and to such a miserable end, was taken out by some good people and given to the poor. No one ever suspected how the wicked wretch came to his end, though they did see a cock's feather close beside the spot where he was planted — head first — the strangest tree that ever was put into the earth, in any garden in this world.

THE ABBOT'S TROUT

IT WAS a fine summer day — many, many years ago — that the good Abbot of Buckfast went fishing. The waters of the river Dart ran close under the walls of the old Abbey of Buckfast, and then went winding through green meadows and beside fern-grown banks until they fed the Abbot's Pool, a black hollow in the river, famed for trout. And here, under the shadow of the trees, sat the abbot with his rod and line, a wicker basket for his fish, and a little brown jug, which he kept close at hand, quenching his

thirst with its contents — whatever that may have been — and there, too, was the fragment of a venison pasty which he had brought with him. The abbot was stout and comfortable-looking in his monk's frock, the cowl thrown back, and his bald pate shining in the midst of its fringe of hair; and the abbot's nose was red, and his little eyes had a merry twinkle as he cast his line into the still dark waters; for here, in this pool, the noisy river lay deep and placid, scarcely a ripple stirring its surface, and so smooth that the trees and the great ferns on the banks were mirrored in its bosom. Now, there were many, many trout in this quiet pool, and it was a rare thing to cast a line into it without catching one of the beautiful, silvery fishes; but this particular morning the good abbot fished in vain. He put the most tempting bait upon his hook and cast it enticingly into the water and waited patiently for a bite — but no, not a nibble. Once or twice, it is true, he certainly felt a most decided twitch at his line, but when he began to draw it in, there was nothing on the hook. He was very much surprised at his ill luck and changed his bait again and again, but all to no purpose; not a fish would bite, and the abbot began to be very

cross. It was warm, and he mopped his bald head and puffed and blew, and stared hard at the pool, for he could not imagine what had become of the fishes. Being so angry and so absorbed, too, he never noticed the astonishing thing that was happening right under his red nose; nothing less than the strangest gambols ever performed in so sober a place. All about the abbot grew the great fern of Devon, the Osmunda, its gigantic fronds waving gracefully down to the very water's edge, while behind him, the birches and the oaks towered together, making a deeply shadowed woodland; and out of this mass of foliage darted little figures, all dressed in green, matching the foliage so perfectly, indeed, that if the abbot had looked about, he would probably have thought that it was only a whirl of falling leaves instead of a troop of pixies scampering over the ferns and under them, dancing and leaping about in the most amazing fashion, and playing all manner of tricks with the abbot himself. They crept up behind him and tickled his ears and his bald head with blades of grass, and he, poor man, slapped the air frantically with his handkerchief, thinking that some kind of a gnat had got after him; then they jostled his elbow, two or three of

them pushing it with all their might, and he fancied that there was a trout on his line and pulled it in eagerly, only to find his bait gone. Delighted with their success in tormenting the poor soul, the pixies laughed and danced in the wildest glee, and then one of them — bolder than his fellows — crept up to the abbot's little brown jug and tried to look in; but it was vastly taller than he, and he had to call two other fairies to help him, and they lifted him and bolstered him up against the jug until he could lean over the brim. No sooner was his head over the edge, however, than the fumes from within overcame him, and he lost his balance and fell in with a splash just as the abbot stretched out his hand and lifted the jug to his lips. The two pixies who had assisted the bold explorer to mount, stood aghast, gazing with horror as they saw their daring comrade vanish into the abbot's mouth. The last they saw was a little pair of green legs waving out of the abbot's throat. Then he set the little brown jug down empty, wiped his lips, and baiting his hook anew, cast his line. But, by this time, all the pixies had discovered the terrible fate of their venturesome comrade, and they ran shrieking into the covert of ferns, dreadfully frightened by such a fearful calamity.

But strange to relate, the abbot himself showed no sign of uneasiness, though he had just disposed of a live pixy at one gulp. He went on fishing with apparent satisfaction, and what was stranger still, he had no sooner swallowed the fairy than he began to feel a promising nibble at his bait, and, lo and behold, he jerked the line and drew in a beautiful fat trout, quite the largest that he had ever seen. The good man's eyes shone with pleasure as the lovely fish twisted and struggled on the hook, the sun shining on its beautiful silvery sides and making it appear doubly attractive. He caught it in his hand and weighed it carefully; certainly it was the largest fish, by a full pound, that had been caught that season, and a beauty, too, and he proceeded to unfasten the hook from its jaws. Then something amazing happened: the fish sat up on its tail, on the abbot's palm, and solemnly winked its left eye at him.

"Bless my soul!" cried the abbot, "how very extraordinary!" and he turned and reached for his jug for comfort; but his last drink had emptied it, and he set it down with a sigh and gazed long and earnestly at the fish.

The trout continued to sit bolt upright on its tail, and this time it winked its right eye.

"Bottles and jugs!" exclaimed the abbot, forgetting himself altogether. "I must be bewitched!" and he dropped the fish into his basket, muttering a Latin phrase or two to scare off the witches.

Then he tried to think he had only imagined this strange behavior on the part of the trout, and he baited his hook anew, and tried to catch another such beauty. But the good man's luck was singular enough, and not another fish nibbled at his line that day. So, as the sun was setting in the valley of the Dart, the old abbot trudged home, through the green meadows, to Buckfast Abbey, with only one splendid trout in his basket, and his rod, and his empty brown jug. But all this while, he was secretly troubled at his extraordinary catch, for whenever he glanced into his basket that terrible fish sat there on its tail and winked! Yes, there was no doubt about it, it winked. The abbot tried not to notice it, for he thought he was bewitched, and it was very unbecoming in an abbot to be bewitched; but, in some way, he was quite fascinated by that fish, and he could not keep from looking at it, every minute or two, although its terribly knowing winks began to be really alarming, and if he had not been a fat old man as well as an abbot,

he would have thrown away both the basket and the fish, and run shrieking to the abbey. But at last the trying walk was at an end and he drew near his destination; but he did not feel equal to meeting the other monks just then, and he avoided the main entrance, where he saw several of his followers assembled, and actually sneaked off to the kitchen with his trout, only too anxious to get rid of it, and yet rather horrified at the notion of consigning such a creature to the frying-pan. He was met at the rear door by one of the poorer monks, who usually labored in the kitchen garden, and this good man — amazed at seeing the abbot so confused and out of breath, stumbling along to the kitchen — made a deep bow and offered to take the basket and rod.

"I see your reverence has been fishing," he said, "and I hope you 've had luck."

"Very poor luck indeed," replied the abbot crossly, thrusting the basket into the brother's hand with an eager haste that was quite unbecoming, "only one fish to-day."

"But certainly the finest fish of the year, my lord Abbot," exclaimed the monk, "a fish worthy to be cooked for your reverence's own supper."

The abbot cast a horror-stricken look at the basket.

"I shall not eat fish tonight," he muttered, and positively ran toward the main entrance.

Much astonished at the abbot's curious behavior, and not heeding the fish, the good monk took the basket to the kitchen and handed it to the cook, that the trout might be prepared for the abbot's supper, for he had not understood his reverence's refusal to eat it.

The kitchen of the abbey was large and clean, the floor of stone, and the huge chimney filling all of one side of the room; and here there was a great roasting, and boiling, and baking, for supper was preparing for all the monks in Buckfast, as well as for the lord abbot. The cooks and the scullions were busy, and there was the clatter of dishes and the spitting and sizzling of frying fat, and a fragrant odor of venison, and roast duck, and fried chicken floated out of the windows; for the good monks of Buckfast loved to live well, and, in those days, abbeys were almost like hotels, so many travellers stopped there every day for food and rest, and it was the lord abbot's duty to shelter and entertain the stranger within his gates, whether he was poor

or rich. So in the hurry and bustle of preparation, the peculiarities of the trout were entirely overlooked, until the chief cook — a lay brother of great skill and judgment — whose duty it was to prepare the abbot's own meals, hastily picked up the fish with the intention of splitting it open to fry. The cook's broad red face glistened with heat, and his brawny arms were bare to the elbows, and as he brandished his knife he did not look like a man to be easily frightened; but when that strange trout calmly sat up on its tail in his hands, and began to wink one eye, the cook turned pale, and dropping the fish into the frying-pan, he threw away his knife and ran shrieking out of the kitchen. Then followed a great uproar, for it was thought that the chief cook had gone mad, and all the other cooks and scullions ran out after him, forgetting the meat on the spits and the half-baked pasties. All the cooks and scullions, I said, but I was wrong; not all; for a little boy, who played the part of scullion and errand boy and scrubber, stayed behind peering, in an amazed fashion, into the frying-pan. The abbot's trout — finding it uncomfortably hot — was dancing the wildest kind of a fandango on the very tip of his tail, all the while

winking prodigiously at the frightened lad, who was alone to witness its antics. The boy caught his breath and gazed and gazed in the wildest astonishment.

"I be switched if I ever saw such a trout before!" cried little Joe, and, determined to save the fish from the fire, he snatched it out of the pan and flung it into a bowl of clear water.

Overjoyed to be in his own element, the trout went diving about the bowl, splashing and gurgling with delight; while the poor scullion boy looked on, in a fascinated way, too much amazed to move. At last the fish bobbed up above the surface and winked once more.

"Thank you, Joe, my dear," said this wonderful trout. "'T is astonishing how hot a frying-pan can be. You've done me a good turn, and I'll not forget it!"

Thoroughly frightened at being thus addressed by a fish, Joe did not know what to do, but he thought it best to be very polite.

"I'm glad I could help you, — Master Fish," he stammered; "pray tell me if I can do anything more."

At this the fish shut up both its eyes very tight

and laughed, which was so extraordinary that poor Joe began to think he was dreaming.

"Thank you, my dear lad," said the trout, in a superior way; "but really I can do more for you than you for me. At present, however, you may remove this bowl to that shady corner under the ivy, by the wall; I noticed it as I came in. The cooks will be back in a moment, and I don't care to be fried, — at least, not yet; besides, there will be a good deal of confusion to-night, for I rather think that the abbot is behaving oddly," and the fish laughed again.

Joe was far too much in awe of his singular acquaintance to think of disobedience, so he staggered out of the kitchen with the heavy bowl in his arms, and hid it away under the ivy before the cooks came trooping back again, drawn by the smell of burnt meat and pastry. The chief cook glanced timidly at the frying-pan, as if he expected something dreadful to appear in it, but finding it empty, and seeing no signs of the terrible fish, he set about his work again, scolding at the delay and the burnt meat as if he were not himself the cause of it all; but then, you know, some people are fond of laying their faults on the shoulders of other