

English Reprints.

WILLIAM WEBBE, GRADUATE.

A DISCOURSE OF ENGLISH POETRIE.

1586.

CAREFULLY EDITED BY
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Associate, King's College, London, F.R.G.S., &c.

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CONTENTS.

NOTES of William Webbe,	3
CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH AUTHORS referred to,	5
INTRODUCTION,	7
BIBLIOGRAPHY,	10

A DISCOURSE OF ENGLISH POETRIE, 11

1. The Epistle to Edward Sulyard, Esquire,	13
2. A Preface to the noble Poets of England,	17

3. A DISCOURSE OF ENGLISH POETRIE,	21
(a) What Poetry is?	21
(b) The beginning of Poetry, and of what estimation it hath always been,	21
(c) The use of Poetry, and wherein it rightly consisted,	25
(d) The Author's judgement of English Poets,	30-37
(e) The Matter of English Poetrie,	38-56
Ex. Comparifon of Thomas Phaer's translation of the <i>Aeneid</i> with the original text of Virgil	47-51
(f) The Manner or Form of English Poetrie,	56-84

A. RHYMED VERSE.

There be three fpecial notes neceffary to be observed in the framing of our accuftomed English Rhyme:—

(1) <i>The metre or verfe muft be proportionate</i>	57
Ex. Criticifm of the different forts of Verfe in Spencer's <i>Shepherds Calender</i>	59-61
(2) <i>The natural Accent of the words muft not be wrested</i>	62
(3) <i>The Rhyme or like ending of verfes</i>	63

B. The Reformed kind of ENGLISH VERSE [*i.e.*, in CLASSICAL FEET], 67-84

Ex. The Author's tranflation of the firft two <i>Eglogues</i> of Virgil into English Hexameters,	73-79
Ex. His tranflation of Hobbinoll's Song in the <i>Shepherds Calender</i> into English Sapphics,	81-84

(g) The Canons or general Cautions of Poetry, preſcribed by Horace: collected by George Fabricius [<i>b.</i> 23 April 1516 at Chemnitz,— <i>d.</i> 13 July 1571].	85-95
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4. EPILOGUE,	96
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NOTES
of
WILLIAM WEBBE.

* *Probable or approximate dates.*

Very little is known of the Author of this work. The suggestion that he was the William Webbe, M.A., one of the joint Authors of a topographical book *The Vale Royal*, 1648, fol., is quite anachronistic.

Messrs. Cooper, in *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, ii. 12. Ed. 1861, state that our Author "was a graduate of this University, but we have no means of determining his college. One of this name, who was of St. John's College, was B.A. 1572-3 [the same year as Spenser], as was another who was of Catharine Hall in 1581-2. His place of residence is unknown, although it may perhaps be inferred that it was in or near the county of Suffolk. We have no information as to his position in life, or the time or place of his death." He was evidently a man of superior intellect and no mean attainments." [Our Author apparently witnessed *Tancred and Gismund* in 1568, and being evidently acquainted with Gabriel Harvey and Spenser (who left Cambridge in 1578), must be the earlier graduate of the above two Webbes.]

1568. *Tancred and Gismund*, written by five members of the Inner Temple, the first letters of whose names are attached to the several acts, viz., Rod. Staff; Hen. No[well] ?; G. All; Ch. Hat[ton] ?; and R. W[ilmot]: is 'curiously acted in view of her Maiesty, by whom it was then princely accepted.'

Webbe appears to have been present at the representation: see 1591. Mr. J. P. Collier in his edition of 'Dodsley's *Old Plays*,' i. 153, prints from a MS. what is apparently a portion of this Tragedy as it was then acted, written in alternate rhymes. He also states in his *Hist. of Dram. Poet.* that it 'is the earliest English play extant, the plot of which is known to be derived from an Italian novel.' iii. 13. Ed. 1831.

*1572-3.

1582. Nov. 28. Gabriel Poyntz presented Robert Wilmott, clerk to the Rectory of North Okendon, Essex: 18 miles from London. *Newcourt Repertorium*, ii. 447. Ed. 1710.

Flemynys is a large manor house in Essex in the parish of Runwell, in the hundred of Chelmsford; from which town it is ten miles distant, and about twenty-nine miles from London. 'This house commands extensive views of some parts of the county and of Kent, including more than thirty parish churches.'

Edward Sulyard succeeded, on the death of his father Eustace in 1546, to Flemynys and other possessions. He had two sons, Edward and Thomas, and a daughter named Elizabeth. He was knighted on 23 July 1603 at Whitehall by James I, before his coronation: and died in June 1610. Of his two sons, Edward died without issue; Thomas, *b.* 1573, was knighted, and *d.* March 1634; leaving a son Edward, who *d.* 7 Nov. 1692 without issue, 'the last of the house and family.' See *W. Berry, County Gen. Essex*, 64. T. Wright, *Hist. of Essex*, i. 142, 143. Ed. 1831. J. P[hilipot] Knts. *Batch. made by James I.* 1660.

*1583 or 4. Webbe appears to have been at this time private tutor to Mr Sulyard's two sons, for he presented his MS. translation (now lost) of the *Georgics* to Mr. Sulyard: see *pp.* 55 and 16.

1585. DEC. 2. The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's appoint Robert Wilmott, M.A., to the Vicarage of Horndon on the Hill, twenty-four miles from London, and a few miles from Flemynys, where his friend Webbe was a private tutor. *Newcourt, idem*. ii. 343.

1586.

Of 'the pregnant ympes of right excellent hope,' Thomas Sulyard was about thirteen years old, and his brother Edward was older than him.

W. Webbe writes the present work in the summer evenings.

SEPT. 4. It is thus registered for publication.

"Robt. Walley

John Charlewood, Rd. of them, for printinge A Discourse of
englishe poetrye vjd."

J. P. Collier, Extr. of Stat. Co.'s Regrs. ii., 215. Ed. 1849.

1587. FEB. 5. Margaret, the mother of Mr. Sulyard died. She is buried at Runwell.

1588.

Warton quotes "a small black-lettered tract entitled *The Touch-stone of Wittes*, chiefly compiled, with some slender additions, from William Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetrie*, written by Edward Hake, and printed at London by Edmund Bollifant." *p. 804. Ed. 1870.*

Our Author—his pupils growing to manhood—then appears to have gone, possibly also in the same capacity of private tutor into the family of Henry Grey, Esquire [created Baron Grey of Groby, 21 July 1603: *d. 1614*] at Pirgo, in the parish of Havering atte Bower, Essex; fifteen miles from London. Dugdale states that the first husband of one of the daughters of this Henry Grey, Esquire, was a *William Sulyard, Esquire. Baron. i. 722. Ed. 1675.* From this old Palace of the Queens of England Webbe wrote the following letter to Wilmot, which is reprinted in the revised edition of *Tancred and Gismund* published in 1592: of which there are copies in the Bodleian, and at Bridgewater House, and an imperfect one in the British Museum (C. 34, e. 44).

1591. AUG. 8.

*To his frend R. W. Master R. VV. looke not now for the tearmes of an intreator, I wil beg no longer, and for your promises, I wil refuse them as bad paiement: neither can I be satisfied with any thing, but a peremptorie performance of an old intention of yours, the publishing I meane of those wast papers (as it pleaseth you to cal them, but as I esteem them, a most exquisite inuention) of Gismunds Tragedie. Thinke not to shift me off with longer delayes, nor alledge more excuses to get further respite, least I arrest you with my *Actum est*, and commence such a Sute of vnkindenesse against you, as when the case shall be scand before the Iudges of courtesie, the court will crie out of your immoderat modestie. And thus much I tel you before, you shal not be able to wage against me in the charges growing vpon this action, especially, if the worshipful company of the Inner temple gentlemen patronize my cause, as vndoubtedly they wil, yea, and rather plead partially for me then let my cause miscary, because themselves are parties. The tragedie was by them most pithely framed, and no lesse curiously acted in view of her Maiesty, by whom it was then as princely accepted, as of the whole honorable audience notably applauded: yea, and of al men generally desired, as a work, either in statelynes of shew, depth of conceit, or true ornaments of poeticall arte, inferior to none of the best in that kinde: nō, were the Roman *Seneca* the censurer. The braue youths that then (to their high praises) so feelingly performed the same in action, did shortly after lay vp the booke vnregarded, or perhaps let it run abroade (as many parentes doe their children once past dandling) not respecting so much what hard fortune might befall it being out of their fingers, as bow their heroical wits might againe be quickly conceiued with new inuentions of like worthines, wherof they haue been euer since wonderfull fertill. But this orphan of theirs (for he wandreth as it were fatherlesse,) hath notwithstanding, by the rare and bewtiful perfections appearing in him, hetherto neuer wanted great*

fauourers, and louing preseruers. Among whom I cannot sufficiently commend your more then charitable zeale, and scholerly compassion towards him, that haue not only rescued and defended him from the deuouring iawes of obliuion, but vouchsafed also to apparel him in a new sute at your own charges, wherein he may again more boldly come abroad, and by your permission returne to his olde parents, clothed perhaps not in richer or more costly furniture than it went from them, but in handsomnes and fashion more answerable to these times, wherein fashions are so often altered. Let one word suffice for your encouragement herein: namely, your commendable pains in disrobing him of his antike curiositie, and adorning him with the approoued guise of our stateliest Englishe termes (not diminishing, but augmenting his artificiall colours of absolute poesie, deriued from his first parents) cannot but bee grateful to most mens appetites, who vpon our experience we know highly to esteem such lofty measures of sententiously composed Tragedies.

How much you shal make me, and the rest of your priuate friends beholding vnto you, I list not to discourse: and therefore grounding vpon these alledged reasons, that the suppressing of this Tragedie, so worthy for ye presse, were no other thing then wilfully to defraud your selfe of an vniuersall thank, your friends of their expectations, and sweete G. of a famous eternitie. I will cease to doubt of any other pretence to cloake your bashfulness, hoping to read it in print (which lately lay neglected amongst your papers) at our next appointed meeting.

I bid you heartely farewell. From Pyrgo in Essex, August the eight, 1591. *Tuus fide et facultate.* GUIL. WEBBE.

It may also be noted that Wilmott dedicated this revised tragedy to two Essex ladies: one of whom was Lady Anne Grey, the daughter of Lord Windsor, and the wife of the above-mentioned Henry Grey, Esquire of Pyrgo.

That the above R. Wilmott, Clergyman, is the same as the Reviser of the play appears from the following passage in his Preface.

"Hereupon I have indured some conflicts between reason and judgement, whether it were convenient for the commonwealth, and the indecorum of my calling (as some think it) that the memory of *Tancred's* Tragedy should be again by my means revised, which the oftner I read over, and the more I considered thereon, the sooner I was won to consent thereunto: calling to mind that neither the thrice reverend and learned father, M. Beza, was ashamed in his younger years to send abroad, in his own name, his Tragedy of *Abraham*, nor that rare Scot (the scholar of our age) *Buchanan*, his most pathetical *Iephtha*." *'Dodsley's Old Plays,' ii. 165.* Ed. by J. P. Collier, 1825.

If the identity may be considered as established, Wilmott the Poet lived on till 1619: when he was succeeded on his death by W. Jackson, in the Rectory of North Okendon. *Newcourt, idem. ii. 447.*

No later information concerning W. Webbe than the above letter, has yet been recovered.

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH AUTHORS

REFERRED TO IN THE FOLLOWING *Discourse*.

R. ASCHAM.	<i>The Scholemaster,</i>	.	.	31, 57
G. B.	? <i>The Shippe of Safeguarde,</i>	1569	.	35
F. C.	?	.	.	35
T. CHURCHYARD.	<i>Churchyard's 'Chippes,'</i>	1575; <i>Church-</i>		
	<i>yard's 'Chance,'</i>	1580; <i>Churchyard's 'Charge,'</i>	1580; &c.	33
M. D.	[? Maister Dyer, <i>i.e.</i> , Sir Edward Dyer]	.	.	33
? DARRELL	?	.	.	35

R. EDWARDES. <i>Par. of Dainty Devises</i> , 1576; <i>Comedies</i>	33
Sir T. ELYOT. <i>The Governor</i> , 1538	42, 43
G. GASCOIGNE. <i>Poies</i> , 1572; <i>The Steele Glas</i> , &c., 1576	33
B. GOOGE. <i>Eglogs, Epitaphes, and Sonettes</i> , 1563; translation of Palingenius' <i>Zodiac of Life</i> . 1560. 1565.	34
Sir J. GRANGE. <i>The Golden Aphroditis</i> , 1577	35
G. HARVEY.	35
HEYWOOD [either JOHN HEYWOOD or JASPER HEYWOOD]	33
W. HUNNIS. <i>Paradise of Dainty Devises</i> , 1576, 1578	33
? HYLL ?	33
E. K. [<i>i.e.</i> EDWARD KIRKE]	33, 53
F. K. [? Fr. Kindlemarsh] <i>Par. of Dainty Devises</i> , 1576, 1578	35
J. LYLY. <i>Euphues</i> , 1579-80; <i>Plays</i>	46
A. MUNDAY. <i>The Mirroure of Mutabilitie</i> , 1579; <i>The Paine of Pleasure</i> , 1580	35
T. NORTON. Joint Author of <i>Ferrex and Porrex</i> , 1561	33
C. OCKLANDE. <i>Anglorum Prælia</i> , 1580, 1582	30
[? DR. E.] SAND[YS]. <i>Par. of Dainty Devises</i> , 1576, &c.	33
E. SPENSER. <i>Shepheards Calender</i> , 1579, 1581, 1586	35, 52, 81
HENRY, Earl of SURREY. <i>Sonnets, &c.</i> , in Tottel's <i>Misc.</i> 1557	33
T. TUSSEK. <i>Five hundred points of Good Husbandrie</i> , 1557-80	33
THOMAS, Lord VAUX. <i>Sonnettes, &c.</i> , in Tottel's <i>Misc.</i> 1557; and <i>Par. of Dainty Devises</i> , 1576	33
E. VERE, Earl of OXFORD. Unpublished <i>Sonnets</i>	33
G. WHETSTONE. <i>The Rocke of Regard</i> , 1576	35
R. WILMOTT. <i>Tancred and Gismund</i> , 1568	35
S. Y. [? M. YLOOP, <i>i.e.</i> M. POOLY in <i>Par. of Dainty Devises</i>]	35

THE TRANSLATORS.

SENECA.

J. HEYWOOD. <i>Troas</i> , 1559; <i>Thyestes</i> , 1560; <i>Hercules Furens</i> , 1561	34
A. NEVILL. <i>Edipus</i> , 1563	34
J. STUDLEY. <i>Medea</i> , 1566; <i>Agamemnon</i> , 1566	34

OVID.

G. TURBERVILLE. <i>Heroical Epistles</i> , 1567	34
A. GOLDING. <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 1565	34, 51
T. CHURCHYARD. <i>Tristitia</i> , 1578	34
T. DRANT. <i>Satires</i> , 1566; <i>Art of Poetrie</i> , 1567	34

VIRGIL.

HENRY, Earl of SURREY. <i>Two Books of the 'Æneid'</i> , 1557	33
T. PHAER, M.D. 9 th Books of the 'Æneid', 1558-1562	33, 46-51
T. TWYNE. <i>The remaining 2nd Books</i> , 1573	34
A. FLEMING. <i>Bucolicks</i> , 1575, in rhyme. His <i>Georgics</i> referred to at p. 55 appeared in 1589	34, 55

A Discourse of English Poetrie

INTRODUCTION.

A Part from the excessive rarity of this work, two copies of it only being known; it deserves permanent republication as a good example of the best form of Essay Writing of its time; and as one of the series of Poetical Criticisms before the advent of Shakespeare as a writer, the study of which is so essential to a right understanding of our best Verse.

Although Poetry is the most ethereal part of Thought and Expression; though Poets must be born and cannot be made: yet is there an art of Poesy; set forth long ago by Horace but varying with differing languages and countries, and even with different ages in the life of the same country. In our tongue—Milton only excepted—there is nothing approaching, either in the average merit of the Journeymen or the superlative excellence of the few Master-Craftsmen, the Poesy of the Elizabethan age. Hence the value of these early Poetical Criticisms. Their discussion of principles is most helpful to all readers in the discernment of the subtle beauties of the numberless poems of that era: while for those who can, and who will; they will be found singularly suggestive in the training of their own Power of Song, for the instruction and delight of this and future generations.

A Cambridge graduate; the private tutor, for some two or three years past, to Edward and Thomas Sul-

vppe some other of meete abilitie, to bestowe trauell in this matter.' His wifh had been anticipated. Already a Master Critic was at work—we know not for certainty whether it was George Puttenham, or who else—who, beginning to write in 1585, published in 1589 *The Arte of English Poesie*: which is the largest and ablest criticism of English Poefy that appeared in print, during the reign of Elizabeth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Issues in the Author's lifetime.

I.—As a separate publication.

1. 1586. London. 1 vol. 4to. See title on opposite page.

Of the two copies known, the one here reprinted is among the Malone books in the Bodleian. The other passed from hand to hand at the following sales: always increasing in price.

1773. APR. 8. Mr. West's sale, No. 1856, 10s. 6d., to Mr. Pearson.

1778. APR. 22. Mr. Pearson's sale, No. 1888, £3, 5s., to Mr. Stevens.

1800. MAY 19. Mr. Stevens' sale, No. 1128, £8, 8s., to the Duke of Roxburghe.

1812. JUNE 2. The Roxburghe sale, No. 3168, £64, to the Marquis of Blandford.

Issues since the Author's death.

I.—As a separate publication.

3. 1870. DEC. 1. London. *English Reprints*: see title at 1 vol. 8vo. p. 1.

II.—With other works.

2. 1815. London. *Ancient Critical Essays*. Ed. by J. Haslewood: *A Discourse of English Poetrie* occupies Vol. ii., pp. 13-95.

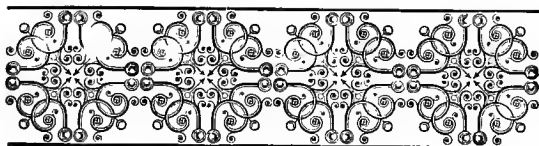
A Discourse of Eng-
lish Poetrie.

Together, with the Authors
iudgment, touching the re-
formation of our Eng-
lish Verfe.

By VVilliam VVebbe
Graduate.



Imprinted at London,
by Iohn Charlewood for
Robert VValley
1 5 8 6.



To the right vvorship=
full, learned, and most gentle Gentle-
man, my verie good Master, Ma.

Edward Suliard, Esquire. VV. VV.

wysheth his harts desire.

(.·.)



Ay it please you Syr, *thys once*
more to beare with my rudenes, in
presenting vnto your viewe, an other
slender conceite, of my simple capa-
city: wherin although I am not able
to bring you anie thing, which is
meete to detain you from your more serious matters:
yet vppon my knowledge of your former courtesy and
your fauourable countenaunce towards all enterprises
of Learning, I dare make bold to craue your accustomed
patience, in turning ouer some of these fewe leaues, which
I shall account a greater recompence, then the wryting
thereof may deserue.

The Epistle.

The firme hope of your wonted gentlenes, not any good lyking of myne owne labour, made me thus presumptuously to craue your worships patronage for my poore booke. A pretty aunswere is reported by some to be made by Appelles to King Alexander, who (in disport) taking vp one of his penfilles to drawe a line, and asking the Paynters iudgment of his draught, It is doone (quoth Apelles) like a King: meaning indeede it was drawen as he pleased, but was nothing lesse then good workmanshippe. My selfe in like sort, taking vppon me, to make a draught of English Poetry, and requesting your worshipps censure of the same, you wyll perhaps gyue me thys verdict, It was doone like a Scholler, meaning, as I could, but indeede more like to a learner, then one through grounded in Poeticall workmanship.

Alexander in drawing his lyne, leaned sometime too hard, otherwhyle too soft, as neuer hauing beene apprentice to the Arte: I in drawing this Poeticall discourse, make it some where to straight (leauing out the cheefe coloures and ornaments of Poetry) in an other place to wyde (stuffing in peeces little pertinent to true Poetry) as one neuer acquainted wyth the learned Muses. What then? as he being a king, myght meddle in what Scyence him listed, though therein hee had no skyll: so I beeing a learner, wyll trye my cunning in some parts of Learning, though neuer so simple.

Nowe, as for my faucie pressing vppon your expected fauor in crauing your iudgment, I beseech you let me

make thys excuse: that whereas true Gentilitie did neuer withdrawe her louing affection from Lady Learning, so I am perswaded, that your worshyppe cannot chuse, but continue your wonted fauourable benignitie towards all the indeuourers to learning, of which corporation I doo indeede professe my selfe one sillie member.

For sith the wryters of all ages, haue fought as an vndoubted Bulwarke and stedfast sauegarde the patronage of Nobilitie, (a shielde as sure as can be to learning) wherein to shrowde and safelye place their feuerall inuentions: why should not I seeke some harbour for my poore trauell to reste and staye vppon, beeing of it selfe vnable to shyft the carping cauilles and byting scornes of lewde controllers?

And in trueth, where myght I rather choose a sure defence and readye refuge for the same, then where I see perfecte Gentilitie, and nobleneffe of minde, to be fastie lyncked with excellencie of learning and affable courtesye? Moreover, adde thys to the ende of myne excuse: that I fende it into your sight, not as anie wyttie peece of worke that may delight you: but being a sleight somewhat compyled for recreation, in the intermyssions of my daylie businesse, (euen thys Summer Eueninges) as a token of that earnest and vnquenckable desyre I haue to shewe my selfe ductifull and welwylling towards you. VVhercunto I am continually enflamed more and more, when I consider eyther your fauourable freendshyppe vsed towards

The Epistle.

my selfe, or your gentle countenaunce shewed to my simple trauelles. The one I haue tryed in that homely translation I presented vnto you: the other I finde true in your curteous putting to my trust, and dooing me so great honesty and credite, with the charge of these toward young Gentlemen your sonnes.

To which pregnant ympes of right excellent hope, I would I were able, or you myght haue occasion to make triall of my louing minde: who shoulde well perceyue my selfe to remayne vnto them a faythfull and trusty Achates, euen so farre as my wealth my woe, my power or perrill, my penne or witte, my health or lyfe may serue to ferche myne ability.

Huge heapes of wordes I myght pyle together to trouble you withall: eyther of my selfe or of my dooinges, (as some doo) or of your worshyppes commendable vertues (as the moste doo) But I purposely chuse rather to let passe the spreading of that worthy fame which you haue euer deferred, then to runne in suspicion of fawning flattery which I euer abhorred.

*Therefore once againe crauing your gentle pardon,
and patience in your ouerlooking thys rude
Epistle: and wysching more happineffe then
my penne can expresse to you and your
whole retinewe, I rest.*

(.·.)

Your worshyppes faithfull

Seruant. VV. VV.

20 A Preface to the notable
Poets of Englande.



Mong the innumerable fortes of
lyfhe Bookes, and infinite fa-
printed pamphlets, wherewith
Country is pestered, all full
stuffed, and euery study full
the greatest part I thinke
one kinde, are such as are
meere Poeticall, or which tende in some respec-
either in matter or forme) to Poetry. Of such
therefore, sith I haue bene one, that haue
desire to reade not the fewest, and because
argument, which men of great learning haue
sure to handle, or at least hauing to doo with
serious matters doo least regarde: If I write som-
concerning what I thinke of our English Poets,
uenture to sette downe my simple iudgement of
Poetrie, I trust the learned Poets will giue me
and vouchsafe my Booke passage, as beeing
rudenesse thereof no preiudice to their noble
but euen (as my intent is) an *instar cotis* to stirre
some other of meete abilitie, to bestowe trauell
matter: whereby I thinke wee may not onelie
meanes which wee yet want, to discern between
writers and badde, but perhappes also challeng
the rude multitude of rusticall Rymers, who
called Poets, the right practise and orderly co-
true Poetry.

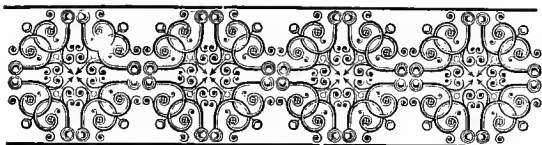
manie, that where as all kinde of good learning, haue aspyred to royall dignitie and statelie grace in our English tongue, being not onelie founded, defended, maintained, and enlarged, but also purged from faultes, weeded of errours, and polished from barbarousnes, by men of great authoritie and iudgement: onelie Poetrie hath founde fewest frends to amende it, those that can, referuing theyr skyll to themselues, those that cannot, running headlong vppon it, thinking to garnish it with their deuises, but more corrupting it with fantastickall errours. VVhat shoulde be the cause, that our English speeche in some of the wyfest mens iudgements, hath neuer attained to anie sufficient ripenes, nay not ful auoided the reproch of barbarousnes in Poetry? the rudenes of the Countrey, or basenesse of wytt: or the course *Dialect* of the speeche? experience vtterlie disproueth it to be anie of these: what then? surely the canckred enmitie of curious custome: which as it neuer was great freend to any good learning, so in this hath it grounded in the most, such a negligent perswasion of an impossibilitie in matching the best, that the finest witts and most diuine heades, haue contented themselues with a base kinde of fingering: rather debasing theyr faculties, in setting forth theyr skyll in the courttest manner, then for breaking custome, they would labour to adorne their Countrey and aduaunce their style with the highest and most learnedst toppe of true Poetry. The rudenes or vnaptnesse of our Countrey to be either none or no hinderaunce, if reformation were made accordingle, the exquisite excellency in all kindes of good learning nowe flourishing among vs, inferiour to none other nation, may sufficiently declare.

That there be as sharpe and quicke wittes in England as euer were among the peerelesse Grecians, or renowned Romaines, it were a note of no witte at all in me to deny. And is our speeche so course, or our phraze so harsh, that Poetry cannot therein finde a wayne whereby it may appeare like it selfe? why should we think so basely of this? rather then of her sister, I meane Rhetoricall *Eloquution*, which as they were by byrth Twyns, by kinde the same, by originall of one descent: so no doubt, as Eloquence hath founde such fauoures, in the English tongue, as she frequenteth not any more gladly: so would Poetrye if there were the like welcome and entertainment gyuen her by our English Poets, without question aspyre to wonderfull perfection, and appeare farre more gorgeous and delectable among vs. Thus much I am bolde to say in behalfe of Poetrie, not that I meane to call in question the reuerend and learned workes of Poetrie, written in our tongue by men of rare iudgement, and most excellent Poets: but euen as it were by way of supplication to the famous and learned Lawreat Masters of Englande, that they would but consult one halfe howre with their heauenly Muse, what credite they might winne to theyr natiue speeche, what enormities they might wipe out of English Poetry, what a fitte vaine they might frequent, wherein to shewe forth their worthie faculties: if English Poetrie were truely reformed, and some perfect platforme or *Profodia* of versifying were by them ratified and sette downe: eyther in imitation of Greekes and Latines, or where it would skant abyde the touch of theyr Rules, the like obseruations selected and established by the naturall affectation of the speeche. Thus much I say, not to perswade you that

are the fauourers of Engliſhe Poetry but to mooue it to you: beeing not the firſte that haue thought vpon this matter, but one that by cōſent of others, haue taken vppon me to lay it once again in your wayes, if perhaps you may ſtumble vppon it, and chance to looke ſo lowe from your diuine cogitations, when your Muſe mounteth to the ſtarres, and ranſacketh the Spheres of heauen: whereby perhaps you may take compaſſion of noble Poetry, pittifullie mangled and defaced, by rude ſmatterers and barbarous immitatours of your worthy ſtudies. If the motion bee worthy your regard it is enough to mooue it, if not, my wordes woulde ſimply preuaile in perſwading you, and therefore I reſt vppon thys onely requeſt, that of your courteſies, you wyll graunt paſſage, vnder your fauourable corrections, for this my ſimple cenſure of Engliſh Poetry, wherein if you pleaſe to runne it ouer, you ſhall knowe breefely myne opinion of the moſt part of your accuſtomed

Poets and particularly, in his place, the lyttle
ſomewhat which I haue ſifted out of my
weake brayne concerning thys
reformed verſifying.

VV: VV:



A Discourse of English Poetrie.



Intending to write some discourse of English Poetrie, I thinke it not amysse if I speake something generally of Poetrie, as, what it is, whence it had the beginning, and of what estimation it hath alwayes beene and ought to be among al sorts of people. Poetrie called in Greeke *ποιησια*, beeing deriued from the Verbe *ποιεω*, which signifieth in Latine *facere*, in English, to make, may properly be defined, the arte of making: which word as it hath alwaies beene especially vsed of the best of our English Poets, to expresse ye very faculty of speaking or wryting Poetically, so doth it in deede containe most fitly the whole grace and property of the same, ye more fullye and effectually then any other English Verbe. That Poetry is an Arte, (or rather a more excellent thing then can be containyd wythin the compasse of Arte) though I neede not stande long to prooue, both the witnes of *Horace*, who wrote *de arte Poetica*, and of *Terence*, who calleth it *Artem Muscam*, and the very naturall property thereof may sufficiently declare: The beginning of it as appeareth by *Plato*, was of a vertuous and most deuout purpose,

A Discourse of

who witneffeth, that by occafion of meeting of a great company of young men, to folemnize ye feafts which were called *Panegyria*, and were wont to be celebrated euery fift yeere, there, they that were moft pregnant in wytt, and indued with great gyfts of wyfedome and knowledge in Muficke about the reft did vfe commonly to make goodly verfes, meafured according to the fweeteft notes of Muficke, containing the prayfe of fome noble vertue, or of immortalitie, or of fome fuch thing of greateft eftimation: which vnto them feemed, fo heauenly and ioyous a thing, that, thinking fuch men to be infpyrde with fome diuine inftinct from heauen, they called them *Vates*. So when other among them of the fineft wits, and apteft capacities beganne in imitation of thefe to frame ditties of lighter matters, and tuning them to the ftroke of fome of the pleafantefte kind of Muficke, then began there to grow a diftinction and great diuerfity betweene makers and makers. Whereby (I take it) beganne thys difference: that they which handled in the audience of the people, graue and neceffary matters, were called wife men or eloquent men, which they meant by *Vates*: and the reft which fange of loue matters, or other lighter deuifes alluring vnto pleafure and delight, were called *Poetae* or makers. Thus it appeareth, both Eloquence and Poetrie to haue had their beginning and originall from thefe exercifes, beeing framed in fuch fweete meafure of fentences and pleafant harmonie called *Πῆμος*, which is an apt compofition of wordes or claufes, drawing as it were by force ye hearers eares euen whether foeuer it lyfeth: that *Plato* affirmeth therein to be contained *λογτεία* an inchauntment, as it were to perfwade them anie thing whether they would or no. And heerehence is fayde, that men were firft withdrawne from a wyld and fauadge kinde of life, to ciuillity and gentlenes, and ye right knowledge of humanity by the force of this meafurable or tunable fpeaking.

This opinion fhall you finde confirmed throughout

the whole workes of *Plato* and *Aristotle*. And that such was the estimation of this Poetry at those times, that they supposed all wisedome and knowledge to be included mystically in that diuine instinction, wherewith they thought their *Vates* to bee inspyred. Wherevpon, throughout the noble workes of those most excellent Philosophers before named, are the authorities of Poets very often alledged. And *Cicero* in his *Tusculane* questions is of that minde, that a Poet cannot expresse verses abundantly, sufficiently, and fully, neither his eloquence can flowe pleasauntly, or his wordes founde well and plenteously, without celestially instinction: which Poets themselues doo very often and gladlie witness of themselues, as namely *Ouid* in. 6. *Fausto: Est deus in nobis Agitante callefcimus illo. etc.* Wherevnto I doubt not equally to adioyne the authoritye of our late famous English Poet, who wrote the *Sheepheards Calender*, where lamenting the decay of Poetry, at these dayes, faith most sweetely to the same.

Then make thee winges of thine aspyring wytt,
And whence thou camest flye back to heauen apace. etc.

Whose fine poeticall witt, and most exquisite learning, as he shewed abundantly in that peece of worke, in my iudgment inferiour to the workes neither of *Theocritus* in Greeke, nor *Virgill* in Latine, whom hee narrowly immitateth: so I nothing doubt, but if his other workes were common abroade, which are as I thinke in ye close custodie of certaine his freends, we should haue of our owne Poets, whom wee might matche in all respects with the best. And among all other his workes whatsoever, I would wysh to haue the sight of hys *English Poet*, which his freend *E. K.* did once promise to publishe, which whether he performed or not, I knowe not, if he did, my happe hath not bene so good as yet to see it.

But to returne to the estimation of Poetry. Besides ye great and profitable fruites contained in Poetry, for

the instruction of manners and precepts of good life (for that was cheefly respected in the first age of Poetry) this is also added to the eternall commendations: of that noble faculty: that Kinges and Princes, great and famous men, did euer encourage, mayntaine, and reward Poets in al ages: because they were thought onely to haue the whole power in their handes, of making men either immortally famous for their valiaunt exploytes and vertuous exercises, or perpetually infamous for their vicious liues. Wherevppon it is said of *Achilles*, that this onely vantage he had of *Hector*, that it was his fortune to be extolled and renowned by the heauenly verse of *Homer*. And as *Tully* recordeth to be written of *Alexander*, that with natural teares he wept ouer *Achilles* Tombe, in ioy that he conceiued at the consideration, howe it was his happe to be honoured wyth so diuine a worke, as *Homers* was. *Aristotle*, a most prudent and learned Philosopher, beeing appointed Schoolemaster to the young Prince *Alexander*, thought no worke so meete to be reade vnto a King, as the worke of *Homer*: wherein the young Prince being by him instructed throughly, found such wonderfull delight in the fame when hee came to maturity, that hee would not onely haue it with him in all his iourneyes, but in his bedde also vnder his pyllowe, to delight him and teache him both nights and dayes. The fame is reported of noble *Scipio*, who finding the two Bookes of *Homer* in the spoyle of Kyng *Darius*, esteemed them as wonderfull precious Iewelles, making one of them his companion for the night, the other for the day. And not onely was he thus affected to yat one peece or parte of Poetry, but so generally he loued the professors thereof, that in his most ferious affayres, and hottest warres against *Numantia* and *Carthage* he could no whitte be without that olde Poet *Ennius* in his company. But to speake of all those noble and wyfe Princes, who bare speciall fauour and countenance to Poets, were tedious, and would require a rehearfall of all such, in whose time there grewe any to credite and

estimation in that faculty. Thus farre therefore may suffice for the estimation of Poets. Nowe I thinke most meete, to speake somewhat, concerning what hath beene the vse of Poetry, and wherein it rightly consisted, and whereof consequently it obtayned such estimation.

To begin therefore with the first that was first worthe-lye memorable in the excellent gyft of Poetrye, the best wryters agree that it was *Orpheus*, who by the sweete gyft of his heauenly Poetry, withdrew men from raungyng vncertainly, and wandring brutishly about, and made them gather together, and keepe company, made houses, and kept fellowshippe together, who therefore is reported (as *Horace* sayth) to asswage the fiercenesse of Tygers, and moooue the harde Flynts. After him was *Amphion*, who was the first that caused Citties to bee builded, and men therein to liue decently and orderly according to lawe and right. Next, was *Tyrtaeus*, who began to practise warlike defences, to keepe back enemies, and saue themselues from inuasion of foes. In thys place I thinke were most conuenient to rehearse that auncient Poet *Pyndarus*: but of the certaine time wherein he flourished, I am not very certaine: but of the place where he continued moste, it shoulde seeme to be the City of *Thebes*, by *Plinie* who reporteth, that *Alexander* in sackng the same Cittie, woulde not suffer the house wherein he dwelt to be spoyled as all the rest were. After these was *Homer*, who as it were in one summe comprehended all knowledge, wisedome, learning, and pollicie, that was incident to the capacity of man. And who so liste to take viewe of hys two Bookes, one of his *Iliades*, the other his *Odissea*, shall thoroughly perceiue what the right vse of Poetry is: which indeede is to mingle profite with pleasure, and so to delight the Reader with pleasantnes of hys Arte, as in ye meane time, his mind may be well instructed with knowledge and wisedome. For so did that worthy Poet frame those his two workes, that in reading the first, that is his *Iliads*, by declaring and setting forth so liuely the Grecians assembly against

Troy, together with their prowesse and fortitude against their foes, a Prince shall learne not onely courage, and valiantnesse, but discretion also and pollicie to encounter with his enemies, yea a perfect forme of wyse consultations, with his Captaines, and exhortations to the people, with other infinite commodities.

Agayne, in the other part, wherein are described the manifold and dangerous adventures of *Ulysses*, may a man learne many noble vertues: and also learne to escape and auoyde the subtyll practises, and perillous entrappings of naughty persons: and not onely this, but in what sort also he may deale to knowe and perceiue the affections of those which be neere vnto him, and most familiar with him, the better to put them in trust with his matters of waight and importaunce. Therefore I may boldly sette downe thys to be the truest, auncientest and best kinde of Poetry, to direct ones endeouour alwayes to that marke, that with delight they may euermore adioyne commoditie to theyr Readers: which because I grounde vpon *Homer* the Prince of all Poets, therefore haue I alledged the order of his worke, as an authority sufficiently proouing this assertion.

Nowe what other Poets which followed him, and beene of greatest fame, haue doone for the moste parte in their feuerall workes I wyll briefly, and as my slender ability wyll serue me declare. But by my leaue, I must content my selfe to speake not of all, but of such as my selfe haue seene, and beene best acquainted withall, and those not all nor the moste part of the auncient Grecians, of whom I know not how many there were, but these of the Latinists, which are of greatest fame and most obuius among vs.

Thus much I can say, that *Aristotle* reporteth none to haue greatly flourished in Greece, at least wyfe not left behynd them any notable memoriall, before the time of *Homer*. And *Tully* sayth as much, that there were none wrytt woorth the reading twyce in the Romaine tongue, before ye Poet *Ennius*. And surely

as the very summe or cheefest effence of Poetry, dyd alwayes for the most part consist in delighting the readers or hearers wyth pleasure, so as the number of Poets increased, they styll' inclyned thys way rather then the other, so that most of them had speciall regarde, to. the pleasantnesse of theyr fine conceytes, whereby they might drawe mens mindes into admiration of theyr inuentions, more then they had to the profite or commoditie that the Readers shoulde reape by their works. And thus as I suppose came it to passe among them, that for the most part of them, they would not write one worke contayning some serious matter: but for the same they wold likewise powre foorth as much of some wanton or laciuous inuention. Yet some of the auncientest sort of Grecians, as it seemeth were not so much disposed to vayne delectation: as *Aristotle* sayth of *Empedocles*, that in hys iudgment he was onely a naturall Philosopher, no Poet at all, nor that he was like vnto *Homer* in any thing but hys meeter, or number of feete, that is, that hee wrote in verse. After the time of *Homer*, there began the firste Comedy wryters, who compyled theyr workes in a better stile which continued not long, before it was expelled by penalty, for scoffing too broade at mens manners, and the priuie reuengements which the Poets vsed against their ill wyllers. Among these was *Eupolis*, *Cratinus*, and *Aristophanes*, but afterward the order of thys wryting Comedies was reformed and made more plausible: then wrytte *Plato*, *Comicus*, *Menander*, and I knowe not who more.

There be many most profitable workes, of like antiquity, or rather before them, of the Tragedy writers: as of *Euripides*, and *Sophocles*, then was there *Phocides* and *Theagines*, with many other: which Tragedies had their inuention by one *Thespis*, and were polished and amended by *Æschilus*. The profite or discommoditie which aryseth by the vse of these Comedies and Tragedies, which is most, hath beene long in controuerſie, and is fore vrged among vs at these dayes: what

I thinke of the same, perhaps I shall breefely declare anon.

Nowe concerning the Poets which wrote in homely manner, as they pretended, but indeede, with great pythe and learned iudgment, such as were the wryters of Sheepeheards talke and of husbandly precepts, who were among the Grecians that excelled, besides *Theocritus* and *Hesiodus* I know not, of whom the first, what profitable workes he left to posterity, besides hys *Idillia* or contentions of Goteheards, tending most to delight, and pretty inuentions, I can not tell. The other, no doubt for his Argument he tooke in hande, dealt very learnedly and profitably, that is, in precepts of Husbandry, but yet so as he myxed much wanton stufte among the rest.

The first wryters of Poetry among the Latines, shoulde seeme to be those, which excelled in the framing of Commedies, and that they continued a long time without any notable memory of other Poets. Among whom, the cheefest that we may see or heare tell of, were these. *Ennius, Cæcilius, Næuius, Licinius, Attilius, Turpitiuſ, Trabea, Lufcius, Plautus*, and *Terens*. Of whom these two last named, haue bene euer since theyr time most famous, and to these dayes are esteemed, as greate helpes and furtheraunces to the obtayning of good Letters. But heere cannot I staye to speake of the most famous, renowned and excellent, that euer writte among the Latine Poets, *P. Virgill*, who performed the very same in that tongue, which *Homer* had doone in Greeke: or rather better if better might as *Sex. Propert.* in his *Elegies* gallantly recordeth in his praise, *Nescio quid magis nascitur Iliade*. Vnder the person of *Aneas* he expresseth the valoure of a worthy Captaine and valiaunt Gouvernour, together with the perillous aduentures of warre, and pollicicke deuises at all assayes. And as he immitateth *Homer* in that worke, so dooth he likewyse followe the very steps of *Theocritus*, in his most pythy inuentions of his *Æglogues*: and likewyse *Hesiodus* in his *Georgicks* or bookes of

Husbandry, but yet more grauely, and in a more decent style. But notwithstanding hys sage grauity and wonderfull wisedome, dyd he not altogether restrayne his wayne, but that he would haue a cast at some wanton and skant comely an Argument, if indeede such trifles as be fathered vppon him were his owne. There followed after him, very many rare and excellent Poets, whereof the most part writt light matters, as *Epigrammes* and *Elegies*, with much pleasant dalliance, among whom may be accounted *Propertius*, *Tibullus*, *Catullus*, with diuers whom *Ouid* speaketh of in diuers places of his workes. Then are there two Hyistoricall Poets, no lesse profitable then delightfome to bee read: *Silius* and *Lucanus*: the one declaring the valiant prowesse of two noble Captaines, one enemie to the other, that is, *Scipio* and *Haniball*: the other likewise, the fortitude of two expert warriors (yet more lamentably then the other because these warres were ciuill) *Pompey* and *Cæsar*. The next in tyme (but as most men doo account, and so did he himselfe) the second in dignity, we will adioyne *Ouid*, a most learned, and exquisite Poet. The worke of greatest profite which he wrote, was his Booke of *Metamorphosis*, which though it consisted of fayned Fables for the most part, and poetically inuentions, yet beeing moralized according to his meaning, and the trueth of euery tale beeing discovered, it is a worke of exceeding wyfedom and sounde iudgment. If one lyst in like manner, to haue knowledge and perfect intelligence of those rytes and ceremonies which were obserued after the Religion of the Heathen, no more profitable worke for that purpose, then his booke *De fastis*. The rest of his dooinges, though they tende to the wayne delights of loue and dalliaunce (except his *Tristibus* wherein he bewayleth hys exile) yet surely are mixed with much good counsayle and profitable lessons if they be wisely and narrowly read. After his time I know no worke of any great fame, till the time of *Horace*, a Poet not of the smootheest style, but in sharpnesse of wytt inferiour to none, and one to whom

all the rest both before his time and since, are very much beholding. About the same time *Iuuenall* and *Perfius*, then *Martial*, *Seneca* a most excellent wryter of Tragedies, *Boetius*, *Lucretius*, *Statius*, *Val: Flaccus*, *Manilius*, *Aufonius*, *Claudian*, and many other, whose iust times and seuerall woorkes to speake of in this place, were neither much needefull, nor altogether tollerable, because I purposed an other argument. Onely I will adde two of later times, yet not farre inferiour to the most of them aforefayde, *Pallengenus*, and *Bap. Mantuanus*, and for a singuler gyft in a sweete Heroicall verse, match with them *Chr. Odam*. the Authour of our *Anglorum Prælia*. But nowe least I stray too farre from my purpose, I wyl come to our English Poets, to whom I would I were able to yeelede theyr deferred commendations: and affoorde them that censure, which I know many woulde, which can better, if they were nowe to write in my steede.

I know no memorable worke written by any Poet in our English speeche, vntill twenty yeeres past: where although Learning was not generally decayde at any time, especially since the Conquest of King *William* Duke of *Normandy*, as it may appeare by many famous works and learned bookes (though not of this kinde) wrytten by Bishoppes and others: yet surely that Poetry was in small price among them, it is very manifest, and no great maruayle, for euen that light of Greeke and Latine Poets which they had, they much contemned, as appeareth by theyr rude verifying, which of long time was vsed (a barbarous vse it was) wherein they conuerted the naturall property of the sweete Latine verse, to be a balde kinde of ryming, thinking nothing to be learnedly written in verse, which fell not out in ryme, that is, in wordes whereof the middle worde of eche verse should found a like with the last, or of two verses, the ende of both should fall in the like letters as thus.

O malè viuentes, versus audite sequentes.

And thus likewyse.

Propter hæc et alia dogmata doctorum

Reor esse melius et magis decorum:

Quisque suam habeat, et non proximorum.

This brutish Poetrie, though it had not the beginning in this Countrey, yet so hath it beene affected heere, that the infection thereof would neuer (nor I thinke euer will) be rooted vppe againe: I meane this tynkerly verse which we call ryme: Master *Afcham* sayth, that it first began to be followed and maintained among the *Hunnes* and *Gothians*, and other barbarous Nations, who with the decay of all good learning, brought it into *Italy*: from thence it came into *Fraunce*, and so to *Germany*, at last conueyed into *England*, by men indeede of great wisedome and learning, but not confiderate nor circumspect in that behalfe. But of this I must intreate more heereafter.

Henry the first King of that name in England, is wonderfully extolled, in all aunient Recordes of memory, for hys singuler good learning, in all kinde of noble studies, in so much as he was named by his surname *Beauleark*, as much to say, as *Fayreclerke* (whereof perhappes came ye name of *Fayreclowe*) what knowledge hee attained in the skyll of Poetry, I am not able to say, I report his name for prooffe, that learning in this Countrey was not little esteemed of at that rude time, and that like it is, among other studies, a King would not neglect the faculty of Poetry. The first of our English Poets that I haue heard of, was *Iohn Gower*, about the time of king *Rychard* the seconde, as it should seeme by certayne coniectures bothe a Knight, and questionlesse a singuler well learned man: whose workes I could wysh they were all whole and perfect among vs, for no doubt they contained very much deepe knowledge and delight: which may be gathered by his freend *Chawcer*, who speaketh of him oftentimes, in

diuer[s] places of hys workes. *Chawcer*, who for that excellent fame which hee obtayned in his Poetry, was alwayes accounted the God of English Poets (such a tytle for honours sake hath beene giuen him) was next after, if not equall in time to *Gower*, and hath left many workes, both for delight and profitable knowledge, farre exceeding any other that as yet euer since hys time directed theyr studies that way. Though the manner of hys stile may seeme blunte and course to many fine English eares at these dayes, yet in trueth, if it be equally pondered, and with good iudgment aduised, and confirmed with the time wherein he wrote, a man shall perceiue thereby euen a true picture or perfect shape of a right Poet. He by his delightfome wayne, so gulled the eares of men with his deuises, that, although corruption bare such sway in most matters, that learning and truth might skant bee admitted to shewe it selfe, yet without controuersie, myght hee gyrd at the vices and abuses of all states, and gawle with very sharpe and eger inuentions, which he did so learnedly and pleasantly, that none therefore would call him into question. For such was his bolde spyrit, that what enormities he saw in any, he would not spare to pay them home, eyther in playne words, or els in some prety and pleasant couert, that the simplest might espy him.

Neere in time vnto him was *Lydgate* a Poet, surely for good proportion of his verse, and meetely currant stile, as the time afforded comparable with *Chawcer*, yet more occupied in superstitious and odde matters, then was requesite in so good a wytt: which, though he handled them commendably, yet the matters themselves beeing not so commendable, hys estimation hath bene the lesse. The next of our aunient Poets, that I can tell of, I suppose to be *Pierce Ploughman*, who in hys dooinges is somewhat harsh and obscure, but indeede a very pithy wryter, and (to hys commendation I speake it) was the first that I haue seene, that obserued ye quantity of our verse without the curiosity of Ryme.

Since these I knowe none other tyll the time of

Skelton, who writ in the time of Kyng *Henry* the eyght, who as indeede he obtayned the Lawrell Garland, fo may I wyth good ryght yeelede him the title of a Poet: hee was doubtles a pleafant conceyted fellowe, and of a very fharpe wytte, exceeding bolde, and would nyppe to the very quicke where he once fette holde. Next hym I thynke I may place mafter *George Gascoyne*, as painefull a Souldier in the affayres of hys Prince and Country, as he was a wytty Poet in his wryting: whose commendations, becaufe I found in one of better iudgment then my felfe, I wyl fette downe hys wordes, and fuppreffe myne owne, of hym thus wryteth *E. K.* vppon the ninth *Æglogue* of the new Poet.

Mafter *George Gascoyne* a wytty Gentleman and the very cheefe of our late rymers, who and if fome partes of learning wanted not (albeit is well knowne he altogether wanted not learning) no doubt would haue attayned to the excellencye of thofe famous Poets. For gyfts of wytt, and naturall promptnes appeare in him abundantly. I might next fpeake of the dyuers workes of the olde Earle of *Surrey*: of the *L. Vaus*, of *Norton*, of *Bristow*, *Edwardes*, *Tuffer*, *Churchyard*. *VVyl: Hunnis: Haiwood: Sand: Hyll: S. Y. M. D.* and many others, but to fpeake of their feuerall gyfts, and abundant skyll fhewed forth by them in many pretty and learned workes, would make my difcoursfe much more tedious.

I may not omitte the deferued commendations of many honourable and noble Lordes, and Gentlemen, in her Maiefties Courte, which in the rare deuifes of Poetry, haue beene and yet are moft excellent skyllfull, among whom, the right honourable Earle of *Oxford* may challenge to him felfe the tytle of ye moft excellent among the reft. I can no longer forget thofe learned Gentlemen which tooke fuch profitable paynes in translating the Latine Poets into our Englilh tongue, whose desertes in that behalfe are more then I can vtter. Among thefe, I euer efteemed, and while I lyue, in my conceyt I fhall account Mafter *D. Phaer*: without doubt

the best: who as indeede hee had the best peece of Poetry whereon to sette a most gallant verse, so performed he it accordingly, and in such fort, as in my conscience I thinke would scarcely be doone againe, if it were to doo again. Notwithstanding, I speak it but as myne own fancy, not preiudiciall to those that list to thinke otherwyse. Hys worke whereof I speake, is the englisshing of *Aeneidos* of *Virgill*, so farre forth as it pleased God to spare him life, which was to the halfe parte of the tenth Booke, the rest beeing since wyth no lesse commendations finished, by that worthy scholler and famous Phisition Master *Thomas Twyne*.

Equally with him may I well adioyne Master *Arthur Golding*, for hys labour in englisshing *Ouids Metamorphosis*, for which Gentleman, surely our Country hath for many respects greatly to gyue God thanks: as for him which hath taken infinite paynes without ceasing, trauelleth as yet indefatigably, and is addicted without society, by his continuall labour, to profit this nation and speeche in all kind of good learning. The next, very well deserueth Master *Barnabe Googe* to be placed, as a painefull furtherer of learning: hys helpe to Poetry besides hys owne deuises, as the translating of *Pallagenius. Lodiace. Abraham Flemming* as in many pretty Poesis of hys owne, so in translating hath doone to hys commendations. To whom I would heere adioyne one of hys name, whom I know to haue excelled, as well in all kinde of learning as in Poetry most especially, and would appeare so, if the dainty morfelles, and fine poetically inuentions of hys, were as common abroad as I knowe they be among some of hys freendes. I wyl craue leaue of the laudable Authors of *Seneca* in English, of the other partes of *Ouid*, of *Horace*, of *Mantuan*, and diuers other, because I would hasten to ende thys rehearfall, perhappes offensyue to some, whom eyther by forgetfulnes, or want of knowledge, I must needes ouer passe.

And once againe, I am humbly to desire pardon of the learned company of Gentlemen Schollers, and

acc. to Arthur, referring George
p. 6, George Junr. 1568 a translation
of 3 books of Marcellus Palingenius, the Zodiacke of Life

students of the Vniuersities, and Innes of Courte, yf I omitte theyr feuerall commendations in this place, which I knowe a great number of them haue worthely deserued, in many rare deuises, and singuler inuentions of Poetrie: for neither hath it beene my good happe, to haue seene all which I haue hearde of, neyther is my abyding in such place, where I can with facility get knowledge of their workes.

One Gentleman notwithstanding among them may I not ouerslyppe, so farre reacheth his fame, and so worthy is he, if hee haue not already, to weare the Lawrell wreathe, Master *George VVhetstone*, a man singularly well skyled in this faculty of Poetrie: To him I wyl ioyne *Anthony Munday*, an earnest traueller in this arte, and in whose name I haue seene very excellent workes, among which surely, the most exquisite vaine of a witty poeticall heade is shewed in the sweete sobs of Sheepehardes and Nymphes: a worke well worthy to be viewed, and to bee esteemed as very rare Poetrie. With these I may place *John Graunge, Knyght, VVylmott, Darrell, F. C. F. K. G. B.* and many other, whose names come not nowe to my remembraunce.

This place haue I purposely referued for one, who if not only, yet in my iudgement principally deserueth the tytle of the rightest English Poet, that euer I read: that is, the Author of the Sheepehardes Kalender, intituled to the woorthy Gentleman Master *Phillip Sydney*, whether it was Master *Sp.* or what rare Scholler in Pembroke Hall foeuer, because himself and his freendes, for what respect I knowe not, would not reueale it, I force not greatly to fette downe: forry I am that I can not find none other with whom I might couple him in this *Catalogue*, in his rare gyft of Poetry: although one there is, though nowe long since, seriously occupied in grauer studies, (Master *Gabriell Haruey*) yet, as he was once his most special freende and fellow Poet, so because he hath taken such paynes, not onely in his Latin Poetry (for which he enioyed great commendations of the best both in iudgment and dignity in

thys Realme) but also to reforme our English verse, and to beautify the same with braue deuises, of which I thinke the cheefe lye hidde in hatefull obscurity: therefore wyll I aduenture to sette them together, as two of the rarest witts, and learnedst masters of Poetrie in England. Whose worthy and notable skyl in this faculty, I would wysh if their high dignities and serious busineses would permit, they would styll graunt to bee a furtheraunce to that reformed kinde of Poetry, which Master *Haruey* did once beginne to ratify: and surely in mine opinion, if hee had chofen some grauer matter, and handled but with halfe that skyll, which I knowe he could haue doone, and not powred it forth at a venture, as a thinge betweene iest and earnest, it had taken greater effect then it did.

As for the other Gentleman, if it would please him or hys freendes to let those excellent *Poemes*, whereof I know he hath plenty, come abroad, as his *Dreames*, his *Legends*, his *Court of Cupid*, his English Poet with other: he shoulde not onely stay the rude pens of my selfe and others, but also satiffye the thirstie desires of many which desire nothing more, then to see more of hys rare inuentions. If I ioyne to Master *Haruey* hys two Brethren, I am assured, though they be both busied with great and waighty callinges (the one a godly and learned Diuine, the other a famous and skyllfull Phisition) yet if they lysted to sette to their helping handes to Poetry, they would as much beautify and adorne it as any others.

If I let passe the vncountable rabble of ryming Ballet makers and compylers of sencelesse sonets, who be most busy, to stuffe euery stall full of grosse deuises and vnlearned Pamphlets: I trust I shall with the best fort be held excused. Nor though many such can frame an Alehouse song of fīue of fixe score verses, hobbling vpon some tune of a Northen lygge, or Robyn hooode, or La lubber etc. And perhappes obserue iust number of fillables, eyght in one line, fixe in an other, and there withall an A to make a iercke in the ende: yet if these

might be accounted Poets (as it is sayde some of them make meanes to be promoted to ye Lawrell) surely we shall shortly haue whole swarmes of Poets: and every one that can frame a Booke in Ryme, though for want of matter, it be but in commendations of Copper noses or Bottle Ale, wyll catch at the Garlande due to Poets: whose potticall poetickall (I should say) heades, I would wyshe, at their worshipfull comencements might in fleede of Lawrell, be gorgeously garnished with fayre greene Barley, in token of their good affection to our Englishe Malt. One speaketh thus homely of them, with whose words I wyll content my selfe for thys time, because I would not bee too broad wyth them in myne owne speeche.

In regarde (he meaneth of the learned framing the newe Poets workes which writt the Sheepehardes Calender.) I scorne and spue out the rakehell rout of our ragged Rymers, (for so themselfes vse to hunt the Letter) which without learning boaste, without iudgment iangle, without reason rage and fume, as if some instinct of poetickall fpyrite had newlie rauished them, aboue the meaneffe of common capacity. And beeing in the midst of all their brauery, suddainly for want of matter or of Ryme, or hauing forgotten their former conceyt, they seeme to be so payned and trauelled in theyr remembraunce, as it were a woman in Chyldbyrth, or as that same *Pythia* when the traunce came vpon her. *Os rabidum fera corda domans etc.*



Thus farre forth haue I aduentured to sette downe parte of my simple iudgement concerning those Poets, with whom for the most part I haue beene acquainted through myne owne reading: which though it may

seeme something impertinent to the tytle of my Booke, yet I trust the courteous Readers wyll pardon me, considering that poetry is not of that ground and antiquity in our English tongue, but that speaking thereof only as it is English, would seeme like vnto the drawing of ones pycture without a heade.

Nowe therefore by your gentle patience, wyll I wyth like breuity make tryall, what I can say concerning our Englishe Poetry, first in the matter thereof, then in the forme, that is, the manner of our verse: yet so as I must euermore haue recourse to those times and wryters, whereon the English poetry taketh as it were the discent and proprietye.

English Poetry therefore being considered according to common custome and auncient vse, is, where any worke is learnedly compiled in measurable speeche, and framed in wordes contayning number or proportion of iust syllables, delighting the readers or hearers as well by the apt and decent framing of wordes in equall resemblance of quantity, commonly called verse, as by the skyllfull handling of the matter whereof it is intreated. I spake somewhat of the beginning of thys measuring of wordes in iust number, taken out of *Plato*: and indeede the regarde of true quantity in Letters and syllables, seemeth not to haue been much vrged before the time of *Homer* in Greece, as *Aristotle* witnesseth.

The matters whereof verses were first made, were eyther exhortations to vertue, dehortations from vice, or the prayes of some laudable thing. From thence they beganne to vse them in exercises of immitating some vertuous and wise man at their feastes: where as some one shoulde be appointed to represent an other mans person of high estimation, and he sang fine ditties and wittie sentences, tunably to their Musick notes. Of thys sprang the first kinde of Comedyes, when they beganne to bring into these exercises, more persons then one, whose speeches were deuised Dyalogue wise, in aunswering one another. And of such like exer-

cifes, or as some wyll needes haue it, long before the other, began the first Tragedies, and were so called of τραγος, because the Actor when he began to play his part, slewe and offered a Goate to their Goddesse: but Commedies tooke their name of κομῆζειν καὶ ἀδειν *comesatum ire*, to goe a feasting, because they vsed to goe in procession with their sport about the Citties and Villages, mingling much pleasaunt myrth wyth theyr graue Religion, and feasting cheerefully together wyth as great ioy as might be deuifed. But not long after (as one delight draweth another) they began to inuent new persons and newe matters for their Comedies, such as the deuifers thought meetest to please the peoples vaine: And from these, they beganne to present in shapes of men, the natures of vertues and vices, and affections and qualities incident to men, as Iustice, Temperance, Pouerty, Wrathe, Vengeance, Sloth, Valiantnes, and such like, as may appeare by the auncient workes of *Aristophanes*. There grewe at last to be a greater diuersitye betweene Tragedy wryters and Comedy wryters, the one expressing onely sorrowfull and lamentable Hystories, bringing in the persons of Gods and Goddeses, Kynges and Queenes, and great states, whose parts were cheefely to expresse most miserable calamities and dreadfull chaunces, which increased worse and worse, tyll they came to the most wofull plight that might be deuifed.

The Comedies on the other side, were directed to a contrary ende, which beginning doubtfully, drewe to some trouble or turmoyle, and by some lucky chaunce alwayes ended to the ioy and appeasement of all parties. Thys distinction grewe as some holde opinion, by imitation of the workes of *Homer*: for out of his *Iliads*, the Tragedy wryters founde dreadfull euent, whereon to frame their matters, and the other out of hys *Odysssea* tooke arguments of delight, and pleasant ending after dangerous and troublesome doubt. So that, though there be many fortes of poetickall wrytings, and Poetry is not debarred from any matter, which

may be expresse^d by penne or speeche, yet for the better vnderstanding, and breefeer method of thys discourse, I may comprehend the same in three sortes, which are Comickall, Tragicall, Histori[c]all. Vnder the first, may be contained all such *Epigrammes*, *Elegies* and delectable ditties, which Poets haue deuised respecting onely the delight thereof: in the seconde, all dolefull complaynts, lamentable chaunces, and what foeuer is poetically expresse^d in sorrow and heauines. In the third, we may comprise, the reste of all such matters, which is indifferent betweene the other two, doo commonly occupy the pennes of Poets: such are the poetickall compyling of Chronicles, the freendly greetings betweene freendes, and very many sortes besides, which for the better distinction may be referred to one of these three kindes of Poetry. But once againe, least my discourse runne too farre awry, wyll I buckle my selfe more neerer to English Poetry: the vse wherof, because it is nothing different from any other, I thinke best to confirme by the testimony of *Horace*, a man worthy to beare authority in this matter: whose very opinion is this, that the perfect perfection of poetrie is this, to mingle delight with profit in such wyse, that a Reader might by his reading be partaker of bothe, which though I touched in the beginning, yet I thought good to alledge in this place for more confirmation thereof some of hys owne wordes. In his treatise *de arte Poetica*, thus hee sayth.

Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetæ,

Aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.

As much to saie: All Poets desire either by their works to profit or delight men, or els to ioyne both profitable and pleasant lessons together for the instruction of life.

And again

*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,
Lectorum delectando pariterque mouendo.*

That is, He misseth nothing of his marke which ioyneth profit with delight, as well delighting his Readers, as profiting them with counsell. And that whole Epistle which hee wryt of his Arte of Poetrie, among all the parts thereof, runneth cheefelie vpon this, that whether the argument which the Poet handleth, be of thinges doone, or sained inuentions, yet that they should beare such an Image of trueth, that as they delight they may likewise profit. For these are his wordes. *Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris.* Let thinges that are faigned for pleasures sake, haue a neere resemblance of ye truth. This precept may you perceiue to bee most duellie obserued of *Chawcer*: for who could with more delight, prescribe such wholsome counsaile and sage aduise, where he seemeth onelie to respect the profite of his lessons and instructions? or who coulde with greater wisdom, or more pithie skill, vnfold such pleasant and delightful matters of mirth, as though they respected nothing, but the telling of a merry tale? so that this is the very grounde of right poetrie, to giue profitable counsaile, yet so as it must be mingled with delight. For among all the auncient works of poetrie, though the most of them incline much to that part of delighting men with pleasant matters of small importaunce, yet euen in the vaineſt trifles among them, there is not forgotten some profitable counsaile, which a man may learne, either by flatte precepts which therein are prescribed, or by loathing such vile vices, the enormities whereof they largelie discover. For surelie, I am of this opinion, that the wantoneſt Poets of all, in their most laciuous workes wherein they busied themſelues, sought rather by that meanes to withdraw mens mindes (especiallie the best natures) from such foule vices, then to allure them to imbrace such beastly follies as they detected.

Horace speaking of, the generall dueties of Poets, sayth, *Os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta fugitat*, and manie more wordes concerning the profite to be hadde out of Poets, which because I haue some of them comprised into an English translation of that learned and famous knight, Sir *Thomas Elyot*, I wyll set downe his wordes.

The Poet fashioneth by some pleasant meane,
 The speeche of children stable and vnfore:
 Gulling their eares from wordes and thinges vncleane,
 Giuing to them precepts that are pure:
 Rebuking enuy and wrath if it dure:
 Thinges well donne he can by example commend,
 To needy and sicke he doth also his cure
 To recomfort if ought he can amende.

And manie other like wordes are in that place of *Horace* to like effect. Therefore poetrie, as it is of it selfe, without abuse is not onely not vnprofitable to the liues and studies of menne, but wonderfull commendable and of great excellencie. For nothing can be more acceptable to men, or rather to be wished, then sweete allurements to vertues, and commodious caueates from vices? of which Poetrie is exceeding plentifull, powring into gentle witts, not roughly and tirannicallie, but it is were with a louing authoritie. Nowe if the ill and vndecent prouocations, whereof some vnbridled witts take occasion by the reading of laciuous Poemes, bee obiected: such as are *Ouids* loue Bookes, and *Elegies*, *Tibullus*, *Catullus*, and *Martials* workes, with the Comedies for the most part of *Plautus* and *Terence*: I thinke it easily aunswered. For though it may not iustlie be denied, that these workes are indeede very Poetrie, yet that Poetrie in them is not the essentiall or formall matter or cause of the hurt therein might be affirmed, and although that reason should come short, yet this might be sufficient, that the workes themselues doo not corrupt, but the abuse of the vsers, who vndamaging their

owne dispositions, by reading the discoueries of vices, resemble foolish folke, who comming into a Garden without anie choise or circumspection tread downe the fairest flowers, and wilfullie thrust their fingers among the nettles.

And furelie to speake what I verelie thinke, this is mine opinion: that one hauing sufficient skyll, to reade and vnderstand those workes, and yet no staie of him selfe to auoyde inconueniences, which the remembraunce of vnlawfull things may stirre vppe in his minde, he, in my iudgement, is wholly to bee reputed a laciuous disposed personne, whom the recitall of sins whether it be in a good worke or a badde, or vppon what occasion foeuer, wyll not staie him but prouoke him further vnto them. Contrariwise, what good lessons the warie and skylful Readers shall picke out of the very worst of them, if they list to take anie heede, and reade them not of an intent to bee made the worfe by them, you may see by these fewe sentences, which the foresayd Sir *Thomas Elyott* gathered as he sayth at all aduentures, intreating of the like argument. First *Plautus* in commendations of vertue, hath such like wordes.

Verely vertue doth all thinges excell,
For if liberty, health liuing or substaunce,
Our Country our parents, and children doo well,
It hapneth by vertue: she doth all aduance,
Vertue hath all thinges vnder gouernaunce:
And in whom of vertue is founde great plenty,
Any thing that is good may neuer be dainty.

Terence, in *Eunucho* hath a profitable speeche, in blasing forth the fashions of harlots, before the eyes of young men. Thus sayth *Parmeno*.

In this thing I tryumphe in myne owne conceite,
That I haue found for all young men the way,
Howe they of Harlots shall know the deceite,
Their wits and manners: that thereby they may
Them perpetuallie hate, for so much as they

A Discourse of

Out of their owne houfes be freſh and delicate,
Feeding curiouſly: at home all day
Lying beggerlie in moſt wretched eſtate.

And many more wordes of the ſame matter, but which may be gathered by theſe fewe.

Quid, in his moſt wanton Bookes of loue, and the remedies thereof, hath very many pithie and wiſe ſentences, which a heedfull Reader may marke, and choſe out from ye other ſtuffe. This is one.

Tyme is a medicine of it ſhall profit,
VVine gyuen out of tyme may be annoyaunce.
And man ſhall irritat vice if he prohibitt,
VVhen time is not meete vnto his vtteraunce.
Therefore if thou yet by counſayle art recuperable,
Fly thou from idlenes and euer be ſtable.

Martiall, a moſt diſſolute wryter among all other, yet not without many graue and prudent ſpeeches, as this is one worthy to be marked of theſe fond youthes which intangle theyr wytt in raging loue, who ſtepping once ouer ſhoes in theyr fancyes, neuer reſt plunging till they be ouer head and eares in their follie.

If thou wylt eſchewe bitter aduenture,
And auoide the annoyance of a penſfull hart,
Set in no one perſon all wholly thy pleaſure,
The leſſe maiſt thou ioy, but the leſſe ſhalt thou ſmart.

Theſe are but fewe gathered out by happe, yet ſufficient to ſhewe that the wiſe and circumspect Readers may finde very many profitable leſſons, diſperſed in theſe workes, neither take any harme by reading ſuch Poemes, but good, if they wil themſelues. Neuertheles, I would not be thought to hold opinion, that the reading of them is ſo tollerable, as that there neede no reſpect to be had in making choiſe of readers or hearers: for if they be prohibited from the tender and vnconſtant wits of children and young mindes, I thinke

it not without great reason: neyther am I of that deuillish opinion, of which some there are, and haue beene in England, who hauing charge of youth to instruct them in learning, haue especially made choyse of such vnchildish stuffe, to reade vnto young Schollers, as it shoulde seeme of some filthy purpose, wyllfully to corrupt theyr tender mindes, and prepare them the more ready for theyr loathsome dyetts.

For as it is sayd of that impudent worke of *Luciane*, a man were better to reade none of it then all of it, so thinke I that these workes are rather to be kept altogether from children, then they should haue free liberty to reade them, before they be meete either of their owne discretion or by heedfull instruction, to make choyse of the good from the badde. As for our Englishe Poetrie, I know no such perillous peeces (except a fewe balde ditties made ouer the Beere potts, which are nothing lesse then Poetry) which anie man may vse and reade without damage or daunger: which indeede is lesse to be meruailed at among vs, then among the olde Latines and Greekes, considering that Christianity may be a staie to such illecibrous workes and inuentions, as among them (for their Arte sake) myght obtaine passage.

Nowe will I speake somewhat, of that princelie part of Poetrie, wherein are displaied the noble actes and valiant exploits of puiffaunt Capitaines, expert souldiers, wise men, with the famous reportes of auncient times, such as are the Heroycall workes of *Homer* in Greeke, and the heavenly verse of *Virgils Æneidos* in Latine: which workes, comprehending as it were the summe and ground of all Poetrie, are verelie and incomparably the best of all other. To these, though wee haue no English worke aunfwerable, in respect of the glorious ornaments of gallant handling: yet our auncient Chroniclers and reporters of our Countrey affayres, come most neere them: and no doubt, if such regarde of our English speeche, and curious handling of our verse, had beene long since thought vpon, and from time to

time been polished and bettered by men of learning, iudgement, and authority, it would ere this, haue matched them in all respects. A manifest example thereof, may bee the great good grace and sweete vayne, which Eloquence hath attained in our speeche, because it hath had the helpe of such rare and singuler wits, as from time to time myght still adde some amendment to the same. Among whom I thinke there is none that will gainsay, but Master *Iohn Lilly* hath deserued moste high commendations, as he which hath stept one steppe further therein then any either before or since he first began the wyttie discourse of his *Euphues*. Whose workes, surely in respecte of his singuler eloquence and braue composition of apt words and sentences, let the learned examine and make tryall thereof thorough all the partes of Rethoricke, in fitte phrases, in pithy sentences, in gallant tropes, in flowing speeche, in plaine sence, and surely in my iudgment, I thinke he wyll yeelde him that verdict, which *Quintilian* giueth of bothe the best Orators *Demosthenes* and *Tully*, that from the one, nothing may be taken away, to the other, nothing may be added. But a more neerer example to prooue my former assertion true (I meane ye meetnesse of our speeche to receiue the best forme of Poetry) may bee taken by conference of that famous translation of Master D. *Phaer* with the coppie it selfe, who soeuer please with courteous iudgement but a little to compare and marke them both together : and weigh with himselfe, whether the English tongue might by little and little be brought to the verye maiesty of a ryght Heroicall verse. First you may marke, how *Virgill* alwayes fitteth his matter in hande with wordes agreeable vnto the same affection, which he expresseth, as in hys Tragicall exclamations, what pathe[ticall] speeches he frameth? in his comfortable consolations, howe smoothly hys verse runnes? in his dreadfull battayles, and dreery byckermments of warres, howe bygge and boystrous his wordes found? and the like notes in all partes of his worke may be obserued. Which excellent

grace and comely kind of choyse, if the translatour hath not hitte very neere in our course English phraze iudge vprightly: wee wyll conferre some of the places, not picked out for the purpose, but such as I tooke turning ouer the Booke at randon. When the Troyans were so tost about in tempestious wether, caused by *Æolus* at *Iuno's* request, and driuen vpon the coaste of *Affrick* with a very neere scape of their liues: *Æneas* after hee had gone a land and kylled plenty of victuals for his company of Souldiours, hee deuided the same among them, and thus louinglie and sweetely he comforted them. *Æn. Lib. i.*

et dictis marentia pectora mulcet
O focii (neque ignari fumus ante malorum)
O passi grauiora: dabit deus his quoque finem
Vos et scyllæam rabiem, penitusque sonantes,
Accestis scopulos: vos et cyclopea saxa
Experti, reuocate animos, mæstumque timorem
Mittite, forsan et hæc olim meminisse iuuabit.
Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum
Tendimus in Latium: fedes ubi fata quietas
Ostendunt, illic fas regna refurgere troiæ.
Durate, et vosmet rebus seruate secundis.
Talia voce refert, curisque ingentibus æger
Spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem.

Translated thus.

And then to cheere their heauy harts with these words he
him bent.
O Mates (quoth he) that many a woe haue bidden and
borne ere thys,
Worfe haue we seene, and this also shall end when Gods
wyll is.
Through *Sylla* rage (ye wott) and through the roaring
rocks we past,
Though *Cyclops* shore was full of feare, yet came we
through at last.

Plucke vppe your harts, and drive from thence both
feare and care away.

To thinke on this may pleasure be perhapps another day.
By paynes and many a daunger fore, by fundry chaunce
we wend,

To come to *Italy*, where we trust to find our resting ende:
And where the destinyes haue decreed *Troyes* Kingdome
est to ryse

Be bold and harden now your harts, take ease while ease
applies

Thus spake he tho, but in his hart huge cares had him
opprest,

Dissembling hope with outward eyes full heauy was his
brest.

Againe, marke the wounding of *Dido* in loue with
Eneas, with howe choyse wordes it is pithily described,
both by the Poet and the translator in the beginning
of the fourth booke.

*At Regina graui iam dudum saucia cura
Volnus alii venis, et caeco carpitur igni, etc.*

By this time perced fatte the Queene so fore with loues
desire,

Her wound in euery vayne she feedes, she fryes in
secrete fire.

The manhood of the man full oft, full oft his famous lyne
She doth reuolue, and from her thought his face cannot
vntwyne.

His countnaunce deepe she drawes and fixed fast she
beares in brest,

His words also, nor to her carefull hart can come no rest.

And in many places of the fourth booke is the same mat-
ter so gallantly profecuted in sweete wordes, as in mine
opinion the copy it selfe goeth no whit beyond it.

Compare them likewise in the woefull and lamentable

cryes of the Queene for the departure of *Aeneas*, towards
the ende of that Booke.

*Terque quaterque manu pectus percussa decorum
Fiauentisque abscissa comas, proh Iupiter, ibit ?
Hic ait, et nostris inluserit aduena Regnis ? etc.*

Three times her hands she bet, and three times strake her
comely brest,
Her golden hayre she tare and frantike like with moode
opprest,
She cryde, O *Iupiter*, O God, quoth she, and shall a goe?
Indeede? and shall a flowte me thus within my king-
dome so?
Shall not mine Armies out, and all my people them pursue?
Shall they not spoyle their shyps and burne them vp with
vengeance due?
Out people, out vpon them, follow fast with fires and
flames,
Set sayles aloft, make out with oares, in ships, in boates,
in frames.
What speake I? or where am I? what furies me doo
thus inchaunt?
O *Dydo*, wofull wretch, now destinyes fell thy head
dooth haunt.

And a little after preparing to kyll her owne selfe.

But *Dydo* quaking fierce with frantike moode and
grieffly hewe.
With trembling spotted cheekes, her huge attempting
to pursue.
Besides her selfe for rage, and towards death with
visage wanne,
Her eyes about she rolde, as redde as blood they
looked than.

At last ready to fall vpon *Aneas* fworde.

O happy (welaway) and ouer happy had I beene,
 If neuer Troian shyps (ahlas) my Country shore had seene.
 Thus sayd she wryde her head, and vnreuenged must
 we die?
 But let vs boldly die (quoth thee) thus, thus to death
 I ply.

Nowe likewise for the braue warlike phrafe and bygge
 founding kynd of thundring speeche, in the hotte skyr-
 mythes of battels, you may confer them in any of the
 last fīue Bookes: for examples sake, thys is one about
 the ninth Booke.

*Et clamor totis per propugnacula muris,
 Intendunt acies arcus, amentaue torquent.
 Sternitur omne solum telis, tum scutæ caucæque
 Dant sonitum flictu galeæ: pugna asper surgit? etc.*

A clamarous noyfe vpmounts on fortresse tops and
 bulwarks towres,
 They strike, they bend their bowes, they whirle from
 strings sharp shoting showres.
 All streetes with tooles are strowed, than helmets,
 skulles, with battrings marred.
 And shieldes dishyuering cracke, vpriseth roughnesse
 byckring hard.
 Looke how the tempest storme when wind out wraft-
 ling blowes at fouth,
 Raine ratling beates the grownde, or clowdes of haile
 from Winters mouth,
 Downe dashyng headlong driues, when God from skyes
 with griesly steuen,
 His watry showres outwings, and whirlwind clowdes
 downe breakes from heauen.

And so fourth much more of the like effect.

Onely one comparifon more will I defire you to marke at your leifures, which may ferue for all the reft, that is, the defcription of Fame, as it is in the 4. booke, towards the end, of which it followeth thus.

*Monstrum horrendum ingens cui quot sunt corpore plumæ
Tot vigilos oculi etc.*

Monfter gaffly great, for euery plume her carkaffe beares,
Like number learing eyes ſhe hath, like number
harkning eares,
Like number tongues, and mouthes ſhe waggēs, a
wondrous thing to ſpeake,
At midnight forth ſhee flies, and vnder ſhade her
found dooth ſqueake.
All night ſhe wakes, nor ſlumber ſweete doth take nor
neuer ſleepes.
By dayes on houſes tops ſhee fits or gates of Townes
ſhe keepes.
On watching Towres ſhe clymbes, and Citties great
ſhe makes agaft,
Both trueth and falſhood forth ſhe telles, and lyes
abroade doth caſt.

But what neede I to repeate any more places? there is not one Booke among the twelue, which wyll not yeelde you moſt excellent pleaſure in conſerring the tranſlation with the Coppie, and marking the gallant grace which our Engliſhe ſpeeche affoordeth. And in trueth the like comparifons, may you chooſe out through the whole tranſlations of the *Metamorphoſis* by Maſter *Golding* who (conſidering both their Coppyes) hath equally deſerued commendations for the beautifying of the Engliſh ſpeeche. It would be tedious to ſtay to rehearſe any places out of him nowe: let the other ſuffice to prooue, that the Engliſh tongue lacketh neyther variety nor currantneſſe of phraſe for any matter.



Wyll nowe speake a little of an other kinde of poetical writing, which might notwithstanding for the variablenesse of the argument therein vsually handled, bee comprehended in those kindes before declared: that is, the compyling *Eglogues*, as much to say as Goteheardes tales, because they bee commonly Dialogues or speeches framed or supposd betwene Sheepeheardes, Neteheardes, Goteheardes, or such like simple men: in which kind of writing, many haue obtained as immortall prayse and commendation, as in any other.

The cheefest of these is *Theocritus* in Greeke, next him, and almost the very same, is *Virgill* in Latin. After *Virgyl* in like sort writ *Titus Calphurnius* and *Baptista Mantuan*, wyth many other both in Latine and other languages very learnedlye. Although the matter they take in hand seemeth commonlie in appearaunce rude and homely, as the vsuall talke of simple clownes: yet doo they indeede vtter in the same much pleasaunt and profitable delight. For vnder these personnes, as it were in a cloake of simplicitie, they would eyther sette foorth the prayses of theyr freendes, without the note of flattery, or enueigh grieuously against abuses, without any token of bytternesse.

Somewhat like vnto these works, are many peeces of *Chawcer*, but yet not altogether so poetically. But nowe yet at ye last hath England hatched vppone Poet of this sorte, in my conscience comparable with the best in any respect: euen Master *Sp*: Author of the *Sheepeheardes Calender*, whose trauell in that peece of English Poetrie, I thinke verely is so commendable, as none of equall iudgment can yeelde him lesse prayse

for hys excellent skyll, and skylfull excellency shewed forth in the same, then they would to eyther *Theocritus* or *Virgill*, whom in mine opinion, if the courtesnes of our speeche (I meane the course of custome which he would not infringe) had beene no more let vnto him, then their pure natieue tongues were vnto them, he would haue (if it might be) surpasse them. What one thing is there in them so worthy admiration, whereunto we may not adioyne some thing of his, of equall desert? Take *Virgil* and make some little comparifon betweene them, and iudge as ye shall see cause.

Virgill hath a gallant report of *Augustus* couertly comprised in the first *Eglogue*: the like is in him, of her Maiestie, vnder the name of *Eliza*. *Virgill* maketh a braue coloured complaint of vnstedfast freendshyppe in the person of *Corydon*: the lyke is him in his 5 *Eglogue*. Agayne behold the pretty Pastorall contentions of *Virgill* in the third *Eglogue*: of him in ye eight *Eglogue*. Finally, either in comparifon with them, or respect of hys owne great learning, he may well were the Garlande, and steppe before ye best of all English Poets that I haue seene or hearde: for I thinke no lesse deserueth (thus sayth *E*, *K* in hys commendations) hys wittinesse in deuising, his pithinesse in vttering, his complaintes of loue so louely, his discourses of pleasure so pleasantly, his Pastoral rudenes, his Morral wyfenesse, his due obseruing of *decorum* euery where, in personages, in season, in matter, in speeche, and generally in all seemely simplicitie, of handling hys matter and framing hys wordes. The occasion of his worke is a warning to other young men, who being intangled in loue and youthful vanities, may learne to looke to themselues in time, and to auoide inconueniences which may breede if they be not in time preuented. Many good Morral lessons are therein contained, as the reuerence which young men owe to the aged in the second *Eglogue*: the cauate or warning to beware a subtil professor of

freendshippe in the fift *Eglogue*: the commendation of good Pastors, and shame and dispraise of idle and ambitious Gotehardes in the seauenth, the loofe and retchlesse luyng of Popish Prelates in the ninth. The learned and sweete complaynt of the contempt of learning vnder the name of Poetry in the tenth. There is also much matter vttered somewhat couertly, especially ye abuses of some whom he would not be too playne withall: in which, though it be not apparant to euery one, what hys speciall meaning was, yet so skilfully is it handled, as any man may take much delight at hys learned conueyance, and picke out much good sence in the most obscurest of it. Hys notable prayse deferued in euery parcell of that worke, because I cannot expresse as I woulde and as it should: I wyll cease to speake any more of, the rather because I neuer hearde as yet any that hath reade it, which hath not with much admiration commended it. One only thing therein haue I hearde some curious heades call in question: *viz*: the motion of some vnfauiery loue, such as in the sixt *Eglogue* he seemeth to deale withall (which say they) is skant allowable to English eares, and might well haue beene left for the Italian defenders of loathsome beastlines, of whom perhappes he learned it: to thys obiection I haue often aunswered and (I thinke truely) that theyr nyce opinion ouer shooteth the Poets meaning, who though hee in that as in other thinges, immitateth the auncient Poets, yet doth not meane, no more did they before hym, any disordered loue, or the filthy lust of the denillish *Pederastice* taken in the worse sence, but rather to shewe howe the dissolute life of young men intangled in loue of women, doo neglect the freendshyp and league with their olde freendes and familiers. Why (say they) yet he shold gyue no occasion of suspition, nor offer to the viewe of Christians, any token of such filthinesse, howe good soeuer hys meaning were: wherevnto I oppose the simple conceyte they haue of matters which concerne learning or wytt, wylling them to gyue

Poets leaue to vse theyr wayne as they see good: it is their foolyſh construction, not hys wryting that is blameable. Wee muſt preſcrybe to no wryters, (much leſſe to Poets) in what ſorte they ſhould vtter their conceyts. But thys wyll be better diſcuſſed by ſome I hope of better abillity.

One other ſorte of Poeticall wryters remaineth yet to bee remembred, that is, The precepts of Huſbandry, learnedly compiled in Heroycall verſe. Such were the workes of *Hefiodus* in *Greeke*, and *Virgils Georgickes* in Latine. What memorable worke hath bene handled in imitation of theſe by any English Poet, I know not, (ſaue onely one worke of M. *Tuſſer*, a peece ſurely of great wytt and experience, and wythal very prettilye handled) And I thinke the cauſe why our Poets haue not trauayled in that behalfe, is eſpecially, for that there haue bene alwayes plenty of other wryters that haue handled the ſame argument very largely. Among whom Maſter *Barnabe Googe*, in tranſlating and enlarging the moſt profitable worke of *Heresbachius*, hath deſerued much commendation, as well for hys faythfull compyling and learned increaſing the noble worke, as for hys wytty tranſlation of a good part of the *Georgickes* of *Virgill* into English verſe.

Among all the tranſlations, which hath bene my fortune to ſee, I could neuer yet finde that worke of the *Georgicks* wholly performed. I remember once Abraham Flemming in his conuerſion of the *Eglogues*, promiſed to tranſlate and publiſhe it: whether he dyd or not I knowe not, but as yet I heard not of it. I my ſelfe wott well I beſtowed ſome time in it*two or three yeeres ſince, turning it to that ſame English verſe, which other ſuch workes were in, though it were rudely: howe beit, I did it onely for mine owne vse, and vpon certayne reſpectes towards a Gentleman mine eſpeciall frende, to whom I was deſirous to ſhewe ſome token of duetifull good wyll, and not minding it ſhould goe farre abroad, conſidering howe ſlenderly I ranne it

ouer, yet since then, hath one gott it in keeping, who as it is told me, eyther hath or wyll vnaduisedly publishe it: which iniury though he meanes to doo me in myrth, yet I hope he wyll make me some suffycient recompence, or els I shall goe neere to watch hym the like or a worfe turne.

But concerning the matter of our Englysh wryters, lett thys suffice: nowe shall ye heare my simple skyl in what I am able to say concerning the forme and manner of our Englyshe verse.

The most vsuall and frequented kind of our English Poetry hath alwayes runne vpon, and to this day is obserued in such equall number of syllables, and likenes of wordes, that in all places one verse either immediatly, or by mutuall interposition, may be aunswerable to an other both in proportion of length, and ending of lynes in the same Letters. Which rude kinde of verse, though (as I touched before) it rather discrediteth our speeche, as borrowed from the *Barbarians*, then furnisheth the same with any comely ornament: yet beeing so ingrafted by custome, and frequented by the most parte, I may not vtterly disallowe it, least I should seeme to call in question the iudgement of all our famous wryters, which haue wonne eternall prayse by theyr memorable workes compyled in that verse.

For my part therefore, I can be content to esteeme it as a thing, the perfection whereof is very commendable, yet so as wyth others I could wysh it were by men of learning and ability bettered, and made more artificiall, according to the woorthines of our speeche.

The falling out of verses together in one like sounde, is commonly called in English, Ryme, taken from the Greeke worde *Ρυθμος*, which surely in my iudgment is verye abusiueely applyed to such a fence: and by thys, the vnworthineffe of the thing may well appeare, in that wanting a proper name, wherby to be called, it borroweth a word farre exceeding the dignitie of it,

and not appropriate to so rude or base a thing. For Ryme is properly, the iust proportion of a clause or sentence, whether it be in prose or meeter, aptly comprised together: wherof there is both an naturall and an artificiall composition, in any manner or kynde of speeche, eyther French, Italian, Spanish or English: and is proper not onely to Poets, but also to Readers, Oratours, Pleadars, or any which are to pronounce or speake any thing in publike audience.

The first begynning of Ryme (as we nowe terme it) though it be somewhat auncient, yet nothing famous. In Greece (they say) one *Symias Rhodias*, because he would be singuler in somthing, wryt poetically of the Fable, containyng howe *Iupiter* beeing in shape of a Swanne, begatte the Egge on Leda, wherof came Castor, Pollux, and Helena, whereof euery verse ended in thys Ryme, and was called therefore *ῥοιον* but thys foolyshe attempt was so contemned and dyspyed, that the people would neither admitte the Author nor Booke any place in memory of learning. Since that it was not hearde of, till ye time ye *Hunnes* and *Gothians* renued it agayne, and brought it into Italie. But howsoever or wheresoever it beganne, certayne it is, that in our English tongue it beareth as good grace, or rather better, then in any other: and is a faculty whereby many may and doo deserue great prayse and commendation, though our speeche be capable of a farre more learned manner of versifying, as I wyl partly declare heereafter.

There be three speciall notes necessary to be obserued in the framing of our accustomed English Ryme: the first is, that one meeter or verse be answerable to an other, in equall number of feete or syllables, or proportionable to the tune whereby it is to be reade or measured. The seconde, to place the words in such sorte, as none of them be wrested contrary to the naturall inclination or affectation of the same, or more truly ye true quantity thereof. The thyrd, to make them fall together mutually in Ryme, that is, in wordes

of like founde, but so as the wordes be not disordered for the Rymes sake, nor the fence hindered. These be the most principall obseruations, which I thinke requisite in an English verse: for as for the other ornaments which belong thereto, they be more properly belonging to the feuerall gyfts of skylfull Poets, then common notes to be prescribed by me: but somewhat perhaps I shall haue occasion to speake heereafter.

Of the kyndes of English verses which differ in number of syllables, there are almost infinite: which euery way alter according to hys fancy, or to the measure of that meeter, wherein it pleaseth hym to frame hys ditty. Of the best and most frequented I will rehearse some. The longest verse in length, which I haue seene vsed in English consisteth of sixteene syllables, each two verses ryming together, thus.

Wher vertue wants and vice abounds, there wealth is but a bayted hooke,
To make men swallow down their bane, before on danger deepe they looke.

Thys kynde is not very much vsed at length thus, but is commonly deuided, eche verse into two, whereof eche shal containe eyght syllables, and ryme crosse wyse, the first to the thyrd, and the second to the fourth, in this manner.

Great wealth is but a bayted hooke.
VVhere vertue wants, and vice abounds:
VVhich men deuoure before they looke,
So them in daungers deepe it drownes.

An other kynd next in length to thys, is, where eche verse hath fourteene syllables, which is the most accustomed of all other, and especially vsed of all the translatours of the Latine Poets for the most part thus.

My mind with furye fierce inflamde of late I know not howe,
Doth burne Parnassus hyll to see, adorning wyth Lawrell bowe.

Which may likewise and so it often is deuyled, eche

verse into two, to [the?] first hauing eyght fillables, the second fixe, wherof the two fixes shall alwayes ryme, and sometimes the eyghtes, sometimes not, according to the wyll of the maker.

My minde with furee fierce inflamde,
Of late I knowe not howe :
Doth burne *Pernaffus* hyll to fee,
Adorn'd wyth Lawrell bowe.

There are nowe wythin this compasse, as many sortes of verses as may be deuised differences of numbers: wherof some consist of equall proportions, some of long and short together, some of many rymes in one stasse (as they call it) some of crosse ryme, some of counter ryme, some ryming wyth one worde farre distant from another, some ryming euery thyrd or fourth word, and so likewyse all manner of dytties applyable to euery tune that may be sung or sayd, distinct from prose or continued speeche. To auoide therefore tedioufnesse and confusion, I wyll repeate onely the different sortes of verses out of the *Sheepehearde's Calender*, which may well serue to beare authoritie in thys matter.

There are in that worke twelue or thirteene fundry sorts of verses, which differ eyther in length, or ryme, of distinction of the stauess: but of them which differ in length or number of fillables not past fixe or seauen. The first of them is of tenne fillables, or rather fye feete in one verse, thus,

A Sheepeheards boy no better doo him call,
When Winters waftfull spight was almost spent.

This verse he vseth commonly in hys sweete playntes, and mornefull ditties, as very agreeable to such affections.

The second sort hath naturally but nyne syllables, and is a more rough or clownish manner of verse, vsed most commonly of him if you mark him in hys

fatyricall reprehensions, and his Sheepehardes homelyest talke, such as the second *Aglogue* is.

Ah for pittie wyll rancke Winters rage,
These bytter blasts neuer gynne to affwage.

The number of nine fillables in thys verse is very often altered, and so it may without any disgrace to the fame, especially where the speeche should be most clownish and simple, which is much obserued of hym.

The third kynd is a pretty rounde verse, running currantly together, commonly seauen fillables or sometime eyght in one verse, as many in the next, both ryming together: euery two hauing one the like verse after them, but of rounder wordes, and two of them likewyse ryming mutually. That verse expresseth notably, light and youthfull talke, such as is the thyrde *Aglogue*. betweene two Sheepehardes boys concerning loue.

Thomalin why fitten we fo
As weren ouerwent with woe
Vpon so fayre a morrowe?
The ioyous time now nigheth fast
That wyll allay this bitter blast
And flake the Winter sorrow.

The fourth fort containeth in eche stasse manie vnequall verses, but most sweetelie falling together: which the Poet calleth the tune of the waters fall. Therein is his song In prayse of *Eliza*.

Ye daintie Nymphes which in this blessed brooke
doo bathe your brest,
Forake your watric bowres and hether looke,
at my request.
And eke yee Virgins that on *Parnafs* dwell,
Whence floweth *Helicon* the learned Well,
helpe me to blaze
her woorthy praise
That in her sex doth all excell. etc.

The fift, is a deuided verse of twelue fillables into two verses, whereof I spake before, and seemeth most meete for ye handling of a Morrall matter, such as is the praise of good Pastors, and the dispraise of ill in the seauenth *Eglogue*.

The sixt kinde, is called a round, beeing mutuallie sung betweene two: one singeth one verse, the other the next, eche rymeth with himselfe.

Per. It fell vppon a holie eue

Ans. Hey ho holliday

Per. When holie fathers wont to shrieue,

Ans. Thus ginneth our Rondelay. etc.

The seauenth forte is a verie tragicall mournfull measure, wherein he bewayleth the death of some freend vnder the person of *Dydo*.

Vp then *Melpomene* the mournfullst Muse of nyne,
such cause of mourning neuer hadst afore:

Vp griesly ghostes, and vp my mournfull ryme:
matter of myrth now shalt thou haue no more.

Dydo my deere alas is dead,
Dead and lyeth wrapt in leade:

O heaue hearfe

Let streaming teares be powred out in flore

O carefull vearfe.

These fortes of verses for breuities sake haue I chofen foorth of him, whereby I shall auoide the tedious rehearfall of all the kindes which are vsed: which I thinke would haue beene vnpossible, seeing they may be altered to as manie formes as the Poets please: neither is there anie tune or stroke which may be sung or plaide on instruments, which hath not some poetical ditties framed according to the numbers thereof: some to Rogero, some to Trenchmore, to downe right Squire, to Galliardes, to Pauines, to Iygges, to Brawles, to all manner of tunes which euerie Fidler knowes better then my selfe, and therefore I will let them passe.

Againe, the diuerſities of the ſtaues (which are the number of verſes contained with the diuiſions or partitions of a ditty) doo often times make great differences in theſe verſes. As when one ſtaffe containeth but two verſes, or (if they bee deuided) foure: the firſt or the firſt couple hauing twelue ſyllables, the other fourteene, which verſifiers call Powlters meaſure, becauſe ſo they tall[i]e their wares by dozens. Alſo, when one ſtaffe hath manie verſes, whereof eche one rimeth to the next, or mutuallie croſſe, or diſtant by three, or by foure, or ended contrarye to the beginning, and a hundred fortes, whereof to ſhewe ſeueral examples, would bee too troubleſome: nowe for the ſecond point.

The naturall courſe of moſt Engliſh verſes ſeemeth to run vpon the olde Iambicke ſtroake, and I may well thinke by all likelihoode, it had the beginning thereof. For if you marke the right quantitie of our vſuall verſes, ye ſhall perceiue them to containe in found ye very propertie of Iambick feete, as thus.

u — u — u — u — u — u — u —
I that my ſlender oaten pipe in verſe was wont to founde:

For tranſpoſe anie of thoſe feete in pronouncing, and make ſhort either the two, foure, fixe, eight, tenne, twelue ſyllable, and it will (doo what you can) fall out very abſurdly.

Againe, though our wordes can not well bee forced to abyde the touch of *Position* and other rules of *Proſodia*, yet is there ſuch a naturall force or quantity in eche worde, that it will not abide anie place but one, without ſome foule diſgrace: as for example try anie verſe, as thys,

u — u — u — u — u — u — u —
Of ſhapes tranſformdeto bodies ſtrange I purpoſeto intreate.

Make the firſt ſyllable long, or the third, or the fifth and ſo forth: or contrariwiſe make the other ſyllables to admitte the ſhortneſſe of one of them places, and ſee

what a wonderfull defacing it wil be to the wordes, as thus.

— u — u — u — u — u — u — u — u
Of strange bodies transformd to shapurpose I to intreat.

So that this is one especiall thing to be taken heede of in making a good English verse, that by displacing no worde bee wrested against his naturall propriety, wherevnto you shal perceyue eche worde to be affected, and may easilie discern it in wordes of two fillables or aboue, though some there be of indifferencie, that wyll stand in any place. Againe, in chouching the whole sentence, the like regarde is to be had, that wee exceede not too boldly in placing the verbe out of his order, and too farre behinde the nowne: which the necessitie of Ryme may oftentimes vrge. For though it be tollerable in a verse to sette wordes so extraordinarily as other speeche will not admitt, yet heede is to be taken, least by too much affecting that manner, we make both the verse vnpleasant and the sence obscure. And sure it is a wonder to see the folly of manie in this respect, that vse not onely too much of thys ouerthwart placing, or rather displacing of wordes, in theyr Poemes and verses, but also in theyr prose or continued writings: where they thinke to rolle most smoothlie, and flow most eloquently, there by this means, come forth theyr sentences dragging at one Authors tayle as they were tyde together with poynts, where often you shal tarrie (scratching your heade) a good space before you shal heare hys principall verbe or speciall word, leaste hys sining grace, which in his sentence is contained should be lesse, and his speeche seeme nothing poetically.

The thyrd obseruation is, the Ryme or like ending of verses: which though it is of least importance, yet hath won such credite among vs, that of all other it is most regarded of the greatest part of Readers. And surely as I am perswaded, the regarde of wryters to this, hath bene the greatest decay of that good order of versifying, which might ere this haue bene established

in our speeche. In my iudgment, if there be any ornament in the same, it is rather to be attributed to the plentifull fulnesse of our speeche, which can affoorde ryming words sufficient for the handling of any matter, then to the thing it selfe for any beautifying it bringeth to a worke: which might bee adorned with farre more excellent collours then ryming is. Notwithstanding I cannot but yeelde vnto it (as custome requireth) the deferred prayfes, especially where it is with good iudgement ordered. And I thinke them right worthy of admiration, for their readines and plenty of wytt and capacity, who can with facility intreate at large, and as we call it *extempore*, in good and fencible ryme, vpon some vnacquainted matter.

The ready skylle of framing anie thing in verse, besides the naturall promptnesse which many haue therevnto, is much helped by Arte, and exercise of the memory: for as I remember, I reade once among *Gaskoynes* workes, a little instruction to versifying, where is prescribed as I thinke thys course of learning to versifye in Ryme.

When ye haue one verse well fetled, and decently ordered which you may dispose at your pleasure, to ende it with what word you wyll: then what soeuer the word is, you may speedilie runne ouer the other wordes which are aunswerable therevnto, (for more readines through all the letters Alphabetically) whereof you may choose that which wyll best fitte the fence of your matter in that place: as for example: if your last worde ende in Booke, you may straightwayes in your minde runne them ouer thus. Brooke, Cooke, crooke, hooke, looke, nooke, pooke, rooke, forooke, tooke, awooke etc. Nowe it is twenty to one, but alwayes one of these shall iumpe with your former worde and matter in good fence. If not, then alter the first.

And indeede I thinke, that next to the Arte of memory, thys is the readiest way to attaine to the faculty of ryming well *Extempore*, especially if it be helped with thus much paynes. Gather together all

manner of wordes especially *Monasyllables*, and place them Alphabetically in some note, and either haue them meetely perfectly by hart (which is no verye laboursome matter) or but looke them dilligently ouer at some time, practising to ryme indifferent often, whereby I am perswaded it wil soone be learned, so as the party haue withall any reasonable gyft of knowledge and learning, whereby hee want not bothe matter and wordes altogether.

What the other circumstaunces of Ryming are, as what wordes may tollerably be placed in Ryme, and what not: what words doo best become a Ryme, and what not, how many sortes of Ryme there is: and such like I wyll not stay nowe to intreate. There be many more obseruations and notes to be prescribed, to the exacte knowledge of verifying, which I trust wilbe better and larger laide forth by others, to whom I deferre manie considerations in this treatise: hoping that some of greater skill will shortly handle this matter in better forte.

Nowe the fundry kindes of rare deuises, and pretty inuentions which come from ye fine poetickall vaine of manie in strange and vnacustomed manner, if I could report them, it were worthie my trauell: such are the turning of verses: the infolding of wordes: the fine repetitions: the clarklie conueying of contraries, and manie such like. Whereof though I coulde sette downe manie: yet because I want bothe manie and the best kindes of them, I will ouerpasse: onelie pointing you to one or two which may suffice for example.

Looke vppon the rufull song of *Colin* sung by *Cuddie* in the *Sheepheardes Calender*, where you shall see a singuler rare deuise of a dittie framed vpon these fixe wordes *VVoe, founde, cryes, past, sleep, augment*, which are most prettilie turned and wounde vppe mutually together, expressing wonderfully the dolefulnesse of the song. A deuise not much vnlike vnto the same, is vsed by some, who taking the last wordes of a certaine number of verses, as it were by the rebound

of an *Echo*, shall make them fall out in some prettie fence.

Of this forte there are some deuifed by *John Graunge*, which becaufe they be not long I wyll rehearse one.

If feare oppresse howe then may hope me shielde?
 Denyall sayes, vayne hope hath pleased well,
 But as such hope thou wouldest not be thine,
 So would I not the like to rule my hart.
 For if thou louest it bidds thee graunt forthwith
 Which is the ioy whereof I liue in hope.

Here if you take the last worde of euerie verse, and place them orderlie together, you shall haue this sentence: *Shielde well thyne hart with hope*. But of these *Echoes* I knowe indeede verie daintie peeces of worke, among some of the finest Poets this day in London: who for the rarenesse of them keepe them priuclie to themselues, and wil not let them come abroad.

A like inuention to the last rehearsed, or rather a better, haue I feene often practifed in framing a whole dittie to the Letters of ones name, or to the wordes of some two or three verses which is very witty, as for example this is one of *W. Hunnis*, which for the shortnes I rather chufde then some yat are better.

If thou desire to liue in quiet rest,
 Gyue care and see, but say the best.

These two verses are now as it were resolued into dyuers other, euery two wordes or fillables being the beginning of an other like verse, in this fort.

<i>If thou</i>	{	delight in quietnes of life,
<i>Desire</i>		to shunne from brawles, debate and strife;
<i>To liue</i>		in loue with G O D, with freend and foe,
<i>In rest</i>		shalt sleepe when other cannot so.

<i>Gyue care</i>	{	to all, yet doo not all beleue,
<i>And see</i>		the end and then thy sentence gyue:
<i>But say</i>		For trueth of happy liues assignde
<i>The best</i>		hath he that quiet is in minde.

Thus are there infinite sortes of fine conueiances (as they may be termed) to be vsed, and are much frequented by versifiers, as well in composition of their verse, as the wittines of their matter : which all I will referre to the consideration of euerie pleasant headdes Poet in their proper gifts : onelie I sett downe these fewe sortes of their formes of versifying, which may stand in steede to declare what manie others may be deuised in like sorte.

But nowe to proceede to the reformed kind of English verse which manie haue before this, attempted to put in practife, and to establish for an accustomed right among English Poets, you shall heare in like manner my simple iudgment concerning the same.

I am fully and certainlie perswaded, that if the true kind of versifying in imitation of Greekes and Latines, had bene practised in the English tongue, and put in vre from time to tyme by our Poets, who might haue continually bene mending and pollyshing the same, euery one according to their seuerall giftes : it would long ere this haue aspyred to as full perfection, as in anie other tongue whatsoeuer. For why may I not thinke so of our English, seeing that among the Romaines a long time, yea euen till the dayes of *Tully*, they esteemed not the Latine Poetrie almost worth any thing, in respecte of the Greeke, as appeareth in the Oration *pro Archia Poeta* : yet afterwarde it increased in credite more and more, and that in short space : so that in *Virgilles* time, wherein were they not comparable with the Greekes ? So likewise, now it seemeth not currant for an English verse to runne vpon true quantity, and those feete which the Latines vse, because it is straunge, and the other barbarous custome, beeing within compasse of euery base witt, hath worne it out of credite or estimation. But if our wryters, beeing of learning and iudgment, would rather infringe thys curious custome, then omitte the occasion of enlarging the credite of their natie speeche, and theyr owne prayfes, by practising that commendable

kind of wryting in true verse: then no doubt, as in other partes of learning, so in Poetry, shoulde not stoupe to the best of them all in all maner of ornament and comlineffe. But some obiect that our wordes are nothing resemblaunt in nature to theirs, and therefore not possible to bee framed with any good grace after their vse: but cannot we then as well as the Latines did, alter the cannon of the rule according to the quality of our worde, and where our wordes and theirs wyll agree, there to iumpe with them, where they will not agree, there to establishe a rule of our owne to be directed by? Likewise, for ye tenor of the verse might we not (as *Horace* dyd in the Latine) alter their proportions to what fortes we listed, and to what we sawe wold best become the nature of the thing handled, or the quality of the words? Surely it is to be thought that if any one, of sound iudgment and learning, shoulde putt forth some famous worke, contayning dyuers formes of true verses, fitting the measures, according to the matter: it would of it selfe be a sufficient authority without any prescription of rules, to the most part of Poets, for them to follow and by custome to ratify. For sure it is, that the rules and principles of Poetry, were not precisely followed and obserued of the first beginners and wryters of Poetry, but were selected and gathered feuerally out of theyr workes, for the direction and behoofe of their followers. And indeede, he that shall with heedefull iudgment make tryall of the English wordes, shall not finde them so grosse or vnapt, but that they wyll become any one of ye most accustomed fortes of Latine or Greeke verses meetely, and run thereon somewhat currantly.

I my selfe, with simple skylle I confesse, and farre vnable iudgment, haue ventured on a fewe, which notwithstanding the rudenes of them may serue to shewe what better might bee brought into our speeche, if those which are of meete abilitie woulde bestowe some trauell and endeouour thereuppon. But before I sette them lowne, I wyll speake somewhat of such obseruations as

I could gather necessary to the knowledge of these kinde of verses, least I should seeme to runne vpon them rashly, without regarde either of example or authority.

The speciall poyntes of a true verse, are the due obseruations of the feete, and place of the feete.

The foote of a verse, is a measure of two fillables, or of three, distinguished by time which is eyther long or short. A foote of two fillables, is eyther simple or mixt, that is, of like time or of diuers. A simple foote of two fillables is likewise twofolde, eyther of two long fillables called *Spondeus*, as -- goodnesse, or of two short called *Pyrrichius* as o o hyther. A myxt foote of 2. fillables, is eyther of one short and one long called *Iambus* as o - dying: or of one long and one short, called *Choreus* as - o gladly. A foote of 3. fillables in like sorte is either simple or myxt. The simple is eyther *Moloffus*, that is of three long, as - - - forgiuenes: or *Trocheus*, that is of 3. short, as o o o merylie. The mixt is of 6. diuers fortes, 1. *Dactylus*, of one long, and two short, as - o o happily. 2. *Anapætus*, of two shorte, and one long, as o o - t[r]auellers. 3. *Bacchius*, of one short, and two long, as o - - remembrers. 4. *Palimbachius*, of two long and one short, as - - o accorded. 5. *Creticus* of a long, a short, and a long, - o - daungerous. 6. *Amphibrachus*, of a short, a long, and a short, as o - o reioyced.

Many more deuisions of feete are vsed by some, but these doo more artificially comprehend all quantities necessary to the skanning of any verse, according to *Falleus* in hys Rethorique. The place of the feete is the disposing of them in theyr proper roomes, whereby may be discerned the difference of eche verse which is the right numbring of the same. Now as for the quantity of our wordes, therein lyeth great difficultye, and the cheefest matter in this faculty. For in truth there being such diuersity betwixt our words and the Latine, it cannot stande indeede with great reason that they shoulde frame, wee beeing onelie directed by such rules

as serue for onely Latine words, yet notwithstanding one may well perceiue by these fewe, that these kinde of verses would well become the speeche, if so bee there were such Rules prescribed, as woulde admitt the placing of your aptest and fullest wordes together. For indeede excepting a fewe, of our *Monosyllables*, which naturally shoulde most of them be long, we haue almost none, that wyll stande fitlie in a short foote: and therefore if some exception were made against the precise obseruation of *Position*, and certaine other of the rules, then might we haue as great plenty and choyse of good wordes to furnish and fette forth a verse, as in any other tongue.

Likewise if there were some direction in such wordes, as fall not within the compasse of Greeke or Latine rules, it were a great helpe, and therefore I had great misse in these few which I made. Such as is the last syllable in these wordes, *able*, *noble*, or *possible* and such like: againe for the nature and force of our *W*. of our *th*, of our *oo*, and *ee*, of our wordes which admytte an *e* in the ende after one or two Consonantes, and many other. I for my part, though (I must needs confesse) many faultes escaped me in these fewe, yet tooke I as good heede as I coulde, and in trueth did rather alwaies omitt the best wordes and such as would naturally become the speech best, then I wolde committe any thing, which shoulde notoriously impugne the Latine rules, which herein I had onely for my direction. Indeede most of our *Monosyllables* I am forced to make short, to supply the want of many short wordes requisite in these verses. The Participle *A*, being but the English article adioyned to Nownes, I alwayes make short, both alone and in composition, and likewise the wordes of one syllable ending in *E*, as *the*, when it is an article, *he*, *she*, *ye*, etc. *we* I thinke should needes be alwayes long because we pronounce continually *VVe*. *I*, being alone standing for the Pronowne *Ego*, in my iudgment might well be vsed common: but because I neuer sawe it vsed but short I so obserued it. Words ending in *y*

I make short without doubt, sauing that I haue marked in others one difference which they vse in the same, that is to make it short in the ende o of an Aduerb, as *gladly*, and long in the ende – of an Adiectiue as *goodly*: but the reason is as I take it, because the Adiectiue is or should be most commonly written thus *goodlie*. O, being an Aduerbe is naturally long: in the ende of wordes both *Monasyllables* and other I thinke it may be vsed common. The first of *Pollisyllables* I directed according to the nature of the worde, as I thought most auniuerable to Latine examples, sauing that somewhere I am constryed to straine curtesy with the preposition of a worde compounded or such like, which breaketh no great square: as in *defence* or *depart*, etc. The myddle fillables which are not very many, come for the most part vnder the precinct of *Position*, whereof some of them will not possibly abide the touch, and therefore must needs be a little wrested: such are commonly ye Aduerbs of three fillables, as *mournfully*, *spyghtfully* and such like words, deriued of this Adiectiue, *full*: and therefore if there be great occasion to vse them, they must be reformed by detracting onely (*l*) and then they stand meetely currant, as *mournfully*. The last fillables I wholly directed so neere as I could to the touch of common rules.

The most famous verse of all the rest, is called *Hexametrum Epicum*, which consisteth of sixe feete, wherof the first foure are indifferently either *Spondæi* or *Dactyli*, the fift is euermore a *dactyl*, and the sixt a *Spondæ*, as thus.

— o — — o — — — — — o o — —
Tyterus happily thou liest tumbling under a beechtree.

Thys kinde of verse I haue onely seene to be practised in our English speeche: and indeede wyll stand somewhat more orderlye therein then any of the other kindes, vntill we haue some tolleration of wordes made by speciall rule. The first that attempted to practise thys verse in English, should seeme to be the Earle of *Surry*, who translated some part of *Virgill* into verse

indeede, but without regard of true quantity of fillables. There is one famous *Distichon*, which is common in the mouthes of all men, that was made by one Master *VVatson*, fellowe of *S. Iohns* Colledge in *Cambridge* about 40. yeeres past, which for the sweetnes and gallantnes therof in all respects doth mat[c]h and surpasse the Latine copy of *Horace*, which he made out of *Homers* wordes, *qui mores hominum etc.*

— — — — —
All traouellers doo gladlie report great praise to Vliffes

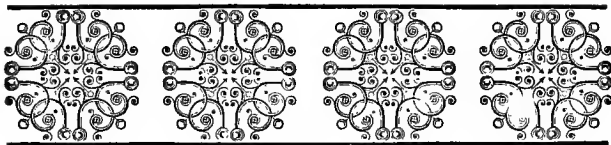
— — — — —
For that he knewe manie mens maners, and saw many citties.

Which two verses if they be examined throughout all the rules and obseruations of the best versifying, shall bee founde to attaine the very perfection of them all. There be two other not much inferiour to these, which I found in ye Gloffe of *E. K.* vpon the fift *Æglogue* of the newe Poet: which Tully translated out of Greeke into Latine, *Hæc habui quæ edi etc.*

All that I ate did I ioy and all that I greedilie gorged.

— — — — —
As for those manie goodlie matters left f for others.

Which though they wyll not abide the touch of *Synalæpha* in one or two places, yet perhappes some English rule which might wyth good reason be established, would make them currant enough, and auoyde that inconuenience which is very obuious in our wordes. The great company of famous verses of thys sort, which Master *Haruey* made, is not vnknowne to any and are to be viewed at all times. I for my part, so farre as those examples would leade me, and mine owne small skylle affoorde me, haue blundered vpon these fewe, whereinto I haue translated the two first *Æglogues* of Virgill: because I thought no matter of mine owne inuention, nor any other of antiquitye more fitte for tryal of thys thyng, before there were some more speciall direction, which might leade to a lesse troublesome manner of wryting.



The Argument of the first

Æglogue.

Vnder the perfonne of *Tityrus* *Vyrgill* beeing figured himfelfe, declareth to *Melibeus* an nother Neateheard, the great benefittes he receyued at *Augustus* hand, who in the fpoyle of *Mantua* gaue him hys goods and fubftance againe.

Melibæus.

Tityrus.

T*ityrus, happilie thou lyste tumbling vnder a beech tree,
All in a fine oate pipe thefe fweete fongs luftilie chaunting:
VVe, poore foules goe to wracke, and from thefe coastes beremooued,
And fro our pastures fweete: thou Tityr, at eafe in a shade plott
Makst thicke groues to refound vvith fonges of braue Amarillis.*

Tityrus.

*O Melibæus, he vv as no man but a God vvho releuede me:
Euer he shalbe my God: from this fame Sheeppcot his alters
Neuer, u tender Lambe shall vvant, vvith blood to bedevv them.
This good gift did he giue, to my steeres thus freelie to vvander,
And to my felfe (thou feest) on pipe to refound vvhat I listed.*

Melibæus.

*Grutch thee sure I doo not, but this thing makes me to wonder,
 VVhence comes all this adoo: vvith grieuous paine not a little
 Can I remooue my Goates: here, Tityre skant get I forward
 Poore olde crone, two vvyns at a clappe ith boysterous hassilles
 Left she behind, best hope i' my flock laid hard on a bare stone.
 Had not a lucklesse lotte possesst our mindes, I remember
 VVarnings oft fro the blast burnt oake vve sawv to be sent vs.
 Oft did a left hand crowv foretell these things in her hull tree,
 But this God let vs heare what he vv as, good Tityre tell me.*

Tityrus.

*That same Cittie so braue vv hich Rome vv as vvont to be called,
 Foole did I thinke, to be like this of ours, vv here vve to the pastures
 VVonted were to remooue from dammes our young prettie Cattell.
 Thus did I thinke young vvhelpes, and Kids to be like to the
 mothers,
 Thus did I vvont compare manie great things vvith many little.
 But this aboue all tovvn as loftily mounteth her high head,
 As by the lovve base shrubbes tall Cypresse shooteth aboue them.*

Melibæus.

And vvhat did thee mooue that needes thou must goe to see Rome?

Tityrus.

*Freedome: vv hich though late, yet once lookt backe to my pore
 state,
 After time vvhen haire from my beard did ginne to be whitish:
 Yet lookt back at last and found me out after a long time.
 VVhen Amarill vv as once obtainde, Galatea departed:
 For (for I vvill confesse) vv hilst as Galatea did hold mee,
 Hope did I not for freedome, and care had I none to my cattell.
 Though manie faire young beastes our folde for the aulders aforded*

*And manie cheefes good fro my presse vvere sent to the Cittie:
Seldome times did I bring anie store of pence fro the markett.*

Melibaens.

*O Amarill, vvhwherefore, to thy Gods (very much did I meruaile)
Heauilie thou didst praie: ripe fruites vngathered all still:
Tityrus is not at home: these Pyne trees Tityre mist thee.
Fountaines longd for thee: these hedgrooves wisht thy return
home*

Tityrus.

*VWhat vvas then tobedoone? from bondage could not I vvind out:
Neither I could haue found such gentle Gods any vvhere els.
There did I see (Melibæe) that youth vvhoſe hestes I by course
still.
Fortnights whole to obserue on the Alters fure will I not faile.
Thus did he gentlie graunt to my sute when first I demaunded.
Keepe your hearedes poore slaues as erst, let bulles to the makes
still.*

Melibaens.

*Happy olde man, then thou shalt haue thy farme to remaine still,
Large and large to thy selfe, others nought but stonie grauell:
And foule stymie rush wherewith their lees be besprinkled.
Here no vnwoonted foode shall grieue young theaues who be
laded,
Nor the infections foule of neighbours flocke shall annoie them.
Happie olde man. In shaddowy bankes and coole prettie places,
Heere by the quainted floodes and springs most holie remaining.
Here, these quickets fresh which lands feuer out fro thy
neighbors
And greene willow rowes which Hiblæ bees doo reioice in,
Oft fine whistring noise, shall bring sweete sleepe to thy fences.
Vnder a Rock side here will proynner chaunt merrie ditties.
Neither on highe Elme trees, thy beloude Doves loftilie sitting,
Nor prettie Turtles trim, vvill cease to crooke with a good cheere.*

Tityrus.

*First, therefore swift buckes shall flie for foode to the skies ward,
And from fish with drawn broade seas themselues shal auoid
hence:*

*First, (both borders broke) Araris shal run to the Parthanes,
And likewise Tygris shall againe runne backe to the Germanes:
Ere his countnaunce sweete shall slippe once out from my hart roote.*

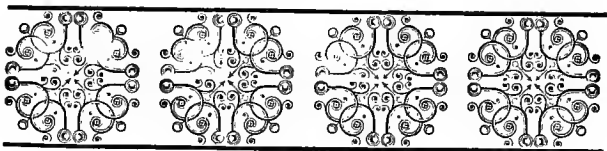
Melibaens.

*We poore foules, must some to the land cald Affrica packe hence.
Some to the farre Scythia, and some must to the swift flood Oaxis.
Some to Britannia coastes quite parted farre fro the whole world.
Oh these pastures pure shall I nere more chance to behold yee?
And our cottage poore with warme turues couerd about trim.
Oh these trim tilde landes, shall a rechelesse souldier haue them?
And shall a Barbarian haue this croppel? see what a mischiefe
Discord vile hath araisde? for whom was our labour all tooke?
Now Melibæe ingraft pearie stocks, sette vines in an order.
Now goe (my braue flocke once that were) O now goe my
kidlings.*

*Neuer againe shall I now in a greene bowre sweetelie reposed
See ye in queachie briers farre a loofe clambring on a high hill.
Now shall I sing no Iygges, nor whilst I doo fall to my iunkets.
Shall ye my Goates, cropping sweete flowres and leaues sit
about me.*

Tityrus.

*Yet thou maist tarrie heere, and keepe me companie this night,
All on a leaue couch: good Aples ripe I doo not lacke,
Chestrutts sweete good store, and plentie of curddes will I set thee.
Marke i the Towne how chimnie tops doo beginne to be smoaking,
And fro the Mountaines high how shaddowes grow to be larger.*



The seconde Æglogue called
Alexis.

The Argument.

Virgill in the personne of *Corydon* as some thinke, complayneth that he is not so gracious with *Augustus* as he would bee: or els it is to be referred to a youth *Alexander*, which was giuen him of *Asinius Pollio*, whom he blameth for the vnstedfastnes of his witt and wandering appetite, in refusing the freendly counsayle which he vsed to giue him.

THat Sheepeheard *Corydon* did burne in loue with *Alexis*,
All his masters deare: and nought had he whereby to hope
Onely in beechen groues, and dolesome shaddowy places. [for.
Dailie resorted he: there these rude disordered outcrys,
Hylles and desert woodes throughout thus mournfully tuned.
O hard harted *Alex*, hast thou no regard to my sweete song?
Pyttiest me not a whitt: yea makst me now that I shall dye.
Yet doo the beastes find out fine shades and trim pretty
coole plottes,
And fro the sun beames safe lie lyzardes vnder a bushtuste:
And for workmen toughe with boyling heate so beparched,
Garlick saury sweete and coole hearbes plenty be dressed.
But, by the scorcht banke sydes i' thy foote steppes stil I goe
plodding.

Hedgerowes hott doo refound with Grafhops mournfully squeak-
 O had I not ben better abyd Amarillis her anger? [ing,
 And her proude difdaine? yea better abyde my Menalcas?
 What though brown did he seeme? yea what though thou be
 fo gallant

O thou fine chery cheekt child trust not t' much to thy beauty.
 Black violetts are tooke when dayfes white be refused.
 Me thou dost despise vnknowne to thy selfe yet Alexis:
 What be my riches greate in neate, in milke what aboundance.
 In Sicill hylles be my Lambes of which there wander a thoufand.
 All times, colde and hote yet fresh milke neuer I wanted.
 Such be my Musicke notes, as (when his flockes he recalling)
 Amphion of Dirce did vse on shore Aracynthus.
 Much mishapt I am not, for late in a bancke I behelde me,
 VVhen still seas were calme, to thy Daphnis neede not I giue
 place

No, though thou be the iudge, if pictures haue any credite.
 O were thou content to remaine with me by the downes heere,
 In these lodgings small, and helpe me proppes to put vnder,
 And trym kydling flocke with me to driue to the greene fieldes:
 Pan in fingring sweete with me shouldst brauely resemble:
 Pan, was first the inuenter, pypes to adioyne in an order:
 Pan, poore flockes and Sheepheardes to most duly regardeth.
 Those fine lipsthou needst not feare to bruse with a sweete pype:
 VVhat dyd Amynt forsake i' this excercise to be cunning?
 One pype with feauene fundry stops matcht sweetly together.
 Haue I my selfe, Damætas which ats death he bequeathd me,
 And sayd, heere, thou art now the second which euer hath ought
 So sayd Damætas: but Amyntas spightfully scornde it. [it.
 Also, two pretty small wyld kyddes, most goodlie bespotted
 Haue I, that heere i' the dales doo runne skant safe I doo
 feare me.

Twyce in a day two teates they suck: for thee will I keepe them:
 Wondrous faine to haue had them both was Thestylis of late.
 And so she shall: for I see thou scornst whatso-euer I giue thee.
 Come hyther O thou sweete face boy: see see, to thy selfe heere
 How fayre Nymphes in baskets full doo bring manie Lillies:
 White violets sweete Nais plucks and bloomes fro the Poppies,
 Narcys, and dyll flowres most sweete that fauoureth also.

Casia, broade mary Goldes, with pancyes, and Hyacinthus.
 And I my felfe rype peaches soft as filke will I gather.
 And such Cheshnutts as Amarill was wont to reioyce at.
 Ploms wyll I bring likewise: that fruite shall be honored also.
 And ye O Lawrell twygges that I croppe, and myrte thy
 felfe next.

For ye be wont, (bound both in a bunch) most sweetely to
 fauour.

Thou art but a Clowne Corydon: these gifts esteemes not Alexis:
 Nor by thy gifts to obtaine art meete to incounter Iolas.

VVretch (ahlas) whats this that I wish? south blasts to the
 yong flowers

Orcleere crystall streames with loathsome swyne to be troubled
 Ah mad boy from whom doost runne? why Gods ithe woods
 dwelt:

And Paris erst of Troy: Pallas most gladly reioyfeth,
 In these bowres: and in trym groues we all chiefly delight
 vs.

Grym Lyoneffe doth course curst woolues, so wolues doo
 the kydlinges.

And these wanton Kyddes likewise these faire Cytifus
 flowers.

Thee Corydon (O Alex) some pleasure euery wight pulles.
 See these yoked fleeres fro the plough nowe seeme to be
 lett loose.

And these shadowes large doo declare thys fun to depart
 hence

Styll I doo burne in loue. What meane in loue to be lookt
 for?

Ah Corydon Corydon, what raging fury dooth haunt thee,
 Halfe cropt downe be thy vynes and broade brauncht elmes
 ouerhang them.

Rather about some needefull worke now busy thy felfe well,
 Either on Ofyers tuffe or bulrush weaue pretty basketts.
 And if Alexis scorne thee still, mayst hope for another.

F I N I S.

I durst not enterpryse to goe any further with this rude tranlation: beeing for the respects aforesayd a troublesome and vnpleasant peece of labour: And therefore these shall suffice till further occasion shall serue to imploy some profitable paynes in this behalfe.

The next verse in dignity to the *Hexameters*, is ye *Carmen Elegiacum* which consisteth of foure feete and two od fillables: viz: the two first feete, eyther *Dactyli* or *Spondæi* indifferent, the one long fillable: next two *Dactyli* and an other long fillable — — — — — some doo measure it in this sorte (and more truely yet not so readily to all) accounting first two indifferently either *Dactyli* or *Spondæi*, then one *Spondæi*, and two *Anapæsti*. But it commeth all to one reckoning. Thys verse is alwayes vnseperably adioyned vnto the Hexameter, and serueth especially to the handling of loue and dalliances, whereof it taketh the name. It will not frame altogether so currantlye in our English as the other, because the shortnesse of the seconde *Penthimimer* will hardly be framed to fall together in good fence, after the Latine rules. I haue not seene very many of them made by any, and therefore one or two for example sake shall be sufficient.

This *Distichon* out of *Ouid*.

*Ingenium quondam fuerat pretiosius auro,
At nunc barbaries grandis habere nihil.*

May thus be translated.

Learning once was thought to be better then any gold was,
Now he that hath not wealth is but a barbarian.

And thys

*Omnia sunt hominum tenui pendencia filo:
Et subito casu quæ valere ruunt.*

Tis but a slender thread, which all mens states do depend on:
And most goodly thinges quickly doo fall to decay.

Thys verse consisteth of these five feete, one *Chore*, one *spondæ*, one *daetyl*, and two *Choreis*, with this addition, that after every third verse be sette one *Adonium* verse, which consisteth of a *daetyl* and a *spondæ*. It is more troublesome and tedious to frame in our speeche by reason they runne without difference, every verse being a like in quantity throughout, yet in my iudgement standeth meetely well in the same. I pray looke the Coppy which I have translated in the fourth *Æglogue* of the *Sheepheardes Calender*: ye song of *Colins* making which *Hobbinoll* singeth in prayse of the Queenes maiesty, vnder the name of *Eliza*.

YE dainty Nymphes that in this blessed brooke,
doe bathe your brest :
Forfake your watry bowres and hether looke,
at my request :
And onely you Virgins that on *Parnafs* dwell.
Whence floweth *Helicon* the learned well,
helpe me to blafe
her worthy praife
That in her sex doth all excell.

Of fayre *Eliza* be your filuer song
that blessed wight :
The flowre of Virgins, may she flourifh long,
in princely plight.

For she is *Syrinx* daughter without spott,
Which *Pan* the Sheepheards God on her begot :
fo fprang her grace,
of heauenly race,
No mortall blemifh may her blott.

See where fhe fittes, etc.

Phæbus once peept forth with a goodly guilt hewe,
For to gaze : but when he sawe the bright beames
Spread abroad fro' her face with a glorious grace,
it did amaze him.

When another sunne he behelde belowe heere,
Blusht he red for shame, nor againe he durst looke:
Would he durst bright beames of his owne with hers match,
for to be vanquisht.

Shew thy selfe now *Cynthia* with thy cleere rayes,
And behold her: neuer abasht be thou so: [beauty, how
When she spreades those beames of her heauenly
thou art in a dump dasht?

But I will take heede that I match not her grace,
With the *Laton* feede, *Niobe* that once did,
Nowe she doth therefore in a stone repent: to all
other a warning.

Pan he may well boaste that he did begit her
Such a noble wight, to *Syrinx* is it ioy,
That she found fuch lott with a bellibone trym
for to be loaden.

When my younglinges first to the dammes doo bleat out,
Shall a milkewhite Lamb to my Lady be offred: [grome.
For my Goddesse thee is yea I my selfe her Heard-
though but a rude Clowne.

Vnto that place *Caliope* dooth high her,
Where my Goddesse shines: to the fame the Muser
After her with sweete Violines about them
cheerefully tracing

Is not it Bay braunche that aloft in handes they haue,
Eune to giue them fure to my Lady *Eliza*:
O so sweete they play—and to the fame doo sing too
heavly to heare ift.

See, the Graces trym to the stroake doo foote it,
Defly dauncing, and meriment doo make them,
Sing to the instruments to reioyce the more, but
wants not a fourth grace?



Heere followe the Cannons or general cautions of Poetry, prescribed by Horace, first gathered by *Georgius Fabricius Cremonensis*: which I thought good to annex to thys Treatise, as very necessary obseruations to be marked of all Poets.

In his Epistle ad Pisones

de arte Poetica.



First let the inuention be meete for the matter, not differing, or straunge, or monstrous. For a womans head, a horse necke, the bodie of a dyuers coloured Byrd, and many members of fundry creatures compact together, whose legges ending like a Fyshes tayle: this in a picture is a wonderful deformitie: but if there be such diuersitye in the frame of a speeche, what can be more vncomely or ilfaoured?

2. The ornaments or colours must not bee too many, nor rashly aduentured on, neither must they be vsed euery where and thrust into euery place.

3. The proprietie of speeche must bee duely obserued that wayghty and great matters be not spoken slenderly, or matters of length too briefly: for it belongeth much both to the comlineffe and nature of a matter: that

in big matters there be lykewise vsed boysterous wordes.

4. In Poeticall descriptions, the speeche must not exceede all credite, nor any thing fainedlie brought in, against all course of nature.

5. The disposing of the worke must be such, that there be no offence committed, as it were by too exquisite dilligence: for many thinges may be oft committed, and some thing by too curious handling be made offenciue. Neyther is it in one part to be well furnished, and in another to be neglected. Which is prooued by example of a Caruer, who expressed very artificially the heade and vpper part of a body, but the rest hee could not make an ende of. Againe, it is prooued thus, that a body should not be in other partes beautifull, and yet bee deformed in the crooked nose: for all the members in a well shapen bodie must be aunswerable, found, and well proportioned.

6. He that taketh in hande to write any thing must first take heede that he be sufficient for the same: for often vnway fooles through their rashnes are ouertooke with great want of ability

7. The ornament of a worke consisteth in wordes, and in the manner of the wordes, are either simple or mixt, newe or olde, propper or translated. In them all good iudgment must be vsed and ready wytt. The chiefeest grace is in the most frequented wordes, for the same reason holdeth in wordes, as doth in coynes, that the most vsed and tried are best esteemed.

8. The kinde of verse is to be considered and aptly applied to the argument, in what measure is most meete for euery fort. The most vsuall kindes are foure, the *Heroic*, *Elegiac*, *Iambick*, and *Lyric*.

9. One must vse one kynde of speeche alike in all wrytings. Sometime the *Lyric* ryseth aloft, sometime the comicall. To the Tragicall wryters belong properly the bygge and boysterous wordes. Examples must be interplaced according fitly to the time and place.

10. Regarde is to be had of affections: one thing

becommeth pleasant persons, an other sadde, an other wrathfull, an other gentle, which must all be heedefully respected, Three things therefore are requisite in verses, beauty, sweetnes, and the affection. *Theophrastus* sayth that this beauty or delectableneffe is a deceyt, and Aristotle calleth it *τυραννία ολιγοκρανόνιον*, a momentany tyranny. Sweetnesse retayneth a Reader, affection moueth him.

11. Euery person must be fitted accordingly, and the speeche well ordered: wherein are to be considered the dignity, age, sex, fortune, condition, place, Country, etc. of eche person.

12. The personnes are eyther to be fayned by the Poets them selues, or borrowed of others, if he borrow them, then must hee obserue *το ὁμοιον*, that is, that he folow that Author exactly whom he purpofeth to immitate, and whereout he bringeth his examples. But if he fayne newe personnes, then must he keepe his *το ὁμαλόν*, that is equallie: so bringing them in eche place, that it be alwayes agreeable, and the last like vnto the first, and not make one person nowe a bolde boaster, and the same straightwaies a wise warie man, for that is passing absurd. Againe, euery one must obserue *το ἀρμωστον*, which is interpreted *conuenientiam*, fitnesse: as it is meete and agreeable euery where, a man to be stoute, a woman fearefull, a seruant crafty, a young man gentle.

13. Matters which are common may be handled by a Poet as they may be thought propper to himselfe alone. All matters of themselues are open to be intreated of by any man: but if a thing be handled of some one in such sort, as he thereby obtaine great prayse, he maketh it his owne or propper to himselfe, as many did write of the Troiane war, but yet *Homer* made matter which was common to all, propper to himselfe.

14. Where many things are to be taken out of auncienter tongues, as the Latines tooke much out of the Greekes, the wordes are not so preciselie to be followed, but that they bee altered according to the iudg-

ment and will of the Immitator, which precept is borrowed of Tully, *Non verbum verbo neceſſe eſt reddere.*

15. The beginning muſt not be fooliſhly handled, that is, ſtraungly or too long.

16. The propoſition or narration let it not be far fetched or vnlikely, and in the ſame forget not the differences of ages and perſons.

17. In a Comedie it is needfull to exhibite all the actions openlie, as ſuch as are cruell, vnhoneſt, or ougly, but ſuch things may better bee declared by ſome meete and handſome wordes, after what ſorte they are ſuppoſed to bee doone.

18. If a Commedye haue more Actes then ſiue, it is tedious, if fewer, it is not ſufficient.

It fitteth not to bring in the perſonnes of Gods, but in verie great matters. *Cicero* ſayth, when the Tragedy wryters cannot bring theyr matters to good paſſe, they runne to God. Let not more perſonnes ſpeake together then ſoure for auoyding conuſion.

The *Chori* muſt be well garniſhed and ſette foorth: wherein eyther menne are admoniſhed, or reprehended, or counſayled vnto vertue. Such matter muſt bee choſen for the *Chorus*, as may bee meete and agreeable to that which is in hand. As for instruments and ſinging, they are Reliques of olde ſimplicitey. For the Muſicke commonlye vſed at Theaters and the licenciouſneſſe of theyr ſonges, which together wyth theyr wealth increaſed among the Romaines, is hurtfull to diſcipline and good manners.

19. In a *Satyr* the clowniſh company and rurall Gods, are brought in to temperate the Heauineſſe of Tragedies, wyth ſome myrth and paſtyme. In ieſting it muſt be obſerued that it bee not lacyuious or Rybaldlike, or ſlaunderous, which precept holdeth generallie in all ſortes of wrytynges.

In a *Satyr* greate heede is to be taken, of the place, of the day, and of the perſonnes: as of *Bacchus*, *Silenus*, or the *Satyres*. Againe of the vnmeetneſſe or inconuenience of the matter, and of the wordes that they be

fitted according to the persons: of *Decorum*, that he which represented some noble personage in the Tragedie, bee not some busy foole in the *Satyr*: finallie of the hearers, least they bee offended by myxing filthy matters with iestes, wanton toyes wyth vnhoneft, or noysome with merry thinges.

20. The feete are to be applied proper to euery kinde of verse, and therin a Poet must not vse too much licence or boldnes. The auncient writers in *Iambick* verses vsed at first pure *Iambicks*: Afterwards *Spondaeus* was admitted into *Locos impares*, but at last such was the licentious custome, that they would both *Spondaeus* where they listed, and other feete without regarde.

21. In compyling of verses great care and circumspection must be vsed.

Those verses which be made Extempore, are of no great estimation: those which are vnartificiall, are vtterly repelled as too foolish. Though many doo lightly regard our verses, yet ought the Carelesnesse of the hearers to bee no cause in vs of errour and negligence. Who desireth to make any thing worthy to be heard of learned eares, let hym reade Greeke Authors heedefullie and continually.

22. Artes haue their increasinges euen as other things, beeing naturall, so haue Tragedies which were first rudely inuented by *Thespis*, at last were much adorned by *Æschylus*: at the first they were practised in Villages of the Countrey, afterwarde brought to stages in great Citties.

23. Some Artes doo increase, some doo decay by a certayne naturall course. The olde manner of Comedies decayde, by reason of slaundering which therein they vsed against many, for which there was a penaltie appointed, least their bitterness should proceede too farre: In place of which among the Latines came the *Satyres*.

The auncient Authors of Comedies, were *Eupolis*, *Cratinus*, and *Aristophanes*, of the middle forte *Plato*

Comicus, of the last kinde *Menander*, which continued and was accounted the most famous.¹

24. A Poet should not content himselfe onely with others inuentions, but himselfe also by ye example of old wryters, sholde bring something of his owne industry, which may bee laudable. So did they which writte among the Latines the Comedies called *Togatae*, whose arguments were taken from ye Greekes, and the other which wrytt the *Prætextatae*, whereof the arguments were Latine.

25. Heedefulnesse and good composition maketh a perfecte verse, and that which is not so may be reprehended. The faculty of a goode witte exceedeth Arte.

26. A Poet that he may be perfect, hath neede to haue knowledge of that part of Philosophie which informeth ye life to good manners. The other which pertaineth to naturall thinges, is lesse plausible, hath fewer ornaments, and is not so profitable.

27. A Poet to the knowledge of Philosophie shoulde also adde greater experience, that he may know the fashions of men and dispositions of people. Thys profit is gott by traueilling, that whatsoeuer he wryteth he may so expresse and order it, that hys narration may be formable.

28. The ende of Poetry is to wryte pleasant thinges, and profitable. Pleasant it is which delighteth by beeing not too long, or vneasy to be kept in memory, and which is somewhat likelie, and not altogether forged. Profitable it is, which styrreth vppe the mindes to learning and wisedome.

29. Certaine escapes are to be pardoned in some Poets, specially in great workes. A faulte may bee committed either in respect of hys proper Arte, or in some other Arte: that a Poet shoulde erre in precepts of hys owne arte, is a shamefull thing, to committe a faulte in another Arte is to be borne withal: as in *Virgil*, who sayneth that *Aeneas* comming into *Africa* flew with hys darte certaine Stagges, whereas

indeede *Affrica* hath in it none of those beastes. Such errors doo happen eyther by vnheedefulnes, when one escapeth them by negligence: or by the common fragility of man, because none there is which can know all things. Therefore this last kinde of error is not to be sticke vpon.

30. A good Poet should haue respect to thys, how to retaine hys Reader or hearer. In a picture some thing delighteth beeing fette farre of, something nearer, but a Poet should delight in all places as well in funne as shaddowe.

31. In a Poet is no meane to be admitted, which if hee bee not he of all is the worst of all.

32. A Poeme if it runne not sweetely and smoothly is odious: which is proued by a *simile* of the two senses, hearing and tasting, as in sweete and pleasaunt meates. And the Poem must bee of that forte, that for the sweetenesse of it may bee acceptable and continue like it selfe vnto the ende, least it wearye or driue away a Reader.

33. He that would wryte any thing worthy the posteritye, let him not enterprise any thing wherevnto his nature is not agreeable. *Mercury* is not made of wood (as they say) neyther doth *Minerua* fauour all studies in euery one. In all Artes nature is the best helpe, and learned men vse commonly to say that *A Poet is as well borne as made a Poet*.

34. Let no man esteeme himselfe so learned, but that he may submytte hys wrytinges to the iudgments of others, and correct and throughly amend the same himselfe.

35. The profite of Poetry sprang thus, for that the auncient wyse men set downe the best things that pertained to mans life, manners, or felicity, and examining and proouing the same by long experience of time, when they are aged they published them in wrytinges. The vse of Poetry what it was at the first, is manifest by the examples of the moste learned men: as of *Orpheus* who first builded houses: of *Amphion* who

made Citties, of *Tyrtaeus* who first made warre: of *Homer*, who wryt most wylfully.

36. In an artificiall Poet three thinges are requisite, nature, Arte, and dilligence.

37. A wryter must learne of the learned, and he must not sticke to confesse when he erreth: that the worfe he may learne to auoyde, and knowe howe to follow the better.

The confession of an error betoken a noble and a gentle minde. *Celfus* and *Quintillian* doo report of *Hippocrates*, that least he should deceiue his posterity, he confessed certayne errors, as it well became an excellent minded man, and one of great credite. For (as sayth *Celfus*) light witts because they haue nothing, will haue nothing taken from them.

38. In making choise of such freendes as should tell vs the trueth, and correct our wrytinges, heedefull iudgment must bee vsed: least eyther we choose vn-skyllfull folke, or flatterers, or dissemblers. The vn-skillfull know not how to iudge, flatterers feare to offende, dissemblers in not praysing doo seeme to commend.

39. Let no man deceiue himselfe, or suffer himselfe to be deceiued, but take some graue learned man to be iudge of his dooing, and let him according to hys counsayle change and put out what hee thinketh good.

40. He which will not flatter and is of ability to iudge, let him endeuour to nothing so much, as to the correction of that which is wrytten, and that let be doone with earnest and exquisite iudgment. He which dooth not thus, but offendeth wilfully in breaking his credite too rashly, may be counted for a madde, furious, and franticke foole.

41. The faultes commonly in verses are seauen, as either they be destitute of Arte, of facility, or ornament: or els, they be superfluous, obscure, ambitious, or needeleffe.



*Out of the Epistles ad Mecænatem,
Augustum, et Florum.*

42. An immitation should not be too seruile or superstitious, as though one durst not varry one iotte from the example: neyther should it be so sencelesse or vn-skilfull, as to immitate thinges which are absurde, and not to be followed.

43. One should not altogether treade in the steppes of others, but sometime he may enter into such wayes as haue not beene haunted or vsed of others. *Horace* borrowed ye *Iambick* verse of *Archilocus*, expressing fully his numbers and elegant[ly], but his vnseemely wordes and pratling tauntes hee moste wyshlye shunned.

44. In our verses we should not gape after the phraes of the simpler sorte, but striue to haue our writings allowable in the iudgments of learned menne.

45. The common peoples iudgments of Poets is feldome true, and therefore not to be sought after. The vulgar sort in *Rome* iudged *Pacuius* to be very learned, *Accius* to bee a graue wryter, that *Affranius* followed *Menander*, *Plautus*, *Epicharmus*: that *Terence* excelled in Arte *Cæcilius* in grauity: but the learned sorte were not of this opinion. There is extant in *Macrobius* (I knowe not whether *Angellius*) the like verdite concerning them which wryt *Epigrammes*. That *Catullus* and *Caluus* wrytt fewe thinges that were good, *Næuius* obscure, *Hortensius* vncomely, *Cynna* vnpleasant, and *Memmius* rough.

46. The olde wryters are so farre to be commended, as nothing be taken from the newe: neyther may we thinke but that the way lyeth open styll to others to

attaine to as great matters. Full well sayd *Sidorius* to *Eucherius*, I reuerence the olde wryters, yet not so as though I lesse esteemed the vertues and desertes of the wryters in this age.

47. Newnes is gratefull if it be learned: for certaine it is, Artes are not bothe begunne and perfected at once, but are increased by time and studie. which notwithstanding when they are at the full perfection, doo debate and decrease againe.

Cic. de orat. There is nothing in the world which bursteth out all at once, and commeth to light all wholly together.

48. No man should dare to practise an Arte that is dangerous, especially before he haue learned the same perfectly: so doo guyders of Shyppes: so doo Phisitions: but so did not manie Romaine Poets (yea so doo not too many English wryters) who in a certaine corragious heate gaped after glory by wryting verses, but fewe of them obtayned it.

49. A Poet should be no lesse skylfull in dealing with the affectes of the mynde, then a tumbler or a Iuggler shoulde bee ready in his Arte. And with such pyth shoulde he sette foorth hys matters, that a Reader shoulde seeme not onely to heare the thing, but to see and be present at the dooing thereof. Which faculty *Fabius* calleth *ὑποτασις* and *Aristotle* *προ ομματον θεσιν ἢ ποιησιν*.

50. Poets are either such as desire to be liked of on stages, as Commedie and Tragedie wryters: or such as woulde bee registred in Libraries. Those on stages haue speciall respect to the motions of the minde, that they may stirre bothe the eyes and eares of their beholders. But the other which seeke to please priuately with[in] the walles, take good aduise in their workes, that they may satisfy the exact iudgments of learned men in their studies.

51. A Poet shoulde not bee too importunate, as to offende in vnseasonable speeches: or vngentle, as to contemne the admonitions of others: or ambitious, as

to thinke too well of his owne dooinges: or too wayward, as to thinke, reward enough cannot be gyuen him for his deferte, or finally too proude, as to defyre to be honoured aboue meafure.

52. The emendations of Poemes be very neceffary, that in the obfcure poyntes many thinges may be enlightned, in the bafier partes many thinges may be thoroughly garnifhed. Hee may take away and put out all vnpropper and vnfeemely words, he may with difcretion immitate the auncient wryters, he may abridge thinges that are too lofty, mittigate thynges that are too rough, and may vse all remedies of fpeeche throughout the whole worke. The thinges which are fcarce feemely, he may amende by Arte and methode.

53. Let a Poet firft take vppon him, as though he were to play but an Actors part, as he may bee efteemed like one which wryteth without regarde, neyther let him fo pollifh his works, but that euery one for the bafeneffe thereof, may think to make as good. Hee may likewyfe exercife the part of gefturer, as though he feemed to meddle in rude and common matters, and yet not fo deale in them, as it were for variety fake, nor as though he had laboured them thoroughly but tryfled with them, nor as though he had fweat for them, but practifed a little. For fo to hyde ones cunning, that nothing fhould feeme to bee laborfome or exquisite, when notwithstanding, euery part is pollifhed with care and ftudie, is a fpeciall gyft which *Aristotle* calleth *κρηψυ*.

54. It is onely a poynt of wyfedome, to vse many and choyfe elegant words, but to vnderftand alfo and to fet forth thinges which pertaine to the happy ende of mans life. Wherevppon the Poet *Horace*, calleth the Arte poetically, without the knowledge of learning and philosophy, a *prating vanity*. Therefore a good and allowable Poet, muft be adorned with wordes, plentiful in fentences, and if not equall to an Orator, yet very neere him, and a fpecial louer of learned men.

F I N I S.

*Epilogus.*

His small trauell (courteous Reader)
 I desire thee take in good worth:
 which I haue compyled, not as an
 exquisite censure concerning this
 matter, but (as thou mayst well per-
 ceiue, and) in trueth to that onely
 ende that it might be an occasion,
 to haue the same throughly and
 with greater discretion, taken in hande and laboured
 by some other of greater abilitie: of whom I knowe
 there be manie among the famous Poets in Lon-
 don, who bothe for learning and leysure, may
 handle this Argument far more pythilie then my
 selfe. Which if any of them wyll vouchsafe to doo, I
 trust wee shall haue Englishe Poetry at a higher price
 in short space: and the rabble of balde Rymes shall
 be turned to famous workes, comparable (I suppose)
 with the best workes of Poetry in other tongues. In
 the meane time, if my poore skill, can sette the same
 any thing forward, I wyll not cease to practise the
 same towards the framing of some apt English *Profodia*:

styl hoping, and hartelie wishing to enioy first
 the benefitte of some others iudgment,
 whose authority may beare greater
 credite, and whose learn-
 ing can better per-
 forme it.

(. .)