

THOMAS BARKER

THE ART OF
ANGLING

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*The Art of Angling Wherein are discovered many rare secrets, very necessary
to be knowne by all that delight in that recreation:*

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Reader: I will complement, and put a case to you. I met with a man, and upon our Discourse he fell out with me: this man having a good weapon, having neither wit, stomack, nor skill; I say this man may come home by *Totnam-high-Cross*, and cause the Clerk to tole his knell: It is the very like case with the Gentleman Angler that goeth to the River for his pleasure: this Angler hath neither judgment, knowledge, nor experience; he may come home light laden at his pleasure.

A man that goeth to the River for his pleasure, must understand, when he cometh there, to set forth his Tackles. The first thing he must do, is to observe the Sun, the Wind, the Moon, the Starres, and the Wanes of the Air; to set forth his Tackles according to the times and seasons; to goe for his pleasure, and some profit.

As for example, the Sun proves cloudy; then must he set forth

either his ground Bait or Tackles, and of the brightest of his Flies. If the Sun prove bright, then must he put on some of the darkest of his flies. Thus must you goe to work with your Flies, light for darkness, and dark for lightness, with the wind in the South, then that blows the Flie in the Trouts mouth. Though I set down the wind being in the South, if the weather be warm, I am indifferent where the wind standeth, either with ground Bait or Menow, so that I can cast my Bait into the River. The very same observations is for night, as for day: For if the Moon prove cleer, or if the Stars glitter in the skie, there is as ill Angling that night, as if it were at high noon in the midst of Summer, when the Sun shineth at the brightest, wherein there is no hopes of pleasure.

I will begin to Angle for the Trout, with the ground Baits with this quality.

The first thing you must gaine, must be a neat taper Rod, light before, with a tender hazell top, which is very gentle. If you desire to attain my way of Angling, (for I have Angled these forty years) with a single haire of five lengths, one tied to another for the bottom of my Line, and a Line of three haired links for the uppermost part; and so you may kill the greatest Trout that swims, with Sea-room.

He that Angles with a Line made of three haired links at the bottom, and more at the top, may kill Fish: but he that Angles with one hair shall kill five Trouts to the others one; for the Trout is very quick sighted; therefore the best way for night or day, is to keep out of the sight. You must Angle alwayes with the point of

your Rod downe the stream; for a Fish hath not the quickness of sight so perfect up the stream, as opposite against him, observing seasonable times; as for example, we begin to Angle in *March*; If it prove cloudie, you may Angle with the ground Baits all day long; but if it prove bright and cleere, you must take the morning and evening, or else you are not like to do any good; so the times must be observed, and truly understood; for when an Angler commeth to the River for his pleasure that doth not understand to set forth his Tackles fit for the time, it is as good keep them in the bag, as set them forth.

I am determin'd to Angle with the ground Baits and set my Tackles to my Rod, and go to my pleasure: I begin at the uppermost part of the streame, carrying my Line with an upright hand, feeling the Plummet running on the ground some ten inches from the hook, plummung my Line according to the swiftnesse of the stream you Angle in; for one plummet will not serve for all streams; for the true Angling is that the plummet runneth on the ground.

For the Bait. The red knotted worme is very good where Brandlins are not to be had, but Brandlins are better: now that you may bring these Brandlings fit to Angle with, that they may live long on the hook, which causeth the best sport. When you have gathered your worms out of the dung-hill, you must gaine the greenest Moss you can find, then wash the earth very clean out of it, then provide an earthen pot, so put your Moss into the pot, then put the worms to the Moss into the pot; within two days

you shall find your worms so poor, that if you bait some of them on your hook, you shall see that with throwing of them two or three times into the water, they will dye and grow white: now the skill is, when these worms be grown poor, you must feed them up to make them fat and lusty, that they may live long on the hook; that is the chiefest point.

To make them lusty and fat, you must take the yolke of an Egge, some eight or ten spoonfull of the top of new milk, beaten well together in a Porringer, warm it a little, untill you see it curdle; then take it off the fire, and set it to coole; when it is cold, take a spoonfull and drop it upon your Moss into the pot, every drop about the bignesse of a green Pea, shifting your Moss twice in the week in the Summer, and once in the winter: thus doing, you shall feed your wormes fat, and make them lusty, that they will live a long time on the hook; so you may keep them all the year long. This is my true experience for the ground Baits, for the running Line for the Trout.

The Angling with a Menow, called in some places Pencks for a Trout, is a pleasant sport, and killeth the greatest Fish; he commeth boldly to the Bait, as if it were a Mastive Dog at a Beare: you may Angle with greater Tackles, and stronger, and be no prejudice to you in your Angling: a Line made of three silks and three hairs twisted for the uppermost part of the Line, and two silkes and two haire twisted for the bottome next your hook, with a Swivel nigh the middle of your Line, with an indifferent large hook.

To bait your hook with a Menow, you must put your hook through the lowermost part of his mouth, so draw your hook thorow, then put the hook in at the mouth againe, let the point of the hook come out at the hindmost Fin, then draw your Line, and the Menowes mouth will close, that no water will get into its belly; you must alwayes be Angling with the point of your Rod down the stream, with drawing the Menow up the stream by little and little, nigh the top of the water; the Trout seeing the bait, commeth at it most fiercely, so give a little time before you strike: This is the true way, without Lead; for many times I have had them come at the Lead and forsake the Menow, so he that tryeth shall prove it in time: let us go to Angling with a Flie, which is a delightfull sport.

The Rod must be light and tender, if you can fit yourselfe with an Hazell, either of one piece or two set together in the most convenient manner, light and gentle: set your Line to the Rod; for the uppermost part, you may use your owne discretion; for the lower part, next your Flie, must be of three or foure haired links. If you can attain to Angle with one haire, you shall have the more rises, and kill more fish; be sure you doe not over-load yourself with the length of your Line: before you begin to Angle, make a triall, having the winde in your back to see at what length you can cast your Flie, that the Flie light first into the water, and no longer; for if any of the Line falleth into the water before the Flie, it is better unthrowne then throwne; be sure you be casting alwayes downe the stream, with the Wind behinde you, and the

Sun before; it is a speciall point to have the Sunne and Moon before you; for the very motion of the Rod drives all the pleasure from you, either by day or night in all your Anglings, both for Wormes and Flies; so there must bee a great care of that.

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