

ness of motive in sought-for source of inspiration by literary people; and its accuracy is easily shown, if needs be, in an impressive manner by citation, contrast and illustration from the best known literature between Walton's time and this. In many instances it has been clearly acknowledged by literary men themselves. In others, the identification is so clear and true as to admit of no possible doubt. The frankest, though still indirect, and the most clearly traced indebtedness of this prompting influence to nature-loving in those whose genius transmits the same lovable quality to others, is made by that master of English prose, Washington Irving.

While under the spell of Walton he became for the nonce an angler, "I hooked myself," he charmingly confesses, "instead of the fish; tangled my line in every tree; lost my bait; broke my rod; until I gave up the attempt in despair, and passed the day under the trees, reading old Izaak; satisfied that it was his charming vein of honest simplicity and rural feeling that had bewitched me, and not the passion for angling." We are certainly largely indebted to this bewitchment by Walton of Irving for that rambling, nature-communing mood whence was filtered through his loving fancy the folk-lore of the legend-haunted Hudson, and gave us the sweetest and best of all his work in those tender tales of the Sketch Book.

No less undeniably, and far more consciously and direct, has Wordsworth, himself divine interpreter of nature's holiest moods and influences, paid tribute to Walton's power for purest inspiration. He tells us of "meek Walton's heavenly memory," one of the most beautiful expressions of praise and reverence to be found in our language; and in the same tribute to Walton's *Lives of Hooker, Sanderson, Wootton, Donne, and George Herbert*, Wordsworth again bursts forth in this incomparable strain of eulogy:

There are no colors in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence
the pen

Was shaped that traced the lives of
these good men,
Dropped from an angel's wing.

Pages could be filled with most briefly noted admissions by the immortals of the gentle angler's subtle power to draw them to the ever-living fountain of purity, simplicity and truth. Justly then, Izaak Walton and his work must be framed in a different perspective than that of their commonly-accepted setting. He must not be merely regarded as "honest Izaak Walton, father of the gentle art of angling." There were able writers before his time upon this engaging diversion. Most of what he wrote, as purely instructive, has been more than half a century out of date. One must be more than a deft and successful angler to be a disciple of Walton, and this truly lovable epithet is almost universally misapplied. I would say, then, that the name and fame of Izaak Walton increase with the centuries because a truly good and sweetly pious life with a glorious genius constantly shine clearer and brighter through his incomparable pages into our later and better understandings. His "Complete Angler," which it must be remembered is also the "Contemplative Man's Recreation," is an imperishable shrine in the

world of letters, because, after the Bible it is the most perfect guide to the worship of nature and nature's God together to which we have access. And being "a disciple of Walton" must come to mean not merely one who can land a trout or grayling prettily, but that one who, in any vocation, is heart and soul attuned to the God-sent harmonies of nature through the measureless peace of pure and perfect life.

With this spirit of loving remembrance, a quest for the olden haunts of Walton becomes almost a reverential pilgrimage. In a half month's time it will be 300 years since his birth, August 9, 1593, in Staffordshire; about 270 years since actual knowledge of his existence as a "sempster" or linen draper in the Royal Burse, Cornhill, where the Royal Exchange now stands, was made a matter of record, by deed; and just 240 years since the first sale "at eighteen pence price" by Richard Merriot in St. Dunstan's Church Yard, Fleet Street, of copies of the first edition of the "Compleat Angler." The London, indeed one might say the England, of that time is no more. Loiter and delve as one may about old Fleet Street and Chancery Lane, there is not a single existing reminder of Walton and his time. So far as I am able to discover in the entire world's metropolis there is but one. That is the initials and date, "I. W., 1658," on the stone tablet to Isaac Casaubon in Westminster Abbey's south transept. It was scratched there by Walton himself, and is a desecration now cherished by all Britain. Who would ever glance at the pages of "Casauboniana" today, or remember that James I. made Casaubon prebendary of Westminster and Canterbury, save for this silent token of Izaak Walton's regard?

The scene of the "Angler" lies directly north of London along the river Lea, between Tottenham and Hertford; and it was a no small walk from Walton's shop in Chancery Lane to his favorite haunts beside this stream. The river itself has its rise in Bedfordshire, still north of Hertfordshire, "in the marsh called Luigrave or Leagrave, from whence the Saxons borrowed its denomination," as the old writer Chauncy relates. It pursues a sinuous course through richly wooded and meadowed parishes and such chief towns of Hertfordshire as Broxbourne, Ware and Hatfield, and from Tottenham lazily and slimly flows down through east London under Lea bridge, is split into black lagoons in the foul Hackney marshes; and becomes a muddy stream again as it passes between Queen Matilda's bridge and the noted bridge of Stratford-le-Bow, the ancient way into Essex. Then, a mere open channel of London sewage it forms the various basins of the Lea Cut, Limehouse Cut and Limehouse Basin of Regent's Canal; and trailing to the west of Stratford and Barking marshes, the foulest-smelling factory spot on the earth's surface, enters the Thames through the noisome delta forming the Isle of Dogs.

In Walton's time all this region was country. It is one of the most unpleasant experiences you can now know in London to follow the Lea from East India dock to Tottenham. The latter is even now a part of London, and one can only with difficulty see the way the gentle angler came and as dimly imagine the Tottenham of old, its then smart

Elizabethan habitations, and its High Cross where the characters in the "Angler" first met, and Piscator, on his way to fish the Lea at Ware that "fine, fresh May morning," makes the pleasant acquaintance of Venator and Auceps. The White Swan Inn at Tottenham was the place where Walton tarried going to and coming from the river Lea. The last time I saw it, it was half hidden from the High Road and High Cross, a tiny slumberous hostel of the long ago, white stuccoed and gabled, with a patch of garden blossom at its side and a bit of a skittle alley behind.

Just north of Tottenham is Bleak Hall, a sleepy hamlet called Cook's Ferry, to which Piscator led his companions of the "Angler." Walton's own picture of the inn is a pleasanter one than can now be drawn; "an honest alehouse, where might be found a cleanly room, lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck about the walls; with a hostess both cleanly and handsome and civil." It was here, over the eating of the toothsome chub, that Venator insisted upon terming Walton, as Piscator, "master." Shortly beyond this the Lea winds pleasantly near Edmonton where John Gilpin, from the indecorous speed of his horse, missed a comfortable dinner; and at Hoddesdon above was the "Thatch House" where, at the very outset of the "Angler's" pleasant experiences, Venator expressed his purpose of drinking his "morning draught." From Tottenham to Ware is a pleasant, vagrant jaunt, but the lover of Walton must needs carry the good old fisherman along with him in the sweet cradle of his fancy for all but the merest suggestion of companionship identification in these first and oldest angling haunts along the river Lea.

Undoubtedly Dove Dale, the water-way of the vagarous and impetuous river Dove, forming the boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire in the romantic region of the Derby Peak, retains least changed the natural scenes most loved of Izaak Walton. It is here his summer months for years were passed. In an almost idyllic enjoyment of his favorite pastime, and in a friendship with Cotton of so perfect a nature that it at least exalted an otherwise characterless man of no little talent to nobler aspirations and accomplishments. Every one is familiar with this strange and unequal attachment; how Walton, almost saintly in character and forty-four years the elder of the *blase* spendthrift and scribbler of unreadable themes, became his friend and companion in Beresford Hall; how Cotton built the famous "Fishing-House" beside the Dove, with its intertwined escutcheon of his own and Walton's initials and the motto, "Piscatoribus Sacrum," above the door; how their affection ripened until Cotton adopted Walton as his "father" and Walton the spendthrift gentleman as his "son;" and how it all had a good ending when, at Walton's request, Cotton accomplished the best work of his life in part second of the "Angler," "Being Instructions How To Angle For A Trout Or Grayling In A Clear Stream," prefaced by "The Retirement," or "Stanzas Irregularly to Mr. Izaak Walton," of much poetic power, beginning with the lines,

Farewell, thou busy world, and may
We never meet again!

I always love to imagine this odd friendship not to have been an "unac-