

The affected uncertainty is itself a drollery of the same flavor.

The essayist talks of the 'peril of illustration' which the 'Angler' has survived. He has, indeed, and come off with a fine basketful. The cuts after Kenny Meadows, Creswick and Smith, satisfactorily reproduced in this edition, are among the triumphs of old-time wood-engraving. The University Press has printed both them and the text in a manner to make us proud of American printing.

#### Lowell's Edition of "The Complete Angler"\*

WHILE THERE REMAIN any contemplative men in this rushing world, new editions of Walton and Cotton's 'Complete Angler' can never cease. But never again can there be one in which honest Izaak shall be introduced to the reader so well and gracefully as in this. Lowell may not have been a fisherman; how many of Walton's readers are? He knew, however, how to angle for the lurking and slippery beauties that abound in the 'clear stream' of this peculiar book. It is time to remove Walton from the sporting snelt and promote him to a higher one, in the company (which he loved) of Montaigne and his cat. This is what Lowell has done in his introduction to this new edition, treating the book as a book, and its author as a literary man. When he speaks gratefully of the gentlemanlike reserve of the past which has left little to record of Walton's career he is, of course, to be taken in a Pickwickian sense. He evidently loved his task, and would make this biography longer and more gossiping if he could. He lights up and displays effectively all the small facts he can gather concerning Walton's life—his no schooling, his humble extraction, the small way of business in which he engaged in London. Because Walton's Fleet Street shop was narrow and was shared with a hosier, a former biographer, Mr. Major, insists that he must have dealt wholesale, for, in such a little place, 'what room would there have been for the display of goods?' 'The space for that purpose,' Lowell suggests, 'was found in the street.' Sir Harris Nicholas dubs Walton 'a parish officer.' In the register of St. Dunstan's in the West, Lowell found a record of his having done duty as a scavenger. The regard of these gentlemen for class proprieties amuses him. He himself has so little that he deals a hard blow over Walton's shoulders at that landlord system to which certain silly critics have charged that he was over friendly.

But if Walton picked up some superfluous *As* which he might better have left lying where his fellow-citizens had dropped them, and if he was thirty years in acquiring a modest competency, he knew how to make friends of knight and bishop, as well as folk less reputable but perhaps more companionable. These last, such as Brome and Sandys, he made welcome in 'a back parlor of his mind, away from the street and with the curtains drawn.' But, with a penniless 'worthy,' like Sanderson, he would stand conversing under a pent-house in the rain, or would regale him on cheese and beer, and thank the storm that kept them long together. The way in which this last incident is touched up by Lowell makes it shine like a gem in a rich setting; and, in fact, the whole essay may be compared to an artistic piece of jeweler's work, of the antique fashion, displaying the native qualities of the subject and enriching it with ornament even more valuable than itself. Coleridge's marginalia were said to be often better than their text, and as much may be said of this 'Introduction,' which is like a Grecian portico to an English country house.

Of the book Lowell asserts its claim to an 'immortality of affection'; points out the traces of style—and of the pains it cost—in certain choicer parts of it; proclaims its charms, as of the society of children. He doubts—but not very deeply—whether Walton had humor. He instances some passages which, if they have not that, have some quality just as good, though as yet unnamed. 'The hermit crab, dwelling alone, 'studying the wind and weather,' the palmer worm who will 'boldly and disorderly wander up and down,' like those Scottish covenanters whom Walton saw and liked not—these, if he meant them to be droll, have that seeming inadvertance which gives its highest zest to humor.'

\* The Complete Angler. By Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton. Introduction by James Russell Lowell. \$3. Little, Brown & Co.