

A LIST OF G. E. M. SKUES' PATTERNS

Greenwell's Glory

Wings: Hen Blackbird
 Body: Yellow or primrose silk waxed with cobbler's wax a ribbed with fine gold wire.
 Legs: Dark furnace hen.
 As the season advanced, this pattern was varied and made with lighter Starling Wings—dark, medium and light; and the hackle was similarly varied in shade to medium. Honey Dun with the advancing season.
 Hook sizes: No. 1, 0, 00

Blue Dun

Wings: Snipe.
 Body: Water rat spun on primrose or yellow tying silk.
 Legs: Medium blue hen.
 Hook: No. 1 or 0
 Skues varied the body of this standard pattern by using undyed heron's herl taken from the wing, and ribbing with fine gold or silver wire.

Rough Olive

Wings: Darkest Starling.
 Body: Heron herl from a wing feather dyed brown-olive, a ribbed with fine gold wire.
 Legs: Brown-olive hen hackle, with dark centre and yellowish-brown points.
 Hook: No. 1

Iron Blue

Wings: Tomtit's tail.
 Body: Mole's fur spun on claret tying silk.
 Legs: Honey-dun hen hackle with red points.
 Hook: No. 0 or 00

Watery Dun

Wings: Palest Starling.
 Body: Hare's poll or buff opossum spun on primrose tying silk
 Legs: Ginger hen's hackle.
 Hook: No. 00

Hare's Ear

Wings: Dark or medium Starling.
 Body: Hare's fur ribbed with fine gold wire.
 Legs: Body-fibres picked out, or fibres placed between the strands of the silk and spun.
 Hook: No. 1 or 0

Black Gnat

Wings: Palest Snipe rolled and reversed.
 Body: Black tying-silk, with two turns of black Ostrich herl or knob of black silk at shoulder.
 Legs: Black hen or cock Starling's crest, two turns at most.
 Hook: No. 00

All the foregoing patterns are standard or slightly modified standard patterns, and Skues employed them not with any view to challenging the floating fly but with the object of complementing or supplementing it on appropriate occasions and circumstances. This he did with marked success, so much so that the name of Skues, and his pen name, "Seaforth & Soforth," became legendary in fly-fishing circles in southern England.

Minor Tactics became and remains one of the classics of chalk-stream fishing, and the restoration of the wet fly to its rightful, traditional place in such fishing was due very largely to this notable book. Never was a case presented so pleasantly and unanswerably, and the pendulum of fly-fishing opinion began to swing back from extremism to the more liberal and logical view which now obtains. It is from this point that development and experiment leading up to the design and representation of the various species of natural nymphs may be traced—a possibility deliberately ignored by the doctrinaire "dry fly only" school.

The important contributions by G. E. M. Skues to fly-fishing on the chalk streams were carried further by the publication in 1921 of his second classic work: *The Way of a Trout with a Fly*—a work considerably influencing contemporary thought concerning the proper use and representation of nymphs, and of serious endeavour to improve upon traditional wet-fly patterns.

The book is a model of its kind, of great significance to the present-day fly-dresser, and of no less practical guidance and service to fly-fishermen of rough as well as chalk rivers. And not until 1939 did this distinguished author have published his third book, entitled: *Nymph Fishing for Chalk*

Stream Trout, which records a full series of nymphal representations evolved from the study and observation of natural nymphs. These three works are essential to the modern fly dresser and student of trout flies.

It will be appreciated, now that time has elapsed and allows of better perspective in the matter of judgment, how much Skues was influenced in his work by exhaustive study of fly-fishing literature from the *Treatyse* on, and, at the same time, by contemporary thought and opinion.

Unconsciously, perhaps, the enduring lessons of the past stained and spread into his work, and afforded an insight into the true art of fly dressing which he could not have otherwise obtained, while, in his own time, the increasing dogmatism and narrow-mindedness of the adherents of the dry fly school provided a valuable stimulus to produce new and corrective work in the face of formidable opposition and even indifference.

It was work which demanded the abilities of a mind trained to reason and of a scholar with exceptional powers of observation, and such gifts enabled G. E. M. Skues to succeed where lesser men would undoubtedly have failed. "Seaforth and Soforth" exemplifies the value of research of the kind, it is hoped, that is offered by this present work.