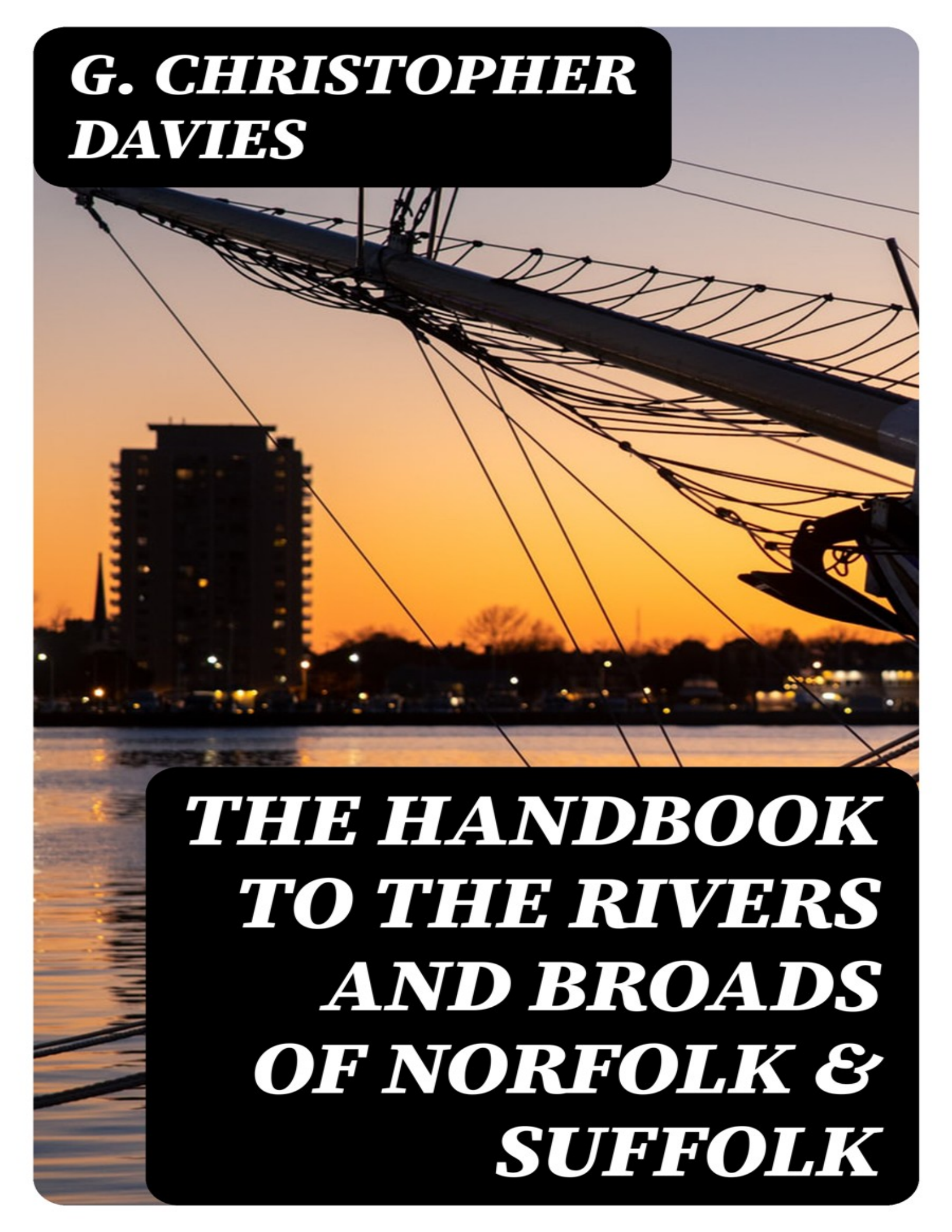
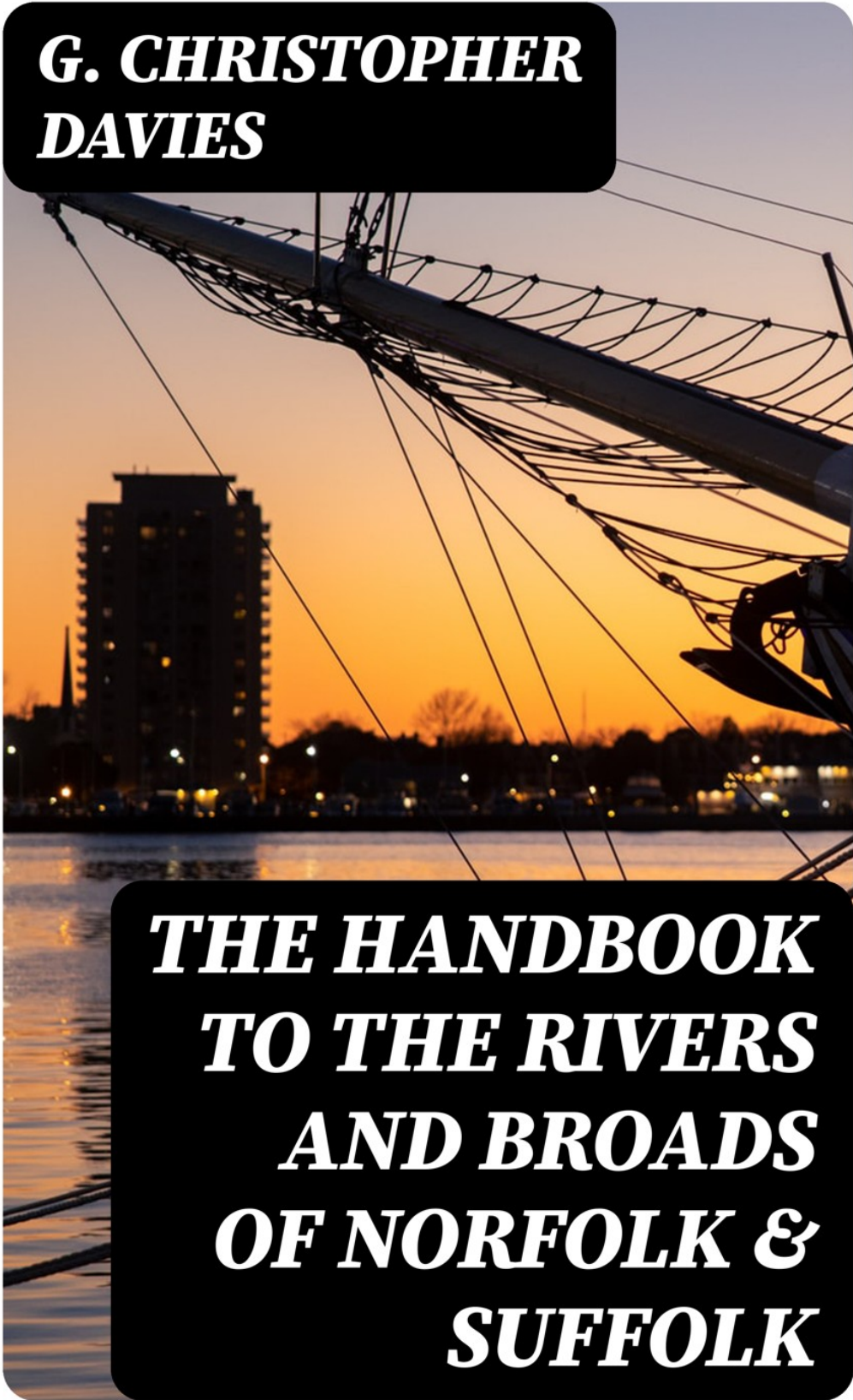


The background of the book cover is a photograph of a river or harbor at sunset. In the foreground, the complex rigging and ropes of a sailing ship are visible, extending from the top right towards the center. In the background, across the water, there is a city skyline with a prominent tall building and other structures, their lights reflecting on the water. The sky is a warm orange and yellow color.

***G. CHRISTOPHER
DAVIES***

***THE HANDBOOK
TO THE RIVERS
AND BROADS
OF NORFOLK &
SUFFOLK***

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a river scene at sunset. In the foreground, the rigging and mast of a sailing ship are visible, extending from the right side towards the center. In the background, across the water, there is a city skyline with a prominent tall building and other structures. The sky is a mix of orange and purple, and the water reflects the colors of the sunset.

***G. CHRISTOPHER
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***THE HANDBOOK
TO THE RIVERS
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G. Christopher Davies

The Handbook to the Rivers and Broads of Norfolk & Suffolk

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INTRODUCTION.

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Since the first appearance of this Handbook, and the larger volume on the same subject, which the preface to the first edition stated to be in contemplation, the Broad District has become highly popular. Each year the tourist stream increases, but, happily, there is still plenty of room. No doubt some of the old *habitués*, who liked to have the whole landscape to themselves, grumble at the change, but the less selfish persons, who happily constitute the majority, do not object to seeing a dozen yachts where formerly they saw but one, or a score of anglers where in past years but half-a-dozen might be seen.

A large trade has arisen in the letting of yachts, boats, and pleasure wherries for cruising purposes; but the inn accommodation has made little advance, and is still too meagre, and insufficient for the demand. The yachts have made great strides in speed and in number. The Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club has flourished exceedingly, and its regattas are popular.

Artists have found out the charm of the quiet scenery of the Broads, and visit us in great numbers. Notably Mr. E. H. Fahey and Miss Osborn have given exhibitions in London devoted to the district. Then *littérateurs* without number have written magazine and newspaper articles, and others, after a few days' scamper, have written exhaustive guide-books; and so the ball, which the present writer set rolling in earnest some years ago, is helped merrily forward, and the

Rivers and Broads of Norfolk and Suffolk are fast becoming one of the most popular of English playgrounds.

I should like to put the brake on a little in one respect. One guide-book writer appears to treat the riverside meadows as commons, and suggests that yachtsmen should bring lawn-tennis sets and cricket materials with them. Pray don't take such absurd advice. All riparian owners adhere stoutly to their just rights. It must be remembered that the rights of the public are limited to *passage along* the navigable rivers and the navigable broads, and the use of the banks of navigable waters for mooring purposes and for towing. The soil of the greater part of the river-beds is vested in the Crown, therefore angling is free to the public. Strictly speaking, the shooting over the Crown rivers is free, but this does not give persons a right to shoot an inch over the banks. Looking to the fact that the Bure is very narrow, and passes through private game preserves, let me earnestly entreat visitors not to fire off guns either at birds or at bottles (which last amusement appears to be a favourite one) above Acle bridge. The sport to the visitors is *nil*, while the annoyance to the riparian owners is extreme. The riparian owners are generally willing to afford the well-behaved public all reasonable facilities for enjoyment. Let this be repaid by the public refraining from potting away at waterhens and pigeons, or other birds on the banks.

It may be well to add that, up to about the year 1830, the Broads and wet marshes were simply waste; but by the Enclosure Acts and Awards, these watery commons were allotted and divided among the neighbouring landowners. In

some cases the rights of navigation and staithes were expressly reserved. In others no reservation was made, and the Broads are absolutely in the hands of private owners. In other cases again, staithes and rights of way have grown into disuse, and channels have become choked up by mud and vegetation. In no case, however, has the right of the Crown to the bed of the common river been affected or changed by the Enclosure Awards.

A great point to remember is, that the possessors of the Broads set as much store by their bulrushes and water lilies as the admiring visitor; therefore, do not gather any off the Broads. All flowers and grasses which grow in such luxuriance by the riverside, within the river wall, or the three yards from the river margin where the navigator has an indefeasible right, may as well be gathered for pleasure as die and rot. Here there is abundance for everyone; but to penetrate into quiet nooks of Broads and help oneself to other people's valued property, is an indefensible act, which by oft repetition has much irritated owners against the public. It is in this respect also that visitors from a distance are most prone to err, because, without reflection, it appears that no harm is done. Nor would there be much harm in a single instance, but "many a little makes a mickle."

As a general rule, visitors from a distance behave exceedingly well, being educated persons with a due sense of law and order. The bottle shooters, coot potters, and noisy revellers, the swan's egg robbers and grebe destroyers, the persons who use one's boat-houses as luncheon rooms or dust bins are, unfortunately, home

products. Of course, I hear of all offences that are committed, and by some people I am actually saddled with the responsibility of any breach of good manners on the part of the public, because I am supposed to have brought the latter to the Broads. I therefore beg the large unknown public (of whose friendliness to me as an author I have had so many proofs), when they visit the Broads, not to allow the exhilaration of an enjoyable holiday to interfere with a due propriety of behaviour.

The hitherto unwritten rules of the Rivers and Broads are these:—

Do not, in the neighbourhood of other yachts or houses, indulge in songs and revelry after eleven p.m., even at regatta times.

Bathe only before eight o'clock in the morning, if in sight of other vessels or moored in a frequented part of the river. Ladies are not expected to turn out before eight, but after that time they are entitled to be free from any annoyance. Young men who lounge in a nude state on boats while ladies are passing (and I have known Norwich youths to do this) may be saluted with dust shot, or the end of a quant.

Adhere strictly to the rule of the road when boating, according to the instructions contained in a subsequent chapter, and when angling, moor out of the way of sailing craft, as afterwards explained.

Do not throw straw or paper overboard to float to leeward and become offensive; but burn, or take care to sink all rubbish.

Do not light fires, place stoves, or throw refuse on the banks in the path of others, whose yachts may be moored

to the same bank.

Steam launches must not run at full speed past yachts moored to the bank, particularly when the occupants of the latter have things spread out for a meal.

Don't take guns on board unless you have leave to shoot on somebody's land.

Remember that sound travels a long way on the water, and do not criticise the people you may encounter with too loud a voice.

Don't go on a friend's yacht with nailed shoes (the commodore of a Thames sailing club once came on board mine in cricket shoes armed with spikes). Don't knock the ashes out of your pipe into his boat, and don't catch small fish and litter his decks with them, leaving them for him to clean up after you.



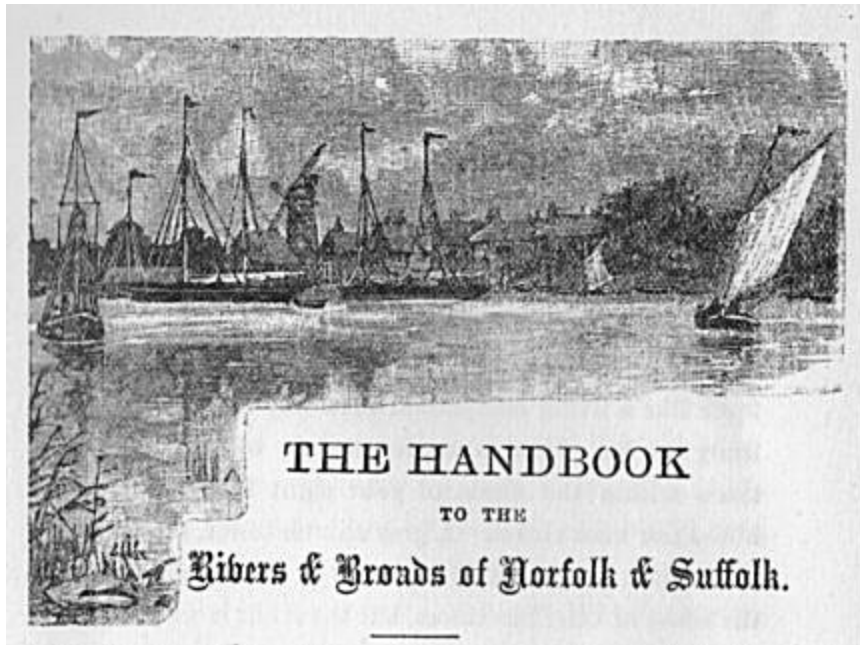
A POOL IN SURLINGHAM BROAD.

Don't moor outside another yacht without the permission of its owner.

Ladies, please don't gather armfuls of flowers, berries, and grasses which, when faded, you leave in the boat or yacht for the unfortunate skipper to clear up. Don't play the piano in season and out of season (the reedbird's song is

sweeter on the Broads); and don't turn out before eight o'clock in the morning when other yachts are near.

Observing all these simple maxims, any number of visitors will find plenty of room for their own enjoyment, without offence to anyone.



CHAPTER I.

THE “BROAD” DISTRICT.

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It is somewhat difficult to analyse the charm which the “Broad” District of Norfolk and Suffolk has for those who have once made its acquaintance in the only way in which an intimate knowledge of it can be gained.

In a journey through it by rail, you see nothing but its flatness; walk along its roads, you see the duller side of it; but take to its water-highways, and the glamour of it steals over you, if you have aught of the love of nature, the angler, or the artist in you.

One reason may be that the rivers are highways. From them you view things as from a different standpoint; along them flows a current of life differing from that on either rail or road: the wind is your servant, sometimes your master; there is an uncertainty in the issue of the day’s proceedings, which to an idle holidaymaker is most delightful, and the slowly-moving water is more like a living companion than any other inanimate thing can be. Houses are few and far between. Oftentimes within the circle of your sight there is neither house nor man visible. A grey church tower, a windmill, or the dark-brown sail of a wherry in the distance

breaks the sense of utter loneliness, but the scene is wild enough to enchain the imagination of many. Long miles of sinuous gleaming river, marshes gay with innumerable flowering plants, wide sheets of water bordered with swaying reeds, yachts or wherries, boats, fish, fowl, and rare birds and plants, and exquisite little bits to paint and sketch—these are the elements out of which a pleasant holiday may be made.

I wrote these lines whilst at anchor on Salhouse Little Broad. The evening was most still and placid, and the boat lay motionless among the lily leaves which covered the water around. The white lilies had so closed their petals that but the faintest morsels of white peeped out; but the yellow, which were most numerous, did not close so completely, and the dark interspaces of water were thickly starred with the golden globes. Beyond the lily leaves was a belt of tall reeds, swayed only by the birds which have their home among them. The yellow iris flowers made the narrow neck of marsh ablaze with colour. Bounding the view was a cordon of trees; on the one side a wooded bank; on the other, but out of sight, the river. A rustic boathouse nestled amid the trees, white swans lighted up the dark shades, moorhens led their broods across the pool; the western clouds were edged with sunset glories, and the reflections in the water were as perfect as the things they copy. But though there was absolute calm, the lily leaves were not still, but moved tremulously, and sent ripples on either side. Looking closely, you saw that the leaves were covered with small insects, and the small roach were busily plucking them off the under side. You could hear the little snap or

suck the fishes made, and once you caught the sound you found the air was full of these snaps, and a most weird effect the sound gave. The roach crowded eagerly round to eat the crumbs that I threw them. So fearless were they, that when I put my hand into the water and held it quite still for a while, they came and snapped at my fingers, and funny little tickling scrapes they gave. I actually succeeded in grasping one or two of the boldest. A piece of paper, which had been crumpled up and thrown on the water, was being urged to and fro by the hungry little fish, who tried to find it eatable, and tugged at it bravely.

The clouds darkened. I went into my cabin as a squall of wind and rain came on. The thunder grew louder and louder, and there, alone, with the tempest raging, I could yet write that the end of the evening was as pleasant as the beginning, so great to me is the charm of the water.

I slung my hammock, hoping that on the following day the sun would shine, the wind would blow, and the hours would pass as quickly as the boat sailed, and slept as sound as man may.

It has happened that I have written a good deal about these waters—too much, some people say. One result has been that I have been pretty well overpowered with correspondence arising from persons making enquiries about the district, with a view to visiting it; therefore, when the publishers requested me to write a kind of handbook or guide to the Broads and Rivers, I thought it a good idea, in that enquirers might, by buying such a book, save themselves the trouble of writing to me, and getting necessarily short and inadequate replies. I am afraid,