

IZAACK WALTON

THE
COMPLEAT
ANGLER

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Izaak Walton

The Compleat Angler

To the Right worshipful

John Offley

of Madeley Manor, in the County of Stafford

Esquire, My most honoured Friend

Sir,—I have made so ill use of your former favours, as by them to be encouraged to entreat, that they may be enlarged to the patronage and protection of this Book: and I have put on a modest confidence, that I shall not be denied, because it is a discourse of Fish and Fishing, which you know so well, and both love and practice so much.

You are assured, though there be ignorant men of another belief, that Angling is an Art: and you know that Art better than others; and that this is truth is demonstrated by the fruits of that pleasant labour which you enjoy, when you purpose to give rest to your mind, and divest yourself of your more serious business, and, which is often, dedicate a day or two to this recreation.

At which time, if common Anglers should attend you, and be eyewitnesses of the success, not of your fortune, but your skill, it would doubtless beget in them an emulation to be like you, and that emulation might beget an industrious diligence to be so; but I know it is not attain by common capacities: and there be now many men of great wisdom, learning, and experience, which

love and practice this Art, that know I speak the truth.

Sir, this pleasant curiosity of Fish and Fishing, of which you are so great a master, has been thought worthy the pens and practices of divers in other nations, that have been reputed men of great learning and wisdom. And amongst those of this nation, I remember Sir Henry Wotton, a dear lover of this Art, has told me, that his intentions were to write a Discourse of the Art, and in praise of Angling; and doubtless he had done so, if death had not prevented him; the remembrance of which had often made me sorry, for if he had lived to do it, then the unlearned Angler had seen some better treatise of this Art, a treatise that might have proved worthy his perusal, which, though some have undertaken, I could never yet see in English.

But mine may be thought as weak, and as unworthy of common view; and I do here freely confess, that I should rather excuse myself, than censure others, my own discourse being liable to so many exceptions; against which you, Sir, might make this one, that it can contribute nothing to YOUR knowledge. And lest a longer epistle may diminish your pleasure, I shall make this no longer than to add this following truth, that I am really,

Sir,

your most affectionate Friend,

and most humble Servant,

Iz. Wa.

The epistle to the reader

To all Readers of this discourse, but especially to the honest

Angler

I think fit to tell thee these following truths; that I did neither undertake, nor write, nor publish, and much less own, this Discourse to please myself: and, having been too easily drawn to do all to please others, as I propose not the gaining of credit by this undertaking, so I would not willingly lose any part of that to which I had a just title before I began it; and do therefore desire and hope, if I deserve not commendations, yet I may obtain pardon.

And though this Discourse may be liable to some exceptions, yet I cannot doubt but that most Readers may receive so much pleasure or profit by it, as may make it worthy the time of their perusal, if they be not too grave or too busy men. And this is all the confidence that I can put on, concerning the merit of what is here offered to their consideration and censure; and if the last prove too severe, as I have a liberty, so I am resolved to use it, and neglect all sour censures.

And I wish the Reader also to take notice, that in writing of it I have made myself a recreation of a recreation; and that it might prove so to him, and not read dull and tediously, I have in several places mixed, not any scurrility, but some innocent, harmless mirth, of which, if thou be a severe, sour-complexioned man, then I here disallow thee to be a competent judge; for divines say, there are offences given, and offences not given but taken.

And I am the willinger to justify the pleasant part of it, because though it is known I can be serious at seasonable times,

yet the whole Discourse is, or rather was, a picture of my own disposition, especially in such days and times as I have laid aside business, and gone a-fishing with honest Nat. and R. Roe; but they are gone, and with them most of my pleasant hours, even as a shadow that passeth away and returns not.

And next let me add this, that he that likes not the book, should like the excellent picture of the Trout, and some of the other fish, which I may take a liberty to commend, because they concern not myself.

Next, let me tell the Reader, that in that which is the more useful part of this Discourse, that is to say, the observations of the nature and breeding, and seasons, and catching of fish, I am not so simple as not to know, that a captious reader may find exceptions against something said of some of these; and therefore I must entreat him to consider, that experience teaches us to know that several countries alter the time, and I think, almost the manner, of fishes' breeding, but doubtless of their being in season; as may appear by three rivers in Monmouthshire, namely, Severn, Wye, and Usk, where Camden observes, that in the river Wye, Salmon are in season from September to April; and we are certain, that in Thames and Trent, and in most other rivers, they be in season the six hotter months.

Now for the Art of catching fish, that is to say, How to make a man that was none to be an Angler by a book, he that undertakes it shall undertake a harder task than Mr. Hales, a most valiant and excellent fencer, who in a printed book called A Private

School of Defence undertook to teach that art or science, and was laughed at for his labour. Not but that many useful things might be learned by that book, but he was laughed at because that art was not to be taught by words, but practice: and so must Angling. And note also, that in this Discourse I do not undertake to say all that is known, or may be said of it, but I undertake to acquaint the Reader with many things that are not usually known to every Angler; and I shall leave gleanings and observations enough to be made out of the experience of all that love and practice this recreation, to which I shall encourage them. For Angling may be said to be so like the Mathematicks, that it can never be fully learnt; at least not so fully, but that there will still be more new experiments left for the trial of other men that succeed us.

But I think all that love this game may here learn something that may be worth their money, if they be not poor and needy men: and in case they be, I then wish them to forbear to buy it; for I write not to get money, but for pleasure, and this Discourse boasts of no more, for I hate to promise much, and deceive the Reader.

And however it proves to him, yet I am sure I have found a high content in the search and conference of what is here offered to the Reader's view and censure. I wish him as much in the perusal of it, and so I might here take my leave; but will stay a little and tell him, that whereas it is said by many, that in fly-fishing for a Trout, the Angler must observe his twelve several flies for the twelve months of the year, I say, he that follows that rule, shall

be as sure to catch fish, and be as wise, as he that makes hay by the fair days in an Almanack, and no surer; for those very flies that used to appear about, and on, the water in one month of the year, may the following year come almost a month sooner or later, as the same year proves colder or hotter: and yet, in the following Discourse, I have set down the twelve flies that are in reputation with many anglers; and they may serve to give him some observations concerning them. And he may note, that there are in Wales, and other countries, peculiar flies, proper to the particular place or country; and doubtless, unless a man makes a fly to counterfeit that very fly in that place, he is like to lose his labour, or much of it; but for the generality, three or four flies neat and rightly made, and not too big, serve for a Trout in most rivers, all the summer: and for winter fly-fishing it is as useful as an Almanack out of date. And of these, because as no man is born an artist, so no man is born an Angler, I thought fit to give thee this notice.

When I have told the reader, that in this fifth impression there are many enlargements, gathered both by my own observation, and the communication with friends, I shall stay him no longer than to wish him a rainy evening to read this following Discourse; and that if he be an honest Angler, the east wind may never blow when he goes a-fishing.

I. W.

The first day

A Conference betwixt an Angler, a Falconer, and a Hunter,

each commending his Recreation

Chapter I

Piscator, Venator, Auceps

Piscator. You are well overtaken, Gentlemen! A good morning to you both! I have stretched my legs up Tottenham Hill to overtake you, hoping your business may occasion you towards Ware whither I am going this fine fresh May morning.

Venator. Sir, I, for my part, shall almost answer your hopes; for my purpose is to drink my morning's draught at the Thatched House in Hoddesden; and I think not to rest till I come thither, where I have appointed a friend or two to meet me: but for this gentleman that you see with me, I know not how far he intends his journey; he came so lately into my company, that I have scarce had time to ask him the question.

Auceps. Sir, I shall by your favour bear you company as far as Theobalds, and there leave you; for then I turn up to a friend's house, who mews a Hawk for me, which I now long to see.

Venator. Sir, we are all so happy as to have a fine, fresh, cool morning; and I hope we shall each be the happier in the others' company. And, Gentlemen, that I may not lose yours, I shall either abate or amend my pace to enjoy it, knowing that, as the Italians say, "Good company in a journey makes the way to seem the shorter".

Auceps. It may do so, Sir, with the help of good discourse, which, methinks, we may promise from you, that both look

and speak so cheerfully: and for my part, I promise you, as an invitation to it, that I will be as free and open hearted as discretion will allow me to be with strangers.

Venator. And, Sir, I promise the like.

Piscator. I am right glad to hear your answers; and, in confidence you speak the truth, I shall put on a boldness to ask you, Sir, whether business or pleasure caused you to be so early up, and walk so fast? for this other gentleman hath declared he is going to see a hawk, that a friend mews for him.

Venator. Sir, mine is a mixture of both, a little business and more pleasure; for I intend this day to do all my business, and then bestow another day or two in hunting the Otter, which a friend, that I go to meet, tells me is much pleasanter than any other chase whatsoever: howsoever, I mean to try it; for to-morrow morning we shall meet a pack of Otter-dogs of noble Mr. Sadler's, upon Amwell Hill, who will be there so early, that they intend to prevent the sunrising.

Piscator. Sir, my fortune has answered my desires, and my purpose is to bestow a day or two in helping to destroy some of those villanous vermin: for I hate them perfectly, because they love fish so well, or rather, because they destroy so much; indeed so much, that, in my judgment all men that keep Otter-dogs ought to have pensions from the King, to encourage them to destroy the very breed of those base Otters, they do so much mischief.

Venator. But what say you to the Foxes of the Nation, would not you as willingly have them destroyed? for doubtless they do

as much mischief as Otters do.

Piscator. Oh, Sir, if they do, it is not so much to me and my fraternity, as those base vermin the Otters do.

Auceps. Why, Sir, I pray, of what fraternity are you, that you are so angry with the poor Otters?

Piscator. I am, Sir, a Brother of the Angle, and therefore an enemy to the Otter: for you are to note, that we Anglers all love one another, and therefore do I hate the Otter both for my own, and their sakes who are of my brotherhood.

Venator. And I am a lover of Hounds; I have followed many a pack of dogs many a mile, and heard many merry Huntsmen make sport and scoff at Anglers.

Auceps. And I profess myself a Falconer, and have heard many grave, serious men pity them, it is such a heavy, contemptible, dull recreation.

Piscator. You know, Gentlemen, it is an easy thing to scoff at any art or recreation; a little wit mixed with ill nature, confidence, and malice, will do it; but though they often venture boldly, yet they are often caught, even in their own trap, according to that of Lucian, the father of the family of Scoffers:

Lucian, well skilled in scoffing, this hath writ, Friend, that's your folly, which you think your wit: This you vent oft, void both of wit and fear, Meaning another, when yourself you jeer.

If to this you add what Solomon says of Scoffers, that they are an abomination to mankind, let him that thinks fit scoff on, and be a Scoffer still; but I account them enemies to me and all that

love Virtue and Angling.

And for you that have heard many grave, serious men pity Anglers; let me tell you, Sir, there be many men that are by others taken to be serious and grave men, whom we contemn and pity. Men that are taken to be grave, because nature hath made them of a sour complexion; money-getting men, men that spend all their time, first in getting, and next, in anxious care to keep it; men that are condemned to be rich, and then always busy or discontented: for these poor rich-men, we Anglers pity them perfectly, and stand in no need to borrow their thoughts to think ourselves so happy. No, no, Sir, we enjoy a contentedness above the reach of such dispositions, and as the learned and ingenuous Montaigne says, like himself, freely, "When my Cat and I entertain each other with mutual apish tricks, as playing with a garter, who knows but that I make my Cat more sport than she makes me? Shall I conclude her to be simple, that has her time to begin or refuse, to play as freely as I myself have? Nay, who knows but that it is a defect of my not understanding her language, for doubtless Cats talk and reason with one another, that we agree no better: and who knows but that she pities me for being no wiser than to play with her, and laughs and censures my folly, for making sport for her, when we two play together?"

Thus freely speaks Montaigne concerning Cats; and I hope I may take as great a liberty to blame any man, and laugh at him too, let him be never so grave, that hath not heard what Anglers can say in the justification of their Art and Recreation; which I

may again tell you, is so full of pleasure, that we need not borrow their thoughts, to think ourselves happy.

Venator. Sir, you have almost amazed me; for though I am no Scoffer, yet

I have, I pray let me speak it without offence, always looked upon

Anglers, as more patient, and more simple men, than I fear I shall find

you to be.

Piscator. Sir, I hope you will not judge my earnestness to be impatience: and for my simplicity, if by that you mean a harmlessness, or that simplicity which was usually found in the primitive Christians, who were, as most Anglers are, quiet men, and followers of peace; men that were so simply wise, as not to sell their consciences to buy riches, and with them vexation and a fear to die; if you mean such simple men as lived in those times when there were fewer lawyers; when men might have had a lordship safely conveyed to them in a piece of parchment no bigger than your hand, though several sheets will not do it safely in this wiser age; I say, Sir, if you take us Anglers to be such simple men as I have spoke of, then myself and those of my profession will be glad to be so understood: But if by simplicity you meant to express a general defect in those that profess and practice the excellent Art of Angling, I hope in time to disabuse you, and make the contrary appear so evidently, that if you will but have patience to hear me, I shall remove all the anticipations

that discourse, or time, or prejudice, have possessed you with against that laudable and ancient Art; for I know it is worthy the knowledge and practice of a wise man.

But, Gentlemen, though I be able to do this, I am not so unmannerly as to engross all the discourse to myself; and, therefore, you two having declared yourselves, the one to be a lover of Hawks, the other of Hounds, I shall be most glad to hear what you can say in the commendation of that recreation which each of you love and practice; and having heard what you can say, I shall be glad to exercise your attention with what I can say concerning my own recreation and Art of Angling, and by this means we shall make the way to seem the shorter: and if you like my motion, I would have Mr. Falconer to begin.

Auceps. Your motion is consented to with all my heart; and to testify it, I will begin as you have desired me.

And first, for the Element that I use to trade in, which is the Air, an element of more worth than weight, an element that doubtless exceeds both the Earth and Water; for though I sometimes deal in both, yet the air is most properly mine, I and my Hawks use that most, and it yields us most recreation. It stops not the high soaring of my noble, generous Falcon; in it she ascends to such a height as the dull eyes of beasts and fish are not able to reach to; their bodies are too gross for such high elevations; in the Air my troops of Hawks soar up on high, and when they are lost in the sight of men, then they attend upon and converse with the Gods; therefore I think my Eagle is so justly

styled Jove's servant in ordinary: and that very Falcon, that I am now going to see, deserves no meaner a title, for she usually in her flight endangers herself, like the son of Daedalus, to have her wings scorched by the sun's heat, she flies so near it, but her mettle makes her careless of danger; for she then heeds nothing, but makes her nimble pinions cut the fluid air, and so makes her highway over the steepest mountains and deepest rivers, and in her glorious career looks with contempt upon those high steeples and magnificent palaces which we adore and wonder at; from which height, I can make her to descend by a word from my mouth, which she both knows and obeys, to accept of meat from my hand, to own me for her Master, to go home with me, and be willing the next day to afford me the like recreation.

And more; this element of air which I profess to trade in, the worth of it is such, and it is of such necessity, that no creature whatsoever—not only those numerous creatures that feed on the face of the earth, but those various creatures that have their dwelling within the waters, every creature that hath life in its nostrils, stands in need of my element. The waters cannot preserve the Fish without air, witness the not breaking of ice in an extreme frost; the reason is, for that if the inspiring and expiring organ of any animal be stopped, it suddenly yields to nature, and dies. Thus necessary is air, to the existence both of Fish and Beasts, nay, even to Man himself; that air, or breath of life, with which God at first inspired mankind, he, if he wants it, dies presently, becomes a sad object to all that loved and beheld

him, and in an instant turns to putrefaction.

Nay more; the very birds of the air, those that be not Hawks, are both so many and so useful and pleasant to mankind, that I must not let them pass without some observations. They both feed and refresh him; feed him with their choice bodies, and refresh him with their heavenly voices. I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of Fowl by which this is done: and his curious palate pleased by day, and which with their very excrements afford him a soft lodging at night. These I will pass by, but not those little nimble musicians of the air, that warble forth their curious ditties, with which nature hath furnished them to the shame of art.

As first the Lark, when she means to rejoice, to cheer herself and those that hear her; she then quits the earth, and sings as she ascends higher into the air and having ended her heavenly employment, grows then mute, and sad, to think she must descend to the dull earth, which she would not touch, but for necessity.

How do the Blackbird and Thrassel with their melodious voices bid welcome to the cheerful Spring, and in their fixed months warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to!

Nay, the smaller birds also do the like in their particular seasons, as namely the Laverock, the Tit-lark, the little Linnet, and the honest Robin that loves mankind both alive and dead.

But the Nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes

such sweet loud musick out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what musick hast thou provided for the Saints in Heaven, when thou affordest bad men such musick on Earth!"

And this makes me the less to wonder at the many Aviaries in Italy, or at the great charge of Varro's Aviary, the ruins of which are yet to be seen in Rome, and is still so famous there, that it is reckoned for one of those notables which men of foreign nations either record, or lay up in their memories when they return from travel.

This for the birds of pleasure, of which very much more might be said. My next shall be of birds of political use. I think it is not to be doubted that Swallows have been taught to carry letters between two armies; but 'tis certain that when the Turks besieged Malta or Rhodes, I now remember not which it was, Pigeons are then related to carry and recarry letters: and Mr. G. Sandys, in his Travels, relates it to be done betwixt Aleppo and Babylon, But if that be disbelieved, it is not to be doubted that the Dove was sent out of the ark by Noah, to give him notice of land, when to him all appeared to be sea; and the Dove proved a faithful and comfortable messenger. And for the sacrifices of the law, a pair of Turtle-doves, or young Pigeons, were as well accepted as

costly Bulls and Rams; and when God would feed the Prophet Elijah, after a kind of miraculous manner, he did it by Ravens, who brought him meat morning and evening. Lastly, the Holy Ghost, when he descended visibly upon our Saviour, did it by assuming the shape of a Dove. And, to conclude this part of my discourse, pray remember these wonders were done by birds of air, the element in which they, and I, take so much pleasure.

There is also a little contemptible winged creature, an inhabitant of my aerial element, namely the laborious Bee, of whose prudence, policy, and regular government of their own commonwealth, I might say much, as also of their several kinds, and how useful their honey and wax are both for meat and medicines to mankind; but I will leave them to their sweet labour, without the least disturbance, believing them to be all very busy at this very time amongst the herbs and flowers that we see nature puts forth this May morning.

And now to return to my Hawks, from whom I have made too long a digression. You are to note, that they are usually distinguished into two kinds; namely, the long-winged, and the short-winged Hawk: of the first kind, there be chiefly in use amongst us in this nation,

The Gerfalcon and Jerkin,
The Falcon and Tassel-gentle,
The Laner and Laneret,
The Bockerel and Bockeret,
The Saker and Sacaret,

The Merlin and Jack Merlin,
The Hobby and Jack:
There is the Stelletto of Spain,
The Blood-red Rook from Turkey,
The Waskite from Virginia:
And there is of short-winged Hawks,
The Eagle and Iron
The Goshawk and Tarcel,
The Sparhawk and Musket,
The French Pye of two sorts:

These are reckoned Hawks of note and worth; but we have
also of an inferior rank,

The Stanyel, the Ringtail,
The Raven, the Buzzard,
The Forked Kite, the Bald Buzzard,
The Hen-driver, and others that I forbear to name.

Gentlemen, if I should enlarge my discourse to the observation
of the Eires, the Brancher, the Ramish Hawk, the Haggard, and
the two sorts of Lentners, and then treat of their several Ayries,
their Mewings, rare order of casting, and the renovation of their
feathers: their reclaiming, dieting, and then come to their rare
stories of practice; I say, if I should enter into these, and many
other observations that I could make, it would be much, very
much pleasure to me: but lest I should break the rules of civility
with you, by taking up more than the proportion of time allotted
to me, I will here break off, and entreat you, Mr. Venator, to
say what you are able in the commendation of Hunting, to which

you are so much affected; and if time will serve, I will beg your favour for a further enlargement of some of those several heads of which I have spoken. But no more at present.

Venator. Well, Sir, and I will now take my turn, and will first begin with a commendation of the Earth, as you have done most excellently of the Air; the Earth being that element upon which I drive my pleasant, wholesome, hungry trade. The Earth is a solid, settled element; an element most universally beneficial both to man and beast; to men who have their several recreations upon it, as horse-races, hunting, sweet smells, pleasant walks: the earth feeds man, and all those several beasts that both feed him, and afford him recreation. What pleasure doth man take in hunting the stately Stag, the generous Buck, the wild Boar, the cunning Otter, the crafty Fox, and the fearful Hare! And if I may descend to a lower game, what pleasure is it sometimes with gins to betray the very vermin of the earth; as namely, the Fichat, the Fulimart, the Ferret, the Pole-cat, the Mouldwarp, and the like creatures that live upon the face, and within the bowels of, the Earth. How doth the Earth bring forth herbs, flowers, and fruits, both for physick and the pleasure of mankind! and above all, to me at least, the fruitful vine, of which when I drink moderately, it clears my brain, cheers my heart, and sharpens my wit. How could Cleopatra have feasted Mark Antony with eight wild Boars roasted whole at one supper, and other meat suitable, if the earth had not been a bountiful mother? But to pass by the mighty Elephant, which the Earth breeds and nourisheth, and descend

to the least of creatures, how doth the earth afford us a doctrinal example in the little Pismire, who in the summer provides and lays up her winter provision, and teaches man to do the like! The earth feeds and carries those horses that carry us. If I would be prodigal of my time and your patience, what might not I say in commendations of the earth? That puts limits to the proud and raging sea, and by that means preserves both man and beast, that it destroys them not, as we see it daily doth those that venture upon the sea, and are there shipwrecked, drowned, and left to feed Haddocks; when we that are so wise as to keep ourselves on earth, walk, and talk, and live, and eat, and drink, and go a hunting: of which recreation I will say a little, and then leave Mr. Piscator to the commendation of Angling.

Hunting is a game for princes and noble persons; it hath been highly prized in all ages; it was one of the qualifications that Xenophon bestowed on his Cyrus, that he was a hunter of wild beasts. Hunting trains up the younger nobility to the use of manly exercises in their riper age. What more manly exercise than hunting the Wild Boar, the Stag, the Buck, the Fox, or the Hare? How doth it preserve health, and increase strength and activity!

And for the dogs that we use, who can commend their excellency to that height which they deserve? How perfect is the hound at smelling, who never leaves or forsakes his first scent, but follows it through so many changes and varieties of other scents, even over, and in, the water, and into the earth! What music doth a pack of dogs then make to any man, whose heart and ears are

so happy as to be set to the tune of such instruments! How will a right Greyhound fix his eye on the best Buck in a herd, single him out, and follow him, and him only, through a whole herd of rascal game, and still know and then kill him! For my hounds, I know the language of them, and they know the language and meaning of one another, as perfectly as we know the voices of those with whom we discourse daily.

I might enlarge myself in the commendation of Hunting, and of the noble Hound especially, as also of the docibleness of dogs in general; and I might make many observations of land-creatures, that for composition, order, figure, and constitution, approach nearest to the completeness and understanding of man; especially of those creatures, which Moses in the Law permitted to the Jews, which have cloven hoofs, and chew the cud; which I shall forbear to name, because I will not be so uncivil to Mr. Piscator, as not to allow him a time for the commendation of Angling, which he calls an art; but doubtless it is an easy one: and, Mr. Auceps, I doubt we shall hear a watery discourse of it, but I hope it will not be a long one.

Auceps. And I hope so too, though I fear it will.

Piscator. Gentlemen, let not prejudice prepossess you. I confess my discourse is like to prove suitable to my recreation, calm and quiet; we seldom take the name of God into our mouths, but it is either to praise him, or pray to him: if others use it vainly in the midst of their recreations, so vainly as if they meant to conjure, I must tell you, it is neither our fault nor our custom; we

protest against it. But, pray remember, I accuse nobody; for as I would not make a "watery discourse," so I would not put too much vinegar into it; nor would I raise the reputation of my own art, by the diminution or ruin of another's. And so much for the prologue to what I mean to say.

And now for the Water, the element that I trade in. The water is the eldest daughter of the creation, the element upon which the Spirit of God did first move, the element which God commanded to bring forth living creatures abundantly; and without which, those that inhabit the land, even all creatures that have breath in their nostrils, must suddenly return to putrefaction. Moses, the great lawgiver and chief philosopher, skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians, who was called the friend of God, and knew the mind of the Almighty, names this element the first in the creation: this is the element upon which the Spirit of God did first move, and is the chief ingredient in the creation: many philosophers have made it to comprehend all the other elements, and most allow it the chiefest in the mixtion of all living creatures.

There be that profess to believe that all bodies are made of water, and may be reduced back again to water only; they endeavour to demonstrate it thus:

Take a willow, or any like speedy growing plant newly rooted in a box or barrel full of earth, weigh them all together exactly when the tree begins to grow, and then weigh all together after the tree is increased from its first rooting, to weigh a hundred pound weight more than when it was first rooted and weighed; and you

shall find this augment of the tree to be without the diminution of one drachm weight of the earth. Hence they infer this increase of wood to be from water of rain, or from dew, and not to be from any other element; and they affirm, they can reduce this wood back again to water; and they affirm also, the same may be done in any animal or vegetable. And this I take to be a fair testimony of the excellency of my element of water.

The water is more productive than the earth. Nay, the earth hath no fruitfulness without showers or dews; for all the herbs, and flowers, and fruit, are produced and thrive by the water; and the very minerals are fed by streams that run under ground, whose natural course carries them to the tops of many high mountains, as we see by several springs breaking forth on the tops of the highest hills; and this is also witnessed by the daily trial and testimony of several miners.

Nay, the increase of those creatures that are bred and fed in the water are not only more and more miraculous, but more advantageous to man, not only for the lengthening of his life, but for the preventing of sickness; for it is observed by the most learned physicians, that the casting off of Lent, and other fish days, which hath not only given the lie to so many learned, pious, wise founders of colleges, for which we should be ashamed, hath doubtless been the chief cause of those many putrid, shaking intermitting agues, unto which this nation of ours is now more subject, than those wiser countries that feed on herbs, salads, and plenty of fish; of which it is observed in story, that the

greatest part of the world now do. And it may be fit to remember that Moses appointed fish to be the chief diet for the best commonwealth that ever yet was.

And it is observable, not only that there are fish, as namely the Whale, three times as big as the mighty Elephant, that is so fierce in battle, but that the mightiest feasts have been of fish. The Romans, in the height of their glory, have made fish the mistress of all their entertainments; they have had musick to usher in their Sturgeons, Lampreys, and Mulletts, which they would purchase at rates rather to be wondered at than believed. He that shall view the writings of Macrobius, or Varro, may be confirmed and informed of this, and of the incredible value of their fish and fish-ponds.

But, Gentlemen, I have almost lost myself, which I confess I may easily do in this philosophical discourse; I met with most of it very lately, and, I hope, happily, in a conference with a most learned physician, Dr. Wharton, a dear friend, that loves both me and my art of Angling. But, however, I will wade no deeper into these mysterious arguments, but pass to such observations as I can manage with more pleasure, and less fear of running into error. But I must not yet forsake the waters, by whose help we have so many known advantages.

And first, to pass by the miraculous cures of our known baths, how advantageous is the sea for our daily traffick, without which we could not now subsist. How does it not only furnish us with food and physick for the bodies, but with such observations for

the mind as ingenious persons would not want!

How ignorant had we been of the beauty of Florence, of the monuments, urns, and rarities that yet remain in and near unto old and new Rome, so many as it is said will take up a year's time to view, and afford to each of them but a convenient consideration! And therefore it is not to be wondered at, that so learned and devout a father as St. Jerome, after his wish to have seen Christ in the flesh, and to have heard St. Paul preach, makes his third wish, to have seen Rome in her glory; and that glory is not yet all lost, for what pleasure is it to see the monuments of Livy, the choicest of the historians; of Tully, the best of orators; and to see the bay trees that now grow out of the very tomb of Virgil! These, to any that love learning, must be pleasing. But what pleasure is it to a devout Christian, to see there the humble house in which St. Paul was content to dwell, and to view the many rich statues that are made in honour of his memory! nay, to see the very place in which St. Peter and he lie buried together! These are in and near to Rome. And how much more doth it please the pious curiosity of a Christian, to see that place, on which the blessed Saviour of the world was pleased to humble himself, and to take our nature upon him, and to converse with men: to see Mount Sion, Jerusalem, and the very sepulchre of our Lord Jesus! How may it beget and heighten the zeal of a Christian, to see the devotions that are daily paid to him at that place! Gentlemen, lest I forget myself, I will stop here, and remember you, that but for my element of water, the inhabitants

of this poor island must remain ignorant that such things ever were, or that any of them have yet a being.

Gentlemen, I might both enlarge and lose myself in such like arguments. I might tell you that Almighty God is said to have spoken to a fish, but never to a beast; that he hath made a whale a ship, to carry and set his prophet, Jonah, safe on the appointed shore. Of these I might speak, but I must in manners break off, for I see Theobald's House. I cry you mercy for being so long, and thank you for your patience.

Auceps. Sir, my pardon is easily granted you: I except against nothing that you have said: nevertheless, I must part with you at this park-wall, for which I am very sorry; but I assure you, Mr. Piscator, I now part with you full of good thoughts, not only of yourself, but your recreation. And so, Gentlemen, God keep you both.

Piscator. Well, now, Mr. Venator, you shall neither want time, nor my attention to hear you enlarge your discourse concerning hunting.

Venator. Not I, Sir: I remember you said that Angling itself was of great antiquity, and a perfect art, and an art not easily attained to; and you have so won upon me in your former discourse, that I am very desirous to hear what you can say further concerning those particulars.

Piscator. Sir, I did say so: and I doubt not but if you and I did converse together but a few hours, to leave you possessed with the same high and happy thoughts that now possess me

of it; not only of the antiquity of Angling, but that it deserves commendations; and that it is an art, and an art worthy the knowledge and practice of a wise man.

Venator. Pray, Sir, speak of them what you think fit, for we have yet five miles to the Thatched House; during which walk, I dare promise you, my patience and diligent attention shall not be wanting. And if you shall make that to appear which you have undertaken, first, that it is an art, and an art worth the learning, I shall beg that I may attend you a day or two a-fishing, and that I may become your scholar, and be instructed in the art itself which you so much magnify.

Piscator. O, Sir, doubt not but that Angling is an art; is it not an art to deceive a Trout with an artificial Fly? a Trout! that is more sharp-sighted than any Hawk you have named, and more watchful and timorous than your high-mettled Merlin is bold? and yet, I doubt not to catch a brace or two to-morrow, for a friend's breakfast: doubt not therefore, Sir, but that angling is an art, and an art worth your learning. The question is rather, whether you be capable of learning it? angling is somewhat like poetry, men are to be born so: I mean, with inclinations to it, though both may be heightened by discourse and practice: but he that hopes to be a good angler, must not only bring an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself; but having once got and practiced it, then doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant, that it will prove to be, like virtue,

a reward to itself.

Venator. Sir, I am now become so full of expectation, that I long much to have you proceed, and in the order that you propose.

Piscator. Then first, for the antiquity of Angling, of which I shall not say much, but only this; some say it is as ancient as Deucalion's flood: others, that Belus, who was the first inventor of godly and virtuous recreations, was the first inventor of Angling: and some others say, for former times have had their disquisitions about the antiquity of it, that Seth, one of the sons of Adam, taught it to his sons, and that by them it was derived to posterity: others say that he left it engraven on those pillars which he erected, and trusted to preserve the knowledge of the mathematicks, musick, and the rest of that precious knowledge, and those useful arts, which by God's appointment or allowance, and his noble industry, were thereby preserved from perishing in Noah's flood.

These, Sir, have been the opinions of several men, that have possibly endeavoured to make angling more ancient than is needful, or may well be warranted; but for my part, I shall content myself in telling you, that angling is much more ancient than the incarnation of our Saviour; for in the Prophet Amos mention is made of fish-hooks; and in the book of Job, which was long before the days of Amos, for that book is said to have been written by Moses, mention is made also of fish-hooks, which must imply anglers in those times.

But, my worthy friend, as I would rather prove myself a gentleman, by being learned and humble, valiant and inoffensive, virtuous and communicable, than by any fond ostentation of riches, or, wanting those virtues myself, boast that these were in my ancestors; and yet I grant, that where a noble and ancient descent and such merit meet in any man, it is a double dignification of that person; so if this antiquity of angling, which for my part I have not forced, shall, like an ancient family, be either an honour, or an ornament to this virtuous art which I profess to love and practice, I shall be the gladder that I made an accidental mention of the antiquity of it, of which I shall say no more, but proceed to that just commendation which I think it deserves.

And for that, I shall tell you, that in ancient times a debate hath risen, and it remains yet unresolved, whether the happiness of man in this world doth consist more in contemplation or action? Concerning which, some have endeavoured to maintain their opinion of the first; by saying, that the nearer we mortals come to God by way of imitation, the more happy we are. And they say, that God enjoys himself only, by a contemplation of his own infiniteness, eternity, power, and goodness, and the like. And upon this ground, many cloisteral men of great learning and devotion, prefer contemplation before action. And many of the fathers seem to approve this opinion, as may appear in their commentaries upon the words of our Saviour to Martha.

And on the contrary, there want not men of equal authority

and credit, that prefer action to be the more excellent; as namely, experiments in physick, and the application of it, both for the ease and prolongation of man's life; by which each man is enabled to act and do good to others, either to serve his country, or do good to particular persons: and they say also, that action is doctrinal, and teaches both art and virtue, and is a maintainer of human society; and for these, and other like reasons, to be preferred before contemplation.

Concerning which two opinions I shall forbear to add a third, by declaring my own; and rest myself contented in telling you, my very worthy friend, that both these meet together, and do most properly belong to the most honest, ingenuous, quiet, and harmless art of angling.

And first, I shall tell you what some have observed, and I have found it to be a real truth, that the very sitting by the river's side is not only the quietest and fittest place for contemplation, but will invite an angler to it: and this seems to be maintained by the learned Peter du Moulin, who, in his discourse of the fulfilling of Prophecies, observes, that when God intended to reveal any future events or high notions to his prophets, he then carried them either to the deserts, or the sea-shore, that having so separated them from amidst the press of people and business, and the cares of the world, he might settle their mind in a quiet repose, and there make them fit for revelation.

And this seems also to be imitated by the children of Israel, who having in a sad condition banished all mirth and musick

from their pensive hearts, and having hung up their then mute harps upon the willow-trees growing by the rivers of Babylon, sat down upon those banks, bemoaning the ruins of Sion, and contemplating their own sad condition.

And an ingenious Spaniard says, that "rivers and the inhabitants of the watery element were made for wise men to contemplate, and fools to pass by without consideration ". And though I will not rank myself in the number of the first, yet give me leave to free myself from the last, by offering to you a short contemplation, first of rivers, and then of fish; concerning which I doubt not but to give you many observations that will appear very considerable: I am sure they have appeared so to me, and made many an hour pass away more pleasantly, as I have sat quietly on a flowery bank by a calm river, and contemplated what I shall now relate to you.

And first concerning rivers; there be so many wonders reported and written of them, and of the several creatures that be bred and live in them, and those by authors of so good credit, that we need not to deny them an historical faith.

As namely of a river in Epirus that puts out any lighted torch, and kindles any torch that was not lighted. Some waters being drunk, cause madness, some drunkenness, and some laughter to death. The river Selarus in a few hours turns a rod or wand to stone: and our Camden mentions the like in England, and the like in Lochmere in Ireland. There is also a river in Arabia, of which all the sheep that drink thereof have their wool turned into

a vermilion colour. And one of no less credit than Aristotle, tells us of a merry river, the river Elusina, that dances at the noise of musick, for with musick it bubbles, dances, and grows sandy, and so continues till the musick ceases, but then it presently returns to its wonted calmness and clearness. And Camden tells us of a well near to Kirby, in Westmoreland, that ebbs and flows several times every day: and he tells us of a river in Surrey, it is called Mole, that after it has run several miles, being opposed by hills, finds or makes itself a way under ground, and breaks out again so far off, that the inhabitants thereabout boast, as the Spaniards do of their river Anus, that they feed divers flocks of sheep upon a bridge. And lastly, for I would not tire your patience, one of no less authority than Josephus, that learned Jew, tells us of a river in Judea that runs swiftly all the six days of the week, and stands still and rests all their sabbath.

But I will lay aside my discourse of rivers, and tell you some things of the monsters, or fish, call them what you will, that they breed and feed in them. Pliny the philosopher says, in the third chapter of his ninth book, that in the Indian Sea, the fish called Balaena or Whirlpool, is so long and broad, as to take up more in length and breadth than two acres of ground; and, of other fish, of two hundred cubits long; and that in the river Ganges, there be Eels of thirty feet long. He says there, that these monsters appear in that sea, only when the tempestuous winds oppose the torrents of water falling from the rocks into it, and so turning what lay at the bottom to be seen on the water's top. And he

says, that the people of Cadara, an island near this place, make the timber for their houses of those fish bones. He there tells us, that there are sometimes a thousand of these great Eels found wrapt or interwoven together He tells us there, that it appears that dolphins love musick, and will come when called for, by some men or boys that know, and use to feed them; and that they can swim as swift as an arrow can be shot out of a bow; and much of this is spoken concerning the dolphin, and other fish, as may be found also in the learned Dr. Casaubon's Discourse of Credulity and Incredulity, printed by him about the year 1670.

I know, we Islanders are averse to the belief of these wonders; but there be so many strange creatures to be now seen, many collected by John Tradescant, and others added by my friend Elias Ashmole, Esq., who now keeps them carefully and methodically at his house near to Lambeth, near London, as may get some belief of some of the other wonders I mentioned. I will tell you some of the wonders that you may now see, and not till then believe, unless you think fit.

You may there see the Hog-fish, the Dog-fish, the Dolphin, the Cony-fish, the Parrot-fish, the Shark, the Poison-fish, Sword-fish, and not only other incredible fish, but you may there see the Salamander, several sorts of Barnacles, of Solan-Geese, the Bird of Paradise, such sorts of Snakes, and such Birds'-nests, and of so various forms, and so wonderfully made, as may beget wonder and amusement in any beholder; and so many hundred of other rarities in that collection, as will make the other wonders

I spake of, the less incredible; for, you may note, that the waters are Nature's store-house, in which she locks up her wonders.

But, Sir, lest this discourse may seem tedious, I shall give it a sweet conclusion out of that holy poet, Mr. George Herbert his divine "Contemplation on God's Providence".

Lord! who hath praise enough, nay, who hath any?
None can express thy works, but he that knows them;
And none can know thy works, they are so many,
And so complete, but only he that owes them.

We all acknowledge both thy power and love
To be exact, transcendant, and divine;
Who cost so strangely and so sweetly move,
Whilst all things have their end, yet none but thine.

Wherefore, most sacred Spirit! I here present,
For me, and all my fellows, praise to thee;
And just it is, that I should pay the rent,
Because the benefit accrues to me.

And as concerning fish, in that psalm, wherein, for height of poetry and wonders, the prophet David seems even to exceed himself, how doth he there express himself in choice metaphors, even to the amazement of a contemplative reader, concerning the sea, the rivers, and the fish therein contained! And the great naturalist Pliny says, "That nature's great and wonderful power is more demonstrated in the sea than on the land ". And this may

appear, by the numerous and various creatures inhabiting both in and about that element; as to the readers of Gesner, Rondeletius, Pliny, Ausonius, Aristotle, and others, may be demonstrated. But I will sweeten this discourse also out of a contemplation in divine Du Bartas, who says:

God quickened in the sea, and in the rivers,
So many fishes of so many features,
That in the waters we may see all creatures,
Even all that on the earth are to be found,
As if the world were in deep waters drown'd.
For seas—as well as skies—have Sun, Moon, Stars
As well as air—Swallows, Rooks, and Stares;
As well as earth—Vines, Roses, Nettles, Melons,
Mushrooms, Pinks, Gilliflowers, and many millions
Of other plants, more rare, more strange than these,
As very fishes, living in the seas;
As also Rams, Calves, Horses, Hares, and Hogs,
Wolves, Urchins, Lions, Elephants, and Dogs;
Yea, Men and Maids, and, which I most admire,
The mitred Bishop and the cowl'd Friar:
Of which, examples, but a few years since,
Were strewn the Norway and Polonian prince.

These seem to be wonders; but have had so many confirmations from men of learning and credit, that you need not doubt them. Nor are the number, nor the various shapes, of fishes more strange, or more fit for contemplation, than their different

natures, inclinations, and actions; concerning which, I shall beg your patient ear a little longer.

The Cuttle-fish will cast a long gut out of her throat, which, like as an Angler doth his line, she sendeth forth, and pulleth in again at her pleasure, according as she sees some little fish come near to her; and the Cuttle-fish, being then hid in the gravel, lets the smaller fish nibble and bite the end of it; at which time she, by little and little, draws the smaller fish so near to her, that she may leap upon her, and then catches and devours her: and for this reason some have called this fish the Sea-angler.

And there is a fish called a Hermit, that at a certain age gets into a dead fish's shell, and, like a hermit, dwells there alone, studying the wind and weather and so turns her shell, that she makes it defend her from the injuries that they would bring upon her.

There is also a fish called by Ælian the Adonis, or Darling of the Sea; so called, because it is a loving and innocent fish, a fish that hurts nothing that hath life, and is at peace with all the numerous inhabitants of that vast watery element; and truly, I think most Anglers are so disposed to most of mankind.

And there are, also, lustful and chaste fishes; of which I shall give you examples.

And first, what Du Bartas says of a fish called the Sargus; which, because none can express it better than he does, I shall give you in his own words, supposing it shall not have the less credit for being verse; for he hath gathered this and other

observations out of authors that have been great and industrious searchers into the secrets of nature.

The adult'rous Sargus doth not only change
Wives every day, in the deep streams, but, strange!
As if the honey of sea-love delight
Could not suffice his ranging appetite,
Goes courting she-goats on the grassy shore,
Horning their husbands that had horns before.

And the same author writes concerning the Cantharus, that which you shall also hear in his own words:

But, contrary, the constant Cantharus
Is ever constant to his faithful spouse
In nuptial duties, spending his chaste life.
Never loves any but his own dear wife.

Sir, but a little longer, and I have done.

Venator. Sir, take what liberty you think fit, for your discourse seems to be musick, and charms me to an attention.

Piscator. Why then, Sir, I will take a little liberty to tell, or rather to remember you what is said of Turtle-doves; first, that they silently plight their troth, and marry; and that then the survivor scorns, as the Thracian women are said to do, to outlive his or her mate, and this is taken for a truth; and if the survivor shall ever couple with another, then, not only the living, but the

dead, be it either the he or the she, is denied the name and honour of a true Turtle-dove.

And to parallel this land-rarity, and teach mankind moral faithfulness, and to condemn those that talk of religion, and yet come short of the moral faith of fish and fowl, men that violate the law affirmed by St. Paul to be writ in their hearts, and which, he says, shall at the Last Day condemn and leave them without excuse—I pray hearken to what Du Bartas sings, for the hearing of such conjugal faithfulness will be musick to all chaste ears, and therefore I pray hearken to what Du Bartas sings of the Mullet.

But for chaste love the Mullet hath no peer;
For, if the fisher hath surpris'd her pheer
As mad with wo, to shore she followeth
Prest to consort him, both in life and death.

On the contrary, what shall I say of the House-Cock, which treads any hen; and, then, contrary to the Swan, the Partridge, and Pigeon, takes no care to hatch, to feed, or cherish his own brood, but is senseless, though they perish. And it is considerable, that the Hen, which, because she also takes any Cock, expects it not, who is sure the chickens be her own, hath by a moral impression her care and affection to her own brood more than doubled, even to such a height, that our Saviour, in expressing his love to Jerusalem, quotes her, for an example of tender affection, as his Father had done Job, for a pattern of patience.

And to parallel this Cock, there be divers fishes that cast

their spawn on flags or stones, and then leave it uncovered, and exposed to become a prey and be devoured by vermin or other fishes. But other fishes, as namely the Barbel, take such care for the preservation of their seed, that, unlike to the Cock, or the Cuckoo, they mutually labour, both the spawner and the melter, to cover their spawn with sand, or watch it, or hide it in some secret place unfrequented by vermin or by any fish but themselves.

Sir, these examples may, to you and others, seem strange; but they are testified, some by Aristotle, some by Pliny, some by Gesner, and by many others of credit; and are believed and known by divers, both of wisdom and experience, to be a truth; and indeed are, as I said at the beginning, fit for the contemplation of a most serious and a most pious man. And, doubtless, this made the prophet David say, "They that occupy themselves in deep waters, see the wonderful works of God": indeed such wonders and pleasures too, as the land affords not.

And that they be fit for the contemplation of the most prudent, and pious, and peaceable men, seems to be testified by the practice of so many devout and contemplative men, as the Patriarchs and Prophets of old; and of the Apostles of our Saviour in our latter times, of which twelve, we are sure, he chose four that were simple fishermen, whom he inspired, and sent to publish his blessed will to the Gentiles; and inspired them also with a power to speak all languages, and by their powerful eloquence to beget faith in the unbelieving Jews; and themselves

to suffer for that Saviour, whom their forefathers and they had crucified; and, in their sufferings, to preach freedom from the incumbrances of the law, and a new way to everlasting life: this was the employment of these happy fishermen. Concerning which choice, some have made these observations:

First, that he never reprov'd these, for their employment or calling, as he did the Scribes and the Money-changers. And secondly, he found that the hearts of such men, by nature, were fitted for contemplation and quietness; men of mild, and sweet, and peaceable spirits, as indeed most Anglers are: these men our blessed Saviour, who is observed to love to plant grace in good natures, though indeed nothing be too hard for him, yet these men he chose to call from their irreprovable employment of fishing, and gave them grace to be his disciples, and to follow him, and do wonders; I say four of twelve.

And it is observable, that it was our Saviour's will that these, our four fishermen, should have a priority of nomination in the catalogue of his twelve Apostles, as namely, first St. Peter, St. Andrew, St. James, and St. John; and, then, the rest in their order.

And it is yet more observable, that when our blessed Saviour went up into the mount, when he left the rest of his disciples, and chose only three to bear him company at his Transfiguration, that those three were all fishermen. And it is to be believed, that all the other Apostles, after they betook themselves to follow Christ, betook themselves to be fishermen too; for it is certain, that the greater number of them were found together, fishing, by Jesus

after his resurrection, as it is recorded in the twenty-first chapter of St. John's gospel.

And since I have your promise to hear me with patience, I will take a liberty to look back upon an observation that hath been made by an ingenious and learned man; who observes, that God hath been pleased to allow those whom he himself hath appointed to write his holy will in holy writ, yet to express his will in such metaphors as their former affections or practice had inclined them to. And he brings Solomon for an example, who, before his conversion, was remarkably carnally amorous; and after, by God's appointment, wrote that spiritual dialogue, or holy amorous love-song the Canticles, betwixt God and his church: in which he says, "his beloved had eyes like the fish-pools of Heshbon".

And if this hold in reason, as I see none to the contrary, then it may be probably concluded, that Moses, who I told you before writ the book of Job, and the Prophet Amos, who was a shepherd, were both Anglers; for you shall, in all the Old Testament, find fish-hooks, I think but twice mentioned, namely, by meek Moses the friend of God, and by the humble prophet Amos.

Concerning which last, namely the prophet Amos, I shall make but this observation, that he that shall read the humble, lowly, plain style of that prophet, and compare it with the high, glorious, eloquent style of the prophet Isaiah, though they be both equally true, may easily believe Amos to be, not only a shepherd, but a good-natured plain fisherman. Which I do

the rather believe, by comparing the affectionate, loving, lowly, humble Epistles of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, whom we know were all fishers, with the glorious language and high metaphors of St. Paul, who we may believe was not.

And for the lawfulness of fishing: it may very well be maintained by our Saviour's bidding St. Peter cast his hook into the water and catch a fish, for money to pay tribute to Caesar. And let me tell you, that Angling is of high esteem, and of much use in other nations. He that reads the Voyages of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, shall find that there he declares to have found a king and several priests a-fishing. And he that reads Plutarch, shall find, that Angling was not contemptible in the days of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and that they, in the midst of their wonderful glory, used Angling as a principal recreation. And let me tell you, that in the Scripture, Angling is always taken in the best sense; and that though hunting may be sometimes so taken, yet it is but seldom to be so understood. And let me add this more: he that views the ancient Ecclesiastical Canons, shall find hunting to be forbidden to Churchmen, as being a turbulent, toilsome, perplexing recreation; and shall find Angling allowed to clergymen, as being a harmless recreation, a recreation that invites them to contemplation and quietness.

I might here enlarge myself, by telling you what commendations our learned Perkins bestows on Angling: and how dear a lover, and great a practiser of it, our learned Dr. Whitaker was; as indeed many others of great learning have been.

But I will content myself with two memorable men, that lived near to our own time, whom I also take to have been ornaments to the art of Angling.

The first is Dr. Nowel, sometime dean of the cathedral church of St. Paul, in London, where his monument stands yet undefaced; a man that, in the reformation of Queen Elizabeth, not that of Henry VIII., was so noted for his meek spirit, deep learning, prudence, and piety, that the then Parliament and Convocation, both, chose, enjoined, and trusted him to be the man to make a Catechism for public use, such a one as should stand as a rule for faith and manners to their posterity. And the good old man, though he was very learned, yet knowing that God leads us not to heaven by many, nor by hard questions, like an honest Angler, made that good, plain, unperplexed Catechism which is printed with our good old Service-book. I say, this good man was a dear lover and constant practiser of Angling, as any age can produce: and his custom was to spend besides his fixed hours of prayer, those hours which, by command of the church, were enjoined the clergy, and voluntarily dedicated to devotion by many primitive Christians, I say, besides those hours, this good man was observed to spend a tenth part of his time in Angling; and, also, for I have conversed with those which have conversed with him, to bestow a tenth part of his revenue, and usually all his fish, amongst the poor that inhabited near to those rivers in which it was caught; saying often, "that charity gave life to religion ": and, at his return to his house, would praise God

he had spent that day free from worldly trouble; both harmlessly, and in a recreation that became a churchman. And this good man was well content, if not desirous, that posterity should know he was an Angler; as may appear by his picture, now to be seen, and carefully kept, in Brazen-nose College, to which he was a liberal benefactor. In which picture he is drawn leaning on a desk, with his Bible before him; and on one hand of him, his lines, hooks, and other tackling, lying in a round; and, on his other hand, are his Angle-rods of several sorts; and by them this is written, "that he died 13 Feb. 1601, being aged ninety-five years, forty-four of which he had been Dean of St. Paul's church, and that his age neither impaired his hearing, nor dimmed his eyes, nor weakened his memory, nor made any of the faculties of his mind weak or useless". It is said that Angling and temperance were great causes of these blessings; and I wish the like to all that imitate him, and love the memory of so good a man.

My next and last example shall be that under-valuer of money, the late provost of Eton College, Sir Henry Wotton, a man with whom I have often fished and conversed, a man whose foreign employments in the service of this nation, and whose experience, learning, wit, and cheerfulness, made his company to be esteemed one of the delights of mankind. This man, whose very approbation of Angling were sufficient to convince any modest censurer of it, this man was also a most dear lover, and a frequent practiser of the art of Angling; of which he would say, "it was an employment for his idle time, which was then

not idly spent"; for Angling was, after tedious study, "a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness; and that it begat habits of peace and patience in those that professed and practiced it ". Indeed, my friend, you will find Angling to be like the virtue of humility, which has a calmness of spirit, and a world of other blessings attending upon it. Sir, this was the saying of that learned man.

And I do easily believe, that peace, and patience, and a calm content, did cohabit in the cheerful heart of Sir Henry Wotton, because I know that when he was beyond seventy years of age, he made this description of a part of the present pleasure that possessed him, as he sat quietly, in a summer's evening, on a bank a-fishing. It is a description of the spring; which, because it glided as soft and sweetly from his pen, as that river does at this time, by which it was then made, I shall repeat it unto you:—

This day dame Nature seem'd in love
The lusty sap began to move;
Fresh juice did stir th' embracing vines.
And birds had drawn their valentines.

The jealous trout, that low did lie
Rose at a well-dissembled fly
There stood my Friend, with patient skill,
Attending of his trembling quill.

Already were the eaves possess'd
With the swift pilgrim's daubed nest;
The groves already did rejoice
In Philomel's triumphing voice:

The showers were short, the weather mild,
The morning fresh, the evening smil'd.
Joan takes her neat-rubb'd pail, and now,
She trips to milk the sand-red cow;

Where, for some sturdy foot-ball swain,
Joan strokes a syllabub or twain.
The fields and gardens were beset
With tulips, crocus, violet;

And now, though late, the modest rose
Did more than half a blush disclose.
Thus all looks gay, and full of cheer,
To welcome the new-livery'd year.

These were the thoughts that then possessed the undisturbed
mind of Sir Henry Wotton. Will you hear the wish of another
Angler, and the commendation of his happy life, which he also
sings in verse: viz. Jo. Davors, Esq.

Let me live harmlessly, and near the brink
Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling-place
Where I may see my quill, or cork, down sink
With eager bite of Perch, or Bleak, or Dace;

And on the world and my Creator think:
Whilst some men strive ill-gotten goods t' embrace;
And others spend their time in base excess
Of wine, or worse, in war and wantonness.

Let them that list, these pastimes still pursue,
And on such pleasing fancies feed their fill;
So I the fields and meadows green may view,
And daily by fresh rivers walk at will
Among the daisies and the violets blue,
Red hyacinth, and yellow daffodil,
Purple Narcissus like the morning rays,
Pale gander-grass, and azure culver-keys.

I count it higher pleasure to behold
The stately compass of the lofty sky;
And in the midst thereof, like burning gold,
The flaming chariot of the world's great eye:

The watery clouds that in the air up-roll'd
With sundry kinds of painted colours fly;
And fair Aurora, lifting up her head,
Still blushing, rise from old Tithonus' bed.

The hills and mountains raised from the plains,
The plains extended level with the ground
The grounds divided into sundry veins,
The veins inclos'd with rivers running round;
These rivers making way through nature's chains,

With headlong course, into the sea profound;
The raging sea, beneath the vallies low,
Where lakes, and rills, and rivulets do flow:

The lofty woods, the forests wide and long,
Adorned with leaves and branches fresh and green,
In whose cool bowers the birds with many a song,
Do welcome with their quire the summer's Queen;
The meadows fair, where Flora's gifts, among
Are intermix'd with verdant grass between;
The silver-scaled fish that softly swim
Within the sweet brook's crystal, watery stream.

All these, and many more of his creation
That made the heavens, the Angler oft doth see;
Taking therein no little delectation,
To think how strange, how wonderful they be:
Framing thereof an inward contemplation
To set his heart from other fancies free;
And whilst he looks on these with joyful eye,
His mind is rapt above the starry sky.

Sir, I am glad my memory has not lost these last verses, because they are somewhat more pleasant and more suitable to May-day than my harsh discourse. And I am glad your patience hath held out so long as to hear them and me, for both together have brought us within the sight of the Thatched House. And I must be your debtor, if you think it worth your attention, for the

rest of my promised discourse, till some other opportunity, and a like time of leisure.

Venator. Sir, you have angled me on with much pleasure to the Thatched House; and I now find your words true, "that good company makes the way seem short"; for trust me, Sir, I thought we had wanted three miles of this house, till you showed it to me. But now we are at it, we'll turn into it, and refresh ourselves with a cup of drink, and a little rest.

Piscator. Most gladly, Sir, and we'll drink a civil cup to all the Otter-hunters that are to meet you to-morrow.

Venator. That we will, Sir, and to all the lovers of Angling too, of which number I am now willing to be one myself; for, by the help of your good discourse and company, I have put on new thoughts both of the art of Angling and of all that profess it; and if you will but meet me to-morrow at the time and place appointed, and bestow one day with me and my friends, in hunting the Otter, I will dedicate the next two days to wait upon you; and we too will, for that time, do nothing but angle, and talk of fish and fishing.

Piscator. It is a match, Sir, I will not fail you, God willing, to be at

Amwell Hill to-morrow morning before sun-rising.

The second day

On the Otter and the Chub

Chapter II

Piscator, Venator, Huntsman, and Hostess

Venator. My friend Piscator, you have kept time with my thoughts; for the sun is just rising, and I myself just now come to this place, and the dogs have just now put down an Otter. Look! down at the bottom of the hill there, in that meadow, chequered with water-lilies and lady-smocks; there you may see what work they make; look! look! you may see all busy; men and dogs; dogs and men; all busy.

Piscator. Sir, I am right glad to meet you, and glad to have so fair an entrance into this day's sport, and glad to see so many dogs, and more men, all in pursuit of the Otter. Let us compliment no longer, but join unto them. Come, honest Venator, let us be gone, let us make haste; I long to be doing; no reasonable hedge or ditch shall hold me.

Venator. Gentleman Huntsman, where found you this Otter?

Huntsman. Marry, Sir, we found her a mile from this place, a-fishing. She has this morning eaten the greatest part of this Trout; she has only left thus much of it as you see, and was fishing for more; when we came we found her just at it: but we were here very early, we were here an hour before sunrise, and have given her no rest since we came; sure she will hardly escape all these dogs and men. I am to have the skin if we kill her.

Venator. Why, Sir, what is the skin worth?

Huntsman. It is worth ten shillings to make gloves; the gloves of an Otter are the best fortification for your hands that can be thought on against wet weather.

Piscator. I pray, honest Huntsman, let me ask you a pleasant question: do you hunt a beast or a fish?

Huntsman. Sir, it is not in my power to resolve you; I leave it to be resolved by the college of Carthusians, who have made vows never to eat flesh. But, I have heard, the question hath been debated among many great clerks, and they seem to differ about it; yet most agree that her tail is fish: and if her body be fish too, then I may say that a fish will walk upon land: for an Otter does so sometimes, five or six or ten miles in a night, to catch for her young ones, or to glut herself with fish. And I can tell you that Pigeons will fly forty miles for a breakfast: but, Sir, I am sure the Otter devours much fish, and kills and spoils much more than he eats. And I can tell you, that this dog-fisher, for so the Latins call him, can smell a fish in the water a hundred yards from him: Gesner says much farther: and that his stones are good against the falling sickness; and that there is an herb, Benione, which, being hung in a linen cloth near a fish-pond, or any haunt that he uses, makes him to avoid the place; which proves he smells both by water and land. And, I can tell you, there is brave hunting this water-dog in Cornwall; where there have been so many, that our learned Camden says there is a river called Ottersey, which was so named by reason of the abundance of Otters that bred and fed in it.

And thus much for my knowledge of the Otter; which you may now see above water at vent, and the dogs close with him; I now see he will not last long. Follow, therefore, my masters, follow; for Sweetlips was like to have him at this last vent.

Venator. Oh me! all the horse are got over the river, what shall we do now? shall we follow them over the water?

Huntsman. No, Sir, no; be not so eager; stay a little, and follow me; for both they and the dogs will be suddenly on this side again, I warrant you, and the Otter too, it may be. Now have at him with Kilbuck, for he vents again.

Venator. Marry! so he does; for, look! he vents in that corner. Now, now, Ringwood has him: now, he is gone again, and has bit the poor dog. Now Sweetlips has her; hold her, Sweetlips! now all the dogs have her; some above and some under water: but, now, now she is tired, and past losing. Come bring her to me, Sweetlips. Look! it is a Bitch-otter, and she has lately whelp'd. Let's go to the place where she was put down; and, not far from it, you will find all her young ones, I dare warrant you, and kill them all too.

Huntsman. Come, Gentlemen! come, all! let's go to the place where we put down the Otter. Look you! hereabout it was that she kennelled; look you! here it was indeed; for here's her young ones, no less than five: come, let us kill them all.

Piscator. No: I pray, Sir, save me one, and I'll try if I can make her tame, as I know an ingenious gentleman in Leicestershire, Mr. Nich. Segrave, has done; who hath not only made her tame,

but to catch fish, and do many other things of much pleasure.

Huntsman. Take one with all my heart; but let us kill the rest. And now let's go to an honest ale-house, where we may have a cup of good barley wine, and sing "Old Rose," and all of us rejoice together.

Venator. Come, my friend Piscator, let me invite you along with us. I'll bear your charges this night, and you shall bear mine to-morrow; for my intention is to accompany you a day or two in fishing.

Piscator. Sir, your request is granted; and I shall be right glad both to exchange such a courtesy, and also to enjoy your company.

The third day

Venator. Well, now let's go to your sport of Angling.

Piscator. Let's be going, with all my heart. God keep you all, Gentlemen; and send you meet, this day, with another Bitch-otter, and kill her merrily, and all her young ones too.

Venator. NOW, Piscator, where will you begin to fish?

Piscator. We are not yet come to a likely place; I must walk a mile further yet before I beam.

Venator. Well then, I pray, as we walk, tell me freely, how do you like your lodging, and mine host and the company? Is not mine host a witty man?

Piscator. Sir, I will tell you, presently, what I think of your host: but, first, I will tell you, I am glad these Otters were killed; and I am sorry there are no more Otter-killers; for I know that

the want of Otter-killers, and the not keeping the fence-months for the preservation of fish, will, in time, prove the destruction of all rivers. And those very few that are left, that make conscience of the laws of the nation, and of keeping days of abstinence, will be forced to eat flesh, or suffer more inconveniences than are yet foreseen.

Venator. Why, Sir, what be those that you call the fence-months?

Piscator. Sir, they be principally three, namely, March, April, and May: for these be the usual months that Salmon come out of the sea to spawn in most fresh rivers. And their fry would, about a certain time, return back to the salt water, if they were not hindered by weirs and unlawful gins, which the greedy fishermen set, and so destroy them by thousands; as they would, being so taught by nature, change the fresh for salt water. He that shall view the wise Statutes made in the 13th of Edward the First, and the like in Richard the Second, may see several provisions made against the destruction of fish: and though I profess no knowledge of the law, yet I am sure the regulation of these defects might be easily mended. But I remember that a wise friend of mine did usually say, "that which is everybody's business is nobody's business": if it were otherwise, there could not be so many nets and fish, that are under the statute size, sold daily amongst us; and of which the conservators of the waters should be ashamed.

But, above all, the taking fish in spawning-time may be said to be against nature: it is like taking the dam on the nest when

she hatches her young, a sin so against nature, that Almighty God hath in the Levitical law made a law against it.

But the poor fish have enemies enough besides such unnatural fishermen; as namely, the Otters that I spake of, the Cormorant, the Bittern, the Osprey, the Sea-gull, the Hern, the King-fisher, the Gorara, the Puet, the Swan, Goose, Duck, and the Craber, which some call the Water-rat: against all which any honest man may make a just quarrel, but I will not; I will leave them to be quarrelled with and killed by others, for I am not of a cruel nature, I love to kill nothing but fish.

And, now, to your question concerning your host. To speak truly, he is not to me a good companion, for most of his conceits were either scripture jests, or lascivious jests, for which I count no man witty: for the devil will help a man, that way inclined, to the first; and his own corrupt nature, which he always carries with him, to the latter. But a companion that feasts the company with wit and mirth, and leaves out the sin which is usually mixed with them, he is the man, and indeed such a companion should have his charges borne; and to such company I hope to bring you this night; for at Trout-hall, not far from this place, where I purpose to lodge to-night, there is usually an Angler that proves good company. And let me tell you, good company and good discourse are the very sinews of virtue. But for such discourse as we heard last night, it infects others: the very boys will learn to talk and swear, as they heard mine host, and another of the company that shall be nameless. I am sorry the other is a gentleman, for less

religion will not save their souls than a beggar's: I think more will be required at the last great day. Well! you know what example is able to do; and I know what the poet says in the like case, which is worthy to be noted by all parents and people of civility:

....many a one

Owes to his country his religion;

And in another, would as strongly grow,

Had but his nurse or mother taught him so.

This is reason put into verse, and worthy the consideration of a wise man. But of this no more; for though I love civility, yet I hate severe censures. I'll to my own art; and I doubt not but at yonder tree I shall catch a Chub: and then we'll turn to an honest cleanly hostess, that I know right well; rest ourselves there; and dress it for our dinner.

Venator. Oh, Sir! a Chub is the worst fish that swims; I hoped for a

Trout to my dinner.

Piscator. Trust me, Sir, there is not a likely place for a Trout hereabout: and we staid so long to take our leave of your huntsmen this morning, that the sun is got so high, and shines so clear, that I will not undertake the catching of a Trout till evening. And though a Chub be, by you and many others, reckoned the worst of fish, yet you shall see I'll make it a good fish by dressing it.

Venator. Why, how will you dress him?

Piscator. I'll tell you by-and-by, when I have caught him. Look you here, Sir, do you see? but you must stand very close, there lie upon the top of the water, in this very hole, twenty Chubs. I'll catch only one and that shall be the biggest of them all: and that I will do so, I'll hold you twenty to one, and you shall see it done.

Venator. Ay, marry! Sir, now you talk like an artist, and I'll say you are one, when I shall see you perform what you say you can do: but I yet doubt it.

Piscator. You shall not doubt it long; for you shall see me do it presently. Look! the biggest of these Chubs has had some bruise upon his tail, by a Pike or some other accident; and that looks like a white spot. That very Chub I mean to put into your hands presently; sit you but down in the shade, and stay but a little while; and I'll warrant you, I'll bring him to you.

Venator. I'll sit down; and hope well, because you seem to be so confident.

Piscator. Look you, Sir, there is a trial of my skill; there he is: that very Chub, that I showed you, with the white spot on his tail. And I'll be as certain to make him a good dish of meat as I was to catch him: I'll now lead you to an honest ale-house, where we shall find a cleanly room, lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall. There my hostess, which I may tell you is both cleanly, and handsome, and civil, hath dressed many a one for me; and shall now dress it after my fashion, and I warrant it good meat.

Venator. Come, Sir, with all my heart, for I begin to be

hungry, and long to be at it, and indeed to rest myself too; for though I have walked but four miles this morning, yet I begin to be weary; yesterday's hunting hangs still upon me.

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