

NORWEGIAN AND OTHER FISH-TALES

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Norwegian and other fish-tales by Bradnock Hall

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BRADNOCK HALL

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SPINNING

NORWEGIAN
AND OTHER FISH-TALES

BY

BRADNOCK HALL

AUTHOR OF 'FISH-TAILS AND SOME TRUE ONES'
'ROUGH MISCHANCE' ETC. ETC.

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

1910

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DEDICATION

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I respectfully dedicate this book to you. I might, of course, select for this purpose any of the great names which naturally occur to the mind in connection with fishing, the government of the country, art, or letters, and so pretend to some transient connection with the makers of history. I should thus, no doubt, obtain an autograph letter from, say, the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, which might be handed down in the archives of the family as an heirloom, passing with the real estate. But this consideration does not weigh with me in comparison with the harmless pleasure which you will feel on learning that a book by a rival author has set forth upon the troubled

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waters of criticism under your auspices. I have upon my shelves a number of books with your name on the title-pages, but I cannot find one which has been dedicated to me. The cases are not, however, parallel, because, while I am able to conceal your identity, you must have disclosed mine. Strange as it may appear, you have but one brother, while I have so many that the whole pedigree of the Halls may be examined without your being so much as suspected.

My second object, when I have laid this little volume at your feet, and created possibly one false impression, is to remove another. In a former book on the same subject, with a similar title, I dealt faithfully with the sportsmen who were good enough to read it, and with the exception of one story, palpably fictitious, I wrote only what was true ; but in the preface I falsely pretended that I was a Conservative and Unionist M.P. This was mere disguise, as there were special reasons, well known to

you, why I should be at some pains to conceal the fact that I was the author of a book on so trivial a subject as angling, but you may recollect my amazement of a dozen years ago when I found that the critics derided or doubted my fish-tales, but swallowed whole the one statement which seemed to us then so absurd. I therefore take this opportunity of reminding you that I am not, and never have been, a Conservative, or a Member of Parliament. I doubt if I shall ever become either. I can promise not to become both.

Your friend, the scientific author of a recent novel, pretended to be a murderer, and my friend, the English authoress (anonymous, too) of another book, wrote as a German nobleman, but no one was deceived for a moment by either. Why, then, should I have been accepted with alacrity as an M.P.? It was merely the setting in each instance.

You will not fail to observe in the present case, in this very volume, where again all the

stories are, on my honour as a Free Trader, literally and exactly true, without even one exception,—you will not fail, I say, to observe that two of the little tales were once your own, and are now worked into the pattern of the book for all the world as if the scenes had been enacted before me instead of you. It is not my fault that we have visited different rivers. Have I not always wished that for us the *same* cold streamlet had indeed

curl'd
Through all his eddy'ng coves?

But you have other fish to fry, other shrines to visit, and other books to write. So we must continue to wander apart, and these children of yours must, with their cousins, bear my name and wear my home-made clothes. I trust that there is nothing to make their real father ashamed of them.

BRADNOCK HALL.

THE ATHENÆUM, 1910.