

They have now the further pleasure of reporting that, during the year that has since elapsed, these young fish have continued to thrive and grow in a most satisfactory manner, with a very small amount of observed mortality. The season is now close at hand when many of these parr will begin to assume the garb of smolts, preparatory to their first visit to the salt water, when they will be set at large to join their elder relatives now in the Derwent, and left to their own resources. These older fish set out on their journey seaward in the month of October, 1865; and doubtless the younger brood will take their departure about the same period of the present year.

Of the salmon-trout it is proposed to detain a portion in the ponds, in the hope that their numbers may be increased by propagation, as the Commissioners have been assured on high authority they may be, without visiting the salt water.

But the object which has for some time past engaged the chief attention and occupied the anxious thoughts of the Commissioners has been the return of some of the brood of 1864 from the sea to the Derwent. The first detachment of these, as has just been mentioned, left the ponds in the form of smolts in October, 1865; and, according to the opinion of many eminent pisciculturists, a portion of them ought to have returned from the sea about the end of the same or the beginning of the following year, after an absence of from two to four months. Not one, however, as far as the Commissioners are aware, was seen, or even reported to have been seen, in the Derwent about that period. Upon this merely negative and superficial evidence, however, the Commissioners cannot take upon themselves to say that none returned. It is quite possible that considerable numbers of them may have been present in the river without having been observed by any one; for a thousand fish in such a stream as the Derwent might pass and repass without attracting notice. Of this fact the Commissioners were strongly warned by the late lamented Mr. Ffennel, Chief Inspector of English Salmon Fisheries, who admonished them not to be disappointed or discouraged if no salmon should be seen in the first year of their migration and return. And, undoubtedly, the return of the salmon was far more confidently and generally looked for in the beginning of the present than of the previous year, so that the eyes of many deeply interested in the undertaking, including Mr. Ramsbottom, the indefatigable superintendent of the salmon-breeding establishment, were directed to the waters of the Derwent with more constant and more earnest attention during the latter than the former season.

In the month of January of the present year some large and strange fish, never before observed by them, were seen to leap in the Derwent, opposite the town of New Norfolk, by several residents of the highest respectability; but as various kinds of salt-water fish occasionally visit this part of the river, although far inferior in size to a salmon or a grilse, and of which none have ever been known to rise above the surface of the water, the Commissioners refrained from drawing any positive conclusion from these observations, although the parties by whom they were made and reported were worthy of every trust.*

But on the 14th February unquestionable evidence of the presence of the returned salmon in the river was afforded by a party of gentlemen† of the first standing in the community, by whom, whilst riding close along the bank of the Derwent, near a place called the "Dry Creek," several miles beyond the reach of the tide, and above several rapids, a large fish was twice seen to leap from the water, which was afterwards observed gliding under the surface for some distance, and was at once recognized as a salmon by one of the party familiarly acquainted in Ireland with the appearance and motions of that fish.

On the 21st February, two miles above the spot last mentioned, a large fish was seen leaping by a respectable tradesman, while driving along the road, which runs close to the bank of the river.

On the 28th, at a spot a mile still further up the stream, a gentleman passing along on horseback, and one of the water-bailiffs attached to the establishment, simultaneously, and from opposite banks of the river, saw a large fish leaping, which the latter, an old salmon-fisher from Scotland, at once identified as a salmon or grilse.

On the 15th March, Mr. Ramsbottom, the experienced superintendent of the ponds, and a salmon-fisher from his earliest years, having been informed by the water-bailiff that at a place a short way below the mouth of the Plenty he had seen a great commotion in the Derwent, apparently caused by great numbers of small native fry pursued by some large fish, stationed himself on the bank of the stream at the spot indicated, and soon after distinctly saw a salmon or grilse rise from the water.

On the 18th March, the same gentleman, his assistant, and a friend (Dr. Moore) from New Norfolk, visited the same part of the river, and in the course of a few hours in the afternoon were rewarded by witnessing seven distinct rises.

On the 1st April, one of the Commissioners (Dr. Officer), accompanied by two friends (Mr. and Mrs. Myles Patterson), took his station an hour before sunset near the same spot, but on the bank of the stream opposite to that from which Mr. Ramsbottom and others had made their observations. Scarcely had he and his companions directed their eyes to the surface of the stream when they perceived that it was in a state of unusual agitation, which they quickly discovered was caused by shoals of small fry skimming along the surface, in their endeavour to escape from some large fish by which they were closely pursued, and whose track close behind them was plainly seen. The character of the pursuers was soon revealed to the beholders by two great fish which in rapid succession rose from the water, fully exposing their glittering bodies to view, and proclaiming themselves to be real salmon. This scene of flight and pursuit continued to be enacted for upwards of an hour, not in one spot only, but in several places simultaneously, over a considerable extent of the river, and terminated only with the setting of the sun. During these observations the large dorsal fin of one of the pursuing fish was distinctly seen rapidly cleaving the water, while another was observed for a few moments reposing close under the surface.

Again on the 3rd and on the 5th April salmon were distinctly seen in the same part of the river by Mr. Ramsbottom and one of the Commissioners (R. C. Read, Esq., J.P.), and another gentleman (Dr. Moore).

* Mrs. Sharland, Miss Kirkpatrick, and Mr. Oakley.

† Right Rev. Dr. Murphy, Rev. Mr. Dunne, Rev. Dr. Hayes, of Melbourne, Rev. Mr. Hennebrey.