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WALTON'S "COMPLETE ANGLER."

Description of a Very Quaint Old Book, Which Contains Good Fish Stories—Pliny, the Scapegoat—An Old Darky With Money to Burn.

A rumor to the effect that the weather is hot having obtained currency, I desire to submit a few whys and wherefores to the sweltering public. In other words, I would like to know why custom allows women to have so much the better of men in the matter of summer clothes. For instance, when I go home on a warm day I see the feminine portion of my household arrayed in all sorts of gauzy stuffs, which require no collars or cuffs, and are as cool as cucumbers. Take the shirt-waist, for instance. It's a regular human ventilator, and lets in all kinds of breezes, whereas a man can buy nothing to equal it—or rather, decency doesn't permit him to wear anything that equals it. If my wife can wear a shirt-waist to dinner, why can't I show up in my shirt-sleeves? Why? There's nobody to say that I can't, but if I try it I have a bloody fight on my hands. The good woman, on such occasions, declines to sit at the table with me, and shows so much temper that I am almost willing to wear an overcoat to pacify her.

"It looks so po'-white," says she, "to see a great, hot man sitting at the table without a coat. Indeed, it's the most hideous sight I know of, excepting, of course, a man without a collar. Nothing in the world could be 'commoner' than that."

Now, hearken unto what I say. When a woman speaks of anything as being "common," you may know that she has the most extreme contempt for it. And when she uses the term "dead common," the thing to which she applies it ought to be removed from the earth. Hence, when she says that such and such an article or such and such a habit is "common," you had better drop it—drop it as though it were a hot potato.

* * *

But all the while she is characterizing the man in his shirt-sleeves as "common" she is herself rejoicing in a shirt-waist, or in a calico sacque, which requires no collar, and lets the breezes play on her neck and a considerable distance down her vertebra.

And even if you go out in public with women, they still have the same advantage over you. The man must box himself up in a starchy shirt and a laundered collar, whereas the woman, if she's got a pretty neck and arms, can lay them bare. And if she hasn't got them, she finds it chilly. Why can't we men do the same? If conventionality (and my wife, especially my wife) allowed it, I would get an indecently low-cut shirt-waist and short sleeves, to say nothing of percale pants and a mere aigret for my head. I wouldn't care who saw that I had a corduroy neck, with a bunch of bones like barrel-hoops. I have ceased to be beautiful, or to care to be beautiful. What I'm after now is comfort, even if I have to wear pajamas or a suit like a Chinese laundryman.

It is with pleasure that I observe in some of the northern papers that the men up North are trying to force a reform in dress—to make the colored negligee shirt perform the same respectable functions that are now performed by the shirt-waist. The designs for men's shirts are yearly getting more gay and giddy. Possibly the time may come when negligee shirts will supersede the coat entirely. If you happened to come down on Main street about 3 P. M. during these days, you would conclude that the reform had already been inaugurated. At any rate, let us hasten it.

* * *

It is pretty safe to venture the assertion that not twenty-five men in Richmond, outside of college professors and school-teachers, have ever read through Izaak Walton's "Complete Angler," yet nearly every fisherman thinks it sounds literary to describe himself as a "disciple of Walton." As a matter of fact, "The Complete Angler," to use frank language, is not exhilarating or madly exciting, and yet, if you take off your coat and go at it leisurely, there is a vast deal of sweetness and piety in this quaint old book. Yes, I say there is a great deal of piety in it, and, what is stranger still, old Izaak, unlike most fishermen, always stuck to the truth. Or rather, when he told a lie, he invariably attributed it to somebody else, and quoted his authority, taking pains, mean while, to show the exact source of his information. Your "disciple of Walton" to-day practices an entirely different method. He takes pains to put himself forward as the hero of every incident. If a whale is caught, he is the man that does the catching; if fabulous stories are told concerning the captures of scores of the finny nibblers, your nineteenth century friend is the man who lands them every one. And so on to the finish.

But, as I have said, the pious Izaak always takes very good pains to put the lie on somebody else. Note his cautious language as he perpetrates the following colossal falsehood on the unsuspecting public:

"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 200 cubics long. * * * And he says that the people of Cadara, an island near this place, make the timber for their houses of those fish-bones."

Few of the boys of the present day can beat that story. But most of the boys of the present day would not have stopped where Walton did. They would have told how they caught several dozen of these piscatorial monstrosities.

* * *

It could hardly be said that there is any plot in "The Complete Angler." It is rather a series of lectures on various fish and how to catch them. Piscator, a fisherman, is overtaken by Venator, a huntsman, and Auceps, a falconer, and the two latter joke Piscator about his fondness for angling, and extol the pleasures of their own sports. The old gentleman lets the falconer and the huntsman have their say, and then he takes his turn on the subject of fishing. Inasmuch as the book contains about 80,650 words, and nearly all of them are explanatory of the angler's art, it may be presumed that Piscator evened up things pretty well before he got through. All this conversation is supposed to have taken place in about a fortnight's time, or less, yet we are not informed that the fisherman talked either of his friends to death. The falconer drops out of the book at an early stage of the game, but the huntsman proves an attentive listener to the last, which is saying a good deal, when one remembers what 80,650 words signify. A newspaper column only contains about 1,500.

It seems to me that Walton mentions pretty much everything that swims in water, unless it be catfish and tadpoles, and possibly they appear under aliases, which I do not recognize. He describes the different kinds of fish individually, telling how to cook them and how to catch them, besides pointing out their habits and peculiarities. Furthermore, by quoting other distinguished liars, he leads us to believe that fish can not only see at night, but can also hear and smell at all times. The responsibility for most of these statements is laid at the doors of Sir Francis Bacon, who wrote a natural history. Observe how cautiously the author proceeds in the following:

"And, lest you may think him singular in his opinions (referring to Bacon), I will tell you, this seems to be believed by our learned Doctor Hakewill, who, in his apology of God's power and providence, fol. 360, quotes Pliny to report (Pliny evidently held the championship belt for piscatorial lying—The Idler) that one of the emperors had particular fish-ponds, and in them several fish that appeared and came when they were called by their particular names; and St. James tells us (chapter iii, 7) that all things in the sea have been tamed by mankind. And Pliny tells us (there it is again), lib. ix., 35, that Antonia, the wife of Drusus, had a lamprey, at whose gills she hung jewels or earrings; and that others have been so tender-hearted as to shed tears at the death of fishes which they have kept and loved. And these observations, which will to most hearers seem wonderful, seem to have a further confirmation from Martial (lib. iv., Epig. 30), who writes thus:

"Piscator, fuge; ne nocens, etc."

"Angler, wouldst thou be guiltless? Then forbear;
For these are sacred fishes that swim here,
Who know their sovereign, and will lick his hand;
Than which none's greater in the world's command;
Nay, more, they've names, and when they called are,
Do to their several owners' call repair?"

In other words, fishes with a college education, who, like human beings, worshipped royalty.

Walton appears to believe that frogs "turn to slime" at certain seasons of the year, and, also, that "it rains frogs," though both of these conclusions seem to be forced on him by his mendacious idol and friend, Pliny.

"The Complete Angler" was first published in 1653 by Walton, who was a retired hosier, and a man of much learning and piety. It is a mistake to suppose that the book is a crude effort at literature. Some of the descriptions are exquisite, and the language throughout is chaste and pure. A deep religious vein permeates the whole work, despite the fish stories quoted from Bacon, Pliny, and others. I would advise every fisherman to read the book. If it had no other effect it might teach them to attribute to Pliny many marvellous tales which are now passed off for the truth.

* * *

In point of age Mr. James M. Matthews, of the Richmond Bar, has gotten more than his alloted threescore and ten, for next fall he will be 78 years old. It should not be understood, however, that he is an old man, or that time has made him rickety. To-day he is as fresh and active and energetic as a youth of 20. Though the flight of many winters has left its snows on his head, Mr. Matthews declines to be a back number, and when it comes to exercising a preference in the matter of companions, he invariably selects young people, whose society he dearly loves. There is hardly a lawyer in Richmond who does not know and esteem Mr. Matthews. The old gentleman—or, rather, I should say the venerable gentleman, for he is venerable without being old—has got one fault. He is a monopolist. He has cornered all the jokes, and puns in creation, and you've got to listen to them when he opens his mouth to speak. Mr. Matthews wears a pair of spectacles which have lenses of the most powerful magnifying strength in them, and these glasses give him a quizzical, owlish aspect, which is very pleasing. Watch his eyes, and you can tell beforehand that he is about to spring a joke on you. When peering through his "lamps" Mr. Matthews can read the smallest manuscript imaginable. They say he can even stand in Henrico and see the ticks crawling on the wormwood fences in his native county, Essex.

But it is as a joker that Mr. Matthews shines pre-eminent. He is at his best, too, when the joke is on the other fellow. Rarely are the tables turned on him, though I shall recall one occasion when he was worsted. To me this incident is one of the most picturesque and pathetic I have ever known. One hardly knows whether to laugh or cry over it.

A few days ago an old negro man, black as the ace of spades and 74 years of age, dropped into Mr. Matthews's office and introduced himself as an ex-slave of the Matthews family. The old darky and Mr. Matthews had not met for half a century. The negro had been sold and taken South, while the young master had continued in his native State. During all this long flight of years Younger Campbell (that is the darky's name) had not forgotten the good old days in Essex when he and Jim Matthews, as boys, sucked cider through the same straw. And thus they met after a fifty-years' separation. Mr. Matthews, as I have said, is a study in pink and white. He is the very incarnation of cleanliness, and possesses that embonpoint which is so pleasing in the old. His skin is rosy, and his hair and beard are beautifully white. On the contrary, Younger Campbell is short, gaunt, beardless, and black—my gracious, so black that he would show up distinctly in the deepest gloom. The old negro fairly feasted his eyes on Mr. Matthews as he "heard tell" of everything that had passed since their separation, while the "young master," for his part, was no less glad to see his dusky servant.

After the venerable Caucasian and the superannuated Ethiopian had talked themselves almost dry Mr. Matthews said: "Younger, I've got some old clothes I'll give you if you come up home with me, but I can't give you any money. I haven't got any to spare."

The old darky thanked Mr. Matthews, and a few minutes afterwards, at a favorable opportunity, called him out into the hall and proudly said: "Boss, did you say you didn't have any money? If you need any money I'll let you have all you want," whereupon he pulled out a "wad" of greenbacks.

Mr. Matthews knew that the faithful old man was as good as his word. The humor of the thing struck him like a lick from a mule's hind leg, and yet, withal, he saw the pathos and the beauty of the incident. He didn't take the money; or rather, he didn't take it as a gift, but he did accept the custodianship of it, so as to prevent the old darky's being robbed. The wad contained about $120.

For several days after the meeting Younger Campbell followed Mr. Matthews around like a dog. He is now on a trip to Tappahannock, though it is probable that he will find nearly all his old companions dead.

HIS
The Idler Reporter
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THE CORN CROP CANNOT RECOVER FROM THE DROUGHT.

A LADY'S UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE

With a Huge Blacksnake—The Wheat Yield About the Average—Many Delightful Outings—A Budget of Personal Notes.

COMORN, KING GEORGE CONUTY, VA., July 21.—(Special.)—The corn crop here cannot recover from the effects of the drought now, no matter how favorable the weather conditions may be during the remaining weeks of the season, and the farmers are naturally very "blue" in consequence of this fact. Indeed, the situation is anything but encouraging. The early corn, which was so promising at one time, long ago stopped growing and became yellow and twisted up. A great deal of the crop in the drought districts tasselled out in due time, but a large percentage of the tender tassels dried up and died before any bloom formed—something never before observed here. Old farmers say that the earing of the corn depends in a large measure upon the blooms on the tassels, and that when there is no bloom there will be no ear. Some of the farmers could not finish ploughing and working their corn, in consequence of the extremely dry weather. Owing to this long lack of rain and the intense heat and high southerly winds, the forest pastures have neither grass nor water, some highland pastures being as bare of grass as they were the 1st of March.

Mrs. Dr. Rice, of this neighborhood, had a most exciting and uneviable experience with a large blacksnake a few days ago. She was removing some carpets from an up-stairs closet, and, while thus engaged, she felt what she supposed was a large cord, or rope, wrapped around one of her ankles, the increasing pressure, or "squeezing," of which became so uncomfortable that she kicked most vigorously to get rid of the "entangling alliance." Mrs. Rice was alone at the time, and when she discovered that she was in the coils of a monstrous reptile she called for help. The lady, fortunately, escaped unhurt, as also did the snake, which mysteriously disappeared in the upper story of the house, and has not been captured as yet.

Mr. Ben. T. Taylor, whose steam thresher has threshed a great many crops in the past month, says that the wheat yield this season is above the average in this county.

DELIGHTFUL OUTINGS.

While the mercury registered high up in the nineties—frequently ninety-nine in the shade—this week, the King George belles and beaux, and their many visitors from the cities, indulged in "delightful" outings on the Potomac. Picnics, fish fries, crabbing, boating, bathing, etc., have been the order of each day.

The largest dance of the season was given in the pavilion at Somerset Beach on Tuesday night. This was gotten up by Mr. Rice Hooe and the Messrs. Tayloe in honor of a number of young ladies of King George and other sections.

Mrs. W. W. Mountjoy and little son have arrived from New York city, and will spend the summer at their magnificent country home, near this place. Mr. Mountjoy will come ten days later and spend the month of August.

Miss Josie M. Brown, a prominent and widely known lady of this county, is arranging to leave here for Washington, D. C., for permanent residence.

Mrs. Florence Parker, of Coalrain, N. C., is a guest of her sisters at "Waverly," near here. Mrs. Parker is a daughter of the late Clerk of the Courts William S. Brown, of this county.

Mr. R. W. Jones, who has been visiting at Cash Corner, this county, has returned to his home, near Chilton's, in Westmoreland.

Mr. R. Walter Coakley, ex-Superintendent of Public Schools of this county, is quite sick from the effects of a sprained ankle.

Mrs. J. C. King, of Newport News, is spending some time with Mr. James A. Arnold and family, at Potomac View, this county.

Miss Cora Billingsley and brother, Master Joe Billingsley, of Baltimore, are visiting kinsfolk in this county.

Miss Clara Bagley, of Portsmouth, Va., is a guest of Miss Josie Brown, in this neighborhood. Miss Bagley taught school here some years ago, and has a large circle of friends in the county.

Mrs. Kate Barren, of Essex, is here on a visit to relatives.

Mrs. Charles W. Rogers and daughter, Miss Nannie, of this neighborhood, left yesterday for Fluvanna county, where they will spend two weeks with relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. John T. Minor returned to their home, here, Wednesday night, after spending a week in Lancaster county with Mrs. Minor's kinsfolk.

An entirely reliable letter from Shiloh Wednesday says: "The drought is alarming. Thermometer 100 degrees. Gardens parched; corn-blades like shoe-strings; corn crop of Mr. Thomas H. Massey, on Mattox creek, in Westmoreland, is past recovery—the blades dried to such an extent that they have broken down and can be easily burned by applying a lighted match."

Mr. Cary Stokes and family, of Washington, D. C., are visiting kinsfolk and friends near Office Hall, in this county.

Mr. Robert Inscoe, formerly of this county, now of Washington, D. C., is reported to be critically ill.

Mrs. Sallie Edwards, of Northumberland, is a guest of relatives in the Shiloh neighborhood of this county.

Mrs. Ola Pratt, of Fauquier, is a guest at "Waveland," the home of Judge and Mrs. C. H. Ashton, in this county.

Mrs. Adams and daughter, Miss Grace Adams, of the national capital city, is visiting Miss Jessie Baker, at Shiloh.

Mr. Joe Haskins, of Stafford, has gone to Richmond city to engage in business.

Mr. E. J. Smith, a prominent shoe merchant of Fredericksburg, came down this week on a visit to his wife and sons, who are summering in King George.

The Republican Executive Committee of Stafford county was in session on Wednesday of this week.

Mrs. Annie Bragdon and daughter, Miss Rosa, who have been spending some time with the family of Sheriff W. N. Heflin, near King George Courthouse, have returned to their home, in Fredericksburg.

Miss Nora Henderson has returned to her home, at Cash Corner, this county, after spending some time with her brother, in Westmoreland.

The Misses Tyler and Miss Grace Jones, who have been spending some time with Misses Virginia and Sophia Tayloe, at Chatterton, this county, have returned to their homes, in Fredericksburg, greatly to the regret of the young folks of King George.

Miss Ida Tolson, of Shamrock, this county, has as her guests Miss Fannie Hoffer and Miss Burch, of Washington.

Mrs. Captain John G. Pollock, of Upper Stafford, has returned home, after a few days' visit to relatives here.

OTHER NOTES.

Miss Mary Brockenbrough, a popular and prominent young lady of Richmond county, is visiting in Fredericksburg.

Mr. G. M. Sanford, of Oldham's, Westmoreland, is spending some days in this county.

"Lewisetta," the beautiful Northern Neck island, made famous by the enormous business done there for some years by Mr. C. R. Lewis, and later by the long trials in the Northumberland courts of Mr. Lewis, has been purchased at public outcry by several Northern Neck capitalists, for the sum of about $4,700. It is understood that the canning and packing houses, etc., there will be put in operation again in the near future.

Miss Grace Pritchett, of Mathews county, is visiting friends in Northumberland.

Mr. Walter R. Crabb, one of the most successful farmers in Westmoreland county, made nearly six thousand bushels of wheat this season.

Marvin-Grove camp-meeting will begin on the 3d of August, and the Northern Neck people are looking forward to the occasion with unusual interest and pleasure.

The Freemasons will erect a new hall at Kinsale, Westmoreland county, this summer.

Sarcastic.

(Collier's Weekly.)

Wife (reading): Another mysterious suicide—unknown man throws himself from a cliff.

Husband (thoughtlessly): Bet his wife was at the bottom of it.

Wife: Charles!

Husband (hurriedly): Of the cliff, my love: not the suicide.

SIX MONTHS' TREATMENT FOR ONE DOLLAR

Dr. Burkhart's VEGETABLE COMPOUND.

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Sold under a bonafide guarantee to cure the following diseases: Kidney and Liver Disease, Fever and Ague, Rheumatism, Sick and Nervous Headache, Erysipelas, Scrofula, Female Complaints, Catarrh, Indigestion, Neuralgia, Nervous Affection, Dyspepsia, Constipation, accompanied by one or more of the following symptoms: Pain in side, back, under shoulder blade, smothering sensations, palpitation of the heart, tired feeling in the morning, poor appetite, coated tongue, blotches or pimples on the face, bad taste in the mouth, roaring, buzzing sounds in the head, bad memory, sour, sick or bloated stomach, pains in the head, dizziness, headache, restlessness at night, night sweats, bad dreams, feeling of fear, stiffness of limbs, skin troubles, disposition to neglect duties and an inability to concentrate the mind upon the details of business. For sale by all druggists.

DR. W. S. BURKHART, Cincinnati, O.

CURIOUS ABOUT PATRICK HENRY.

Sequel to Fourth of July Oratory in a Penitentiary.

(Cincinnati Enquirer.)

"Speaking of Fourth of July incidents," remarked Hon. Thomas Shay one afternoon last week, "did you ever hear of the Fourth of July speech Tom Cogan made up at the Ohio penitentiary? It happened in this manner: Each year the inmates are given a little celebration, speeches are made and a musical programme by amateurs is sprung on the convicts, who, of course, can't get away and have to listen to it, and one Fourth of July some years ago Cogan, being in Columbus attending to some legal business, he was asked to make a speech at the penitentiary. He hadn't any speech ready, and didn't know exactly what to spring on 'em, so he hashed up a lot of patriotic stuff about the Declaration of Independence, George Washington, Patrick Henry, and turned it loose on them. He felt kind of uneasy, of course, but there really wasn't any danger, as there were a lot of guards there, with guns, to protect him in case of necessity. So, after the speech was made, Tom was asked to stay and to take dinner with the warden. While they were eating dinner a guard sent in word that one of the convicts—a man known by the alias of 'Sheet-Iron Mike'—wanted to talk to Cogan. The Warden explained that 'Sheet-Iron' was a reformed 'gold-brick guy.' He had reformed from 'gold-bricking' and had turned burglar. After dinner the Warden took Cogan up to 'Sheet-Iron Mike's' cell, and the burglar said:

"'I want to thank you, sir, for that speech you made to us poor fellers.'

"'Ah,' said Cogan, growing chesty, 'I'm glad it did you good, my man! Is there anything you wish to ask me about it?'

"'Yes,' replied 'Sheet-Iron,' 'I wanter know somethin' about this yere Patrick Henry! Him as said, "Gimme liberty or gimme death."'

"'Well, what about him?' queried Cogan. 'I can tell you all about him.'

"'Wot I wanted to know,' replied Sheet-Iron Mike,' 'is, wot penitentiary was he in, an' did he git his liberty, or did he stay his time out?'"

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease, and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven catarrh to be a constitutional disease, and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., is the only constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally, in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials. Address
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