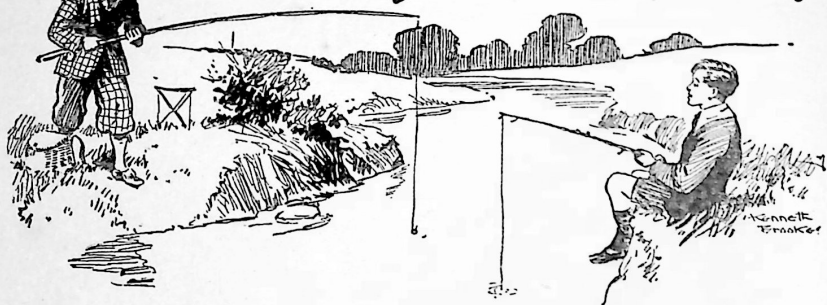


# The Luck of the Line!



***A bent pin, a length of thread, and a slender branch can perform wonders where elaborate fishing tackle fails!***

**S**OMETIMES it seems to the fisherman that the fish he is so keen on catching will not be caught. The weather is right. The tackle is right. The fish are there, plainly to be seen. But the unlucky fisherman gets never a bite. Why? Well, if we look long enough, we can find a reason for most things.

You may have seen a man with a fine rod, expensive tackle, different kinds of bait, landing-net all complete, fish for hours and catch nothing, while a hundred yards away a village boy with a rough stick, a length of twine, and an ancient hook with a worm on it has been getting real good luck. Why?

One reason is that

the local fisherman knows the best places to go to. Fish are not distributed evenly over a river or lake, making one place as good as another. They have their favourite

spots for feeding and playing, very much as human beings. You would not, if you wanted to catch perch, choose a bit of water full in the blazing sunlight; but if there were a nice, shady spot at hand, such as under a bridge, that would be the place to go to, and with good hopes of making a catch. If you *do* hook a perch (you will know him by the four or five dark stripes across his bronze-green body), be careful when taking him off the hook, or one of the spikes in the fin near his head may



**A village boy with a rough stick, a length of twine, and an ancient hook with a worm on it, may get all the luck!**

run into your hand. Weather, time of year, time of day—all these things have a lot to do with luck in fishing. I have turned out as early as three o'clock in the morning and made a good catch; yet fishing for the rest of the day has given me not a bite!

It is true that the wind has something to do with it. When there is a high, cold wind, fish are cold and sulky, and do not go about looking for something to eat. A sunny, hot day is excellent for the fisherman who tries his hand at catching fish because he doesn't want to exert himself at



Fish are not accustomed to shouting, loud talking, and so on, and will take their "hook," not yours!

anything more vigorous. But it is not the likeliest day for getting fish. A warm, rather cloudy day with a light wind usually gives best results. But you must go where the fish are. So if you are a stranger in the place, get some local person to give you a tip as to where the likeliest places are to be found.

Very coarse lines and big hooks often explain why fish are not caught. The thinner the line and the smaller the hook the better. Why? Because you need to tempt the fish with something that will not scare him. When he goes feeding, naturally he does not find his food fastened to a thick bit of string. You want to use a fine line, so that there is a chance of his not seeing it at all. A fish may not have much of a brain, but he

is very easily scared. And anything unusual is liable to scare him.

You might not think, for example, that so simple a matter as a shadow—your shadow—falling upon the water would scare him. But it will. From this you will gather that, instead of pitching down on the bank anywhere when you start fishing, it is as well to choose a spot from which, if there is sunlight, your shadow will not be thrown far across the edge of the bank.

Noise scares fish more than anything else. A fish can and does hear, and any noise to which he is not used will send him darting away like a flash, no matter how tempting a bait you may be dangling about in his neighbourhood.

Habit has accustomed him to the noises made by cows and horses coming down to drink, and by horses tramping along the bank towing barges. He has learned that such noises do not mean harm. But shouting, loud talking, the banging of tin cans, and so forth he is not accustomed to. So he takes his "hook"—not yours!

Earth and water carry sounds well, as you know. So noises on the bank or splashing in the water, perhaps fifty yards away, will alarm him.

Perch fishing is encouraging, because if you are careful and get the first fish that jerks your float under the water, you are likely to get all the perch in that particular region. But if, for any reason, you do not hook the first one that bites, you can pack up and go off elsewhere. No other perch there will pay attention to your bait.

Failure when trying to get roach, or other "bottom" fish, is usually due to lowering the bait to the wrong depth. The fish do not swim about *anywhere* in their hunt for food. They are used to finding it at a certain depth, and if you do not lower your bait to the proper depth you can go fishing for hours without luck, though fish may be plentiful. They don't see your bait.

So find out (by means of a lead on your line) just how much line you must have in the water to convey the bait to the bottom, or an inch or so above it, and fix your float accordingly.

# A Deserted Picnic!



**Puzzle—Find the Greyfriars Party!**