

**IZAAK
WALTON**

THE
COMPLETE
ANGLER 1653

Izaak Walton
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PREFACE

The "first edition" has been a favourite theme for the scorn of those who love it not. "The first edition—and the worst!" gibes a modern poet, and many are the true lovers of literature entirely insensitve to the accessory, historical or sentimental, associations of books. The present writer possesses a copy of one of Walton's Lives, that of Bishop Sanderson, with the author's donatory inscription to a friend upon the title-page. To keep this in his little library he has undergone willingly many privations, cheerfully faced hunger and cold rather than let it pass from his hand; yet, how often when, tremulously, he has unveiled this treasure to his visitors, how often has it been examined with undilating eyes, and cold, unenvious hearts! Yet so he must confess himself to have looked upon a friend's superb first edition of "Pickwick" though surely not without that measure of interest which all, save the quite unlettered or unintelligent, must feel in seeing the first visible shape of a book of such resounding significance in English literature.

Such interest may, without fear of denial, be claimed for a facsimile of the first edition of "The Compleat Angler" after

"Robinson Crusoe" perhaps the most popular of English classics. Thomas Westwood, whose gentle poetry, it is to be feared, has won but few listeners, has drawn this fancy picture of the commotion in St. Dunstan's Churchyard on a May morning of the year 1653, when Richard Marriott first published the famous discourse, little dreaming that he had been chosen for the godfather of so distinguished an immortality. The lines form an epilogue to twelve beautiful sonnets *à propos of the bi-centenary of Walton's death*:

"What, not a word for thee, O little tome,
Brown-jerkined, friendly-faced—of all my books
The one that wears the quaintest, kindest looks—
Seems most completely, cosily at home
Amongst its fellows. Ah! if thou couldst tell
Thy story—how, in sixteen fifty-three,
Good Master Marriott, standing at its door,
Saw Anglers hurrying—fifty—nay, three score,
To buy thee ere noon pealed from Dunstan's bell:—
And how he stared and . . . shook his sides with glee.
One story, this, which fact or fiction weaves.
Meanwhile, adorn my shelf, beloved of all—
Old book! with lavender between thy leaves,
And twenty ballads round thee on the wall."

Whether there was quite such a rush as this on its publishing day we have no certain knowledge, though Westwood, in his "Chronicle of the Compleat Angler" speaks of "the almost

immediate sale of the entire edition." According to Sir Harris Nicolas, it was thus advertised in *The Perfect Diurnall*: from Monday, May 9th, to Monday, May 16th, 1653:

"The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation, being a discourse of Fish and Fishing, not unworthy the perusal of most Anglers, of 18 pence price. Written by Iz. Wa. Also the Gipsee, never till now published: Both printed for Richard Marriot, to be sold at his shop in Saint Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet street."

And it was thus calmly, unexcitedly noticed in the *Mercurius Politicus*: from Thursday, May 12, to Thursday, May 19, 1653: *"There is newly extant, a Book of 18d. price, called the Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation, being a discourse of Fish and Fishing, not unworthy the perusal of most Anglers. Printed for Richard Marriot, to be sold at his shop in St. Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet street."*

Thus for it, as for most great births, the bare announcement sufficed. One of the most beautiful of the world's books had been born into the world, and was still to be bought in its birthday form—for eighteen-pence.

In 1816, Mr. Marston calculates, the market value was about £4 4s. In 1847 Dr. Bethune estimated it at £12 12s. In 1883 Westwood reckoned it "from £70 to £80 or even more" and since then copies have fetched £235 and £310, though in 1894 we have a sudden drop at Sotheby's to £150—which, however, was more likely due to the state of the copy than to any diminution in the

zeal of Waltonian collectors, a zeal, indeed, which burns more ardently from year to year.

Sufficiently out of reach of the poor collector as it is at present, it is probable that it will mount still higher, and consent only to belong to richer and richer men. And thus, in course of time, this facsimile will, in clerical language, find an increasing sphere of usefulness; for it is to those who have more instant demands to satisfy with their hundred-pound notes that this facsimile is designed to bring consolation. If it is not the rose itself, it is a photographic reflection of it, and it will undoubtedly give its possessor a sufficiently faithful idea of its original.

But, apart from the satisfaction of such curiosity, the facsimile has a literary value, in that it differs very materially from succeeding editions. The text by which "The Compleat Angler" is generally known is that of the fifth edition, published in 1676, the last which Walton corrected and finally revised, seven years before his death. But in the second edition (1655) the book was already very near to its final shape, for Walton had enlarged it by about a third, and the dialogue was now sustained by three persons, Piscator, Venator and Auceps, instead of two—the original "Viator" also having changed his name to "Venator." Those interested in tracing the changes will find them all laboriously noted in Sir Harris Nicolas's great edition. Of the further additions made in the fifth edition, Sir Harris Nicolas makes this just criticism: "It is questionable," he says, "whether the additions which he then made to it have increased

its interest. The garrulity and sentiments of an octogenarian are very apparent in some of the alterations; and the subdued colouring of religious feeling which prevails throughout the former editions, and forms one of the charms of the piece, is, in this impression, so much heightened as to become almost obtrusive."

There is a third *raison d'être* for this facsimile, which to name with approbation will no doubt seem impiety to many, but which, as a personal predilection, I venture to risk—there is no Cotton! The relation between Walton and Cotton is a charming incongruity to contemplate, and one stands by their little fishing-house in Dovedale as before an altar of friendship. Happy and pleasant in their lives, it is good to see them still undivided in their deaths—but, to my mind, their association between the boards of the same book mars a charming classic. No doubt Cotton has admirably caught the spirit of his master, but the very cleverness with which he has done it increases the sense of parody with which his portion of the book always offends me. Nor can I be the only reader of the book for whom it ends with that gentle benediction—"And upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust in his providence, and be quiet, and go a Angling"—and that sweet exhortation from I Thess. iv. 11—"Study to be quiet."

After the exquisite quietism of this farewell, it is distracting to come precipitately upon the fine gentleman with the great wig and the Frenchified airs. This is nothing against "hearty, cheerful Mr. Cotton's strain" of which, in Walton's own setting and in

his own poetical issues, I am a sufficient admirer. Cotton was a clever literary man, and a fine engaging figure of a gentleman, but, save by the accident of friendship, he has little more claim to be printed along with Walton than the gallant Col. Robert Venables, who, in the fifth edition, contributed still a third part, entitled "The Experienc'd Angler: or, Angling Improv'd. Being a General Discourse of Angling," etc., to a book that was immortally complete in its first.

While "The Compleat Angler" was regarded mainly as a text-book for practical anglers, one can understand its publisher wishing to make it as complete as possible by the addition of such technical appendices; but now, when it has so long been elevated above such literary drudgery, there is no further need for their perpetuation. For I imagine that the men to-day who really catch fish, as distinguished from the men who write sentimentally about angling, would as soon think of consulting Izaak Walton as they would Dame Juliana Berners. But anyone can catch fish—can he, do you say?—the thing is to have so written about catching them that your book is a pastoral, the freshness of which a hundred editions have left unexhausted,—a book in which the grass is for ever green, and the shining brooks do indeed go on forever.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

[Frontispiece Text:



Being a Discourse of
FISH and FISHING,
Not unworthy the perusal of most *Anglers.*

*Simon Peter said, I go a fishing: and they said, We
also wil go with thee. John 21. 3.*

London, Printed by T. Mearns for Peter Mearns, in

The Compleat Angler

or the

Contemplative Man's Recreation

Being a Discourse of

FISH and FISHING,

Not unworthy the perusal of most Anglers

**Simon Peter said, I go a fishing; and they
said. We also wil go with thee. John 21.3**

**London, Printed by T. Maxes for RICH. MARRIOT,
in S. Dunstons Churchward Fleet Street, 1653.**

To the Right Worshipful JOHN OFFLEY Of MADELY Manor in the County of *Stafford*, Esq, My most honoured Friend.

SIR,

I have made so ill use of your former favors, as by them to be encouraged to intreat 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 'tis a discourse of Fish and Fishing, which you both know so well, and love and practice so much.

You are assur'd (though there be ignorant men of an other belief) that Angling is an Art; and you know that Art better then any that I know: and that this is truth, is demonstrated by the fruits of that pleasant labor which you enjoy when you purpose to give rest to your mind, and devest your self 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 eye-witnesses 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 attainable by common capacities.

Sir, this pleasant curiositie 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, which have been reputed

men of great Learning and Wisdome; 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 the praise of Angling, and doubtless he had done so, if death had not prevented him; the remembrance of which hath often made me sorry; for, if he had lived to do it, then the unlearned Angler (of which I am one) had seen some Treatise of this Art worthy his perusal, which (though some have undertaken it) 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, then 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 not adventure to make this Epistle longer then to add this following truth, That I am really, Sir,

Your most affectionate Friend, and most humble Servant,

Iz. Wa.

To the *Reader of this Discourse*: But especially, To the honest ANGLER.

I think fit to tell thee these following truths; that I did not undertake to write, or to publish this discourse of *fish* and *fishing*, to please my self, and that I wish it may not displease others; for, I have confest there are many defects in it. And yet, I cannot doubt, but that by it, some readers may receive so much *profit*

or *pleasure*, as if they be not very busie men, may make it not unworthy the time of their perusal; and this is all the confidence that I can put on concerning the merit of this Book.

And I wish the Reader also to take notice, that in writing of it, I have made a recreation, of a recreation; and that it might prove so to thee in the reading, and not to read *dull*, and *tediously*, I have in severall places mixt some innocent Mirth; of which, if thou be a severe, sower complexioned man, then I here disallow thee to be a competent Judg. For Divines say, *there are offences given; and offences taken, but not given*. And I am the willinger to justifie this *innocent Mirth*, because the whole discourse is a kind of picture of my owne disposition, at least of my disposition in such daies and times as I allow my self, when honest *Nat.* and *R. R.* and I go a fishing together; and let me adde this, that he that likes not the discourse, should like the pictures the *Trout* and other fish, which I may commend, because they concern not my self. And I am also to tel the Reader, that in that which is the more usefull 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 think but that he may find exceptions in some of these; and therefore I must intreat him to know, or rather note, that severall Countreys, and several Rivers alter the *time* and *manner* of fishes Breeding; and therefore if he bring not candor to the reading of this Discourse, he shall both injure me, and possibly himself too by too many Criticisms.

Now for the Art of catching fish; that is to say, how to make

a man that was none, an Angler by a book: he that undertakes it, shall undertake a harder task then *Hales* offered to thy view and censure; I with thee as much in the perusal of it, and so might that in his printed Book [called the private School of defence] undertook by it to teach the Art of Fencing, and was laught at for his labour. Not but that something usefull might be observed out of that Book; but that Art was not to be taught by words; nor is the Art of Angling. And yet, I think, that most that love that Game, may here learn something that may be worth their money, if they be not needy: and if they be, then my advice is, that they forbear; for, I write not to get money, but for pleasure; and this discourse boasts of no more: for I hate to promise much, and fail.

But pleasure I have found both in the *search* and *conference* about what is here offered to thy view and censure; I wish thee as much in the perusal of it, and so might here take my leave; but I will stay thee a little longer by telling thee, that whereas it is said by many, that in *Fly-fishing* for a *Trout*, the Angler must observe his twelve *Flyes* for every Month; I say, if he observe that, he shall be as certain to catch fish, as they that make Hay by the fair dayes in Almanacks, and be no surer: for doubtless, three or four *Flyes* rightly made, do serve for a *Trout* all *Summer*, and for *Winter-flies*, all *Anglers* know, they are as useful as an *Almanack* out of date.

Of these (because no man is born an *Artist* nor an *Angler*) I thought fit to give thee this notice. I might say more, but it is not fit for this place; but if this Discourse which follows shall come

to a second impression, which is possible, for slight books have been in this Age observed to have that fortune; I shall then for thy sake be glad to correct what is faulty, or by a conference with any to explain or enlarge what is defective: but for this time I have neither a willingness nor leisure to say more, then wish thee a rainy evening to read this book in, and that the east wind may never blow when thou goest a fishing. Farewel.

Iz. Wa.

Because in this Discourse of *Fish* and *Fishing* I have not observed a method, which (though the Discourse be not long) may be some inconvenience to the Reader, I have therefore for his easier finding out some particular things which are spoken of, made this following Table.

The first Chapter is spent in a vindication or commendation of the Art of Angling.

In the second are some observations of the nature of the Otter, and also some observations of the Chub or Cheven, with directions how and with what baits to fish for him.

In chapt. 3. are some observations of Trouts, both of their nature, their kinds, and their breeding.

In chap. 4. are some direction concerning baits for the Trout, with advise how to make the Fly, and keep the live baits.

In chap. 5. are some direction how to fish for the Trout by night; and a question, Whether fish bear? and lastly, some direction how to fish for the Umber or Greyling.

In chap. 6. are some observations concerning the Salmon, with

direction how to fish for him.

In chap. 7 are several observations concerning the Luce or Pike, with some directions how and with what baits to fish for him.

In chap. 8. are several observations of the nature and breeding of Carps, with some observations how to angle for them.

In chap. 9. are some observations concerning the Bream, the Tench, and Pearch, with some directions with what baits to fish for them.

In chap. 10. are several observations of the nature and breeding of Eeles, with advice how to fish for them.

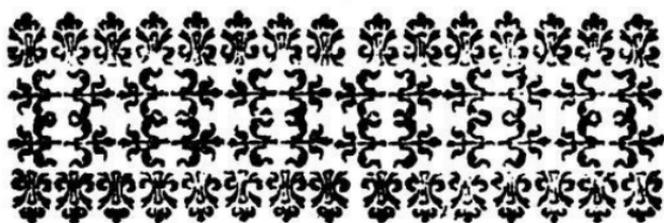
In chap. 11 are some observations of the nature and breeding of Barbels, with some advice how, and with what baits to fish for them; as also for the Gudgeon and Bleak.

In chap. 12. are general directions how and with what baits to fish for the Russe or Pope, the Roch, the Dace, and other small fish, with directions how to keep Ant-flies and Gentles in winter, with some other observations not unfit to be known of Anglers.

In chap. 13. are observations for the colouring of your Rod and Hair.

These directions the Reader may take as an ease in his search after some particular Fish, and the baits proper for them; and he will shew himselfe courteous in mending or passing by some errors in the Printer, which are not so many but that they may be pardoned.

(1)



The Complete
ANGLER.

OR,
The contemplative Mans
RECREATION.

{PISCATOR.}
{VIATOR.}

Piscator.



You are wel over-
taken Sir; a good
morning to you;
I have stretch'd
my legs up *Tot-*
nam Hil to over-
take you, being

The Complete ANGLER. OR, The contemplative Mans RECREATION

| PISCATOR |

| VIATOR |

Piscator. You are wel overtaken Sir; a good morning to you; I have stretch'd my legs up *Totnam Hil* to overtake you, hoping your businesse may occasion you towards *Ware*, this fine pleasant fresh *May day* in the Morning.

Viator. Sir. I shall almost answer your hopes: for my purpose is to be at *Hodsden* (three miles short of that Town) I wil not say, before I drink; but before I break my fast: for I have appointed a friend or two to meet me there at the thatcht house, about nine of the clock this morning; and that made me so early up, and indeed, to walk so fast.

Pisc. Sir, I know the *thatcht house* very well: I often make it my resting place, and taste a cup of Ale there, for which liquor that place is very remarkable; and to that house I shall by your favour accompany you, and either abate of my pace, or mend it, to enjoy such a companion as you seem to be, knowing that (as the Italians say) *Good company makes the way seem shorter.*

Viat. It may do so Sir, with the help of good discourse, which

(me thinks) I may promise from you, that both look and speak so cheerfully. And to invite you to it, I do here promise you, that for my part, I will be as free and open-hearted, as discretion will warrant me to be with a stranger.

Pisc. Sir, I am right glad of your answer; and in confidence that you speak the truth, I shall (Sir) put on a boldness to ask, whether pleasure or businesse has occasioned your Journey.

Viat. Indeed, Sir, a little business, and more pleasure: for my purpose is to bestow a day or two in hunting the *Otter* (which my friend that I go to meet, tells me is more pleasant then any hunting whatsoever:) and having dispatched a little businesse this day, my purpose is tomorrow to follow a pack of dogs of honest Mr. —, who hath appointed me and my friend to meet him upon *Amwel hill* to morrow morning by day break.

Pisc. Sir, my fortune hath answered my desires; and my purpose is to bestow a day or two in helping to destroy some of those villainous 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 a Pension from the Commonwealth to incourage them to destroy the very breed of those base *Otters*, they do so much mischief.

Viat. But what say you to the *Foxes* of this Nation? would not you as willingly have them destroyed? for doubtlesse they do as much mischief as the *Otters*.

Pisc. Oh Sir, if they do, it is not so much to me and my

Fraternitie, as that base Vermin the *Otters* do.

Viat. Why Sir, I pray, of what Fraternity are you, that you are so angry with the poor *Otter*?

Pisc. I am a Brother of the *Angle*, and therefore an enemy to the *Otter*, he does me and my friends so much mischief; for you are to know, that we *Anglers* all love one another: and therefore do I hate the *Otter* perfectly, even for their sakes that are of my Brotherhood.

Viat. Sir, to be plain with you, I am sorry you are an *Angler*: for I have heard many grave, serious men pitie, and many pleasant men scoff at *Anglers*.

Pisc. Sir, There are many men that are by others taken to be serious grave men, which we contemn and pitie; men of sowre complexions; mony-getting-men, that spend all their time first in getting, and next in anxious care to keep it: men that are condemn'd to be rich, and alwayes discontented, or busie. For these poor-rich-men, wee *Anglers* pitie them; and stand in no need to borrow their thoughts to think our selves happie: For (trust me, Sir) we enjoy a contentednesse above the reach of such dispositions.

And as for any scoffer, *qui mockat mockabitur*. Let mee tell you, (that you may tell him) what the wittie French-man [the Lord Mountagne in his *Apol. for Ra-Se-bond.*] sayes in such a Case. *When my Cat and I entertaine each other with mutuall apish tricks (as playing with a garter,) who knows but that I make her more sport then she makes me? Shall I conclude her simple,*

that has her time to begin or refuse sportiveness as freely as I my self have? Nay, who knows but that our agreeing no better, is the defect of my not understanding her language? (for doubtlesse Cats talk and reason with one another) and that shee laughs at, and censures my folly, for making her sport, and pities mee for understanding her no better? To this purpose speaks Mountagne concerning Cats: And I hope I may take as great a libertie to blame any Scoffer, that has never heard what an Angler can say in the justification of his Art and Pleasure.

But, if this satisfie not, I pray bid the Scoffer put this Epigram into his pocket, and read it every morning for his breakfast (for I wish him no better;) Hee shall finde it fix'd before the Dialogues of *Lucian* (who may be justly accounted the father of the Family of all *Scoffers*;) And though I owe none of that Fraternitie so much as good will, yet I have taken a little pleasant pains to make such a conversion of it as may make it the fitter for all of that Fraternity.

*Lucian well skill'd in scoffing, this has writ,
Friend, that's your folly which you think your wit;
This you vent oft, void both of wit and fear,
Meaning an other, when your self you jeer.*

But no more of the *Scoffer*; for since *Solomon* sayes, he is an abomination to men, he shall be so to me; and I think, to all that love *Vertue* and *Angling*.

Viat. Sir, you have almost amazed me [Pro 24. 9]: for though I

am no Scoffer, yet I have (I pray let me speak it without offence) always look'd upon *Anglers* as more patient, and more simple men, then (I fear) I shall finde you to be.

Piscat. Sir, I hope you will not judge my earnestnesse to be impatience: and for my *simplicitie*, if by that you mean a *harmlessnesse*, or that *simplicity* that was usually found in the Primitive Christians, who were (as most *Anglers* are) quiet men, and followed peace; men that were too wise to sell their consciences to buy riches for vexation, and a fear to die. Men that lived in those times when there were fewer Lawyers; for then a Lordship might have been safely conveyed in a piece of Parchment no bigger then your hand, though several skins are not sufficient to do it in this wiser Age. I say, Sir, if you take us *Anglers* to be such simple men as I have spoken of, then both my self, and those of my profession will be glad to be so understood. But if by *simplicitie* you meant to expresse any general defect in the understanding of those that professe and practice *Angling*, I hope to make it appear to you, that there is so much contrary reason (if you have but the patience to hear it) as may remove all the anticipations that Time or Discourse may have possess'd you with, against that Ancient and laudable Art.

Viat. Why (Sir) is Angling of Antiquitie, and an Art, and an art not easily learn'd?

Pisc. Yes (Sir:) and I doubt not but that if you and I were to converse together but til night, I should leave you possess'd with the same happie thoughts that now possesse me; not onely for the

Antiquitie of it, but that it deserves commendations; and that 'tis an Art; and worthy the knowledge and practice of a wise, and a serious man.

Viat. Sir, I pray speak of them what you shall think fit; for wee have yet five miles to walk before wee shall come to the *Thatcht house*. And, Sir, though my infirmities are many, yet I dare promise you, that both my patience and attention will indure to hear what you will say till wee come thither: and if you please to begin in order with the antiquity, when that is done, you shall not want my attention to the commendations and accommodations of it: and lastly, if you shall convince me that 'tis an Art, and an Art worth learning, I shall beg I may become your Scholer, both to wait upon you, and to be instructed in the Art it self.

Pisc. Oh Sir, 'tis not to be questioned, but that it is an art, and an art worth your Learning: the question wil rather be, whether you be capable of learning it? For he that learns it, must not onely bring an enquiring, searching, and discerning wit; but he must bring also that *patience* you talk of, and a love and propensity to the art itself: but having once got and practised it, then doubt not but the Art will (both for the pleasure and profit of it) prove like to *Vertue, a reward to it self*.

Viat. Sir, I am now become so full of expectation, that I long much to have you proceed in your discourse: And first, I pray Sir, let me hear concerning the antiquity of it.

Pisc. Sir, I wil preface no longer, but proceed in order as you desire me: And first for the Antiquity of *Angling*, I shall not say

much; but onely this; Some say, it is as ancient as *Deucalions* Flood: and others (which I like better) say, that *Belus* (who was the inventor of godly and vertuous Recreations) was the Inventer of it: and some others say, (for former times have had their Disquisitions about 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 hee erected to preserve the knowledg of the *Mathematicks*, *Musick*, and the rest of those precious Arts, which by Gods appointment or allowance, and his noble industry were thereby preserved from perishing in *Noah's* Flood.

These (my worthy Friend) have been the opinions of some men, that possibly may have endeavoured to make it more ancient then may well be warranted. But for my part, I shall content my self in telling you, That *Angling* is much more ancient then the incarnation of our Saviour: For both in the Prophet *Amos* [Chap. 42], and before him in *Job* [Chap. 41], (which last Book is judged to be written by *Moses*) mention is made *fish-hooks*, which must imply *Anglers* in those times.

But (my worthy friend) as I would rather prove my self to be a Gentleman, by being *learned* and *humble*, *valiant* and *inoffensive*, *vertuous* and *communicable*, then by a fond ostentation of *riches*; or (wanting these Vertues my self) boast that these were in my Ancestors; [And yet I confesse, that where a noble and ancient Descent and such Merits meet in any man, it is a double dignification of that person:] and so, if this Antiquitie of Angling

(which, for my part, I have not forc'd) shall like an ancient Familie, by either an honour, or an ornament to this vertuous Art which I both love and practise, I shall be the gladder that I made an accidental mention of it; and shall proceed to the justification, or rather commendation of it.

Viat. My worthy Friend, I am much pleased with your discourse, for that you seem to be so ingenuous, and so modest, as not to stretch arguments into Hyperbolicall expressions, but such as indeed they will reasonably bear; and I pray, proceed to the justification, or commendations of Angling, which I also long to hear from you.

Pisc. Sir, I shall proceed; and my next discourse shall be rather a Commendation, then a Justification of Angling: for, in my judgment, if it deserves to be commended, it is more then justified; for some practices what may be justified, deserve no commendation: yet there are none that deserve commendation but may be justified.

And now having said this much by way of preparation, I am next to tell you, that in ancient times a debate hath risen, (and it is not yet resolved) Whether *Contemplation* or *Action* be the chieftest thing wherin the happiness of a man doth most consist in this world?

Concerning which, some have maintained 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 that God enjoyes himself only by *Contemplation* of his own *Goodness*, *Eternity*,

Infiniteness, and *Power*, and the like; and upon this ground many of them prefer *Contemplation* before *Action*: and indeed, many of the Fathers seem to approve this opinion, as may appear in their Comments upon the words of our Saviour to *Martha*. [Luk. 10. 41, 42]

And contrary to these, others of equal Authority and credit, have preferred *Action* to be chief; as experiments in *Physick*, and the application of it, both for the ease and prolongation of mans life, by which man is enabled to act, and to do good to others: And they say also, That *Action* is not only Doctrinal, but a maintainer of humane Society; and for these, and other reasons, to be preferr'd before *Contemplation*.

Concerning which two opinions, I shall forbear to add a third, by declaring my own, and rest my self contented in telling you (my worthy friend) that both these meet together, and do most properly belong to the most honest, ingenious, harmless Art of Angling.

And first I shall tel you what some have observed, and I have found in my self, That the very sitting by the Rivers side, is not only the fittest place for, but will invite the Angler to Contemplation: That it is the fittest place, seems to be witnessed by the children of *Israel*, [Psal. 137.] who having banish'd all mirth and Musick from their pensive hearts, and having hung up their then mute Instruments upon the Willow trees, growing by the Rivers of *Babylon*, sate down upon those banks bemoaning the *ruines of Sion*, and contemplating their own sad condition.

And an ingenuous *Spaniard* says, "[That both Rivers, and the inhabitants of the watery Element, were created for wise men to contemplate, and fools to pass by without consideration.]" And though I am too wise to rank myself in the first number, yet give me leave to free my self from the last, by offering to thee a short contemplation, first of Rivers, and then of Fish: concerning which, I doubt not but to relate to you many things very considerable. Concerning Rivers, there be divers wonders reported of them by Authors, of such credit, that we need not deny them an Historical faith.

As of a River in *Epirus*, that puts out any lighted Torch, and kindles any Torch that was not lighted. Of the River *Selarus*, that in a few hours turns a rod or a wand into stone (and our *Camden* mentions the like wonder in *England*;) that there is 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 then *Aristotle*, [in his Wonders of nature, this is confirmed by *Ennius* and *Solon* in his holy History.] tells us of a merry River, the River *Elusina*, that dances at the noise of Musick, that with Musick it bubbles, dances, and growes sandy, but returns to a wonted calmness and clearness when the Musick ceases. And lastly, (for I would not tire your patience) *Josephus*, that learned *Jew*, tells us of a River in *Judea*, that runs and moves swiftly all the six dayes of the week, and stands still and rests upon their *Sabbath* day. 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 Gods 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, transcendent, and divine;
Who does 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 [Psal. 104], wherein, for height of Poetry and Wonders, the Prophet *David* seems even to exceed himself; how doth he there express himselfe in choice Metaphors, even to the amazement of a contemplative Reader, concerning the Sea, the Rivers, and the Fish therein contained. And the great Naturallist *Pliny* sayes, "[That Natures great and wonderful power is more demonstrated in the Sea, then 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*, *Randelitius*, *Pliny*, *Aristotle*, and others is demonstrated: But I will sweeten this discourse also out of a

contemplation in Divine *Dubartas*, who sayes [in the fifth day],

*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 is to be found,
As if the world were in deep waters drown'd.
For seas (as well as Skies) have Sun, Moon, Stars;
(As wel as air) Swallows, Rooks, and Stares;
(As wel as earth) Vines, Roses, Nettles, Melons,
Mushrooms, Pinks, Gilliflowers and many milions
Of other plants, more rare, more strange then these;
As very fishes living in the seas;
And 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 cowled Fryer.
Of which examples but a few years since,
Were shewn 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, then their different natures, inclinations and actions: concerning which I shall beg your patient ear a little longer.

The *Cuttle-fish* wil cast a long gut out of her throat, which (like as an Angler does his line) she sendeth, forth and pulleth

in again at her pleasure, according as she sees some little fish come neer to her [Mount *Elsayes*: and others affirm this]; and the *Cuttle-fish* (being then hid in the gravel) lets the smaller fish nibble and bite the end of it; at which time shee by little and little draws the smaller fish so neer 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*.

There are also lustful and chaste fishes, of which I shall also give you examples.

And first, what *Dubartas* sayes of a fish called the *Sargus*; which (because none can express it better then 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 Adulterous 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 grassie shore,
Horning their husbands that had horns before.*

And the same Author writes concerning the *Cantharus*, that which you shall also heare 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.

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

Pisc. Why then Sir, I will take a little libertie 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 out-live his or her Mate; and this is taken for such a truth, that if the Survivor shall ever couple with another, the he or she, not only the living, but the dead, is denyed the name and honour of a true *Turtle Dove*.

And to parallel this Land Variety & teach mankind moral faithfulness & to condemn those that talk of Religion, and yet come short of the moral faith of fish and fowl; Men that violate the Law, affirm'd by Saint *Paul* [Rom. 2.14.15] to be writ in their hearts, and which he sayes shal at the last day condemn and leave them without excuse. I pray hearken to what *Dubartas* sings [5. day.] (for the hearing of such conjugal faithfulness, will be Musick to all chaste ears) and therefore, I say, hearken to what *Dubartas* sings of the *Mullet*:

*But for chaste love the Mullet hath no peer,
For, if the Fisher hath surprised her ppeer,*

*As mad with woe to shoare 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 *Partridg*, and *Pigeon*) takes no care to hatch, to feed, or to cherish his own Brood, but is sensless though they perish.

And 'tis 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 Broode, more then doubled, even to such a height, that our Saviour in expressing his love to *Jerusalem*, [Mat. 23. 37] 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 spawne on flags or stones, and then leave it uncovered and exposed to become a prey, and be devoured by Vermine 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 *Cuckoe*) they mutually labour (both the Spawner, and the Melter) to cover their spawne with sand, or watch it, or hide it in some secret place unfrequented by Vermine, 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 divers others of credit, and are believed and

known by divers, both of wisdom and experience, to be a truth; and are (as I said at the beginning) fit for the contemplation of a most serious, and a most pious man.

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 Patriarks or Prophets of old, and of the Apostles of our Saviour in these later times, of which twelve he chose four that were 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 Mony-Changers. And secondly, That he found the hearts of such men, men that 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 nothing be too hard for him, yet these men he chose to call from their irreprovable employment, and gave them grace to be his Disciples and to follow him.

And it is observable, that it was our Saviours will that his four Fishermen Apostles should have a prioritie of nomination in the catalogue of his twelve Apostles, as namely first, *S. Peter, Andrew, James* [Mat. 10.] and *John*, and then the rest in their order.

And it is yet more observable, that when our blessed Saviour went up into the Mount, at his Transfiguration, when he left the

rest of his Disciples and chose onely three to bear him company, that these three were all Fishermen.

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 ingenuous and learned man, who observes that God hath been pleased to allow those whom he himselfe hath appointed, to write his holy will in holy Writ, yet to express his will in such Metaphors as their former affections or practise had inclined them to; and he brings *Solomon* for an example, who before his conversion was remarkably amorous, and after by Gods appointment, writ that Love-Song [the Canticles] betwixt God and his Church.

And if this hold in reason (as I see none to the contrary) then it may be probably concluded, that *Moses* (whom I told you before, writ the book of *Job*) and the Prophet *Amos* were both Anglers, for you shal in all the old Testaments find fish-hooks 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 stile of that Prophet, and compare it with the high, glorious, eloquent stile of the prophet *Isaiah* (though they be both equally true) may easily believe him to be a good natured, plaine Fisher-man.

Which I do the rather believe, by comparing the affectionate, lowly, humble epistles of S. *Peter*, S. *James* and S. *John*, whom

we know were Fishers, with the glorious language and high Metaphors of *S. Paul*, who we know was not.

Let me give you the example of two men more, that have lived nearer to our own times: first of Doctor *Nowel* sometimes Dean of *S. Paul's*, (in which Church his Monument stands yet undefaced) a man that in the Reformation of Queen *Elizabeth* (not that of *Henry the 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 publick use, such a one as should stand as a rule for faith and manners to their posteritie: And the good man (though he was very learned, yet knowing that God leads us not to heaven by hard questions) made that good, plain, unperplexed Catechism, that is printed with the old Service Book. I say, this good man was as dear a lover, and constant practicer of Angling, as any Age can produce; and his custome was to spend (besides his fixt hours of prayer, those hours which by command of the Church were enjoined the old Clergy, and voluntarily dedicated to devotion by many Primitive Christians:) besides those hours, this good man was observed to spend, or if you will, to bestow 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 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 would praise God he had spent that day free from

worldly trouble, both harmlesly and in a Recreation that became a Church-man.

My next and last example shall be that undervaluer of money, the late Provost of *Eaton Colledg*, *Sir Henry Wotton*, (a man with whom I have often fish'd and convers'd) a man whose forraign 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 practicer of the Art of Angling, of which he would say, "[Twas an imployment for his idle time, which was not idly spent;]" for Angling was after tedious study "[A rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diversion of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a Moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness, and that it begot habits of peace and patience in those that profest and practic'd 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 possest him, as he sate quietly in a Summers evening on a bank a fishing; it is a description of the Spring, which because it glides as soft and sweetly from his pen, as that River does now by which it was then made, I shall repeat unto you.

*This day dame Nature seem'd in love:
The lustie sap began to move;
Fresh juice did stir th'imbracing Vines,
And birds had drawn their Valentines.
The jealous Trout, that low did lye,
Rose at a well dissembled flie;
There stood my friend with patient skill,
Attending of his trembling quill.
Already were the eaves possest
With the swift Pilgrims dawbed nest:
The Groves already did rejoice,
In Philomels triumphing voice:
The showrs were short, the weather mild,
The morning fresh, the evening smil'd.*

*Jone takes her neat rubb'd pail, and now
She trips to milk the sand-red Cow;
Where for some sturdy foot-ball Swain.
Jone strokes a Sillibub or twaine.
The fields and gardens were beset
With Tulips, Crocus, Violet,
And now, though late, the modest Rose
Did more then half a blush disclose.
Thus all looks gay and full of chear
To welcome the new liveried year.*

These were the thoughts that then possest the undisturbed mind of Sir *Henry Wotton*. Will you hear the wish of another

Angler, and the commendation of his happy life [Jo. Da.], which he also sings in Verse.

*Let me live harmlesly, and near the brink
Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling place,
Where I may see my quill or cork down sink,
With eager bit of Pearch, or Bleak, or Dace;
And on the world and my Creator think,
Whilst some men strive, ill gotten goods t'imbrace;
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 Daffadil,
Purple Narcissus, like the morning rayes,
Pale ganderglass and azure Culverkayes.*

*I count it higher pleasure to behold
The stately compass of the lofty Skie,
And in the midst thereof (like burning Gold)
The flaming Chariot of the worlds great eye,
The watry clouds, that in the aire up rold,
With sundry kinds of painted colour flye;
And fair Aurora lifting up her head,
Still blushing, rise from old Tithonius bed.*

*The hills and mountains raised from the plains,
The plains extended level with the ground,
The grounds divided into sundry vains,
The vains inclos'd with rivers running round;
These rivers making way through natures chains
With headlong course into the sea profound;
The raging sea, beneath the vallies low,
Where lakes, and rils, and rivulets do flow.*

*The loftie woods, the Forrests wide and long
Adorn'd with leaves & branches fresh & green,
In whose cool bowres the birds with many a song
Do welcom with their Quire the Summers Queen:
The Meadows fair, where Flora's gifts among
Are intermixt, with verdant grass between.
The silver-scaled fish that softly swim,
Within the sweet brooks chrystal watry 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 Skie.*

Sir, I am glad my memory did not lose these last Verses,

because they are somewhat more pleasant and more sutable to *May Day*, then 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 *Thatcht 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.

Viat. Sir, You have Angled me on with much pleasure to the *thatcht 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 the *thatcht House*, till you shewed it me: but now we are at it, we'l turn into it, and refresh our selves with a cup of Ale and a little rest.

Pisc. Most gladly (Sir) and we'l drink a civil cup to all the *Otter Hunters* that are to meet you to morrow.

Viat. That we wil, Sir, and to all the lovers of Angling too, of which number, I am now one my self, 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 too morrow at the time and place appointed, and bestow one day with me and my friends in hunting the *Otter*, I will the next two dayes wait upon you, and we two will for that time do nothing but angle, and talk of fish and fishing.

Pisc. 'Tis a match, Sir, I'l not fail you, God willing, to be at *Amwel Hil* to morrow morning before Sunrising.

CHAP. II

Viat. My friend *Piscator*, you have kept time with my thoughts, for the Sun is just rising, and I my self just now come to this place, and the dogs have just now put down an *Otter*, look down at the bottom of the hil, there in that Meadow, chequered with water Lillies and Lady-smocks, there you may see what work they make: look, you see all busie, men and dogs, dogs and men, all busie.

Pisc. Sir, I am right glad to meet you, and glad to have so fair an entrance into this dayes sport, and glad to see so many dogs, and more men all in pursuit of the *Otter*; lets complement no longer, but joine unto them; come honest *Viator*, lets be gone, lets make haste, I long to be doing; no reasonable hedge or ditch shall hold me.

Viat. Gentleman Huntsman, where found you this *Otter*?

Hunt. Marry (Sir) we found her a mile off 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 Sun-rise, and have given her no rest since we came: sure she'l hardly escape all these dogs and men. I am to have the skin if we kill him.

Viat. Why, Sir, whats the skin worth?

Hunt. 'Tis worth ten shillings to make gloves; the gloves of an

Otter are the best fortification for your hands against wet weather that can be thought of.

Pisc. I pray, honest Huntsman, let me ask you a pleasant question, Do you hunt a Beast or a fish?

H. Sir, It is not in my power to resolve you; for the question has been debated among many great Clerks, and they seem to differ about it; but most agree, that his tail is fish: and if his body be fish too, then I may say, that a fish will walk upon land (for an *Otter*

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