

CURIOSITIES IN FRENCH FISHING TACKLE.

French manufacturers of fishing tackle offer their customers a great variety of novel and ingenious implements: some of the devices are so curious, that a short description may interest angling readers of the *Indian Field*.

A cross-bow specially made for harpooning fish, appears to be a most ingenious toy, from which one might get a good deal of amusement. It has a wooden bow, which, however, does not bend as in ordinary cross-bows; the impulse to the harpoon is given by thick elastic strings. The arrow is a light tube made of fibre, with a steel head. The line runs down this tube to a reel, which is fixed underneath the barrel of the cross-bow. The makers declare that this instrument shoots with considerable accuracy, and that with its assistance one can capture fish of considerable size, when they are lying on or near the surface.

A terrible looking instrument in the harpoon-gaff; a set of claws gape at the end of the shaft, and on thrusting the contrivance down on to a fish the claws seize hold of it like the talons of an osprey. A French tackle shop offers, as might be imagined, a great assortment of fishing creels, for most of the baskets sold in England are of French make. Consultation of a Saint Etienne catalogue also shows that English sellers make an enormous profit on these foreign creels.

There seems to be a considerable demand among Continental anglers for artificial insects, judging by the numberless ingenious imitations which are offered for sale. Besides caterpillars, spiders, grasshoppers, beetles, and so forth, they make artificial gooseberries and cherries. You can also buy imitation mice and crabs, and frogs which work their legs in life-like manner, as they are drawn through the water.

An extraordinary fishing instrument is the floating reel. A reel is fastened to the top of a sort of little boat, while the angler carries a larger winder full of line. The boat can be made to sail out into the middle of a river, and let out the baited hook from its reel. The apparatus is, of course, an application of the otter principle, and

anyone using such a device on British waters would certainly be run in for poaching.

A peculiarly ingenious device of very questionable utility, is a combined rod and reel. The rod is in four pieces; the top and two middle joints being of split cane, while the butt is a metal tube. On the butt are two grips, with a reel, permanently attached to the rod, between them. The upper grip glides backwards and forwards like the fore-end of a Winchester repeating shotgun. This to and fro motion winds in the reel, so that when you want to shorten line, you pump the upper grip to and fro. The paying out of line is regulated by a small lever worked by the thumb.

There is also an automatic reel made in France, which strikes the fish on touching a lever, or, if preferred, when bottom fishing, the reel can be arranged to strike the fish directly there is a pull at the bait. As the catalogue says, the angler, after resting his rod over a twig, can go off and smoke his pipe quietly, or take a siesta, and the reel does the rest.

For casting long distances, a reel is made to twist through a right angle, like the well-known Malloch. The French edition is, however, made in wood instead of metal, and looks very like an ordinary Nottingham wooden reel. The handles being fixed to the drum, the latter cannot be reversed, as in the case of the Scotch reel.

A very good system of stiffening light cane bottom rods is carried out in France. A fine silk ribbon is wound spirally round the cane, and then a similar ribbon is wound with the spirals in the opposite direction, both ribbons being varnished and covered at their ends by the ferrules they cannot ever become loose. This plan adds great stiffness and strength to light roach canes, without appreciably increasing their weight.

French tackle shops sell an enormous variety of made-up baits. Some of these pastes are scented with all kinds of odorous substances. One can even buy desiccated blood for bottom fishing.—["*Fleur de Lys*" in the *Indian Field*.]