

FROM THE ANGLER'S POINT OF VIEW.

Trout Fishing. By W. Earl Hodgson. Pp. xviii+276. (London: A. and C. Black, 1904.) Price 7s. 6d. net.

Fishing Holidays. By Stephen Gwynn. Pp. ix+299. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1904.) Price 7s. 6d. net.

An Angler's Year. By Charles S. Patterson. Pp. xii+192. (London: W. R. Russell and Co., Ltd., n.d.) Price 2s. 6d.

THE first two of these books are not in any sense books of reference or guides for the angler; Mr. Gwynn frankly states that his object is not instruction but amusement, but it is no ground of complaint that the former as well as the latter is to be found in his descriptions of his fishing holidays. Mr. Hodgson's is a pleasantly trivial book, interesting as giving the views of an experienced fisherman on many points, but no more instructive, in fact, than Mr. Gwynn's in intention. The former is at his best when describing matters of his own observation; "the whistler" would take a lot of beating as a piece of pure narrative, and is almost on a level with Mr. Gwynn's best; it calls for equal admiration in the vigour with which an almost Homeric battle is described, and the delicacy with which a veil is drawn over the undignified end of a noble fish, but it is scarcely possible to extend this admiration to the delicacy with which twenty-one of the author's friends and a daily newspaper are veiled in the obscurity of initialled dashes, which are frequently inadequate as a disguise and always typographically unsightly.

Mr. Hodgson deserves great praise for his effort to figure adequately in colours a series of trout flies, and the result is really very pleasing; we wish we could add really successful, but it seems very doubtful whether the three-colour process is suited to this class of work; the reds, and especially the clarets, are not satisfactory, and a comparison of the different representations given of, e.g., the cow-dung, olive dun, or black gnat seems to show that sufficient accuracy for work of this nature cannot be obtained by the process employed. The excellent reproduction of a picture of a group of brown trout given as a frontispiece may almost serve as a contrast to the figures of flies to show the class of subjects well and ill suited for illustration by this method. It would have been interesting to have had more explanation in the book itself of the flies figured and the reasons for their selection, especially from so ardent an advocate of the wet fly as Mr. Hodgson.

Mr. Gwynn's book is most delightful; we have read much of it before in various periodicals, but nothing is lost in reading it again in book form, and the print and general get-up are so good as to give an additional pleasure to the reader. The proverb which Micky applied to the author's efforts to catch a salmon—to misquote it—*Is fada do leabhar gan bradan*, cannot in any sense be applied to his efforts to write a book; it is the book that is too short, and there is a wonderful store of really useful information not only as to salmon, but as to trout and, in one excellent essay, pitchards.

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Unlike Mr. Hodgson's book, Mr. Patterson's "An Angler's Year" contains a large amount of information which should be of the greatest assistance to the beginner. The method by which the author deals with his subject is good; he selects typical days from each month in the year (except March, which he not unfairly regards as "the silly season of angling"), and describes actual experiences of his own, illustrating them with information as to the best gear and method of using it in each instance. Without ever becoming didactic, Mr. Patterson gives a great deal of most useful advice upon many forms of fishing, and is equally interesting whether he treats of trout or conger. There is one addition which would, we think, be appreciated in any future edition, and that is an index, and it really seems an undue economy of space to print advertisements on the back of the title-page and table of contents; still, these are but details (as is the quaint misprint which causes the pike to figure as *Essex lucius*), and in no way affect the value of what appears to us a very practical and useful little book.

It has lately been suggested that there is nowadays too great a tendency to attribute human characteristics to animals; the fisherman certainly tends to attribute them to fish; Mr. Patterson expresses a conviction that the Test trout know more than the anglers; Mr. Hodgson combats at some length the views of those who hold that trout are cunning; both are at issue with Sir Herbert Maxwell as to a trout's sense of colour. The task of approaching the presumed feelings of a fish—especially with a view to deceive—without attributing to it some almost human qualities, even as Mr. Patterson attributes the cunning of the carp to the size of its brain and the fulness of its years, is not easy; there is a tendency almost automatically to put oneself in the place of the fish and to try to look at the world from that standpoint, and to do this one must, to some degree, give the fish human views. Our fish are certainly more interesting a little humanised, and one can feel a real sympathy for M. Guitel's goby and his efforts to find a mate which a mere bald narrative of facts would not evoke; but in reading books on fishing one cannot help wondering whether it is really the fish or only the fisherman who likes some peculiarly compounded paste or some particular tying of a favourite fly. Somehow, while feeling sure that Mr. Gwynn and Mr. Hodgson are right in insisting on the importance of the size of fly used, we yet feel some suspicion that it is the former author and not the fish he angled for that had no taste for worms.

L. W. B.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Betrachtungen über das Wesen der Lebenserscheinungen. Ein Beitrag zum Begriff des Protoplasmas. By Prof. R. Neumeister. Pp. iv+107. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1903.) Price 2 marks.

THIS is an essay—critical and constructive—on the mechanical and vitalistic interpretations of the phenomena of life. Biology has oscillated from the one position to the other since the days of Harvey. Some progress in the physico-chemical analysis of an abstracted part or process of the organism is made, and