

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GRAYLING.

The history of the grayling is an interesting one to the naturalist angler, as much so as the fish itself is of great interest to any one who attempts to angle for them.

Thirty years ago the Michigan Jordan was preëminently a grayling stream, and but few trout found in it; the grayling simply abounded in these waters; in twenty years the trout grew, increased, multiplied and replenished the waters, thus fulfilling the first law of creation; in increasing ratio the grayling disappeared, and has kept on disappearing until it has become almost a scarcity on the very stream that was noted as a grayling stream.

The same might be said of the Boyne; in 1874, '75 and '76 grayling were frequently taken side by side in equal numbers with the trout, but, singular, as it may seem, you could find fingerling trout in abundance, while all the grayling were of larger size, say from half a pound to one and one-quarter pounds. I never remember taking a small-fingerling grayling in either the Boyne or Jordan, while in Cannon Creek and Buttermilk Creek, both feeders of the Manistee, grayling of three inches long are as much a nuisance as are trout of the same size in trout streams. No trout are found in these creeks, nor have I heard of any ever being taken in them. Rumors have come at times of grayling that some bucolic fishermen have found in the feeders of the intermediate chain of lakes. Some of these rumors I took pains to run to ground and when producing a carefully sketched picture of the grayling and asking the individual if that was the fish he caught the answer would be:

"Why, no; I dunno! Never seen that fish afore, yew calls that graylings?" They did not know a fresh run trout from a grayling.

On one summer fishing trip I was confidently told some grayling had been caught in Cedar Creek. I found the Cedar a brush-grown creek almost covered by tamarac, cold and dark, possessing beautiful gamy trout but no sign of a grayling, and my informant, a reverend gentleman, had never seen a grayling until I showed him one, brought from within a few miles north and east of Traverse City.

The gentleman who introduced me to one of the best grayling streams in Michigan called my attention to the fact that trout and grayling cannot exist in the same stream, and led me to investigate for causes. In fishing for both I found a gradual decrease of the grayling, while the trout held their own in spite of the numbers who fished for them; this gentleman, a public official in Traverse County, Michigan, has had similar experience, and in twenty years' fishing came to the conclusion that the trout are too combative and too previous for the gentle grayling, but there are other causes: The grayling is a spring spawner, and as the winter snows are beginning to melt, the trout is alert for sweet morsels, and if any grayling eggs come floating along the line of *fontinalis*' explorations he soon finds a depository for them. The grayling cannot fight against such odds as logging, fish and fishermen; all tend to drive the fish away from the streams they once occupied.

In 1876, I fished the Cheboygan River and feeders, but found no trout, but bass in abundance and of large size. The Sturgeon and its feeders are grayling streams, and like

Mr. Green I had plenty of advice concerning good streams "a little ways further on that contain plenty of trout," but could never get any of these woodsmen to locate the streams or give any proof of the production of trout in that entire region. We had in camp, grayling caught in the Sturgeon weighing 2½ lbs., the largest and heaviest I ever handled. These were caught by an old Maine woodsman whose vernacular was strangely aglay with the mixture found among the Michigan mossbackers. This trait runs through the whole of the fishing region—they are honest and open as the day, but the prospective is a factor among them, and many a fisherman has been deluded by hopes that turned to wormwood. Information taken *secundem artem* should be taken in infinitesimal doses. I have learned by bitter experience that instead of finding trout and grayling in the same stream, the trout were there, and plenty of hungry mosquitoes which took their revenge on me for my simplicity; but the grayling was a matter of history—"They had been there."

The grayling streams of Michigan are the Hersey, the lower Pine, the Manistee and its many feeders. The Muskegon, undoubtedly, at some time was a grayling stream. The Pigeon River, the Sturgeon, the Au Sable and many of these streams are being depleted, and unless artificial propagation is attempted the grayling will soon pass away.

Mr. Frank Clark, of the U. S. Fish Commission, who has studied the grayling thoroughly and with more than sentimental interest, claims that they can be propagated at less cost and with a less percentage of loss than can brook trout. A pound grayling will produce about 4000 eggs, if but the eggs can be obtained, and grayling fry can be planted by the million. The greatest difficulty is almost beyond human remedy; so many streams are fished out that the cost of obtaining even a few thousand eggs would be very heavy.

The grayling sprang into popular favor and maintained its place for a short time, but its race was a short-lived one. Within the memory of anglers of to-day it came; the enthusiasm was almost unbounded; it conquered the hearts of such men as George Dawson, Fred. Mather, Le Moynes, Clarke, Carpenter, Edwards and Stockton, of Chicago; Holabird, of San Diego, Cal.; Lockwood, Jerome and a host of Michigan anglers. Lockwood, of the G. R. & I. R. R., is a grayling enthusiast though a modest one.

But the Huns and Goths of the North Shore streams came down in savage hordes and drove the gentle grayling from his heritage and took possession by the right of conquest. The race has been for the swift and the battle for the strong—the mightier has prevailed; but the successor is a worthy representative of the king of the finny tribes—a prince of the house of Salmo, even the *fontinalis*, before whom the flag of the *Thymallus signifer* comes down and gradually gives way to this new comer.

NORMAN.

Duluth, Minn., Jan., 1887.

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