

with the other to spring them out. Go around one and one half times, or twice, but make sure the pliers are in a down position when you finish. (Figure J) Pull the pliers and the remainder of the hackle towards the back and wind the tying thread back through the hackle making sure to catch the stem hanging in the pliers. (Figure K) Now wind the thread forward and let it hang on its bobbin. Reach in under the hook with the scissors and cut off the hackle stem. (Figure L)

Step 6. Finishing the head. The best finish for any kind of fly tying is the whip finish. Professionals use it and so do advanced amateurs. It is neat, fast and fool proof, and doesn't require head cement. It is difficult to explain and just as hard to show in art work or photos. If you will place your fingers in the same positions as in the photos, chances are you will learn it. Pick up the thread in your left hand about 8 inches from the hook and lift the thread so it is on the same plane as the fise. (Figure M) Keep the thread taut in your left hand throughout the remaining steps. Place the two first fingers of your right hand in back of and over the thread, with the palm down. (Figure N) Now twist the two fingers forward, spreading them apart slightly. You should have turned your hand over so now the palm is up. Now you have half a knot between your right hand and your left. Pull on your left hand and follow the tension until the half knot is pulled against the head of the hook, but keeping the right hand two fingers spread apart. (Figure O) The thread in your right hand should be laying across

the middle of the first joint of your forefinger and right in the crease of the first joint of your forefinger and right in the crease of the first joint of your second finger, and they will be behind the hook. (Figure P) Move the second finger up under the first one, keeping the thread tight over the middle of the first joint and wind the thread around the back side of the hook. As you do this, you will feel the tension shift from your forefinger to the second finger. (Figure Q) Come around until your fingers are in the same position as when you first twisted them over. Before you go around the second time, pull the second finger back away from the forefinger so you will feel the thread again right in the crease of the first joint. Go around three or four more times in the same manner and stop at the top of the last turn. Your fingers will again be behind the hook. Place the third finger of your right hand against the thread on the back side of the hook. (Figure R) Pull the thread with your left hand and you will feel the knot tighten around your first two fingers. Tilt the two fingers toward you, taking pressure off the second finger. Pull it back out of the knot and catch the loop in your thumb and forefinger. Continue to pull the thread with your left hand and guide the loop downward toward the tip of the head, keeping the third finger against the knot on the back. (Figure S) Now cut the thread close up under the head.

I must confess that I tied flies for many years using half hitches

to finish and that is wasn't so long ago that Les Reinke of Abercrombie Fitch in Chicago taught me the whip finish in the back room of the angling department in that store.

The foregoing steps are for any of the floss and hackle flies in the book or any others you might like to try. You might experiment with short, soft hackles you might be able to obtain from other birds in your area such as bob white or ^{and doves} quail, waterfowl and pheasants although most of the ~~the~~ hackles on these birds are too large for these flies. The Tups Indispensible and other flies with fur thorax call for the extra step of spinning the fur on the tying thread and winding it in before you wind on the hackle.

There are many ways to spin fur on thread, but the easiest, I think, is to do it right on the tying thread hanging on its bobbin. This would be at the end of step two, after you have wound the floss just two thirds of the way up the shank. You will need liquid wax and the hare's face.

Coat two inches of the thread with liquid wax by dipping a bodkin into the wax and applying it to the thread. Cut some fur from the hare's face using the scissor blades flat. (Figure T) Lift the scissors with the fur on the blades and dump the fur on your thigh or on the fly tying table. (Figure U) The fur should be about 1/8 of an inch across and about 3/4 of an inch long. Gingerly, lift the fur with your thumb and forefinger and place it right agins the waxed tying thread. It will stick there. (Figure V) Now with your thumb and forefinger pinch the fur and tying thread together and roll them between your fingers. (Figure W) Wind the thread and fur around the hook towards the front. The fur thorax should not be

more than 1/8 of an inch wide even on a size 10 hook. (Figure X) If there is not enough fur, recoat more tying thread and add more. If there is too much, pinch the thread and fur with your thumb nail and strip it right down off the thread. Now complete the fly with the hackle and the whip finish.

Chapter VIII

The soft hackled flies are fished best in the kind of water most fly fishermen like best. It is the kind of water which has sufficient current speed to move the line rapidly down stream. It is the kind of water which will quickly whisk away a loose fly should it accidentally fall into the river from your fly box. Damn, you say, you can't reach it fast enough that the current hasn't already got it. The water speed is not that great, however, that wading downstream is difficult. Wading should be fairly easy with sufficient pressure nudging you all the time and making it seem natural to be going that way instead of the other.

The right river for the soft hackled fly will be more rough surfaced than smooth or glass like. This means, of course, the water is running over rocks and stones, sunken trees or stumps and weed beds. It helps, too, if here and there you can see a larger outcropping either above or just below the surface.

The rough textured surface also means that where the fly is, the depth is not too great. I would not advertise the fly in more than four feet of water, the shallower the better, because the fly rarely sinks more than three or four inches.

Productive water for the soft hackle fly is fairly straight and riffly, with long, gentle bends and flat, with little variance in depth from one side to the other. To the non-fisher, this kind of water looks too shallow. "There wouldn't be any fish in there", they say. I find much of this kind of water ignored also by the average fly fisherman, who

*not normally -
the most scenic
of rivers*

seems to prefer deeper pools, ~~the~~ the shallow water on their side and the deeper water on the other. Wading is relatively easy in this kind of situation and it is true that the fish tend to "hole up" in this kind of water. But so do the fishermen.

There are two such similar and beautiful pools or runs on the Madison, just inside the west entrance to the Park, called Barn Hole No. 1 and Barn Hole No. 2. They are very popular, because they are easily fished and they are close to West Yellowstone. Frequently, each pool might be occupied by two, three or four fishermen. However, there is a very, fast, choppy riffle just above No. 1 which nobody hardly ever fishes. There is a cable across this water on which Park rangers cross the river in some sort of spring releases or gravity driven chair. I start in above that cable and work down. The water here is very strong, and one can't wade it much over the knees. There is no time for mending, but you really don't need it. The water is quite broken up by medium sized boulders and it's surprising how many big fish lay there.

On this stretch, I seldom fail to take a fish up to 15 inches with one of the soft hackles, preferably a Tups or one of the other thorax patterns, and I have missed rises in there that really jar me.

One such fish, in October, 1973, I believe to have been in the 7 or 8 pound class, and in October when big browns and rainbow migrate up the Madison from Hebgen Lake, fish of that size can be found in this river. I was below the cable using the size twelve pheasant tail. I had worked the stretch down without any interest from a fish, when I had a powerful nip at the fly, but no real take. Whenever this happens, it is wise

A happening like this raises interesting questions about what fish, particularly big fish, will eat or what they can see. Why will they attack such an ;obviously small insect or artificial when it would take several hundred of them to make even a small appetizer"? How much energy must they spend to rise or move to one side or the other after the tiny prey? Is there so much protein, nutrients and calories in a small insect that ~~enxx~~ just one or a couple will ~~sas~~tain a large fish for a long period of time? How to they see such tiny artificials or real insects zipp9ng by them at high speed in broken water?

A. H. E. Wood said there was very little a salmon didn't see.

We can assume the trout sees just as much. Even without answers to these questions, we ;can marvel at what remarkable creatures Perhaps trout really are. The ~~mystexx~~ inability to "know all" about them and the mystery ~~that~~ remains are what makes their pursuit so ~~delightful~~ fascinating and delightful.

not to move another step and not to change the casting length of the line. You may have put the fish down with the pricking or touching of the fly, but the second chance at an eager fish is worth the cast. My second cast was identical. The big fish came again and this time was hooked firmly. As with many steelhead I have caught on the fly, the big fish started diagonally down stream pulling line off the reel at incredible speed. My God! This Can't be! Not on a size 12 soft hackle. But it was all over in a flash. I reeled up looking anxiously for the broken line, leader or fly. I had the line...I had the leader and I had the fly. I was puzzled until I checked the fly; the very tip of the barb was gone, broken like a spider's single web by that big fish.

A happening like this raises interesting questions about what fish, particularly big fish, will eat or what they can see. Why will they attack such an obviously small ^{insect} ~~piece of food~~ when it would take several hundred of them to make even a small appetizer? How much energy must they spend to rise or move to one side or the other after the tiny prey? How do they see such tiny artificials or real insects zipping by them in broken water. A. H. E. Wood said there was very little a salmon didn't see. And I'm not implying that big fish have lost their sight; as older humans lose theirs ^{what a remarkable} ~~I can only ask the~~ ^{creature the trout is} ~~questions; the answers if there are any, make the sport the more interesting and more challenging.~~

No 1. Barn Hole is just below the fast riffly stretch I have been talking about. It is ideal for the soft hackle, but better for it during the months of September and October. On the evening of the same day I was broken

by the big fish, I landed and released two browns and a rainbow, between 18 and 20 inches, ^{during} 45 minutes of the finest and most exciting fishing I ever had in my life. It all happened from 6:45 until 7:30. After releasing the first fish, the partridge and green soft hackle resembled hardly anything at all. It was then too dark to change. After the second fish, the floss was torn to shreds with just a couple of barbules of the partridge hackle still hanging on. After the third fish, the hook was practically bare, yet I think I could have taken another had not total darkness and nighttime cold settled on the river.

Most fishermen on the Barnhole No. 1, never fish enough of it. They start in at the the top, wade down a hundred feet or so and stop where the pool levels off into a 300 foot long broad shallow tail. Three years ago, I got my first 16 inch brown on the Madison with a soft hackle in that tail, barely over a foot deep, with half a dozen fishermen in and out of the water above watching in amazement.

The kind of water least suitable for the soft hackle is the multi-bend river with its deep, black pools, short, abrupt tails and fast lips. Pocket water like the Roaring Forks, at Aspen, even though it carries a large stock of trout, is not entirely conducive to the soft hackle. Yet, the sister river to the Roaring Fork, the Frying Pan River, yields very well to the soft hackles. Similarly, the East River of the Gunnison responds to the soft hackle, but its more tumultuous, pockety, hard to wade cousing, Taylor Fork, gives up its trout reluctantly, to the soft feathered fly.

Many borad riffly stretches of the madison, in the Park and out

of it; the Gallatin, especially midway between West Yellowstone and Bozeman are beautiful rivers for these flies.

In Michigan, the 10 mile long, no-close season, fly-only stretch of the Pere Marquette works well all year long with these flies. *During the spring of* ~~Last spring~~, 1972, on April 10, with snow in the woods, and temperatures at or just above freezing, I took two small browns on soft hackles, while fishing with larger flies before and after for steelhead.

There is some nice, riffly water on the Muskegon above Newaygo where good sized rainbows take the soft hackle very well. Of the Au Sauble system in Michigan, stretches of the North Branch come forth (where I first used the partridge hackle), while the South branch seems too sluggish, sandy and siltish. The main branch has much soft hackle water, especially in the lower stretches, but too much canoe traffic on a weekend to permit any fishing at all.

Further north, the Boardman, although beautiful and yielding big browns at night, has never been a good soft hackle river.

The best, most productive river I ever found for these flies is the Firehole in Yellowstone Park. The water I speak of is above the Canyon, but not so far up as where the geysers spew their hot steam. Here the river is quite broad and flat. The bottom is mixed gravel and rock with heavy weed beds rising and bending out of sand knolls. The current is steady, with a broken surface. In this water, rainbows respond to the flies, better than do the brown. I asked Pat Barnes, fly tackle shop proprietor and guide in West Yellowstone, why this was and he said the

browns were on the bottom while the rainbows ranged higher in the stream, accounting for the larger number of them caught on the shallow riding soft hackled flies.

The soft hackled fly on this water in August, September and even October is an amazing performer in these days of controlled and crowded fisheries with stocking generally falling short of the take. The Firehole, however, has to be filled to the brim with rainbow and brown, and it must have tremendous, sub-aqueous insect life for the soft hackles to work so well.

Schwiebert and Charles E. Brooks, "The Trout and The Stream," 1974, both say a good proportion of this life underwater is the pupae of the Caddis fly. I never knew

Fish here are often seen tailing or bulging, an encouraging sign on any water for these flies. True, I have never taken a 16" fish on the Firehole, which is not the minimum legal taking size on this river and the Madison, but my average day's take does not fall far short of W. S. Stewart who said, "And he is not worthy of the name of angler who cannot, in any day of the month, when the water is clear, kill from fifteen to twenty pounds weight of trout in any country in the south of Scotland".

The firehole trout are fat with small heads, and average 13 or 14 inches in length. The soft hackle will take 25 to 40 of these per day, and though I have never weighed them, or kept any, their total weight must be more than Stewart's figure.

Even though the Firehole is so good to me and my soft hackles, it is not so good to other fishermen I have met on it who were using either dry flies, western streamers or other kinds of wet flies or nymphs. Many fishermen I have talked with said they had very few fish.

The productive water I'm speaking of is pretty much overlooked. It runs right along the main road to Old Faithful, and if you're not too far in the water, you will have to watch your back cast else you might catch a tourist's car.

One minor accomplishment of the soft hackled fly occurred here 4 years ago, during the early part of October. I was winding up a phenomenal day's fishing. I hooked and released at least 40 trout, mostly rainbow, on the orange; and partridge and the yellow and partridge. The rises missed numbered into the 50's. I was sated and it was getting dark, but I was still going.

Chuck Fothergill, drove by in his VW bus and pulled over to the side to see how I was doing. We had met a couple of years earlier in the Madison in the Park, and then later at his fly tackle shop in Aspen. He introduced me to his beloved Roaring Fork and showed me how he takes 30 or 40 trout per day, fishing upstream with weighted nymphs and weighted leader. Our styles were at complete opposites. He was on the bottom, I was on the top. He used lead. I used nothing but the bare fly. He fished upstream. I fished down.

Sticking to my own style and fly, he could outfish me 10 to 1 on the Roaring Fork, and I was amazed and a little stunned by his ability. He once said he never saw any one fish the nymph downstream with a slick line and without any weight as I did. And I think the soft hackles were new to him.

When he stopped on the Firehole to watch me, I was elated. I told him I had caught more trout that day than I could count. Would he watch me while I tried to take another? Yes, okay. Oh, that I could just catch one more and do it as quickly and easily as I had with all the others. I stepped in the water and cast. Not a long cast, and the mend was not required. In the classic way, with no drag, almost as though rehearsed over and over again by the trout, the fly and me, the 14 or 15 inch rainbow acted the part beautifully. I looked up at Chuck, the fish doing his thing to the end.

Chuck said, "Okay, you convinced me."

Chapter IX

If you were fishing dry fly and decided instantly to switch to any of the soft hackle flies in the book, and the mending method, you wouldn't have to change a thing except the fly. Your dry fly rod would be from 7 feet to 8 and 1/2 feet long. Your line would be a floater. And your leader would be tapered to a pretty fine point, say two, three or at the most four pounds.

The rod may be fiberglass or bamboo, the leader knotted or knotless and the line probably one of the new, plastic floating lines.

You would have to change styles, however, from upstream to across and down, and bring in the occasional mend we talked about earlier.

I still use bamboo, possibly because my fishing life started and grew with this material. And I have returned to silk lines during the last couple of years. I guess the reasons for preferring the bamboo rod and the silk lines are the same. They are both solid with no air space in the center, or built in as it is in the new plastic fly lines.

The air space puts me off. In a glass rod, it makes the butt too large and the tip too obvious. The rod feels "light as a feather", but seems to lack stamina in the middle.

In a plastic line, the trapped-in air cells inflate the diameter of the line at least a size or two larger than the same size or weight line in silk.

The larger diameter of the plastic line causes more wind resistance and cannot be controlled in casting or mending as easily as the silk line. With any amount of backing, the plastic line needs a larger capacity reel, because of the extra bulk.

It is true, the silk line has to be greased and greased regularly to float. But as one British writer said recently, you can play tunes on the silk line by greasing only a part of it, leaving the last few feet ungreased, giving the angler a sinking tip. Or, you can leave the whole line ungreased, in which case all of the line will sink.

New ~~silicone~~ manufactured in England by King Eider are not made with a silicone dressing which is supposed not to require drying the line. I usually uncoil the line at night on a ~~raft~~, and grease it in the morning before going out. The line will require another greasing at mid day in order to keep it floating. String it up between two trees or lay it on the grass or weeds, let it dry for a few minutes and regrease.

There are no special qualifications for the leader in this style of fishing. My leaders are never much longer than the rod I'm using. I make them up from Maxima leader material, starting at the butt with ~~number~~ 6 line at 20 pounds, then 15, 12, 10, 8, 9, 10 and 3 depending on how small a fly I'm fishing. Each succeeding piece of material is slightly longer than the preceeding. With an 8 foot rod and

a number 7 line, I start with 25 pound material at the ~~butt~~.

Maxima is the finest material I have ever used for leaders. It seems to have the right stiffness to roll out high on the back cast and to turn over the fly on the forward cast. Even though there are other monofilaments with smaller diameters, I like it better because of the color (or lack of it) and the transparency which makes it difficult to see in the water. Dry or wet, it has the feel of silk worm gut leaders we used many years ago. The material also ties and holds the blood knot very well. I have never seen leaders ready made from this material, so you will have to buy it on spools and make your own.

When Pritt and Stewart were taking their 15 and 20 pounds of trout per day with the soft hackle flies, they were doing it with more than one fly on the cast. In fact, Steart says, "The number of flies that should be used at a time is a matter upon which great diversity of opinion exists; some anglers never use more than three, while others occasionally use a dozen." He goes on to say the bigger the water, the more flies the angler might use.

Today, when the fly is taking very well, it is tempting to put a second or even third fly on the leader, in the hopes of catching two trout at a time. I have done this a couple of times, and there was a time when I was using two and three flies quite often.

It can be a good practice to start out fishing this way, if more than one fly is permitted on the water, where one does not know what kind of subaqueous life exists there, or what artificial is taking, then

switch to the single, most successful fly, after it has proved itself over the others. That one fly appeals to the trout more than the others happens quite frequently and then it is really quite useless to have the others on, unless they are the same pattern and color. This fact proves selectivity of fishing feeding under the surface.

The best way to attach the second or third fly to the leader is to use one of the blood knot ends of the leader material. Instead of cutting this end after you tie the know, just leave it stick out 6 or 7 inches and tie the dropper fly on it. This should be done toward the fine, tip end of the leader where the material is fine enough to let the fly work.

Some public or part water prohibits the use of more than one fly at a time and I don't know why this should be so when most fly fishermen that I know, today, do not even kill minimum limits.

It is more sporting, however, and I feel, more in the classic tradition to use only one fly. Besides, the dropper or droppers will invariably catch each other or the tail fly during the act of casting and create knots other than those tied in by yourself. In weedy rivers, the junction of the dropper has a habit of collecting floating vegetation which has to be removed from time to time.

Chapter X

a fly fisherman is
 If ~~you~~ ^{he} are not an absolute grouch, ~~you~~ ^{he} will meet other
 fishermen along the way of the trout streams ~~you~~ ^{he} fish on, who, from
 strangers will turn into friends. There is a natural inclination to
 keep to one's self, specially since the sport demands the concentration
 of the cast alone. ^{he} There is also amatural selfishness to keep the
 location of the goold ~~spots~~ ^h and riffles to oneself and not to divulge
 the fly apttern one knows is good or taking on that partidular water.

I have met a few fishermen who wouldn't give ~~you~~ ^{me} the time
 of day, let alone valuable information which might help ~~you~~ ^{me} take a
 fish. But I have met many more who would share with ~~you~~ ^{me}, a perfect
 stranger, his flies, leaders and his most productive and favorite water.

Such a man is Jim Rader. He lives in Baldwin, Michigan,
 just a few miles from the Pere Marquette. *He lives in a modest home*
He works for ~~job is running equipment for~~ the state conservation department. As
 a native, or "local" he does everything in Michigan that can be done
 in the fields of fishing and hunting. He starts the fishing season (he
 really never ends it) with steelhead fishing in March on the Pere
 Marquette, now open to fly fishing only, all year long, from route 37,
 downstream for about 10 miles.

On that river and the Little Manistee and other steelhead
 bearing rivers nearby, he will take 70 or 80 steelhead ina year, many
 on flies and many on spinners of his own making. He was one of the first
 fishermen in the area to take giant Chinook, close to 40 pounds, in the
 rivers as they came up to spawn. He fishes from a boat in Lake Michigan

for lake trout, now making a comeback in that water. And he is one of the best trout fly fishermen I have ever met.

His knowledge of fly fishing is staggering, yet he never read a book on the subject. He casts tiny dry flies, big "caddis" at night, weighted steelhead flies, all with equal ease and proficiency, yet he doesn't own an Orvis, Leonard, Thomas or Young. He know when the brown drake, the iron blue or the "Caddis" will come off, yet he can't tell you the four stages any of the insects go through.

He frequently takes browns to 7 pounds on flies, and 20 inchers are commonplace to him.

I met Jim in Ed's tackle and fly shop in Baldwin, without introduction. He was buying flies for some evening fishing and I was checking the hatches with the proprietor, and buying fly dope or insect repellent.

Jim is straight forward and unpretentious. He has a natural confidence with betrays his background and minimum education. After the usual fishermen's salutations, he came right to me and asked if I wanted to go fishing with him that evening.

An offer like that from a local is worth more than gold and if you ever get one, don't turn it down. Even though I was a non-resident, I did, however, know the P.M. quite well. I knew many access roads, the knowledge of which is absolutely necessary to fly fishermen in any

trout area. And I had been fishing the river since 1948.

I followed Jim to his home and we transferred rods, waders and other fishing needs to his "fishing car", a 1957 Chevy.

We went downstream toward Bowman's Bridge. Jim was talking about the "caddis". They were not up yet in full force, but he saw a big fish working a couple of nights ago on a stretch of the river above the bridge.

Like other "local" fly fishermen, Jim, too, was a trophy trout hunter. They were all after the biggest fish in the county, competing with each other in their own, exclusive "club", with no trophies or prizes, but just the simple remark from any or all of them, over beers in the local tap, that Jim or Fred or Al was ~~an~~ ^a good fisherman. In this club, big fish in Lake Country, Michigan and other trout counties in this state are hunted by the locals as bighorn sheep and royal elk are hunted in Montana and Idaho.

For every night of fishing, the local spends at least another or two nights just walking the bank, rodless and waderless. They listen and watch... walk somemore and listen and watch.. This is no easy chore, for there are no pathways along these silent, secret stretches of the river. The hunters cross, mud filled spring bogs, and crawl through jungles of weed and shrub, often in total darkness.

Invariably they find the unmolested trophy, for these are not silent feeders, but loud and clamorous with spectaculr bravery.

Once the fish shows himself to one of these locals, he is doomed. The fisherman makes the spot, studies the water, casting positions and angles (if it is not pitch black), where to enter the river, cross it and get out. The local backs away then and gloats to himself for a day or two before coming back and taking that big fish out of his home.

Now we ~~were past~~ ^{passed} Bowman's Bridge and turned upstream of the main road. In all my years of fishing the river, I never saw that road before. It was so obscure, I don't think I could find it again by myself.

We drove in, the old Chevy grinding through the sand with branches of the trees scraping the sides of the car. We came to a little clearing and parked, the river not far away.

This was bigish water running over an all sand bottom. The current was strong with a fairly even surface. There were deep, dark pools, making crossing the stream difficult. And tress, tag alders and stumps lined both sides of the river. It was rather spooky, but it was the kind of water chih you felt harbored big browns.

There was still a lot of light left in the sky, and since the "caddis" was not expected yet, we started fishing right away.

Jim put me in at the exact spot he saw the big fish a couple of nights ago. He described the area and pointed to where he saw the fish rise. I tried it with big "caddis" dries and then with a green drake bucktail, but I couldn't find the big fish.

Jim was downstream. I decided to work down to him and switched to a partridge and green. I started wading down, fishing the soft

hackle against the far side of the bank. I saw a light colored fly on the water against the bank and a nice trout took it with a little commotion.

Was this the big fish Jim saw higher up in the stream? I changed to the partridge and yellow and cast it two feet ahead of the rise and the fish had it just like the natural a moment ago. It was a good fish, but not of the gigantic proportions described by Jim.

As I played him, Jim hurried up. I landed the 16 inch brown just as Jim got there and was taking the partridge hackle out of the fish's mouth. It was a size 12, the hackle all matted down against the hook. Jim saw the fly and asked what it was. He claimed he never saw one like it before. I then showed him my fly box, filled with nothing but the soft hackles. He was a little amazed.

I gave Jim four or five flies to try and he went off downstream. I went back to fishing, too, but I could hear him yelling out everytime he had a rise on his new flies.

Later that evening, in Jim's kitchen, I tied a dozen mixed soft hackles for him. I was leaving the next morning and I knew I wouldn't see him for a while. I was glad for him to have the flies and I knew that they would have a good and convincing try out.

In August, I received the following letter from Jim, Dated August,

3.

Dear Syl:

I'm sending you some partridge feathers, I picked up and skinned out. One old hen and two young ones, and will save you more

when I get some. I still haven't been able to get any wood duck feathers but will keep trying.

You made a believe out of me with your nymphs. I finally took two nice 20 inch browns on them, but I wore them out and would like to get some more if you have them.

By now, you probably have heard that the fly only water won the fight and will be open year around, so you will be able to ~~go~~ ^{to} some spring fly fishing. I did pretty good on the fly hatches. I took 64, the biggest 7 pounds. (caddis hatches) *italics mine.*) Now, I'm working on the lake trout out in Lake Michigan and doing real goods.

Sincerely Jim Rader.

Chapter XI

A minor revolution has been taking place during the last few years in the style of fly fishing for steelhead as practiced in the west. The style has been turned topsy-turvy from big, heavy ^{ily ed} weight flies, [^] sinking lines and sinking shooting heads to small, sparsely dressed, unweighted flies, ⁹ and the floating or greased line.

Before, where a steelhead fisherman was using two's and four's, he's now using 6's, 8's and even 10's. Before, where he was raking the bottom, his fly is now riding in the upper four inches of the stream. Before, where he let the line belly in the current, he is now mending the floating line just as AHE Wood did when he caught all those salmon in Scotland during the earlier part of the century.

The ghost of Wood haunts the banks of the Clearwater, Snake and Salmon rivers in Idaho; the Grande Ronde, Imnaha and Deschutes Rivers in Oregon; and the Rouge, Umpqua and Klamath rivers in California.

The mending fly fishermen are having fun they never dreamed ^{of x} ~~of~~ Steelhead to 20 pounds, committing head and tail rises like small trout, are now taken in this new style likened by some to dry fly fishing for trout.

What a fishing bargain this is. The thrill amounts to the one from fishing Atlantic salmon with a fly, without the high price tag generally associated with it, for in these areas mentioned all ~~the~~ ^{the angler} need ^{is}

is the fishing license, the equipment and the method.

That method is the same one I use with the soft hackled fly for trout, with smaller rods, lighter lines, and, of course, smaller, soft hackled flies. Once ~~you~~ ^{the angler} learn the system for trout, ~~you~~ ^{by} can, with the addition of the double haul, step right into any of the great riffles on these rivers and try for the fishing thrill of ~~your~~ ^{his} lifetime.

Or, if ~~you~~ ^{he is} already one of the steelhead fishermen ~~already~~ ^{mending} ^{I have seen on} ~~the river~~, then it will be easy for ~~you~~ ^{him} to fish the soft hackles for the smaller trout.

In chapter IV, I described Wood's Greased line mending method briefly. Now we can go in and out of the book, and get answers to special problems right from the horse's mouth.

Question? What's the theory of greased line fishing?

Answer: "The basic idea is to use the line as a float for, and controlling agent of, the fly; to suspend the fly just beneath the surface of the water, and to control its path in such a way that it swims diagonally down and across the stream, entirely free from the slightest pull on the line".

Question? How does one know when the fly is dragging if ~~he~~ ^{he} can't see the fly?

Answer: "Watch the line for bellying, or, whenever you feel the pull of line on the rod, you know that drag has been set up".

Question? How ~~do~~ ^{does one} mend with the line laying on the water?

Answer: "The line should be removed from the surface of the

water by raising the rod almost horizontally and keeping the arm stiff". (I said earlier that I held the rod parallel to the water, but as high as ^{it} could off the water. I still think this is the best way with singled handed short rods we use for trout fishing. AHE Wood mixed his salmon fishing with a single-handed rod of 12 feet and longer rods ^{two handed 14} up to ~~16~~ feet long.

~~The longer rod will help in mending, however.~~

Question: What's wrong with drag?

Answer: "As there is little a fish does not see, the fly ought to behave naturally all the time, as an insect or other live creature would do in the water, and try to let the fly move with all the eddies it meets, as will ^{any} ~~the~~ living thing that is trying to move in the water with the stream and across."

Question? What is leading?

Answer: "By moving the rod in advance of the line---but not of course dragging it---you help the fly to swim more ^{down} ~~stream~~ stream than across".

Question? How will I know when I'm doing it right?

Answer: "The ⁹ ~~reased~~ reased line, if fished properly (and this is by no means the case every time,) has no drag and ofen is all slack and crooked".

The last answer brings to mind the classic photograph of the expert dry fly fisherman, having just cast his line in loose "S"'s and curves.

The question must come to the mind of the reader, as it did to mine when I first started reading about the grease line, what do do when the line eventually swings clear around to the fisherman's side as it must do in any kind of current?

The answer is nothing, because it's time to recast. The lower part of the cast in greased line fishing with the soft hackles is the least important. Lawrie said Scotch and border fishermen never even let their spiders or other soft hackles go that far, but that they were fishing just the upper part of the cast, without drag, casting short and frequently.

"Greased Line Fishing for Salmon" by Jock Scott", is one of the finest books on instruction of fly fishing I have ever read. Even if you never fish for salmon, or get a chance to try the system for steelhead, the lessons there will serve you well in the fishing of the soft hackles, or other kinds of nymphs and wet flies, as it did for me.

Two other books, "Salmon Fishing", Frederick Hill, 1948, and "The Floating Line for Salmon and Sea-trout", Anthony Crossley, 1939, also treat of the floating mended line.

Chapter XII

There is a little, light mark more than half way up the butt section of my 7 and 1/2 ^{foot rod which measures just} ~~butt section of my 7 and 1/2~~ ^{just over 22 inches} from the butt of the reel seat. The mark will be there forever to remind me of my big fish, because I never keep big fish, and rarely keep a small one or two for a camp supper.

I don't believe in mounting fish and even though I am and have been for many years an avid duck hunter, I also don't believe in mounting birds, or other animals, big or small. The memory should be enough, and always has been for me without staring at some dusty specimen on the wall of the den or the office.

The memory can be pulled out of the mind, or heart, whenever I ^{want} ~~want~~ to, to dwell on ^{for} ~~for~~ how so ever long I want to. I dwell on this one quite often during the quiet, winter months, and will now display it, in this, the last chapter of this little book.

I was photographing big crawler tractors in Idaho and Montana six years ago in the early part of September. I finished my work near Butte on a Friday and drove to Ennis to fish the Madison there on the weekend.

When I saw the river in and near that town the next morning, I realized why this was a great mecca for the fly fisherman. At Ennis,

and below, the Madison splits up into several small streamlets, and I fished a couple of these, taking a few small fish.

There was a regional retriever trial near town and I watched the Labs, Goldens and a few Chesapeakes perform for a few hours in the afternoon.

I wanted to try the river upstream and was told there was a ranch about two miles up where fishermen were permitted to cross the private land to get to the river. This was on the western side of the stream.

I like ^d this part of the Madison much more than the downstream part. It was big, strong water with long, thin islands dividing it into smaller water. You could fish close to your bank or ventur ^e out near the islands without going too far out in the main and treacherous part of the river. The current was very strong with a nice, broken surface, and even on the "lee" side of the islands, wading was difficult.

It was good water for the soft hackles, and I was having fun~~y~~ with frequent takes from smaller fish.

Fifty yards upstream there were two island^s, a very long one on the left, near the centr of the stream, and a shorer one on the right. Between them ther^e was a beautiful scour that was sure to be four feet deep. I waded straight up in line with the smaller island and intended to go all the way up and fish the scour down. I was about half way up the length of it, still wading and not yet fishing, ^{when} ~~and~~ I saw my big fish.

He rose just once, in the middle of that scour, not more than 8 or 10 feet away from me. The rise was slow and deliberate, head first, then the big, vermiculated body curving over and going in. There were no signs of a hatch or a single fly on the water, and I don't know what he took.

Showing himself to me, so close, I felt sure he saw me, too, and ^fslacked off back downstream. I was not going to fish him now. I'll give him plenty of rest so that he might forget me, if he did see me. We can make an appointment for tomorrow night at the same time.

The next day, I returned to the field trials. Being a regional trial, there were many good dogs and their classy retrieves kept me pre-occupied. They finished about five, and I went back to the motel to get the Orvis, waders and flies. In the motel room, I checked the line and tied on a new leader.

It was six by the time I waded out to the edge of the scour. I stayed wider this time, however, and kept looking for any signs of my friend. I saw none. Now, I was at the head of the scour, just below the smaller island, and I put on a Tups.

I was above the spot where I saw him, but I intended for it to be this way. I didn't want to undershoot him, I wanted to put the Tups right where he lived.

I cast several times, throwing nice slack line and moving down very slowly. Something welled up inside me. The fly was running down the center of the scour. He had to see it, if he were there. He did!

The rise was almost the same. He didn't come so far out of the water as he did 24 hours earlier, but there he was, and I had him.

I looked at my watch. It was 6:05.

What a difference a big fish makes. He moves hardly at all at the beginning. The feeling is of authority. The heaviness is inviolable. You know this is not going to be easy and you feel a little outclassed.

Things started to happen slowly. At first, no big runs, ~~sproozing~~ leaps high in the air, just the fish lying there, jerking his head like a dog. When is he going to go, when is he going to realize this could be the fight of his life?

Right now! And he started upstream taking life off the reel the handle spinning wildly under my hand. He was going fast and could have kept right on going up around the island and down on the other side and that would have been it. But he turned and came back down and we started to slug it out in the scour.

Now, we settle down to a long series of runs up and down and over against the bank of the island. More sulking and holding and jerking of the head. He never relented. I never slacked off. I just wanted to tire him out, to pull him by my feet and see what he looked like close up.

Really, I overplayed him, and I'm sure that a more eager fisherman could have played him out much sooner. But finally he was at my feet on his side and it was 6:35.

I never took him out of the water, but set the Orvis over him, the butt of the rod at the tip of his tail. I pinched the rod with my thumb and forefinger right over the end of his nose to measure him, and held it tight so as not to lose the place.

Then with my left hand, I unhooked the Tups. I turned the big fish over to right him and gave him a little shove upstream and he was gone. I scratched the light mark on the rod with my fly scissors where my thumb and forefinger were and started in.

~~and I was to the point of death~~
A yellow cow dog was on the bank and apparently was watching me the whole time. Before I got to the shore, he was in the water swimming out to me, struggling hard against the current. Now he was up to me and turned to follow me in. We got to the shore and started up the bank. I walked slowly across the meadow, the yellow cow dog following and he seemed as happy as I was.

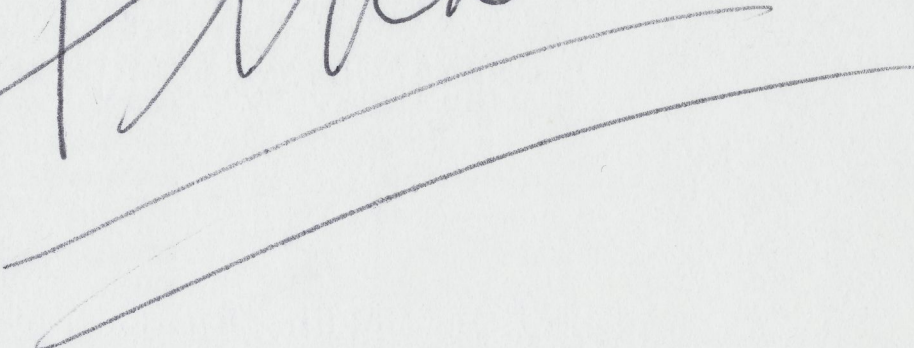
1.

THE SOFT HACKLED FLY

by

Sylvester Nemes

Final



Anyone who has fished for a generation or more ought to have something to say however inefficient he may be. He will have had much experience; and this is necessary if you are to describe so varied a pursuit as angling, where the possibilities are so many that some incidents only repeat themselves once or twice in a lifetime. The factors which go to make up success or failure are so numerous that until you have been through the same incident often you usually misjudge it. You do not assign the right cause. You are continually making wonderful discoveries which you think will revolutionize the pursuit and prevent you from ever coming home empty.

Summer on the Test. By J. W. Hills, 1924

I have met who embraced the sport late in life. In a three day fishing school in Vermont, Colorado or Montana, these men learned to fish dry, but lost a great deal of fishing fun by not learning how to fish a sunk fly downstream.

Because the soft hackled fly is nymph-like, the book may help to show practiced and would-be nymph fishermen a new way to ~~offer~~ ~~offer~~ their favorite nymph patterns, or to try the soft hackled flies instead. The instructions here eliminate the need for the average fly fisherman to be an amateur entymologist. He need not know the difference between a stone fly nymph and a small mayfly nymph. He can forget emergence dates, fly sex, and ~~amaturity~~ or immaturity. And he can travel from one stream to another, east or west, and enjoy the sport as it was meant to be enjoyed in the beginning...without cult, ritual and mystery.

Because history is important and interesting to many fly fishermen, the book also traces the evolution of the soft hackled fly in angling literature. The repeated discoveries of the mention of them in the most highly regarded books on fly fishing is quite remarkable. Yes, even in the first English word written about fly fishing in 1496, a soft hackled fly, the Donne fly of Sister Berners, is the first of twelve in her list.

With so noble a beginning, it is the purpose of this book, to restore the soft hackled fly to its rightful place.

Chapter I

I saw my first soft hackled flies some fifteen years ago in Paul H. Young's tackle shop in Detroit, Michigan. The flies were simple, yet extremely attractive. Drab, yet enticing. The slender bodies were of silk floss in any of three colors: orange, yellow and olive green. At the head of each fly was a partridge hackle, wound very sparsely around the hook. Lying there together, mixed in the box, the flies looked alive and natural and very much like real insects, due mostly to the minute, freckled markings on every barbule of the partridge hackles.

Young called the flies, "P.H.Y. Partridge spiders". His catalog advertised the flies saying, "Fished like a nymph. This is one of the best all around wet flies I ever used. Fish down and across stream, and take trout. Hackles lay back along the hook when wet, and crawl or work in the current."

That advertising message, written by one of the great bamboo rod makers of America seemed to simple, too pat. Yet the flies excited me and appealed to some facet of my fishing makeup, and I went out of the store with six of them; two orange, two yellow and two green.

I didn't know then, that these simple, two part flies would, in a short time, shape my whole fishing future and become the nucleus of a soft fly fishing method that would exclude every other kind of fly.

II

It is the object of this book to show how, and perhaps why, this happened.

To retrace one's fishing steps to the present time or state of the art can be at once, pleasant and enlightening, difficult and even embarrassing. One is affected first by locale and the easily available water, and by the successes or failures recorded on this water either by the fisherman, himself, or by friends or strangers he happens to meet at the water's edge. The fickle fisherman will discard a certain lure, bait or fly pattern or fishing style as soon as he finds something else more successful, or more appealing to his inner senses.

Once addicted to fly only, he moves laterally or horizontally from wet only to dry only. From nymph most of the time to dry some of the time, or from big, shiny streamer only to nymph only, or from day fishing to night fishing. In most movements, he seeks to catch more fish or bigger fish, but finally he seeks a personal satisfaction doing what, to him, elevates him with the pleasure he's looking for. This is why the fisherman always wears the same old hat, or torn vest. Why he prefers his bamboo rod to a glass one. Why he'd rather cast a silk line instead of a plastic one. Why he sticks with one fly or kind of fly or method instead of some other. Or even why he prefers to fish, in solitude, an obviously less fruitful stretch of water on his favorite river, instead of jamming up with the other fishermen in the popular pool or run just around the bend.

So it was with my own fishing evolution. It started on the west side of Cleveland, in the late 30's, at least 150 miles from the nearest trout stream. True, I had Lake Erie a few blocks from home, and I can remember first, fishing with a hand line and trolley for perch and pike, as they swarmed the breakwalls and piers in search of food. Huge schools of white bass also sourced the shallows chasing madly anything that moved. They came in right up the beaches, boiling the surface. The school moved across the water in one large mass and it was easy to catch a bushel basket full of them with a bait casting rod and multiple winding reel. This was more fun than still fishing for perch or pike. The favorite lure for the white bass was a piece of white cloth, a quarter of an inch wide and about an inch long. The piece of cloth was stuck on to a smallish hook and two or three or even four of these were tied on to a four or five foot piece of gut. The gut was attached to a small section of broom handle with screw eyes on either end, one for the casting line and the other for the gut.

The broom handle was the plug and supplied the weight one needed for the cast and it kept the "flies" up on the surface during the retrieve. The fisherman threw the plug right into the middle of the school and worked it back in jumps and jerks. The white bass went mad after it, chasing the white pieces of cloth, hooking themselves, fighting to get off, unhooking themselves, so that another could grab it before it was finally retrieved. Three fish, up to

10 inches long, were frequently caught at one time. And you could see it all.

Not all of the white bass fishermen used the pieces of cloth. Some used a real fly, a small white or yellow streamer type made from plain chicken feathers. I don't think they were any more effective than the cloth, but ~~once~~ I saw them, I knew I had to try them.

The flies were available from a barber, Glen Buckel, who had a shop on Detroit Avenue, just west of the neighborhood I lived in. I rode over there on my bike the first chance I got.

The shop was small with a window on each side of the door. One window had a display of fly tying materials; packages of hackles, tinsels, hooks, furs, chenille, apired wing quills and other fly tying materials. The other window contained a framed large card on which was attached all the materials required for a dry Quill Gordon. The finished Gordon was also stuck to the card, and I wondered how a feather, piece of quill and slips of yellowwood duck could be turned into such a beautiful work of art.

Inside, framed colored prints of trout, salmon and fishing scenes hung on the wall. Black and white photos showed a smiling Glen and other fishing friends standing near streams and fishing in them. Two barber chairs were on the left, and if, as customers sat in them, they could look to the other wall, where hung long, glass

cases filled with trout flies, bass flies and even fully dressed salmon flies.

Glen Buckel had no customers and was bent over a vise on a table in the back of the room. Here, too, were the cabinets and cabinets which contained huge stocks of fly tying materials. Rod cases, sections of bamboo rods in various stages of completion leaned in a corner of the room, for I found out later, Glen made bamboo rods from raw cane.

At that point, I was 16 or 17, I know now that I felt the first major romantic experience of my life. It was love at first sight. It is hard to say and difficult to explain what and how I was in love with. For I had never before seen a trout fly, a trout, a trout stream or read a single word about them.

Glen didn't pay too much attention to me and went right on tying the flies. Feeling like an intruder, I inched closer to him. He was waiting for me to speak first. I don't know why, but I felt embarrassed. I started asking silly, elementary questions about fly tying and fly fishing. Like any professional's attitude towards the rank beginner, Glen was so bored, he couldn't answer. I got nothing out of him except the suggestion to visit the main branch of the public library in downtown Cleveland where I could find all the information I wanted on fly tying and fly fishing.

Before I left the shop, however, I bought fifteen or twenty cents worth of hooks and white and yellow chicken feathers for the white

bass flies, and started a hobby that has been a real and important part of my life for more than 30 years.

My first tyings were terrible. I had no vise, no hackle pliers, no thread bobbin. I fashioned a vise from a pair of square nosed pliers, put the hook in the jaws and wrapped a stout rubber band around the handles. I made a pair of hackle pliers from a piece of coat hanger, and from the same material, I invented my own thread bobbin, which I still use today. My mother supplied thread and flosses from her crocheting and sewing basket.

I couldn't figure out how to get the hackle fibres to stand out perpendicular to the hook shank as they did on Glen's flies. I thought each fibre was tied in separately. I couldn't tie a half hitch. The tinsel wouldn't lay flat. It was frustrating and I was getting nowhere.

There was nothing left to do but take Glen's advice and head for the library. Over a period of a year, I read every book on fly tying and fly fishing the library had to offer. I would take home for seven days at a time, books by Halford, Skues, LaBranche, Hewitt, Hills, Bergman, Knight and many others. In one of the British books, I saw photographs of the Test River and of the Village of Stockbridge on that river and the Grosvenor Hotel, where fly fishers met to fish this great stream. How easy it was for me to read these books. What fascination they held for me? How inexplicable that a kid from the west side of Cleveland, without a single fly

fishing friend or relative; without ever having seen a trout stream, would spend teen age days and nights reading about a subject so remote and trying to tie flies for trout in streams still unseen and unfished.

Armed with the knowledge I was getting from the books, I visited Glen more and more. He warmed up gradually for it was obvious I was as enthusiastic a pupil as he had ever encountered. I would show him the flies I tied and he would show me where and how I made mistakes. He taught me the right way to set and tie wings, to make half hitches, to wind hackles around the shank, and to handle tinsels. He talked with me like a streamside brother. He tolde me of the great trout streams in northern Michigan where he had come from originally and where he spent two weeks every year on vacation. He spoke of trout streams near Kane, Pennsylvania. These were the closest to Cleveland, he said.

The more he talked, the more I knew that soon I would have to fish one of these river, to be baptised or married forever because the courtship had gone on long enough.

So, in the spring of 1938, I made plans to fish the streams near Kane. I had been working at odd jobs around the neighborhood, cleaning a bakery, selling newspapers and whatever. I had enough money to buy a pair of boots, a fly rod and reel, and had enough left for the Greyhound bus ride to Kane and back and room and board for the weekend. And I had my own flies.

My mother worried about the trip. To her it was an odyssey to the ends of the earth. I was going alone and I didn't know a soul in Kane. How would I get to the rivers from town? Where would I stay and what would I eat? I told her I could take care of myself. I could hitch hike to the streams or walk if I had to.

The bus left Cleveland late in the evening. I never slept a wink, and by dawn I could see the purple black outlines of the low altitude mountains in north central Pennsylvania. All that I read about and dreamed about was going to come true. Or was it? I couldn't cast, I couldn't make the fly float. I couldn't wade because the rocks in the streams were too slippery and I went into the icy spring water more than once. In the British books that I had read earlier, I saw the patterns of the Butcher and the Alexandra. These flies were such killers that they were outlawed on many British streams. I had tied many of these for the Kane trip and tried them again and again, but nothing came to them. I haven't used them since.

I can't remember if I caught a single fish during that weekend, but I can remember seeing some small trout in a basket of another fisherman and their beauty of form and color convinced me that the baptismal was worth it. The mountains, the clear water and pure air also helped to entrance me.

Back in Cleveland later, I was fishing Rocky River with ringed-

eyed flies and spinners. Now, at least, I was stuck to a fly rod. The river divides Cleveland from Lakewood and runs through Metropolitan Park. I don't know what the condition of the river is at the present time, but back then it was quite clear and delightful, with some rapids and slow pools and many sharp bends against small cliffs of shale. As its name implies, there were many rocks in the river which split the current and hid some very nice black bass.

A fast retrieve was necessary to keep the spinner blade turning in the slower water, and I learned the figure "8" left hand retrieve. After a while, I learned to read the water, and would move from one pool to another looking for places that resembled the previous striking place.

With the fly rod during this time, I was also using live helgramites. The river was full of them and they could be caught by upsetting rocks in the faster current against a piece of netting held by yourself or a friend below. Once obtained, the helgramite was secured to the hook with a small rubber band slipped over his abdomen. The helgramites were mean and evil looking. With their powerful pinchers at their heads, they would grab onto your finger or onto the lip of the bass that you caught using the helgramite, if it wasn't already in his stomach.

The fly and spinner combination on a fly rod followed me into

the army in 1942, and I was using them with great success for rainbow on the San Gabriel River, near Los Angeles where I was stationed for a time. In that same river, I was fishing a wooly worm, which was becoming popular on the west coast. The ringed-eyed fly and spinner combination has almost disappeared from American trout fishing, due perhaps to considerably fly-only legislation, yet in the early forties, it was a very popular way to fish. One could buy the flies separately and attach them to his own spinners, or buy the fly-spinner combinations. These flies were very colorful and almost always had some red in them. Today, most fly material catalogs do not even list ringed-eyed hooks.

In December of 1943, the Army gave me passage on a crowded troop ship to England and moved me and our fighter control squadron to a small village right on the banks of the Hampshire Avon. I did not fish that river as the trout season was still closed, but I ghillied one day in February for a titled gentleman who owned salmon fishing rights and helped him land a 20 lb salmon he had taken on spinning gear.

In April, our squadron moved to an airfield at Andover, ~~just~~ 7 or 8 miles from Stockbridge, and the Test River. What a coincidence! What a stroke of fate! As soon as it was possible, I was on a bus to the village and that fabled river.

an 8 foot, two piece rod from a tackle shop in Andover. I had not much choice in selection because it was the only rod in the store. The joints were of the Hardy spiral lockfast type and the windings, close spaced the whole length of the rod in typical British fashion. The action was medium, much like American rods.

Mr. Bains was a nice, older man, taciturn, yet friendly. He offered me one of the club rods, with Hardy reel and double tapered silk line, but the rod felt too heavy. It was about 10 feet long. He could sense I was anxious to try my own, new rod and lent me a reel and line and knotted silk worm leader. I had my own dries from Glen. Mr. Bains thought they were well tied, but too large for the river. He gave me a small tin box with several Test patterns in it: olives, iron blues, orange and giner quills and the Welshman's buttons, in 12's, 14's and 16's.

The Leckford water of the Test was about four miles long. It was divided into ten beats, the same number as the membership of the club. ~~members~~ members at that time included a vice admiral of the British fleet air arm, the owner of a well known chain of department stores, a doctor, a lawyer and other similar, well-endowed gentlemen.

Beat numbers were marked on stakes driven into the bank on both sides of the river. Crossing the river meant walking back to one of the bridges because there was no wading and one fished dry shod. Bains took me to my beat and explained that I was not fish until I saw a trout rise.

River bank foliage was trimmed impeccably, even the weeds were kept low. Tree branches that might interfere with the false casting were not present. Benches were placed along every beat so the fisherman could sit on them and watch the water for the rising fish. No wonder the English call this, "the contemplative sport".

I sat and waited, my eyes glued to the river. After a short time, I began to see wallows buzzing the surface of the river, dipping down here and there for the first flies of the hatch. Then the rises started on the river, slowly at first, then faster, until I could see a half dozen fish feeding immediately above and below me. I tried the closest fish. He rose and I struck, but too fast. Another try on another fish and I lipped the fish, losing the fly. After quite a few more tries, I finally got one, a fish of about a pound and a half. I was starting to throw more slack, to give the fly a longer, natural float before any drag occurred. It seemed better to wait a second to set the hook after I saw the rise, than to strike immediately. I fished out my whole beat and raised many fish, but I caught only one other slightly larger than the first.

These two fish, on my first day on the Test, were the largest I ever caught in about 7 years of fly fishing. Reading now, about how difficult it is to catch Test trout, because of the "education" and warriness, the clear slow water with tricky currents, their selectivity and aversion to drag, I think I did quite well.

I continued to fish the Test through May and the first part of June.

and again during July of 1945. I learned to strike slowly, to stalk the fish from a low position on one knee, and to throw slack. I caught many "brace" of brown trout and a few grayling, a fish the Test fly fisher disdains and calls "gray bob". The largest fish I saw taken there was caught by another gentleman on a different beat from mine. I helped net the fish after the man fought it for some 25 minutes on a size 16 orange quill. The huge trout weight one ounce less than 5 pounds.

The way the British fish the Test and other chalk streams is a good example of many fishermen doing their own thing in their own way. Most American would not agree with the system, and there are and have been some British anglers and writers who thought the dry fly only rules were all wet and proved it. Now, these rules have been modified, I understand, and some clubs have succumbed to limited sunk fly fishing upstream.

Writing these pages, I am reminded of the generosity of the members of the Leckford Club. I don't think I fully appreciated the privilege of fishing the Test when I was so young. Mr. Bains has departed, and as I suspect sadly, so have many of the fine gentlemen I met there during those troubled years. But, it's always sad to reflect on good fishing times and good fishing friends.

Chapter II

After the war, I pursued a college education in my home state of Ohio. I built my first bamboo rod and was tying more and more flies. I saw Glen only rarely, anymore, but on our first meeting after I returned from Europe, he seemed anxious to question me about fishing the Test. He, too, had read much about the river. He knew that only a priveleged few ever get to fish it... and that only a few more would even be permitted to walk along its banks. At that time, few American had done either. Piscatorially, I had reached quite a high plateau and this esteem was obvious in Glen and it made me feel important and good.

Now, ~~fishing~~ came during spring and summer breaks when I would hitch hike from Cleveland to Grayling or Baldwin, Michigan, ~~ac~~cheap, but hazardous and arduous occupation which in those days was the only way I could get to the streams. I fished parts of Pennsylvania, too, and revisited Kane, where I performed better than I did during my first trip several years before.

I had returned to wet fly fishing mostly with bucktails in the early part of the year and small, winged wet patterns later on. I always carried dry flies with me, in case a hatch~~up~~ came on, but looking back on it, I can rember very few first rate hatches during daylight hours.

What a difference from the British way and the American.

Here I was sharing the river with worm fishermen, egg fishermen and other fly fishermen. They came and went in front of you upstream and down. The animosity was always the greater, the coarser the tackle and style. I feel that most American fly fishermen would like to fish finer or with dry fly only, but that on all systems rivers, they must compete with the live bait or hardware fishermen, and so resort to large bucktails. One rarely sees good, healthy hatches on these rivers and even when they do occur, the fish do not seem to feed on the insects.

After college, I never moved far from the midwestern metropolitan areas of Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago, and for a time was limited to opening days and weekends on the Au Sauble, Pere Marquette, Little Manistee, the Boardman and other rivers in Michigan. With fly only, either bucktail or wet fly, I was catching my fair share of the regular sized fishing in these rivers, planters or natural sapwners, but rarely would put into a 20 inch fish.

Yet, big trout were in these rivers and local fly fishers caught them regularly. Their secret was night fishing with big, non-descript hair and feather flies, dry or wet. Fred Kornke, was one of these local fishermen. He lived in Lovells, Michigan, on the north branch of the Au Sauble. He, too, was from Cleveland, but gave up the city life to spend more time on a trout stream. He and his wife, Hazel, operated the Pines restaurant, and every evening after closing, Fred

was on one of the branches of the Au Sauble or some of the smaller creeks not too far from home. He rarely fished during the day time.

The restaurant was a kind of meeting place for many locals of the area. Fred sold flies, rods and reels. Two six pound nocturnal bornws were mounted on the wall. I would guess he caught several fish of that size every fishing season.

I fished the north branch quite a lot because it had no canoe traffic on it and because it was fly only. I ate every meal I possibly could in his restaurant and would often drive 40 miles out of my way, hoping he would invite me with him on one of his evening's sojourns. For a while I ~~felt~~ a non-resident like myself might get an invitation to the white house easier than being invited to one of Fred's hotspots, but he finally did offer and I gladly accepted.

We left the restaurant about 9 p.m. and drove for about 1/2 hour in a downstream direction. At the end of along pole fence, he stopped and turned into a small rutted road. We parked and walked about a quarter of a mile towards the river. There was still enough daylight left to see our way over the rotted tree stumps and tall spreading ferns. The river ~~was flowing~~ quite fast and its sound came to you before you could see it. We clambered down the steep bank and sat on a felled trunk of a large tree. Now, we waited. We were waiting,

Fred said, to hear the first sounds of the whip-poor-will. He kept looking up into the waning sky for the first signs of the "Caddis" hatch. Misnamed in Michigan, the "Caddis" hatch is really the hatch of the large, burrowing May fly. These flies will have a wing span of about two inches. The nymphs of the species are called wigglers and are large enough to be impaled on a hook as live bait. No other hatch in Michigan causes so much excitement among fly fishermen. Ever trout in the river will gorge themselves on these fliers, and it is during this time that fish of over 5 and 6 pounds are taken. The fly rarely comes off before dark.

The light was fading fast now, and the whip-poo-wills were answering themselves up and down the river. Then, in the remaining light of the sky, through the trees, we saw the first "caddis" flies winging their way up stream. Fred said it was time to get in. He put me in just a few feet down from the tree trunk and he went down stream some 50 yards.

It was pitch black from the surface of the river to the tops of the trees, but you could hear the trout sucking in the "caddis" here and there. How accurately my hearing had become! Robbed of sight, I was listening with an inner ear. I started casting to the sounds, having made sure I was far enough in the river to clear the back cast. Immediately, I had a strike, the sound from the rise to the artificial louder and more vociferous than the regular suckings of the spent naturals. I landed the fish of about 14 inches, and started in again.

I was asking myself where were the 7 and 8 inch fish I normally caught in water like this during the daylight hours, when I heard quite a large commotion in the vicinity of my fly and set the hook again. I had a good fish on this time, but the line went slack.

I brought the line in to check the fly and turned on my flashlight. The fly was gone. I shined the light onto the water and there were no more "caddis". Now, ~~hatch~~ ^{hatch} was just getting started and it was all over. Now, I could see Fred's ~~position~~ ^{position} moving up and down on the bank and I got out to join him. He didn't do much better than I did and we walked back ~~slightly~~ ^{slightly} dodging the rotted tree stumps and brushing the tall ferns with our thighs.

The experience is typical of trying to fish the "caddis" hatch in Michigan. The non-resident angler, limited to a weekend or a couple of days now and then, doesn't stand a chance of being there when the flies are really on. It is a hit and miss proposition, like much other daylight dry fly fishing, and if he cannot be there every day or every evening for a period of two or three weeks, the dry fly angler will find only few moments in his fishing lifetime when all the conditions are ideal enough to produce hatches for the floating fly. This is why the "locals" do so well, and there is no competing with them.

I have tried other night fishing on the Au Sauble, the Pere Marquette and other rivers in Michigan. And I have caught fish over the 20 inch mark, not many, but on these waters, this is the only way to get big

fish with the fly. But there is so much for the sight to enjoy when fishing in daylight, that much of what I fish for seems to be gone, once the whip-poor-wills begin their night time answering service.

Chapter III

It was on the same water, the north branch of the Au Sauble, that I first tried Young's partridge spiders. I started fishing the fly the same way I fished winged wets and bucketails. In slower water, I would jerk the fly in its down stream course, and in faster water, I would let it drift freely. I always threw a fairly tight line so that I could feel the strike even when I couldn't see the fly or the swirl of the fish. The fly performed well from the start, but gradually I noticed an increase in the amount of action when the fly was drifting freely in any kind of water. The longer the natural, free running drift, the better the results.

With a tight line, the fly would run down without drag for a short time, then start to cross over to my side as the line bellied in the current. I did not like that part of the cast and was trying to change it. I wanted longer, natural drifts and started throwing a slack line with "S's" in the cast, much like I did for the Test trout with the dry fly. This kept the fly "over there" longer in the eddies or pockets or flats I read as good holding water.

Instead of casting straight across, I started casting up a little, moving the rod tip toward my bank to keep the line tight to signal the strike, then moving the rod tip toward the other bank as the line and the fly passed my level in their down stream phase of the trip. To

lengthen the amount of free drift, when the cast was spent, I would let out line, the amount governed by the speed of the water.

Of the three colors, the green, yellow and orange, I and the fish were partial to the orange. If I fished strange water anywhere, I always started out with this color, and would try the others if it didn't work after a half hours' fishing. I believe, however, that the three colors pretty well represent almost all the colors of insect life, nymph or emerging fly, one might find on any stream in the country.

I was so enamored of these partridge hackle flies, that gradually my fly box contained nothing but them in three colors and in sizes from 8 to 14. My own tyings of them became even more slender and sparse than the first ones I bought from Young.

I gave up fishing all streamers or bucktails in daylight hours and rarely tied and used any more wet flies with any wings on them whatsoever.

My confidence in the soft hackled fly gained each time I went out. I could follow other fly fishermen down the river who would fish a nice stretch of water without a single rise, and take fish right at their backs. When they asked what I used, I would tell them and they would act puzzled. They never heard of the fly. Then I would give them a couple and invariably they would say "is that all there's to them?"

I would fish the fly any time of day on any water, and was surprised

to see it take trout even during a hatch. Normally, the arrival of a hatch usually means the end to wet fly or nymph fishing. No so with these soft hackles. Without know what fly was on the water, I would use the yellow bodied fly when the natural insect was very light or yellow, the orange bodied fly when the natural was reddish or brown, and the green bodied one when the natural was blue or dun or any other dark shade.

With a floating line, the fly was just below the surface of the water. I could see the rise in the form of a swirl or bulge in the water, but I really didn't have to see it, because I could feel it as well. This was what I really like about the soft hackled system.

The classic upstream nymph fishing method requires keen eyesight many anglers are not endowed with, watching for a 'brown shado', or 'wink' a bulge, a tightening of the line or leader or some other mysterious, intuitive message. But, I believe a blind man could successfully fish my flies in the manner described.

So, after 20 years of fly fishing, wet fly and dry, upstream and down, America and England, I had come back to a simple, two-part fly, body and game bird hackle, and a fishing system that was easy and productive, satisfy and esthetic.

During the next five years, however, it was to get even better. Here's why. I discovered other soft hackled flies besides those made with partridge feathers. I started fishing western streams with fast

shallow riffles, even more suitable to the soft hackled fly; I began to fish for steelhead; and I read Jock Scott's book, "Greased Line Fishing for Salmon".

Chapter IV

In 1968, my work as a free lance industrial photographer took me to western Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. I had never seen or fished the famous rivers in those states before: the Wind, Madison, Yellowstone, Rock Creek, Gallatin, Snake and others. The fisherman, on first seeing these rivers is awed by their size and speed, the clarity of the water, the openness of the valleys through which the streams run and the breathtaking beauty of the mountains all around.

Most of these rivers can be described as long riffles from source to end. The rivers run "flat", just barely skimming the earth's surface, except for canyons where fishing is almost impossible. There is much free or open water to fish. There is a great deal of fly only water, and there are relatively few fishermen. In addition, the average trout will be 6 or 7 inches longer than the average from the midwest or east, and a four pound brown or rainbow barely raises an eyebrow.

I have been lucky enough, since 1968, to find work in those states and great fishing pleasure, on many streams at least twice every year. On these trips, I have fished the soft hackled fly almost exclusively, but I must admit trying out such local "western" tying as the the Bitch Creek Montana Nymph and wooly worms. These are big, ugly, weighted flies, most of which represent the prevalent stone fly nymph or even

the helgramite. Casting them is difficult and unenjoyable. Most fishermen there cast them upstream, roll them down on the bottom like a worm and set the hook when the line stops moving in the current. This is not my preferred way of fishing the fly, so I stuck with the soft hackles and improved the method of fishing them after I read "Greased Line Fishing for Salmon".

In this book, first published in 1935 and just recently re-issued, Jock Scott, the author, tells how A. H. E. Wood landed 3,490 salmon from 1913 to 1934 on a Scottish river using small, slimly dressed flies and a greased, floating line.

Mr. Wood's method of "mending" the line to increase the natural float or drift of the fly was exactly what I was looking for to eliminate drag or bellying of the line, and still permit me to fish downstream and to feel the rise without the necessity of seeing it.

With this method, the fisherman can fish ~~the~~ fly in a natural manner, the fly traveling very near the surface and presenting a side view of itself to the fish.

With the soft hackled fly, the method is deadly for trout.

So what is mending? It is the lifting or raising of the troublesome, or dragging part of the line and turning it upstream or down, without really moving the fly. To accomplish the upstream or downstream mend, one must use a floating line. One must learn to throw a slack line. I do this by throwing the line high, waiting until it is fully

extended, then drawing back on it while it is still suspended, so that if falls to the water in loose "s" curves. The beginning fly fisherman, who hasn't yet learned how to throw a tight, straight line, can learn to mend immediately.

Most small rivers will require an upstream mend because there is usually more fast water between the fisherman and the fly. But on large rivers, the angler may find much slow water between him and the fly, and this situation requires a downstream mend.

If the water is all in a "sheet", that is the same velocity from bank to bank, then mending is not required.

Mending the line either up or down is like turning the pages of a precious book. From the bottom. The pages should not be corkscrewed, but rather turned all at once, stiff and ~~flipped~~ over. The rod should be held high, but parallel to the water. Mending action can be likened to children playing with a jump rope. There is no need to mend too much line. In most cases, a ten or fifteen foot mend is all that is required. With a high, floating line, this will be not too difficult.

As the line continues downstream, the angler must keep on mending, as long as drag occurs, until the cast is fished out. To help in the process, lead the line with the rod in its downstream journey and hold it high and parallel so that the mend will come easy.

With the soft hackled fly and the mending method, hooking the fish is almost automatic. First, the rise, or swirl, or splash or bulge will occur where the fly is and the action will be relayed to the angler. It is also good practice to keep one's eyes moving downstream on the area where the fly is believed to be. Striking the fish need not be forceful, merely a tightening of the rod is usually sufficient to set the hook.

It has always seemed to me that dry fly fishing is considered the higher art of trout fishing and wet fly the lower, because there seems to be more to do about the dry fly. In dry fly fishing, there is the floating line and the natural, drag-free float. There is the finer leader, the greater stalking, the better knowledge of the fly on the water and the exact imitation. More art and more science, hence greater pleasure? Maybe? But, the soft hackled fly fished with a floating line, and mended upstream and down, with fine terminal tackle gives the most sophisticated dry fly fisherman plenty to do in the arts and science departments, and a lot more to feel in the fun department.

There is plenty of proof. The soft hackled fly tempts the trout a great deal more of the time. It tempts bigger trout. And it rouses the rapacity of the most lethargic trout to cause him to charge from a great distance or depth. That's why the take when fishing these flies is so powerful and so extremely physical.

In dry fly fishing, the trout with no real urgency reaches for the fly, if it is straight over his head, but it is the fisherman who sets the hook into the fish, and the battle between fish and fisherman ensues. With the soft hackled fly, the trout throws caution to the wind, because he's not afraid to move under the water and speeds to the fly with urgency, setting it into himself. The contact is more violent and forceful, because it was the trout's decision and not the fisherman's.

Upstream fishing with a weighted or unweighted nymph can be compared in the same way. The fisherman watches for the slightest hesitancy of the line or leader, or hint in the water, and tightens the line to set the hook, feeling nothing until that has been accomplished.

Chapter V

What is it about the soft hackled fly that has led a fisherman like myself to give up entirely the use of all other sunk flies in fishing for trout? What special appeal does it have? What does it represent or imitate, if anything, at all? What makes it so universal that sometimes it fishes just as well during a hatch, as without one, and fishes well on most trout streams of the country?

Earlier British writer, by the score, (as the reader will see in the next chapter) praised the soft hackles. They were included in many lists of killing flies as general flies, meaning that they had no counterparts in real insect life. It was a good fly, they said, but they didn't know why.

Even G. E. M. Skues, who led the revolt against the use of dry fly only on southern British chalk streams, apparently did not know why. In his, "Way of a Trout with a Fly", first published in 1921, he said, "Fished directly upstream, a wet fly (whether winged or not), which is hackled with a stiff cock's hackle, has ~~thrown away~~ one of its chief advantages, the mobility of the hackle. In fact, one might be inclined to think that, if a hackle were not needed to break the fall or suggest life, such a fly might best be dressed without a hackle. A hen's hackle, or a small bird's hackle, would respond to every movement of the current, and would thus suggest an approach of life

13
14
11
12
12
12

20
12
40
20
240
10 pages

in action, which is very fascinating. The Yorkshire hackles and Stewart's famous trio of 'spiders', so called, are based on this theory. What these flies really represent cannot always be certainly predicated. Doubtless the hackles in some cases suggest the wings and legs of hatched-out insects. drowning or drowned and tumbled by the current, and in others they suggest some nondescript, struggling subaqueous creature. In either case the mobility suggests life."

"Life" of what order or class of insects...ephemera (mayfly) or trichoptera (caddis)?

My answer to this question when I was working on this part of the book in 1972, was the ephemera.

I was convinced the soft hackled fly suggested any of the four types of nymphs or their duns of the mayfly family...the order of insects generally considered to be of the most interest to fly fishermen. In the order there are: 1. flat or clinging nymphs such as the March Brown; 2. swimming nymphs such as the pale evening dun; 3. crawling nymphs such as the blue-winged olive; and 4. burrowing nymphs such as the wiggler of the large Michigan May fly.

The various nymphs prefer different kinds of bottoms from mud to sand to stone to large flat rocks, and bottoms with weeds and without. The shapes of the nymphs differ considerably; some long

and slender, some short and fat and some wide and flattened. Some rivers can actually produce all four kinds in a very few feet, and it has been observed by many fishing writers that two and three or more different kinds of nymphs can be hatching from the same water simultaneously.

This hatching occurs, entomologists say, when the nymphs swallow water or air; or both to expand its muscles and split the outer skin along the top of the thorax. This can happen on the surface or underneath, in which case the new dun elevates to the surface in some sort of gas balloon which keeps him dry. At this point, we have an ~~an~~unwet or dry dun actually submerged! I believed this was the reason why the sunk soft hackled fly was taken so well during a ~~hatch~~.

All of the above, as I said, was written during the latter months of 1972. Since that time, however, I have read "Nymphs" by Ernest Schwiebert, published in 1973.

Leafing through the pages of this book and admiring the beautiful, color plates of various nymphs, enlarged four times, I came across the plate of caddis pupae. I was struck by what I saw...the green, gold, yellow, brown and orange of the slender bodies, the small drooping wings, and the long floppy, hanging legs extending beyond the ends of the bodies! "These are soft hackles", I thought; the closest thing I ever saw in print of a living nymph, to the soft hackled flies I had been using so well for so long.

Hungrily, I read through the three chapters on the caddis and microcaddis. Schwiebert said there were hundreds of species of the insects and that they were to be found just about anywhere. He believed them to be the "most numerous of the aquatic insects extant in American trout water, making their availability factor relatively high."

In this observation, Schwiebert agreed with J. R. Harris, "An Angler's Entomology", first published in England in 1952, who said, "Caddis-flies, Sedge-flies, or as they are often called in Ireland, Rills, form numerically the largest of the three main groups of water flies. They belong to the order Trichoptera.

"...Caddis-flies differ widely in their development from both stone flies and ephemeroptans in one obvious respect. The two latter orders pass from the egg to a larval stage and then to a winged stage. But caddis-flies pass from the egg to the larval and then through a pupal stage before they assume a winged form."

Not only were there more of them, (caddis flies,) Schwiebert said, but that they were more hardy than the mayfly class and less susceptible to pollution and pesticides. He also hinted that the caddis is better fished as a shallow sunk fly than as a dry, because the dry was difficult to imitate as a fluttering insect on or about the water and that it was easier to imitate the swimming pupae, which were more easily caught by the trout.

Almost all of the artificial caddis pupae in his chapters are tied with partridge, grouse and similar bird, soft hackles. And Mr. Schwiebert pays respect to the earlier British, and British North Country angling writers who wrote about them more than 100 years ago.

After seeing his paintings of the caddis pupae and reading his clear and sane sentences about them, I knew I had to ammend my own thinking about what the soft hackled flies, ~~do~~, in fact, imitate, and thank him for being "crazy" enough to write a book like that.

Ephemera or Trichoptera? Or both?

With so many different may fly nymphs and their duns; and with so many different caddis pupae in the water at the same time, it seems impossible to imitate any specific one when fishing the sunk fly. This is why I have never used or believed in the hard bodied nymphs, the flattened imitations or rubber molded ones. Any attempt to imitate any specific nymph or dun, would seem to limit the appeal to the trout by the exact imitation. This is the basic difference between dry fly fishing and sunk fly fishing. It is a very different kind of ball game. Fishing on top, the angler wants the exact imitation because he can see what fly is up. Fishing under the surface, the angler wants the barest resemblance to the dozens of different kinds of nymphs or pupae, because he can never see or know what is really happening down there.

Any sunk artificial fly, to be good, must transform itself in the water into something alive, something suggestive and moving, something that looks good to eat. Such a fly looks different in the water than it does out of it. The best way to demonstrate this is to look at the soft hackled fly dry, then wet it and taken another look.

The transformation is amazing!

The soft partridge or snipe or starling feather with its tapered barbules, mold themselves against the body with the tips away and toward the tail of the fly. There is a natural lump or thorax created at the front of the fly, by reason of the tapering of the barbules, the thicker and closer to the stem of the feather than at the tips.

Floating naturally down stream, with no movement from the fisherman, these barbules close in and out, squirm against the body of the fly, and react in a lifelike way to every little kind of pressure.

Without wings, the fly has no top or bottom, and will look the same to the fish no matter what side is up. Frequently, a trout caught on the fly will have the hook in his top lip with the bend point up instead of down.

The soft hackled fly also can be described as not a nymph still, not a dun yet; not a pupae still, not an adult caddis yet. The hackle barbules are really too long and too soft and too many to represent the six legs of the nymph. The hackle barbule could suggest dun wings

just as they are cracking open during emergence. Taken for the caddis pupae, they definitely could suggest the longer legs, and drooping wings. They might even suggest the mature fly, fluttering on top the surface.

On any soft hackled fly, it is obvious, however, that the hackle is everything. It must do all the work to make the fly so successful. To prove or disprove this, some day, I'm going to fish the fly with hackle only. The reader will have to wait to hear the results of this experiment.

Chapter VI

One gets a particular delight in finding the mention of his peculiar way of fishing; his favorite fly or group of flies; his most beloved river; or anything about the subject of ~~his~~ fishing akin to him; in angling literature. The more often one sees the reference, the more he knows he is on the right track himself. He can say, "See, so and so has said it and it must be right". The older the literary reference, the more excited and elated is the beholder. The more revered or popular or championed is the writer, the more convinced is the reader. It is the search for the agreement that causes this and it is true not only in fishing, but in other sports, as well.

When I first started fishing the soft hackled fly, I didn't know what deep and oppulent water I was wading in. First, I thought Young invented the fly, as he, was accredited with invention of the Strawman nymph and the midge rod. Dumb me! No one invents flies or styles, they are evolved, developed, borrowed, adopted, ~~adapted~~ or stolen. I know that now, because from the earliest known work on angling to some of the most recent there is frequent mention, yes, even whole books, of and on the soft hackled fly.

In fact, a search reveals so much mention and attention to it, that I have been puzzled why this small group of flies hasn't prosperedd more ~~than I have~~ than I have been able to find knowledge of, specially since we are a country of predominant wet fly fishers.

Besides the mention found in "Nymphs", by Ernest Schwiebert, already written about in the last chapter, the other newest reference is found in "Quill Gordon", by John McDonald, 1972. It is about the oldest reference found in, "The Treatise of Fishing with an Angle", Dame Juliana Berners, 1496. Through some of the most assiduous angling research I have ever encountered, McDonald takes apart the 12 flies described in the Treatise, unscrambles the middle English jargon of the period and recreates the flies so that they can then be painted and reproduced in this beautiful book.

He says, "In the present stage of knowledge, secure conclusions cannot be made on several critical points. In instances where it is impossible to render a logically strong judgement between choices, we present our first choice as the most likely, and alternatives as possible but less likely. The alternatives are offered in the illustrations and the table of our dressings.

"Now look at the flies and our argument for the dressing of each".

Using the language of the treatise, he describes the first fly in the list, "The donne flye the body of the donne wool and the wingis of the pertryche (partridge) it alics mine." He asks the first question: does "dun" imply an insect or color or material? He thinks it a color. He asks the second question; was the partridge a wing or body feather? He thinks it a wing feather. He asks the third question; was the feather hackled round the hook or tied upright? He thinks it ~~hahackled~~.

His alternative two shows a fly very similar to the partridge hackled flies in this work, and this makes me feel good. But because of my interest in the soft hackle, I should disagree with him and think it should be first choice. But I don't.

Here's why. When I saw the first trout flies in Glen Buckel's barber shop window and later when I tried to tie the same flies, I thought the hackle barbules were tied in under and around the hook individually or in small groups of individual barbules. Needless to say, it was impossible to make them stand straight out like they did on Glen's flies. I had read no books and seen no instruction, so I didn't know the barbules splayed out as the hackle was wound around the shank of the hook. One day soon after, Glen was showing me some very nice hackles and wound one around his finger. It was like magic, the light went on as the separate barbules spread round and round his finger!"

So it is possible, Berners was as dumb as I was and knew not ^a this amazing characteristic of a simple hackle, even though there were to have been earlier "books of credence" which might have told her the exact way of handling the hackle.

John Waller Hills, the famous angling historian, thought differently, however. In his "A History of Fly Fishing For Trout." first published in 1921, he gave the Dame more knowledge than I do. Hills believed the first fly of her list, the Donne Fly, to be exactly the same as the Partridge and orange as it is dressed today in England, as it was dressed by Paul Young