindhearted M. Z——, who, among his other gifts, is a first-rate fisherman and shot.

On leaving St. Nicolas, my two friends accompanied me half way on the road to Rostrenen, recommending to my notice the hotel kept by Mademoiselle Prangualt, who is a very lady-like and charming young woman, of about five-and-twenty. The hotel is a nice old-fashioned house, where

a good table, and all that sort of thing is provided. At the *table d'hôte* that evening, singular to say, the whole talk was about the Epsom Derby. Did I know M. Coutance? I had not that honour. French par D, with a rap on the table that made all the glasses ring; and who is this that rides the second horse? M. Francois (it was "Francis"), but we sat still and laughed). Ah, ah! We had the best horse, Count Lagrange's Gladiateur, and now we have the best jockeys, *voila!* We inquired touching the Grand Prix at Paris? "Oh that Plutos was a *Bête, Ca ne fait rien.*" Up betimes in the morning, and, after some *Café au lait* started on the Carhaix route, turning off S.W. at the little town of Glomel, where we crossed the Brest and Nantes Canal, an inviting spot for the bottom fisher. There is a wharf here for landing lime, &c., and among the wooden piers there must be quantities of perch. The ground rose by degrees, and we were mounting a spur of the Montagnes Noir; the air felt fine and clear, and away to the north'ard, the rather large town of Carhaix looked like a lot of white marbles clustered together, far below us. Through the little valleys a stream was meandering over a rushy moor, which widened out considerably before passing under the bridge which crossed the road. There were a number of fish rising; I dropped my pack and put the tackle together, but got no rise to my fly. I was anxious to see what fish was making such rings on the water; and, after some search, I found the grub of the cow-dung fly, and putting it on the hook of the tail fly, soon had my curiosity gratified. Lo! a dace; and then another to the same grub. Giving these to a woman without shoes or stockings, who was tending some goats, and who entertained me with her whole family history in Brezonec—it was thrown

away upon me—I started again on my way. The weather was very hot, the road very lonely—I did not see a house or a human being for miles; and was not able even to buy a cup of cider, until after a long march of eight leagues I reached the village of Goerin, in the department of Morbihan, where I fixed my quarters at the Hotel du Cheval Blanc, a very excellent house in all its arrangements, which was fortunate, as it was the only one. I had walked all day at a considerable elevation upon a spur of the Montagnes Noires, through a country considerably wooded, with cover for game everywhere, and first-rate cock-shooting in the winter. I was informed (not by the hotel keeper, who, however, is a sportsman, and farms his own land) that an English gentleman, with an unpronounceable name, remained with his brace of setters at the Cheval Blanc for some weeks during the previous winter, who had excellent sport, bagging in one day his nine brace of birds, and couple, or leash, of hares. This may not seem much to us at home, accustomed, as we are, to our preserved manors; but, in Western France, where the open country (in contradistinction to the forest and large woods, where the roebuck, and in some instances, the wild boar is preserved) is open to all who pay their five-and-twenty francs for a *permit de chasse*; you must go even beyond Mrs. Glasse's famous injunction, as, before you can catch your hare, you must, first of all, find her. Goerin is another good halt for the angler; a rivulet just to the southward of the town runs into the river Laita, both streams abounding in good trout; and, away to the north, the river Isole, so that you have some considerable choice of water, which, in these out-of-the-way places, is less disturbed by fishermen, because, being at a considerable distance from any

railway station, there is no market for the trout. Although the weather was dry and hot, with that continual plaguy east wind, still one was able to place a nice dish of good fish upon the table. The Laita runs into the Ellee below La Faouet, the distance being only five leagues. The French league is four kilometers of 1000 meters, ten kilometers is about six English miles; the league, therefore, is about two-miles-and-a-half English. The road was very good, though hilly; we were three-quarters-of-an-hour mounting one elevation, from which the view was grand—the river dashing away on the right far below us. Near the village of Le Saint is a Roman entrenched camp on the summit of the hill, in a most commanding position. There are extensive woods of fir on each side of the road, nearly to the entrance of La Faouet, where we fixed our quarters, at the Lion d'Or, in the *Grand Place* of that pretty and ancient little town. The river Ellee is a considerable stream, encompassing the town on its eastern, southern, and western sides, and joining the river Laita about four miles in the latter direction, whence they flow into the Atlantic. They pass through the beautiful old town of Quimperlé, some fourteen miles by road, and abounding throughout the whole distance in salmon and trout; indeed, the Quimperlé salmon bear as reputable a name in Brittany (of course I mean Basse Bretagne) as the king of fresh water fish out of the Severn does with us; and I much regret that, in a walking tour, a salmon rod with its accessories, was too great a weight to be thought of. Throwing the fly for trout in the Ellee, above its conjunction with the sister river, the Laita (a noble stream), I was obliged to solicit the assistance of a man I saw fishing at a distance, in

landing a nice salmon-trout of one-and-a-half pounds. My piscatorial friend, who was a *cantonnier*, and numbered off accordingly; and who, like all that class of men, was an old soldier, was fishing with a salmon rod. He informed me that, during the month of April, he had killed three salmon close by, weighing respectively seven, eight, and ten pounds, which, upon inquiry in the town, I found to be correct, and with such tackle he might have fished for crocodiles, judging from its coarseness and strength. He stated he always fished with the same fly—large coarse black hackle. Our friend Bernard, of Church-place, Piccadilly, would be considerably amused at the sight of it—indeed, I had a good mind to have sent it to him. The black hackle with yellow body, in some few instances, is a great favourite with the Breton fly fishers. Some few years ago, after whipping the Trieux all day with every fly in my book without landing a fish, my dignity was considerably lowered by a cobbler, who showing me his basket (a good take, too), informed "Monsieur" that "he had not the right fly, and indeed they did not know how to dress flies in England." How is it that all cobblers in the neighbourhood of rivers are—not to put too fine a point on it—"takers of fish," legitimately or otherwise as the case may be? This same knight of St. Crispin was whipping with a monstrosity meant to imitate the honey bee, and he caught fish with it too. I had my revenge anyhow; I did send this one to England, and the result shortly followed; for meeting my friend of the lapstone, a few weeks after, I beat him hollow with his own fly.

Revenons a nos moutons—La Faouet and its two noble streams, especially the Ellee, which has all the characteristics of a first-rate salmon and trout stream, such as a strong cur-

rent, clear, but rather too much wooded on the banks; with plenty of mills, having the usual dams and tails; cataracts, and obstructions caused by monster boulders of granite in its bed. Its breadth varies from thirty to forty yards, the strong current not allowing the weeds to accumulate to any great extent, and I saw, in my walk up the river, "such fish." We are all aware of the magnifying effects of limpid water, and in some instances, fishermen's eyes have a similar property; I should not, therefore, like to give an opinion as to the probable weight of some trout which I saw. Certain English gentlemen, from Quimperle, had been staying at the Lion d'Or a few weeks previous to my arrival, and had taken some heavy trout; this I gathered at the dinner table from the people, who had seen and measured them, although, singular to say, they had not weighed them. After clinking our *chopins* in a road side *auberge*, my new found friend, the "cantonnier" (*i.e.*, one who has in charge the repair of the road, either for government, or the department), who, having been at Inkermann with Bosquet, and at Malakoff, under Pellisier, still preserved his liking for our own countrymen, offered to show the river in its best aspect further down; we accordingly started, enlivening the way with reminiscences of those old days in the Crimea, and of that brave English General (Cathcart), whose name, however, he could not pronounce. We came together to a mill, and, like a gentleman, he gave me the upper end of the mill race at once; himself keeping down stream a good one hundred yards, and, although he was summoned two or three times to assist in landing a fish, he never murmured, wanted to shift his ground or change his fly. Here, in the bright rapid water, the superiority of fine tackle was

apparent, the small flies, and delicate dark gut, raising and killing fish after fish, while the poor fellow below could not get a rise; so, pulling up I gave him two similar flies to those which were doing so much mischief. His heavy two-handed rod was, however, too much for the small hooks, for, in striking, he invariably broke his hold of the fish. After fishing down to the fork of the rivers, we left off with a handsome basket of trout, and my friend took me across country, leaving me in the main route for home, to my great comfort; for, how I should have got there without his assistance, is more than this deponent knoweth. And, here, let me put in a word of caution to all wandering disciples of old Izaac, who may be tempted to throw a fly in the rivers of Basse Bretagne. The country people invariably speak Breton, and very few understand French, so that if you get out of your reckoning in the fields, as has ofttimes been my case when shooting, it is a somewhat difficult matter to find the right road again. It is to me, a matter of surprise, that La Faouet is not more frequented by anglers from a distance, as there are both salmon and trout in the rivers. It is a quaint old place; the dress of the peasantry is so picturesque, that of the women especially, who keep up the old practice of riding pillion fashion, in contradistinction to the custom in the Cotes du Nord where they ride *en cavaliers*, it is very droll to see the farmers' wives riding into market in this fashion, with a baby on their knees across the pommel of the saddle whilst the husband leads the horse. As for the men you can't tell one from another; they are all dressed alike, broad felt hats; long hair hanging down upon their shoulders; coarse linen jackets and breeches, with itted worsted gaiters, and wooden sabots; long double-

breasted black waistcoats, and broad leather belts round their waists fastened in front by a large brass buckle. The country around is romantic and beautiful. I walked, on Sunday morning, to look at an old ruin (the Chapel of St. Barbe), situate on a lofty hill S.E. of the town, the view was magnificent; the river, like a silver thread winding about, could be seen for many a mile, and, with my glass, I could make out old *chateaux*, church steeples, villages quietly nestling among the hills, and the ruins of the old Chapel close at hand, suggestive of long-forgotten days. The gothic-looking old town, slumbering in the mellow sunlight, at my feet, and the deep silence all around, produced upon the mind a train of solemn serious reflection; elevating one, for the time, above common, everyday things. In this frame of mind, which caused me to long for my accustomed place of worship, I slowly wended my way down the long hill side to the Lion d'Or, which had been my very comfortable quarters for several days.

A commercial gentleman at the *table d'hôte* gave me his card, "M. McAuliffe:" he did not speak a word of English. I had noticed several names over the shop doors, evidently English or Irish, and remarked the singularity of the circumstance; upon which he told me that numbers of Scotch and Irish families had settled down about here after "the wars of the *Jaques*" (the revolution of 1689, I suppose), and, notably, after the surrender of Limerick by Sarsfield to Gynkel, for King William, when the army of James was, by treaty, allowed to embark for France. A brigade of them was afterwards heard of under Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy.

Quitting La Faout in the following morning, I turned away N.W., and following the course of the river Laita,

passed the division of the Departments, at a bridge about four miles from the town. Morbihan was behind me, and I found myself in mountainous Finistere, travelling upon a good road, nevertheless, in the direction of Quimperlé. Loquenole, a large village, lying a little off the road, on the left, is distant about half way, and would be a first-rate halt for any one upon salmon fishing intent, as there is a great volume of water. The river is now the Laita only (the Ellee losing its distinctive appellation at the confluence), and it is a large volume of water, somewhat resembling the Usk, between Brecon and Abergavenny. Some miles further on, it receives the waters of the Isole, already mentioned in connection with Goerin, which stream, rising at the base of the Montagnes Noires, takes a S.W. curve in passing close to the little town of Scaer, where there is good fishing and a comfortable hotel. *Apropos* of hotels in general, an hotel in Basse Bretagne is an imperative necessity, from the fact that an Englishman could not live upon the fare provided at the village inns; bread made from rye and *blè noir*, *crêpe*, or pancakes made of the flour of *blè noir* (buck wheat), which is extensively grown here, and soup, the principal ingredients of which are cabbage and bacon, being the ordinary food of the country people. The Isole is lost in the Laita before entering Quimperlé, through which town it flows; and, after becoming navigable below, is known as La Riviére de Quimperlé. The water was low and bright, and an east wind was blowing so that I did not fish here; but, from the number of streams I have attempted to describe, the reader will understand that angling in this neighbourhood must be first-rate; indeed, the Quimperlé salmon are celebrated for their quality even in Paris. Walking out in the evening, I saw several

people fishing from the bridges, &c., in the very streets, and seeing a man with his rod I followed him to learn his mode of angling, from curiosity, He was kneading some bread in the palm of his hand, and with a long line, heavily shotted, but no float, and a No. 6 hook, baited with the paste he had made, he "threw in" over the parapet and took, while I stood there, six or seven lumping dace. He told me that often in the evening he killed very large eels with the lob worm. From the quays, on the following morning, I saw numbers of very large dace, and a few good trout. Quimperlé is a fine old town with two good hotels—the Lion d'Or and the Hotel des Voyageurs—and the neighbourhood is extremely picturesque and beautiful. Quimperlé is rendered famous in the chronicles of Froissart; a great victory gained by Sir Walter Manny, that gallant knight and esquire to Queen Philippa of Hainault, whom he accompanied to England on her marriage with Edward III. In company with a number of Breton and English knights, and three thousand English archers, he attacked six thousand Spaniards and Genoese, under the command of Lord Lewis of Spain, who had been plundering the country; pursued them to their ships, recovered all their booty, and took their vessels. Lewis himself escaped with only one vessel and scarcely three hundred men. This was but one of a series of successes, which are duly recorded by that gossiping yet charming old chronicler. Two of our countrymen are especially mentioned—Sir John Botelor (Butler), and Sir Matthew Trelawney, who were both severely wounded and laid in a field.

As there was nothing to be done here for the present, the weather being hot and dry, with an east wind, I departed

per rail *viâ* Rosporden* for Quimper, the capital of the department, and committed myself to the care of Madame Delamon, at the Hotel du Lion d'Or, in the grand Place, just under the shadow of the most beautiful cathedral in Brittany—a glorious pile of early Gothic, with the statue of King Gradlon (its founder), sitting on horseback between the two towers. Quimper is a large and handsome city, a description of which you may read in any guide book for Brittany, though I prefer Mr. Jephson's account. The neighbourhood is very beautiful, and it is about an equally short distance from the seaport towns of Douarnenez and Concarneau, both of which are celebrated for the number of craft employed in catching that delicious little fish, the sardine. One individual alone (whom I happen to know) has fifty vessels so engaged. In the season both places are much frequented by the fashionable world of Paris for sea bathing; it is a famous locality for both rod and gun, the country being extensively wooded in all directions, and having a large amount of cover there is much game, in addition to opportunities for the fly fisher that would satisfy the most fastidious. The noble river running right through the town (with its long array of handsome stone quays, avenues of trees, light iron balustrades and bridges) is the product of three considerable streams, which form quite a network of water on the east, north, and west sides. These rivers rise, in most instances,

* At Rosporden there is a good hotel. The river Aven, rising in the mountains near Coray, on the route between Carhaix and Quimper, flows past Rosporden, crosses the line close to the railway station, at which point it has the appearance of a somewhat large lake. Taking thence a more southerly course, it passes Nizon, debouching into the Atlantic at the head of a creek, close to the little fishing village of Pont Aven, not far from Concarneau.

from the base of the Montagnes Noires. The river Ged, running nearly parallel with the railway from Rosporden, joins the Odet some distance N.E. of the city; these, again, before they reach Quimper, are joined by the Benaudet or Stheir, whose course has been from the N.W. The streams thus united (Quimper, in the Brezonec tongue, meaning the meeting of the waters) become navigable below the town, and flow into the Atlantic, some seven miles distant, forming a noble estuary.

After making two or three extensive casts to ascertain the lay of the land, and waiting for a little rain, which opportunely came in a copious downfall, I started off, up stream, to the Odet, above its junction with the Ged, where at five or six miles distant, is one of those convulsions of nature peculiar to Brittany. The stream here, during the process of time (how long let geologists determine) has bored, or cut for itself a passage between two mighty hills of granite, and the elements, during many ages, have loosened the light supporting soil, large blocks of stone having rolled from the summits and sides of the hills into the bed of the stream below, and for several miles you have that joy to the senses of the fly fisher—a succession of cataracts, rapids, and tumbling bays; the river is alternately cooped up into narrow channels, through which it roars, and rushes, and foams, and then widening out into many a noble reach of clear water, from thirty to forty yards wide, it flows along over its rocky bed through the most lovely bit of scenery it was ever my good fortune to behold. The bright sparkling river, with hills on either side, clothed in their spring livery of green and gold looked charming; and this inviting spot, called in Brezonec, "Stan-ga-la," or the "Valley of the Rocks," has no

doubt been long since transferred to canvas to delight the eyes of visitors to the Royal Academy; as I was informed at the hotel that two English artists, Messrs. S—— and C—— had been staying there for some weeks. It was refreshing to hear that they had both left pleasant memories of their presence (it is not always the case with us bold Britons, you know), and had paid particular attention to the scenery of the Stan-ga-la.

Here is plenty of room for casting; you can cross the river dryshod, by jumping from one block of granite to the other, and there are but few trees on which to hang your flies to dry, only the gorse growing close to the water, bothered one a little. I was quite unmolested, and never saw a soul all day from one end of this "enchanted valley" to the other. Not a sound to be heard but the rush of waters; and here, keeping the advantage of the wind, as I crossed and re-crossed the river, did I play havoc among the trout, using my favourite soldier fly, in scarlet doublet and golden armour, and the black hackle and silver twist, for which, as the sun declined in the west (ah! how beautifully), I substituted the little blue dun. They rose ravenously at this last fly, which was dressed on too small a hook, and I lost several good fish in consequence. However, after throwing in again every fish I did not consider up to my standard weight of half-a-pound (how many I cannot pretend to remember), I was enabled to carry away my basket three parts filled with beautiful trout. None were above a pound weight, and I have no doubt that with favourable conditions of weather and water, a good basket could be made up at any seasonable time. It is not always such good fishing, as experience proves, for having to wait a day or two for my letters, I resolved to have another

foray at the Stan-ga-la. The wind had veered round to the east, and, after flogging the water from three o'clock in the afternoon until dusk, I only killed three fish, and lost my way on my return to the city, but was restored to consciousness and good humour by a good dinner and some excellent Bordeaux, all alone by the kitchen fire, at ten o'clock at night. I was shown, by M. Delamon, a handsome suit of apartments, for a family, in a large and beautifully furnished private house in the park, overlooking the river, the terms of which, including board at the hotel, inclusive of wine, were forwarded by letter to me, and are at my readers' service. The walks and drives in the neighbourhood are very numerous. The city authorities have escarped the side of a lofty hill, which forms the south boundary of a large square in the park (the river forming the north), where, under lofty trees, easy, broad ascents lead to the top, whence the view is magnificent.

Leaving, very reluctantly, the scenes I have feebly attempted to describe, I left Quimper, per rail, for Chateaulin (nine leagues); the whole distance strongly reminding one of certain parts of the Chester and Holyhead line between Conway and Carnarvon, saving the absence of houses. Now it passes between huge cliffs of granite, now it opens out into bosky glades, while from the hills above invariably runs the little trout stream. A French gentleman in the carriage told me there were good fish in all of these rivulets. He had his fishing tackle with him, and was going to remain a few days at Chateaulin, a pretty little town, situated on both sides of the river which flows into Brest harbour, about six or seven leagues hence. This river is, in fact, the commencement of the Nantes and Brest canal, a noble sheet of

water, navigable, of course. Steamboats ply between here and Brest. As I walked, during the two following days, by the side of this famous structure, I observed the great difference between it and similar works in England, viz., the rivers from the mountain, on the left bank of the canal, looking south all ran into it, so that in its course it receives into its capacious bosom all the streams that would otherwise have to be carried under, or over it. Now, speaking altogether from an angler's point of view, the result is obvious—it swarms with fish of all kinds. A broad deep canal is this—I know nothing like it in England—it was constructed for the passage of merchandise between Brest and Nantes, to protect French commerce from our cruisers during the war. It is, apparently, quite a hundred yards in width, and abounds in large pike and perch, and some immense trout, (as I was informed by several persons), of six or seven pounds weight; these are taken by the worm, or by spinning, and, as it was, obviously, not a water for the fly, I contented myself by admiring and looking on. I should say, in case of some curious engineer tripping up my heels, that ample means exist for the discharge of surplus water, by floodgates, &c.

Chateaulin, viewed from the railway station (which is at a considerable elevation), is a handsome little town, through which the canal passes, the opposite sides of which are connected by a stone bridge. It is the temporary terminus of the coast-line from St. Nazaire, in the direction of Brest; and when finished will connect that harbour with the mouth of the river Loire and the city of Nantes. Brest has already direct communication with Paris.

Leaving the railway station, and descending into the

town, I admired the embankment on both sides the noble sheet of water which extend the whole length of the place. It has solid granite piers, and, the houses being well set back, it forms a splendid promenade. I crossed the stone bridge, and, setting my face East, mounted the opposite heights, and marched off directly for Chateauneuf, a rather long walk, after three o'clock in the afternoon, of seven or eight leagues. The mountain road was under repair by the government, and numbers of men were cutting down the crests of the hills, and filling up the vallies with the *debris;* it was quite refreshing to see the manner in which they went to work. A tramway was laid down, and dozens of railway waggons drawn by horses were at work, and the granite was being rolled down into the hollows by hundreds of tons. The improvement will be immense when the work is finished, and will, no doubt, be highly appreciated by the Finistere Jehus, and their little horses. I paused at the village of Sainte Thoys, the lofty tower of whose church can be seen for miles. One of those peculiarities incidental to Brittany, a *Calvaire*, occurs at the entrance to the church-yard; and in a square stone building, are all the incidents of our Saviour's crucifixion, namely, the cross, the body of our Lord, the cock, ladder, spear, hammer, nails, &c., &c.; all beautifully executed in Kersanton granite of a greenish hue, and although they have been in existence for five centuries, the work is as fresh, and everything stands out as sharp and well defined as if the sculptor were still living. The leaves and flowers are so well done that the maul and chisel must have been in the hands of a very skilful artist. Everything was life size, and I stood a long time, looking on with

admiration, and regretting my inability to sketch the whole thing. The poet Keats was right in saying—

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

The truism will exist for all eternity.

Attached to most of the churches here they have a charnel house, which is a sort of lean-to in the churchyard, where the bones of the dead are deposited when dug up, and each separate set are put into a box with a little pigeon hole, labelled and painted. "*Ci gît*, &c., &c.;" it is a very curious, but most decorous, method of dealing with human remains. It was eight o'clock before Chateauneuf was reached, and was very hungry, having breakfasted in Quimper at ten, and there is always some difficulty in getting a dinner out of the usual routine, mind that, now! However, the lady at the hotel (Ah! it is always the ladies who assist a traveller, whether he be Alfred in the forests of Somerset, or Mungo Parke in the African deserts), kindly came to the rescue, so I had dinner, and some good hot coffee, on a well-swept kitchen hearth, with a fire made especially for the occasion, as the evening had set in cold. May good digestion wait on appetite, and thankfulness on both.

The Brest and Nantes canal is within ten minutes' walk of the house, and I found that an English gentleman, with his lady, had been located there three months, for the fishing, which must be tolerably good, or he would not have stayed all that time. I never saw him, for, with that charming *insouciance* which is so eminently characteristic of our race, *perdû* he remained. Although I dined, slept, and breakfasted in the house, I only heard him, discoursing sweet ·sic on his violin, as I retired to bed, "Still so gently o'er

me stealing." I was wafted away into the land of Nod by the sweet strains, and had confused dreams of hackles, red and black; of Sontag; of poor Malibran; of large trout, and Swedish nightingales.

I was off and away betimes in the morning, and crossed the large river Aulne at its junction with the canal at Landeleau. The river here differs in no wise from the canal; being quite as broad, and apparently quite as deep, and the fishing must be first-rate; close by there are a lock and a weir, with a fall of water quite as large as that at Teddington lock. Some distance further on is a large water mill, with the usual accompaniment of dam, pool, race, tail, &c., but as it was impossible to carry everything on one's shoulders, and having no top strong enough for spinning tackle, I passed on and took up my quarters at the Hotel Latour d'Auvergne, Carhaix.

Charles Lever has to English readers immortalized Latour d'Auvergne in that sprightly work, "Tom Burke of Ours." The "*premier grenadier*" of France was of an ancient family of this town, and preferred carrying his musket as a private soldier, with the title which Napoleon conferred upon him, to wearing the epaulettes of an officer. He was killed in a battle with the Austrians in Italy; but his name is still called first on the muster roll of his regiment, the senior sergeant answering, "*Mort sur le champ de battaile.*" His fellow-townsmen have erected to his memory a bronze statue, which is placed upon a handsome pedestal, in the Grand Place.

At Carhaix the river Heirre passes within a mile north of the town, and then runs into the canal some distance below. There it is, a considerable body of water (not navig-

able), with plenty of very fine trout in it, some having been taken in this neighbourhood weighing from three to five pounds, although none such fell to my lot. It was not altogether to my liking as a trout stream, for it consisted of "long reaches" of broad, smooth, deep water, abounding, no doubt, in good fish, but not the kind of water one depicts as one's *beau ideal* for casting with the fly; and, as Carhaix is rather a large and populous town, I resolved to try the stream higher up towards Callac. While fishing near an ancient stone bridge, to the north of Carhaix, I witnessed a fight of rather a singular character. At some little distance from me a large yellow cat was striking something in the grass at the bottom of an old stone wall, very gingerly and carefully, not as if the object she was attacking were a rat or mouse. Putting down my rod, I crept up, and looking over the wall very quietly, saw pussy had got a somewhat large viper, which, as often as it was sliving off to its hole, she drew back by striking her right claw into his back; the thing would then turn round and hiss; upon which pussy, standing on her hind legs, would quickly get out of the way, and directly he turned to scull off, down came the claw into his back, and so at last she killed him.

Carhaix is a very ancient town. On the stone coping of one of the high-peaked gabled houses, immediately opposite the Hotel Latour D'Auvergne, is carved a date of the 16th century; and, in the wars of the Succession, in 1342, the place sustained a long siege, by Charles de Blois, and surrendered only after a long and obstinate resistance. It must, then, have been very populous, and strongly fortified, judging from the number of men De

Blois was compelled to bring against the town, and the military engines he had with him. It is, however, gratifying to know that the lives and fortunes of the inhabitants were preserved; for their offences were pardoned by De Blois, upon condition of the people doing homage and swearing fealty to him. The garrison of the Castle Goy la Forét had a very different fate. At the same period, and at the hands of our own countrymen, under Sir Walter Manny, the castle was taken by storm and every soul put to the sword. Evidences of that stormy period even yet remain all over Brittany; the *Chateaux* have, apparently, all been built for defence. The site is always upon some commanding spot, thus reminding one of the fortalices upon the Scottish border :—

> "The battled towers; the dungeon keep;
> The loop-holed grates where captives weep;
> The flanking walls, that round it sweep."

To this day the thick walls are still standing, the mortar of which is as hard as the stone itself, the only means of getting them apart being by blasting. The small windows, and the little turrets, loop-holed for arrows or musketry, to cover the main entrance and the posterns with a flanking fire, remain; but very few appear to have had a moat—it could not have been from any deficiency of water. Angling is one of the contemplative man's diversions, and one must therefore be excused if, looking at the large amount of forest land in the country and remembering the great number of wolves there were in old days, I contemplate with a shudder the fate of poor wounded soldiers, left out all night after a battle in such a region.

An old soldier of the empire, who is a friend of mine, and a member of the same family as Latour d'Auvergne, relating his adventures with the French army in the retreat from Moscow, told me that large numbers of dogs and wolves followed very close upon the rear guard, for reasons it is very easy to define.

The river Heirre runs by the road side, and winds about all the distance from Callac to Carhaix. I found very comfortable quarters in the former town, after a journey of about five leagues, at the Hotel de la Bretagne; and, now, having left mountainous Finistere, and got back again into the Cotes du Nord, the country had none of those striking peculiarities to which I had been accustomed for several weeks past, being level and fertile; nevertheless, the Heirre is a pretty stream, and had its full quota of good fish. Taking the road, which I had already traversed on my route from Carhaix, I went down stream, two leagues from the town, and commenced fishing at a mill close by an old chapel; a carpenter at work there recommended, as usual, the black hackle (seule), therefore to please him—as he was evidently a fisherman—and having plenty of time, I whipped the neighbourhood of the mill quietly and carefully, for two full hours, without getting a fish. I then came back, and sitting under the trees where he was at work, told him the result, and showed him the two flies I intended to try next, the red palmer and yellow dun; he shook his head; had never seen anything like them! 'twould'nt do. However, after consuming an hour over a crust of bread and a mug of cider (that is your fare for lunch, my ainty friend, if you would fish in Brittany; and you

will be lucky if you get white bread away from your hotel), I was up and at it again. My carpenter friend being somewhat curious as to what "those very small flies" could do, he looked on at a distance; so going to the tail of the weir, on the opposite side of the water, and having the wind at my back, I cast my line, like thistle-down, into the hurly-burly below, thinking such flies would tempt a saint, if he or she were a trout. At the second or third cast, a ring! a rise! a gentle strike! and a fine fellow is dashing in and out of the pool, and rushing madly about in all directions, to rid himself of the fatal incumbrance; but all in vain. Giving to him there, and holding on here, the rushes became less and less furious; and, as I could not move from where I was, I let out my line, getting the fish into water that would scarcely cover him, and my friend went in without touching my light line; put his hands under, and hove a fine pound fish on the grass, to his great surprise at what such small flies and hooks could do.

"There's a *belle truite*," said he. "Pick him up, and take him home for your supper," said this deponent. "Did not Monsieur want so fine a trout? It was not every day that such were caught." "Ah! well, he would not have been caught at all, if you had not gone in and landed him, so take him home." "*Merci beaucoup*," and we parted. The poor fellow, an intelligent workman, was slaving away dubbing at the trunk of a tree with an adze to form a beam for a house that was about being erected, and earning the munificent sum of thirty *sous*, or fifteen pence per day, and his home was at Callac, two leagues or five miles off. Think of that, my friends of the Trades' Unions.

Now here was five miles below, and five miles above, of fishable water. What a gipsy kind of independence it gives one to have that sort of Robinson Crusoe idea, "Monarch of all one surveys," from a piscatorial point of view; so different from the restrictions at home, where fish of all kinds are guarded with such jealous care. A young nobleman who had requested my assistance in a small matter during the past winter, in giving me permission, at my personal request, for a day's pike-fishing in a navigable river, running through his estate, said "I don't give it, even to my personal friends;" well, after that intimation, you know, one could not go; consequently, I had no jack. But in western France, the land is so subdivided that no one individual thinks it worth his while to interfere to the detriment of the angler, and as long as you don't damage the crops, all is well. I did not improve on the size and weight of my first fish, although I think during the afternoon I killed as good. The river here is very weedy, lacks the rocky bottom and furious currents found in other places; but I had a beautiful basket of trout, although I was obliged to wade in several times in order to extricate flies and fish from the weeds. The best fish, with the exception of the first, were taken, away from the mills, in the quiet and somewhat deeper parts of the river; keeping out of sight, quietness, and a light clear cast, being indispensable. There are plenty of good fish in the river, and the level character of the fish you take is somewhat surprising, none are very little, and none that I took were over one pound, although I am sure there are plenty above that weight. Last, though not least, I never took a dace, nor saw one all

day long, to my great relief. I fished the Heirre at Callac again and again, each time taking fish, and should, I am confident, have done much better had the water been more plentiful and not so clear; in which case I should no doubt have landed some of those trout about whom report was so busy. I was invited by a gentleman (*pensionnaire* at the Hotel de la Bretagne) to accompany him to a large pond or lake in the neighbourhood, in which, according to his account, there were very large trout; he said he had taken them from four to five pounds' weight. This he stated publicly at table, among several gentlemen who fished, and, as no one demurred, I presume he was correct. However, something intervened, and he could not fulfil his engagement with me.

An English gentleman had been staying at the Hotel de la Bretagne, with his two servants, for six weeks on fishing purposes intent—pretty good evidence, one would think, in favour of the capabilities of the river and the comforts of the hotel. The latter is the only one in the town, and under the supervision of Madame Thomas, is clean and comfortable, with good beds, a liberal table, and very reasonable charges. Madame had a little jeremiad (who has'nt?) about the English Monsieur's servant cooking for his master, who also committed the enormity of having—What did I think Monsieur had for breakfast? "*Café au lait! Ah! fi donc! fi donc!*" Ah! we Islanders have a good deal to answer for.

During my stay here I saw another of the great cattle fairs; and, whilst looking at a very handsome dun pony somewhat under twelve hands in height, with silver mane and tail; quite a ladies' pet (which I may add for the

information of my fair readers, was prized at three hundred francs), a voice said in my ear: "Would Monsieur like to look at some superb horses?" and, on turning, I saw a smart *kepi*, a well fitting scarlet jacket, a pair of very white baggy trowsers, terminated by long boots and spurs, the whole costume enclosing the body of a most voluble individual with a riding whip, who looked as though he had just been officiating in the ring at Franconi's Circus, and who told me that he was the official for the *haras*, i.e., stud for the improvement of the breed of native horses, here. He took me to the stables, and showed me some magnificent animals. The French government take great pains, and go to enormous expense in order to improve the breed of horses in this country; and here were two entire horses, coloured respectively brown and grey, great, fine, upstanding animals, full sixteen-hands-and-a-half, with splendid manes and tails. They were both stripp'd, brought out, and put through their paces (such grand action) with as much form and *esprit* as if you had been at Anderson's in Piccadilly, and your *cicerone* had been Mr. Rice himself. That accomplish'd *master of the horse* would have readily sold a pair like the grey for five hundred guineas; they would have looked splendid in a barouche at the portals of a Belgravian mansion.

The country round Callac is hilly, and well wooded; it has plenty of cover, and much game. Whilst staying, for a few minutes, to rest at a farmhouse between Chateauneuf and Carhaix, the people told me that three wolves had been killed in a wood at the back of the house during the preceding winter.

Callac is six leagues from Belle Isle Begar, a station

on the Western Railway, about thirty miles below St. Brieuc, and to Belle Isle I should have proceeded had I not overheard, before leaving Guingamp, part of a letter read from a gallant officer, resident there, who after reciting that, on that very day, he had lost a fine salmon, after having hooked him, concluded by saying there were but few fish in the river. Accordingly I wended my way into the mountains of Cornouaille, but, nevertheless, Belle Isle en Terre has long been a favourite residence for sporting purposes; many good fishermen having, for years, made the river Guier famous for the number and quality of both salmon and trout taken out of its stream. As I am only speaking from hearsay, it must suffice to observe that the river rises among the hills N. of Callac, and, flowing past Belle Isle, falls into the Channel below Lannion. Continuing the march we leave Callac; pass Pont Melvez, and enter the wooded district of Mousterus, in whose immediate neighbourhood, at the old Chateau of Bois de L'Isle, I have had many a day's shooting, in the lifetime of the late proprietor.

There was a Breton gentleman who lived a few winters ago at the Chateau of Glisker, between this place and Guingamp, who undertook to keep himself and his household (during the shooting season), by the sole help of his dogs and his gun. I don't know whether he won his wager, but my informant laughingly told me that they had to eat up all the squirrels.

The vicinity was, of yore, much infested with wolves which are now pretty nearly cleared off. I remember seeing a number of *pattes* nailed to the miller's door; and enquiring how many wolves he had killed during his

tenancy. He answered thirty-seven; and that he trapped them thus: a huge steel trap was attached to a log of wood, by a short chain; the wolf, when caught, trotted off, carrying trap, log, and all, but did not go far, you may depend upon it.

The miller goes at day-break to inspect his traps. If any are missing, he fetches his old dog and lays him on the scent, having previously attached to his collar a long line, the other end of which he keeps in his hand. Monsieur Loup, with the encumbrances named, has not gone far, and is soon ran into, when the cowardly brute lays himself down, and, tucking his head between his two fore arms, is in that position knocked on the head with the miller's *sabot* or wooden shoe.

So plentiful were the woodcocks at Mousterus that two Breton gentlemen of my acquaintance killed in my presence ten couples, in a morning's shooting. They have a curious mode of cock shooting in cover, which consists in attaching a small bell to the collar of their setter, and when the tinkle ceases, they walk up to the dog and flush their bird. But, with all these advantages, the non-fertility of the country is such that the great landowners could never have lived after the manner of Chaucer's Franklin:—

> "Withouten bak'd-meat never was his house,
> Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
> It snewëd in his house of meat and drink,
> Of allë dainties that men could of think,
> After the sundry seasons of the year.
> So changed he his meat and his suppêr
> Full many a fat partridge had he in mew,
> And many a bream, and many a luce in stew."

Guingamp is a short walk of eight kilometers from Mousterus; the way is very pretty and mostly down hill, the towers of the grand old cathedral on the right, and the spire of the church of La Grace in view nearly all the way on the left. The French take greater care of the outskirts of their borough towns than we do, and I found walking under the avenue of trees (which is the invariable approach to the town), upon cool, pleasant turf uncommonly pleasant after a long and dusty walk of twenty-three miles with all my traps upon my back. I remained in my old quarters a week, and had very good sport in the Trieux. There are more fish above the town towards Plessidy, but they are small, therefore I generally commenced casting below the potteries, about three miles on the Pontrieux road. I only saw one salmon rise, but he was a right royal fish, weighing, probably, twenty pounds; "the grapes were very sour." And now bidding a reluctant farewell for the present, but not (let us hope) for ever, to the lovely river, I shouldered my knapsack and marched down to the coast by way of Lanvollen, a distance of eight leagues. On reaching the river Leff, the rain fell so heavily that I was obliged to take refuge in a cottage among a whole colony of washer-women. The Bretonnes all wash their clothes at the nearest stream, and, consequently, in the open air in all weathers, banging the things with a wooden bat, or knocking the life out of them on a stone.

Let me remark incidentally, that, all over Brittany, the young girls sell their hair directly it is long enough to be marketable, and all the women wear a close-fitting white cap. Packmen, who act as agents of the mer-

chants, go round to the markets and fairs, and exchange their wares (generally very common things) for the hair; giving a handkerchief, or some such article for the long back hair of a country girl, and it is not uncommon to see the poor things standing up in a bye street or lane, being sheared. In presence of a whole bevy of the fair sex, deep silence was not to be expected; therefore, I had to submit to a good deal of badinage. "What had I got in my pack? Why did'nt I unstrap and show my goods, like a good *marchand?* What would I give for this one's hair? or that one's?" and so on. "Ah no," I replied, "I could not deprive them of woman's loveliest ornament, &c." The weather cleared, but not in time for me to fish, so I started once more, for the beach at Pontrieux, by the "sad, sea wave," and, after dining at the Hotel Talus, with good Captain Chevalier, embarked at midnight with that very energetic seaman on board his cutter, the Eclipse. Notwithstanding a heavy load, consisting of forty-nine bullocks down in the hold, in addition to fat pigs, calves, sheep, butter and eggs piled upon deck, and the little cabin overflowing with passengers, in seven hours we arrived off St. Helier's pier. We met the mail steamers starting for Southampton, and, as it was low water we pulled ashore in the cutter's boat, found a bath and a good breakfast at the York Hotel, particularly agreeable after a somewhat hard day-and-night's work. I remained one day on the pretty little Island of Jersey, where everything—houses, gardens, cows, &c.—is on a miniature scale except the cabbages; and took my passage at six o'clock the following morning in the Brighton mail steamer, and at "post meridian half-

past four," found myself walking along the Esplanade, at Weymouth, after a very pleasant passage across a sea as smooth as a mill-pond.

Our wanderings in La Bretagne are over; there is no more to be done except to render ourselves prisoners, "rescue or no rescue," to the conventionalities and amenities of civilized life; but the recollection of so many pleasant days of freedom clings around the stern realities of every-day duty. Hence these sketches of my tour; which, if they induce a brother angler to follow in my footsteps will have accomplished my wishes.

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