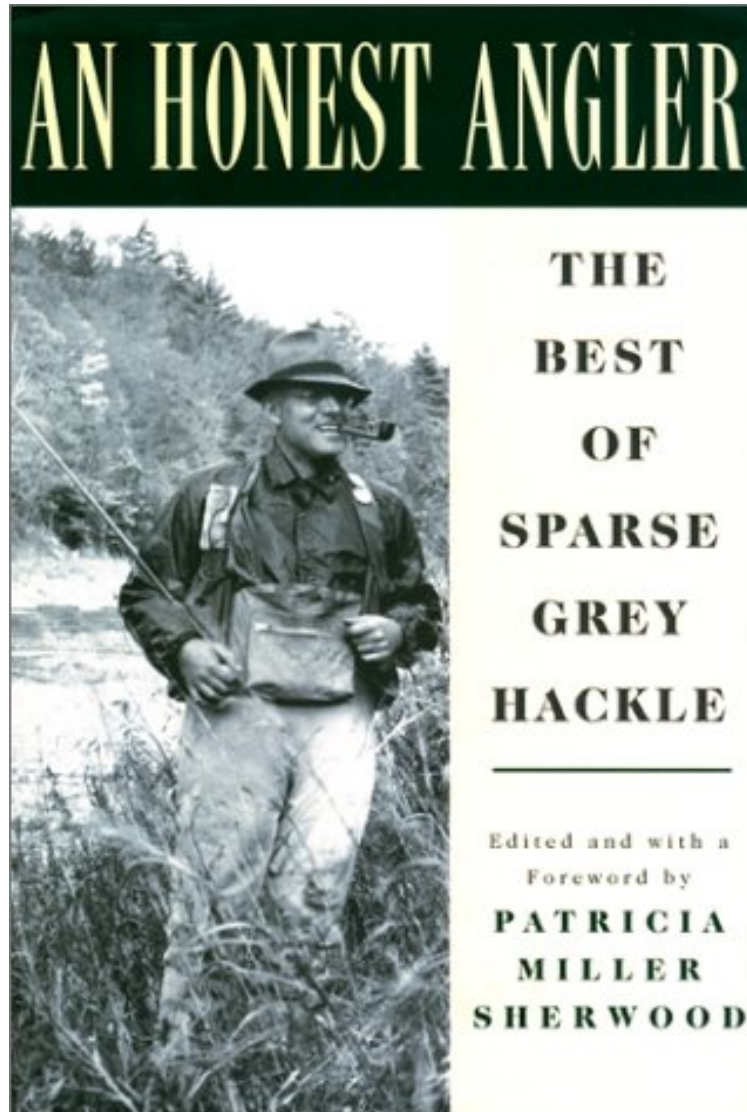


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## An Honest Angler: The Best of Sparse Grey Hackle

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helpful. I find Grey Hackles books to be very boring. By Author I find Grey Hackles books to be very boring have read a few of them my thoughts were "Oh My God" this person has too much time on his hands. He has no imagination at all, but when one sits around tying flies all day what can you expect. I give it a one star rating because I couldn't find a - star rating.

A treasury of essays, columns, articles, and letters from an icon of fly fishing's golden age.

.com Sparse Grey Hackle is a legendary member of the fly-fishing literati, although he'd be the first to resign from anything that sounded as pretentious as "literati." For years his articles, writing he referred to with a usual dollop of self-deprecation as "huntin', shootin', fishin'" columns, delighted readers of outdoors magazines. Although an outdoorsman in the general sense, Sparse was, above all, an angler of the fly, plying his love on the famed trout streams of the Catskills. An Honest Angler collects many of these pieces, reflecting the author's generous wit and experience, along with correspondence to noted fly-fishers. His writing, like a smooth cast, deftly covers a variety of productive "waters," moving from the tall tales of fishermen to the finer points of presenting a particular dry fly to a particularly fussy trout. Those already familiar with the work of Sparse Grey Hackle will welcome this new edition of previously uncollected material; those new to Sparse and his place in the golden age of American fly-fishing are in for a pleasant surprise. From Publishers Weekly Hackle was the pen name of Alfred W. Miller (1892-1983), an angler whose essays and articles appeared in many publications for a good part of this century. This collection of his magazine articles, newspaper columns and letters to friends has been put together by his daughter. He is disarmingly candid about why anglers fish: "Your typical fisherman is... taking refuge from the realities of life." He knows the history of fly-fishing, the rods, the gear (there's a delightful history of waders) and the companions one is likely to encounter. In a way it's unfortunate that Miller's reputation rests so heavily on his pieces about fishing, for he is a charming essayist on a number of quite unrelated subjects and an entertaining storyteller as well. His tales of his career in the Army chasing Pancho Villa in Texas and Mexico are captivating, as are his recollections of the Ambulance Service in France during WWI. Those who are skeptical about Miller's way with a phrase will be won over by several columns he wrote for the vacationing Red Smith, the dean of sportswriters of his time and an exceedingly tough judge of literary style. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s These columns, articles, and letters from the late fly-fishing writer Sparse Grey Hackle (a.k.a. Alfred W. Miller) will delight those familiar with his work but will sometimes leave the newcomer in the dark. Hackle (1892-1983), who took his nom de plume in the 1930s when he wrote "furious articles" protesting the pollution of Catskill Mountain streams, is best remembered for his classic *Fishless Days*, *Angling Nights*. Several pieces from that book appear here, along with columns from the *New York Times*, *Outdoor Life*, and elsewhere. Sherwood, his daughter, intersperses these with excerpts from letters to a number of friends and fellow fishermen, including Nick Lyons, Lewis Hull, Howard Walden, and Henry Darbee. The letters are often problematic in that there is little or no background information provided; the reader must know who the correspondent is or the cheerful banter can sink like a lead weight. The columns are often quite entertaining, even if Hackle's folksy good humor seems dated. There's a good piece on Finger Lakes, New York, "a lovely land of woods and waters," he writes, but nature has provided "so little fishing for so much water." A delightful exchange in the 1930s and '40s with the editor of *Rod and Gun* finds Hackle wishing bumblebees could be designated "a game animal" along with backyard "moochers" such as robins and crows and woodpeckers. Another good piece, "Murder," involves a Depression-era businessman who escapes his financial woes by going fishing. There's also a nice portrait of Harry and Elsis Darbee, owners of a Catskills fly and tackle shop (though no dates are provided as to when they operated). Some lovely writing ("a fine fly rod is a magnificent thing, a strain of music made visible"), but Hackle would be better served with a framework that does more than simply reprint columns and excerpts with little or no logical order or context. -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.