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Title: Pastoral Poems by Nicholas Breton, Selected Poetry by George Wither, and
Pastoral Poetry by William Browne (of Tavistock)

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George Wither

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Release date: July 6, 2007 [eBook #22001]
Most recently updated: January 2, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Irma Spehar, Ralf Stephan and the Online Distributed
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PASTORAL POEMS BY
NICHOLAS BRETON, SELECTED POETRY BY GEORGE WITHER, AND
PASTORAL POETRY BY WILLIAM BROWNE (OF TAVISTOCK) ***

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The Pembroke Booklets

(First Series)

III

Nicholas Breton

Pastoral Poems

George Wither

Selected Poetry

William Browne

(of Tavistock)

Pastoral Poetry



J. R. Tutin

Hull

1906

Large Paper Edition, limited to 250 copies

Turnbull & Spears, Printers, Edinburgh.

{02}

Nicholas Breton

(1558-1626)

*Thou that wouldst find the habit of true passion,
And see a mind attired in perfect strains ...
Look here on Breton's work.--BEN JONSON.*

George Wither

(1588-1667)

The praises of poetry have been often sung in ancient and in modern times; strange powers have been ascribed to it of influence over animate and inanimate auditors; its force over fascinated crowds has been acknowledged; but before Wither, no one ever celebrated its power at home, the wealth and the strength which this divine gift confers upon its possessor. Fame, and that too after death, was all which hitherto the poets had promised themselves from this art. It seems to have been left to Wither to discover that poetry was a present possession, as well as a rich reversion, and that the Muse has a promise of both lives,--of this, and of that which was to come.--CHARLES LAMB.

William Browne

(1591-? 1645)

*I feel an envious touch,
And tell thee Swain: that at thy fame I grutch,
Wishing the Art that makes this Poem shine,
And this thy Work (wert not thou wrongèd) mine.*

GEORGE WITHER: *To the Author*
[of *Britannia's Pastorals*].

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WILLIAM BROWNE

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Prefatory Note

There are few issues attended with greater uncertainty than the fate of a poet, and of the three represented herein it may be said that they survive but tardily in public interest. Such a state of things, in spite of all pleading, is quite beyond reason; hence the purport of this small Anthology is at once obvious.

A group of poets graced with rarest charm and linked together by several and varied circumstances, each one figures here in unique evidence and bold relief of individuality. They are called of the order Spenserian; servants at the altar to the Pastoral Muse; and, in the reckoning of time, belong to that glorious age of great Elizabeth. Nicholas Breton (or Britton, as it is pronounced) and William Browne were both contributors to *England's Helicon*, of 1614, and Browne and Wither each submitted verses for *The Shepherd's Pipe*,

a publication of the same year. The former two were, in turn, under the patronage of that most cultured family, the Herberts, Breton being a *protégé* of "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," whom Browne (and not Ben Jonson, as is commonly said) eulogised thus in elegy. George Wither, being Browne's intimate friend, was presumably not unappreciated by the kinsfolk of George Herbert. Thus do they appear as in a bond of spiritual union.

{06} Breton, a step-son to the poet Gascoigne, and the elder of our fascinating trio, is conspicuous for an unswerving, whole-hearted attachment to nature and rural scenes. It is in the pastoral lyric where, with tenderest devotion, he pursues, untrammelled, a light and free-born fancy. His fertile, varied muse, laden with the passionate exaggerations of love-lorn swain, is yet charged with richest imagery and thought, full to overflowing with joyous abandonment, and sweet with the perfume of many flowers, culled in distant fields.

Wither, though best remembered by exploits in the political arena, is none the less a poet of deep and purest feeling. To be sure, his best and earlier work has all of that delightful extravagance and amorous colouring peculiar to the age. But there is reflected a homely dignity and mobile, felicitous vein in which the poet seems endowed with every attribute of a melodist. Exquisite, graceful and diverse he, at times, would soar to flights of highest inspiration and bedeck the page with gems of rarest worth. In the heptasyllabic couplet he is decidedly successful.

And lastly William Browne, than whom we have not a more modest and retiring singer, here makes his bow with a slender portfolio of excerpts. Whatever else may transpire it is certain that labour such as his bears the assurance of unsullied happiness and overflowing joy. It is quaint, simple, unassuming; without affectation, full of pathos, and gently sensitive. He was a man who knew no guile, and his sweet and artless nature is faithfully portrayed in the outpourings of an impressionable, poetic soul. To dance with rustic maidens on the lea; to sing by moonlight to the piper's strain; to be happy, always happy, such is the theme, delicate and refined, of these our half-forgotten poets.

W. B. KEMPLING.

{07}

Nicholas Breton

A Sweet Pastoral

Good Muse, rock me asleep
 With some sweet harmony:
 The weary eye is not to keep
 Thy wary company.

Sweet Love, begone awhile,
 Thou knowest my heaviness:
 Beauty is born but to beguile
 My heart of happiness.

See how my little flock,
 That loved to feed on high,
 Do headlong tumble down the rock,
 And in the valley die.

The bushes and the trees
 That were so fresh and green,
 Do all their dainty colour leese,
 And not a leaf is seen.

The blackbird and the thrush,
 That made the woods to ring,
 With all the rest, are now at hush,
 And not a note they sing.

Sweet Philomel, the bird
 That hath the heavenly throat,
 Doth now alas! not once afford
 Recording of a note.

{08}

The flowers have had a frost,
 Each herb hath lost her savour;
 And Phyllida the fair hath lost
 The comfort of her favour.

Now all these careful sights
 So kill me in conceit,
 That how to hope upon delights
 It is but mere deceit.

And therefore, my sweet Muse,
 Thou know'st what help is best;
 Do now thy heavenly cunning use
 To set my heart at rest;

And in a dream bewray
 What fate shall be my friend;
 Whether my life shall still decay,
 Or when my sorrow end.

Aglaia: a Pastoral

Sylvan Muses, can ye sing
 Of the beauty of the Spring?
 Have ye seen on earth that sun
 That a heavenly course hath run?
 Have ye lived to see those eyes
 Where the pride of beauty lies?
 Have ye heard that heavenly voice
 That may make Love's heart rejoice?
 Have ye seen Aglaia, she
 Whom the world may joy to see?
 If ye have not seen all these,
 Then ye do but labour leese;
 While ye tune your pipes to play
 But an idle roundelay;
 And in sad Discomfort's den
 Everyone go bite her pen;
 That she cannot reach the skill
 How to climb that blessed hill
 Where Aglaia's fancies dwell,
 Where exceedings do excell,
 And in simple truth confess
 She is that fair shepherdess
 To whom fairest flocks a-field
 Do their service duly yield:

{09}

On whom never Muse hath gazèd
But in musing is amazèd;
Where the honour is too much
For their highest thoughts to touch;
Thus confess, and get ye gone
To your places every one;
And in silence only speak
When ye find your speech too weak.
Blessèd be Aglaia yet,
Though the Muses die for it;
Come abroad, ye blessèd Muses,
Ye that Pallas chiefly chooses,
When she would command a creature
In the honour of Love's nature,
For the sweet Aglaia fair
All to sweeten all the air,
Is abroad this blessèd day;
Haste ye, therefore, come away:
And to kill Love's maladies
Meet her with your melodies.

Flora hath been all about,
And hath brought her wardrobe out;
With her fairest, sweetest flowers,
All to trim up all your bowers.

Bid the shepherds and their swains
See the beauty of their plains;
And command them with their flocks
To do reverence on the rocks;
Where they may so happy be
As her shadow but to see:
Bid the birds in every bush
Not a bird to be at hush:
But to sit, and chirp, and sing
To the beauty of the Spring:
Call the sylvan nymphs together,
Bid them bring their musicks hither.
Trees their barky silence break,
Crack yet, though they cannot speak
Bid the purest, whitest swan
Of her feathers make her fan;
Let the hound the hare go chase;
Lambs and rabbits run at base;
Flies be dancing in the sun,
While the silk-worm's webs are spun;
Hang a fish on every hook
As she goes along the brook;
So with all your sweetest powers
Entertain her in your bowers;
Where her ear may joy to hear
How ye make your sweetest quire;
And in all your sweetest vein
Still Aglaia strike her strain;
But when she her walk doth turn,
Then begin as fast to mourn;
All your flowers and garlands wither
Put up all your pipes together;
Never strike a pleasing strain
Till she come abroad again.

{10}

Phyllida and Corydon

In the merry month of May,
In a morn by break of day,
With a troop of damsels playing
Forth I rode, forsooth, a-maying,
When anon by a woodside,
Where as May was in his pride,
I espied, all alone,
Phyllida and Corydon.

{11}

Much ado there was, God wot!
He would love, and she would not:
She said, never man was true;
He says, none was false to you.
He said, he had loved her long:
She says, Love should have no wrong.

Corydon would kiss her then,
She says, maids must kiss no men,
Till they do for good and all.
Then she made the shepherd call
All the heavens to witness, truth
Never loved a truer youth.
Thus with many a pretty oath,
Yea, and nay, and faith and troth!--
Such as silly shepherds use
When they will not love abuse;
Love, which had been long deluded,
Was with kisses sweet concluded:
And Phyllida, with garlands gay,
Was made the lady of the May.

Astrophel's Song of Phyllida and Corydon

Fair in a morn (O fairest morn!),
Was never morn so fair,
There shone a sun, though not the sun
That shineth in the air.
For the earth, and from the earth,
(Was never such a creature !)
Did come this face (was never face
That carried such a feature).
Upon a hill (O blessèd hill!
Was never hill so blessèd),
There stood a man (was never man
For woman so distressed):
This man beheld a heavenly view,
Which did such virtue give
As clears the blind, and helps the lame,
And makes the dead man live.
This man had hap (O happy man!
More happy none than he);
For he had hap to see the hap

{12}

That none had hap to see.
 This silly swain (and silly swains
 Are men of meanest grace):
 Had yet the grace (O gracious gift!)
 To hap on such a face.
 He pity cried, and pity came
 And pitied so his pain,
 As dying would not let him die
 But gave him life again.
 For joy whereof he made such mirth
 As all the woods did ring;
 And Pan with all his swains came forth
 To hear the shepherd sing;
 But such a song sung never was,
 Nor shall be sung again,
 Of Phyllida the shepherds' queen,
 And Corydon the swain.
 Fair Phyllis is the shepherds' queen,
 (Was never such a queen as she,)
 And Corydon her only swain
 (Was never such a swain as he):
 Fair Phyllis hath the fairest face
 That ever eye did yet behold,
 And Corydon the constant'st faith
 That ever yet kept flock in fold;
 Sweet Phyllis is the sweetest sweet
 That ever yet the earth did yield,
 And Corydon the kindest swain
 That ever yet kept lambs in field.
 Sweet Philomel is Phyllis' bird,
 Though Corydon be he that caught her,
 And Corydon doth hear her sing,
 Though Phyllida be she that taught her:
 Poor Corydon doth keep the fields
 Though Phyllida be she that owes them,
 And Phyllida doth walk the meads,
 Though Corydon be he that mows them:
 The little lambs are Phyllis' love,
 Though Corydon is he that feeds them,
 The gardens fair are Phyllis' ground,
 Though Corydon is he that weeds them.
 Since then that Phyllis only is
 The only shepherd's only queen;
 And Corydon the only swain
 That only hath her shepherd been,--
 Though Phyllis keep her bower of state,
 Shall Corydon consume away?
 No, shepherd, no, work out the week,
 And Sunday shall be holiday.

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A Pastoral of Phyllis and Corydon

On a hill there grows a flower,
 Fair befall the dainty sweet!
 By that flower there is a bower,
 Where the heavenly Muses meet.

In that bower there is a chair,
 Fringed all about with gold,
 Where doth sit the fairest fair
 That did ever eye behold.

It is Phyllis, fair and bright,
 She that is the shepherds' joy,
 She that Venus did despite,
 And did blind her little boy.

This is she, the wise, the rich,
 That the world desires to see:
 This is *ipsa quæ*, the which
 There is none but only she.

{14}

Who would not this face admire?
 Who would not this saint adore?
 Who would not this sight desire,
 Though he thought to see no more?

O, fair eyes, yet let me see,
 One good look, and I am gone:
 Look on me, for I am he,
 Thy poor silly Corydon.

Thou that art the shepherds' queen,
 Look upon thy silly swain;
 By thy comfort have been seen
 Dead men brought to life again.

Corydon's Supplication to Phyllis

Sweet Phyllis, if a silly swain
 May sue to thee for grace,
 See not thy loving shepherd slain
 With looking on thy face;
 But think what power thou hast got
 Upon my flock and me;
 Thou seest they now regard me not,
 But all do follow thee.
 And if I have so far presumed,
 With prying in thine eyes,
 Yet let not comfort be consumed
 That in thy pity lies;
 But as thou art that Phyllis fair,
 That fortune favour gives,
 So let not love die in despair
 That in thy favour lives.
 The deer do browse upon the briar,
 The birds do pick the cherries;
 And will not Beauty grant Desire
 One handful of her berries?
 If it be so that thou hast sworn
 That none shall look on thee,
 Yet let me know thou dost not scorn
 To cast a look on me.

{15}

But if thy beauty make thee proud,
 Think then what is ordain'd;
 The heavens have never yet allow'd
 That love should be disdain'd.
 Then lest the fates that favour love
 Should curse thee for unkind,
 Let me report for thy behoof,
 The honour of thy mind;
 Let Corydon with full consent
 Set down what he hath seen,
 That Phyllida with Love's content
 Is sworn the shepherds' queen.

A Report Song in a Dream, between a shepherd and his nymph

Shall we go dance the hay? *The hay?*
 Never pipe could ever play
 Better shepherd's roundelay.

Shall we go sing the song? *The song?*
 Never Love did ever wrong.
 Fair maids, hold hands all along.

Shall we go learn to woo? *To woo?*
 Never thought came ever to[o](?)
 Better deed could better do.

Shall we go learn to kiss? *To kiss?*
 Never heart could ever miss
 Comfort where true meaning is.

{16}

Thus at base they run, *They run,*
 When the sport was scarce begun;
 But I waked, and all was done.

Another of the Same

Say that I should say I love ye,
 Would you say 'tis but a saying?
 But if Love in prayers move ye,
 Will ye not be moved with praying?

Think I think that Love should know ye,
 Will you think 'tis but a thinking?
 But if Love the thought do show ye,
 Will ye loose your eyes with winking?

Write that I do write you blessed,
 Will you write 'tis but a writing?
 But if Truth and Love confess it,
 Will ye doubt the true inditing?

No, I say, and think, and write it,

Write, and think, and say your pleasure;
Love, and truth, and I indite it,
You are blessed out of measure.

A Shepherd's Dream

A silly shepherd lately sat
Among a flock of sheep;
Where musing long on this and that,
At last he fell asleep.
And in the slumber as he lay,
He gave a piteous groan;
He thought his sheep were run away,
And he was left alone.
He whoop'd, he whistled, and he call'd,
But not a sheep came near him;
Which made the shepherd sore appall'd
To see that none would hear him.
But as the swain amazèd stood,
In this most solemn vein,
Came Phyllida forth of the wood,
And stood before the swain.
Whom when the shepherd did behold
He straight began to weep,
And at the heart he grew a-cold,
To think upon his sheep.
For well he knew, where came the queen,
The shepherd durst not stay:
And where that he durst not be seen,
The sheep must needs away.
To ask her if she saw his flock,
Might happen patience move,
And have an answer with a mock,
That such demanders prove.
Yet for because he saw her come
Alone out of the wood,
He thought he would not stand as dumb,
When speech might do him good;
And therefore falling on his knees,
To ask but for his sheep,
He did awake, and so did leese
The honour of his sleep.

A Quarrel with Love

Oh that I could write a story
Of love's dealing with affection!
How he makes the spirit sorry
That is touch'd with his infection.

But he doth so closely wind him,
In the plaits of will ill-pleased,
That the heart can never find him
Till it be too much diseased.

{18}

'Tis a subtle kind or spirit
 Of a venom-kind of nature,
 That can, like a coney-ferret,
 Creep unawares upon a creature.

Never eye that can behold it,
 Though it worketh first by seeing;
 Nor conceit that can unfold it,
 Though in thoughts be all its being.

Oh! it maketh old men witty,
 Young men wanton, women idle,
 While that patience weeps, for pity
 Reason bite not nature's bridle.

What it is, in conjecture;
 Seeking much, but nothing finding;
 Like to fancy's architecture
 With illusions reason blinding.

Yet, can beauty so retain it,
 In the profit of her service,
 That she closely can maintain it
 For her servant chief on office?

In her eye she chiefly breeds it;
 In her cheeks she chiefly hides it;
 In her servant's faith she feeds it,
 While his only heart abides it.

A Sweet Contention between Love, his Mistress, and Beauty

Love and my mistress were at strife
 Who had the greatest power on me:
 Betwixt them both, oh, what a life!
 Nay, what a death is this to be!

{19}

She said, she did it with her eye;
 He said, he did it with his dart;
 Betwixt them both (a silly wretch!)
 'Tis I that have the wounded heart.

She said, she only spake the word
 That did enchant my peering sense;
 He said, he only gave the sound
 That enter'd heart without defence.

She said, her beauty was the mark
 That did amaze the highest mind;
 He said, he only made the mist
 Whereby the senses grew so blind.

She said, that only for her sake,
 The best would venture life and limb:
 He said, she was too much deceiv'd;
 They honour'd her because of him.

Long while, alas, she would not yield,
 But it was she that rul'd the roost;[1]
 Until by proof, she did confess,
 If he were gone, her joy was lost.

And then she cried, "Oh, dainty love,
 I now do find it is for thee,
 That I am lov'd and honour'd both,
 And thou hast power to conquer me."

But, when I heard her yield to love,
 Oh! how my heart did leap for joy!
 That now I had some little hope
 To have an end to mine annoy!

But, as too soon, before the field
 The trumpets sound the overthrow,
 So all too soon I joy'd too much,
 For I awaked, and nothing saw.[2]

[Transcriber's note 1: The original had 'roast']

[Footnote 2: Ellis reads *so*.]

{20}

Love

Foolish love is only folly;
 Wanton love is too unholy;
 Greedy love is covetous;
 Idle love is frivolous;
 But the gracious love is it
 That doth prove the work of it.

Beauty but deceives the eye;
 Flattery leads the ear awry;
 Wealth doth but enchant the wit;
 Want, the overthrow of it;
 While in Wisdom's worthy grace,
 Virtue sees the sweetest face.

There hath Love found out his life,
 Peace without all thought of strife;
 Kindness in Discretion's care;
 Truth, that clearly doth declare
 Faith doth in true fancy prove,
 Lust the excrements of Love.

Then in faith may fancy see
 How my love may constru'd be;
 How it grows and what it seeks;
 How it lives and what it likes;
 So in highest grace regard it,
 Or in lowest scorn discard it.

The Passionate Shepherd.

Those eyes that hold the hand of every heart,

That hand that holds the heart of every eye,
 That wit that goes beyond all Nature's art,
 The sense too deep for Wisdom to descry;
 That eye, that hand, that wit, that heavenly sense
 Doth show my only mistress' excellence.

{21}

O eyes that pierce into the purest heart!
 O hands that hold the highest thoughts in thrall!
 O wit that weighs the depth of all desert!
 O sense that shews the secret sweet of all!
 The heaven of heavens with heavenly power preserve thee,
 Love but thyself, and give me leave to serve thee.

To serve, to live to look upon those eyes,
 To look, to live to kiss that heavenly hand,
 To sound that wit that doth amaze the mind,
 To know that sense, no sense can understand,
 To understand that all the world may know,
 Such wit, such sense, eyes, hands, there are no moe.

Sonnet

The worldly prince doth in his sceptre hold
 A kind of heaven in his authorities;
 The wealthy miser, in his mass of gold,
 Makes to his soul a kind of Paradise;
 The epicure that eats and drinks all day,
 Accounts no heaven, but in his hellish routs;
 And she, whose beauty seems a sunny day,
 Makes up her heaven but in her baby's clouts.
 But, my sweet God, I seek no prince's power,
 No miser's wealth, nor beauty's fading gloss,
 Which pamper sin, whose sweets are inward sour,
 And sorry gains that breed the spirit's loss:
 No, my dear Lord, let my Heaven only be
 In my Love's service, but to live to thee.

{22}

A Sweet Lullaby

Come, little babe, come, silly soul,
 Thy father's shame, thy mother's grief,
 Born as I doubt to all our dole,
 And to thyself unhappy chief:
 Sing lullaby and lap it warm,
 Poor soul that thinks no creature harm.

Thou little thinkst, and less dost know
 The cause of this thy mother's moan;
 Thou want'st the wit to wail her woe,
 And I myself am all alone;
 Why dost thou weep? why dost thou wail,
 And know'st not yet what thou dost ail?

Come, little wretch! Ah! silly heart,
 Mine only joy, what can I more?

If there be any wrong thy smart,
 That may the destinies implore,
 'Twas I, I say, against my will--
 I wail the time, but be thou still.

And dost thou smile? O thy sweet face!
 Would God Himself He might thee see!
 No doubt thou wouldst soon purchase grace,
 I know right well, for thee and me,
 But come to mother, babe, and play,
 For father false is fled away.

Sweet boy, if it by fortune chance
 Thy father home again to send,
 If Death do strike me with his lance
 Yet may'st thou me to him commend:
 If any ask thy mother's name,
 Tell how by love she purchased blame.

{23}

Then will his gentle heart soon yield:
 I know him of a noble mind:
 Although a lion in the field,
 A lamb in town[1] thou shalt him find:
 Ask blessing, babe, be not afraid!
 His sugar'd words hath me betray'd.

Then may'st thou joy and be right glad,
 Although in woe I seem to moan;
 Thy father is no rascal lad:
 A noble youth of blood and bone,
 His glancing looks, if he once smile,
 Right honest women may beguile.

Come, little boy, and rock a-sleep!
 Sing lullaby, and be thou still!
 I, that can do naught else but weep,
 Will sit by thee and wail my fill:
 God bless my babe, and lullaby,
 From this thy father's quality.

[Transcribers' note 1: 'lown' in the original]

{24}

George Wither

Prelude

(From *The Shepherd's Hunting*)

Seest thou not, in clearest days,
 Oft thick fogs cloud Heaven's rays?
 And that vapours which do breathe
 From the Earth's gross womb beneath,
 Seem unto us with black steams
 To pollute the Sun's bright beams,
 And yet vanish into air,
 Leaving it unblemished fair?

So, my Willy, shall it be
With Detraction's breath on thee:
It shall never rise so high
As to stain thy poesy.
As that sun doth oft exhale
Vapours from each rotten vale,
Poesy so sometime drains
Gross conceits from muddy brains;
Mists of envy, fogs of spite,
Twixt men's judgments and her light;
But so much her power may do,
That she can dissolve them too.
If thy verse do bravely tower,
As she makes wing she gets power;
Yet the higher she doth soar,
She's affronted still the more,
Till she to the highest hath past;
Then she rests with Fame at last.
Let nought, therefore, thee affright;
But make forward in thy flight.
For if I could match thy rhyme,
To the very stars I'd climb;
There begin again, and fly
Till I reached eternity.
But, alas, my Muse is slow,
For thy place she flags too low;
Yea, the more's her hapless fate,
Her short wings were clipt of late;
And poor I, her fortune ruing,
Am put up myself a mewing.
But if I my cage can rid,
I'll fly where I never did;
And though for her sake I'm crost,
Though my best hopes I have lost,
And knew she would make my trouble
Ten times more than ten times double,
I should love and keep her too,
Spite of all the world could do.
For though, banished from my flocks
And confined within these rocks,
Here I waste away the light
And consume the sullen night,
She doth for my comfort stay,
And keeps many cares away.
Though I miss the flowery fields,
With those sweets the spring-tide yields;
Though I may not see those groves,
Where the shepherds chaunt their loves,
And the lasses more excel
Than the sweet-voiced Philomel;
Though of all those pleasures past,
Nothing now remains at last
But Remembrance--poor relief!
That more makes than mends my grief:
She's my mind's companion still,
Maugre envy's evil will;
Whence she should be driven too,
Were't in mortal's power to do.

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She doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow,
Makes the desolatest place
To her presence be a grace,
And the blackest discontents
To be pleasing ornaments.
In my former days of bliss
Her divine skill taught me this,
That from everything I saw
I could some invention draw,
And raise pleasure to her height
Through the meanest object's sight;
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustling;
By a daisy, whose leaves spread,
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me,
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.
By her help I also now
Make this churlish place allow
Some things that may sweeten gladness
In the very gall of sadness:
The dull lonesness, the black shade
That these hanging vaults have made;
The strange music of the waves
Beating on these hollow caves;
This black den which rocks emboss
Overgrown with eldest moss;
The rude portals that give light
More to terror than delight;
This my chamber of neglect,
Walled about with disrespect;
From all these, and this dull air,
A fit object for despair,
She hath taught me, by her might,
To draw comfort and delight.
Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,
I will cherish thee for this.
Poesy, thou sweet'st content
That e'er Heaven to mortals lent!
Though they as a trifle leave thee
Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee,
Though thou be to them a scorn
That to nought but earth are born
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.
Though our wise ones call thee madness,
Let me never taste of gladness,
If I love not thy maddest fits
More than all their greatest wits.
And though some, too seeming holy,
Do account thy raptures folly,
Thou dost teach me to contemn
What makes knaves and fools of them.

{27}

A Poet's Home

Two pretty rills do meet, and meeting make
Within one valley a large silver lake:
About whose banks the fertile mountains stood
In ages passèd bravely crowned with wood,
Which lending cold-sweet shadows gave it grace
To be accounted Cynthia's bathing-place;
And from her father Neptune's brackish court,
Fair Thetis thither often would resort,
Attended by the fishes of the sea,
Which in those sweeter waters came to plea.
There would the daughter of the Sea God dive,
And thither came the Land Nymphs every eve
To wait upon her: bringing for her brows
Rich garlands of sweet flowers and beechy boughs.
For pleasant was that pool, and near it then
Was neither rotten marsh nor boggy fen,
It was nor overgrown with boisterous sedge,
Nor grew there rudely then along the edge
A bending willow, nor a prickly bush,
Nor broad-leaved flag, nor reed, nor knotty rush.
But here well-ordered was a grove with bowers,
There grassy plots set round about with flowers.
Here you might through the water see the land
Appear, strowed o'er with white or yellow sand;
Yon deeper was it, and the wind by whiffs
Would make it rise and wash the little cliffs
On which, oft pluming, sat unfrighted than
The gagging wild-goose and the snow-white swan,
With all those flocks of fowls which to this day,
Upon those quiet waters breed and play.
For though those excellences wanting be
Which once it had, it is the same that we
By transposition name the Ford of Arle,
And out of which, along a chalky marle,
That river trills whose waters wash the fort
In which brave Arthur kept his royal court.
North-east, not far from this great pool, there lies
A tract of beechy mountains, that arise,
With leisurely ascending, to such height
As from their tops the warlike Isle of Wight
You in the ocean's bosom may espy,
Though near two furlongs thence it lie.
The pleasant way, as up those hills you climb,
Is strowed o'er with marjoram and thyme,
Which grows unset. The hedgerows do not want
The cowslip, violet, primrose, nor a plant
That freshly scents: as birch, both green and tall;
Low sallows, on whose blooming bees do fall;
Fair woodbines, which about the hedges twine;
Smooth privet, and the sharp-sweet eglantine,
With many moe whose leaves and blossoms fair
The earth adorn and oft perfume the air.

When you unto the highest do attain
An intermixture both of wood and plain
You shall behold, which, though aloft it lie,

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Hath downs for sheep and fields for husbandry,
 So much, at least, as little needeth more,
 If not enough to merchandise their store.

In every row hath nature planted there
 Some banquet for the hungry passenger.
 For here the hazel-nut and filbert grows,
 There bullice, and, a little farther, sloes.
 On this hand standeth a fair weilding-tree,
 On that large thickets of blackberries be.
 The shrubby fields are raspice orchards there,
 The new felled woods like strawberry gardens are,
 And had the King of Rivers blessed those hills
 With some small number of such pretty rills
 As flow elsewhere, Arcadia had not seen
 A sweeter plot of earth than this had been.

{29}

From *Faire Virtue*.

Her Beauty

Her true beauty leaves behind
 Apprehensions in my mind
 Of more sweetness than all art
 Or inventions can impart;
 Thoughts too deep to be expressed,
 And too strong to be suppressed....
 ... What pearls, what rubies can
 Seem so lovely fair to man,
 As her lips whom he doth love
 When in sweet discourse they move:
 Or her lovelier teeth, the while
 She doth bless him with a smile!
 Stars indeed fair creatures be;
 Yet amongst us where is he
 Joys not more the whilst he lies
 Sunning in his mistress' eyes.
 Than in all the glimmering light
 Of a starry winter's night?

Note the beauty of an eye,
 And if aught you praise it by
 Leave such passion in your mind,
 Let my reason's eye be blind.
 Mark if ever red or white
 Anywhere gave such delight
 As when they have taken place
 In a worthy woman's face.

{30}

From *Faire Virtue*.

Rhomboidal Dirge.

Ah me!
 Am I the swain
 That late from sorrow free
 Did all the cares on earth disdain?
 And still untouched, as at some safer games,

Played with the burning coals of love, and beauty's flames?
 Was't I could dive, and sound each passion's secret depth at will?
 And from those huge o'erwhelmings rise, by help of reason still?
 And am I now, O heavens! for trying this in vain,
 So sunk that I shall never rise again?
 Then let despair set sorrow's string,
 For strains that doleful be;
 And I will sing,
 Ah me!

But why,
 O fatal time,
 Dost thou constrain that I
 Should perish in my youth's sweet prime?
 I, but awhile ago, (you cruel powers!)
 In spite of fortune, cropped contentment's sweetest flowers,
 And yet unscornèd, serve a gentle nymph, the fairest she,
 That ever was beloved of man, or eyes did ever see!
 Yea, one whose tender heart would rue for my distress;
 Yet I, poor I! must perish ne'ertheless.
 And (which much more augments my care)
 Unmoanèd I must die,
 And no man e'er
 Know why.

Thy leave,
 My dying song,
 Yet take, ere grief bereave
 The breath which I enjoy too long,
 Tell thou that fair one this: my soul prefers
 Her love above my life; and that I died her's:
 And let him be, for evermore, to her remembrance dear,
 Who loved the very thought of her whilst he remained here.
 And now farewell! thou place of my unhappy birth,
 Where once I breathed the sweetest air on earth;
 Since me my wonted joys forsake,
 And all my trust deceive;
 Of all I take
 My leave.

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Farewell!
 Sweet groves, to you!
 You hills, that highest dwell;
 And all you humble vales, adieu!
 You wanton brooks, and solitary rocks,
 My dear companions all! and you, my tender flocks!
 Farewell my pipe, and all those pleasing songs, whose moving strains
 Delighted once the fairest nymphs that dance upon the plains!
 You discontents, whose deep and over-deadly smart
 Have, without pity, broke the truest heart.
 Sighs, tears, and every sad annoy,
 That erst did with me dwell,
 And all other joys,
 Farewell!

Adieu!
 Fair shepherdesses!
 Let garlands of sad yew

Adorn your dainty golden tresses.
 I, that loved you, and often with my quill,
 Made music that delighted fountain, grove, and hill;
 I, whom you loved so, and with a sweet and chaste embrace.
 Yea, with a thousand rather favours, would vouchsafe to grace,
 I now must leave you all alone, of love to plain;
 And never pipe, nor never sing again!
 I must, for evermore, be gone;
 And therefore bid I you,
 And every one,
 Adieu!

I die!
 For, oh! I feel
 Death's horrors drawing nigh,
 And all this frame of nature reel.
 My hopeless heart, despairing of relief,
 Sinks underneath the heavy weight of saddest grief;
 Which hath so ruthless torn, so racked, so tortured every vein,
 All comfort comes too late to have it ever cured again.
 My swimming head begins to dance death's giddy round;
 A shuddering chillness doth each sense confound;
 Benumbed is my cold sweating brow
 A dimness shuts my eye.
 And now, oh! now,
 I die!

From *Faire Virtue*.

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Song

Lordly gallants! tell me this
 (Though my safe content you weigh not),
 In your greatness, what one bliss
 Have you gained, that I enjoy not?
 You have honours, you have wealth;
 I have peace, and I have health:
 All the day I merry make,
 And at night no care I take.

Bound to none my fortunes be,
 This or that man's fall I fear not;
 Him I love that loveth me,
 For the rest a pin I care not.
 You are sad when others chaff,
 And grow merry as they laugh;
 I that hate it, and am free,
 Laugh and weep as pleaseth me.

You may boast of favours shown,
 Where your service is applied:
 But my pleasures are mine own,
 And to no man's humour tied.
 You oft flatter, sooth, and feign;
 I such baseness do disdain;
 And to none be slave I would,
 Though my fetters might be gold.

By great titles, some believe,
Highest honours are attained;
And yet kings have power to give
To their fools, what these have gained.
Where they favour there they may
All their names of honour lay;
But I look not raised to be,
'Till mine own wing carry me.

Seek to raise your titles higher;
They are toys not worth my sorrow;
Those that we to-day admire,
Prove the age's scorn to-morrow.
Take your honours; let me find
Virtue in a free born mind--
This, the greatest kings that be
Cannot give, nor take from me.

Though I vainly do not vaunt
Large demesnes, to feed my pleasure;
I have favours where you want,
That would buy respect with treasure.
You have lands lie here and there,
But my wealth is everywhere;
And this addeth to my store--
Fortune cannot make me poor.

Say you purchase with your pelf
Some respect, where you importune;
Those may love me for myself,
That regard you for your fortune.
Rich or born of high degree,
Fools as well as you may be;
But that peace in which I live
No descent nor wealth can give.

If you boast that you may gain
The respect of high-born beauties;
Know I never wooed in vain,
Nor preferred scornèd duties.
She I love hath all delight,
Rosy-red with lily-white,
And whoe'er your mistress be,
Flesh and blood as good as she.

Note of me was never took,
For my woman-like perfections;
But so like a man I look,
It hath gained me best affections.
For my love as many showers
Have been wept as have for yours:
And yet none doth me condemn
For abuse, or scorning them.

Though of dainties you have store,
To delight a choicer palate,
Yet your taste is pleased no more
Than is mine in one poor sallet.

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You to please your senses feed
But I eat good blood to breed;
And am most delighted then
When I spend it like a man.

Though you lord it over me,
You in vain thereof have braved;
For those lusts my servants be
Whereunto your minds are slaved.
To yourselves you wise appear,
But, alas! deceived you are;
You do foolish me esteem,
And are that which I do seem.

When your faults I open lay,
You are moved, and mad with vexing;
But you ne'er could do or say
Aught to drive me to perplexing.
Therefore, my despised power
Greater is, by far, than your.
And, whate'er you think of me,
In your minds you poorer be.

You are pleased, more or less,
As men well or ill report you;
And show discontentedness,
When the times forbear to court you.
That in which my pleasures be,
No man can divide from me;
And my care it adds not to,
Whatso others say or do.

Be not proud, because you view
You by thousands are attended;
For, alas! it is not you,
But your fortune that's befriended.
Where I show of love have got,
Such a danger fear I not:
Since they nought can seek of me,
But for love, beloved to be.

When your hearts have everything,
You are pleasantly disposed:
But I can both laugh and sing,
Though my foes have me enclosed.
Yea, when dangers me do hem,
I delight in scorning them,
More than you in your renown,
Or a king can in his crown.

You do bravely domineer,
Whilst the sun upon you shineth:
Yet, if any storm appear,
Basely, then, your mind declineth.
But, or shine, or rain, or blow,
I my resolutions know--
Living, dying, thrall, or free,
At one height my mind shall be.

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When in thralldom I have lain,
 Me not worth your thought you prized;
 But your malice was in vain,
 For your favours I despised.
 And, howe'er you value me,
 I with praise shall thought on be
 When the world esteems you not
 And your names shall be forgot.

In these thoughts my riches are;
 Now, though poor or mean you deem me,
 I am pleased, and do not care
 How the times or you esteem me.
 For those toys that make you gay
 Are but play-games for a day:
 And when nature craves her due,
 I as brave shall be as you.

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Song

Shall I, wasting in despair,
 Die, because a woman's fair?
 Or make pale my cheeks with care
 'Cause another's rosy are?
 Be she fairer than the day,
 Or the flow'ry meads in May;
 If she be not so to me,
 What care I how fair she be.

Should my heart be grieved or pined
 'Cause I see a woman kind?
 Or a well-disposèd nature
 Joinèd with a lovely creature?
 Be she meeker, kinder than
 Turtle-dove or pelican:
 If she be not so to me,
 What care I how kind she be.

Shall a woman's virtues move
 Me to perish for her love?
 Or, her well-deserving known,
 Make me quite forget mine own?
 Be she with that goodness blest
 Which may gain her name of best
 If she be not such to me,
 What care I how good she be.

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
 Shall I play the fool and die?
 Those that bear a noble mind,
 Where they want or riches find,
 Think what with them they would do
 That without them dare to woo.
 And unless that mind I see,
 What care I though great she be.

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Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
 I will ne'er the more despair;
 If she love me, this believe,
 I will die ere she shall grieve.
 If she slight me, when I woo,
 I can scorn, and let her go.
 For, if she be not for me,
 What care I for whom she be.

"Amarillis I Did Woo"

Amarillis I did woo,
 And I courted Phillis too;
 Daphne, for her love, I chose;
 Cloris, for that damask rose
 In her cheek, I held as dear;
 Yea, a thousand liked well near.
 And, in love with all together,
 Fearèd the enjoying either;
 'Cause to be of one possest,
 Barred the hope of all the rest.

Sonnet: On A Stolen Kiss

Now gentle sleep hath closèd up those eyes,
 Which waking kept my boldest thoughts in awe,
 And free access unto that sweet lip lies
 From whence I long the rosy breath to draw.
 Methinks no wrong it were if I should steal,
 From those two melting rubies, one poor kiss.
 None sees the theft that would the thief reveal,
 Nor rob I her of aught which she can miss.
 Nay, should I twenty kisses take away,
 There would be little sign I had done so.
 Why then should I this robbery delay?
 Oh, she may wake, and therewith angry grow.
 Well, if she do, I'll back restore that one,
 And twenty hundred thousand more for loan.

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A Christmas Carol

So now is come our joyful feast,
 Let every man be jolly;
 Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
 And every post with holly.
 Though some churls at our mirth repine,
 Round your foreheads garlands twine,
 Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
 And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimnies smoke,
 And Christmas blocks are burning;
 Their ovens they with baked meats choke,

And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury it in a Christmas pie;
And evermore be merry.

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labour;
Our lasses have provided them
A bagpipe and a tabour.
Young men and maids, and girls and boys
Give life to one another's joys;
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun,
Their hall of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.
The country-folk themselves advance,
For Crowdy-Mutton's come out of France;
And Jack shall pipe and Jill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

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Ned Swatch hath fetched his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn
With droppings of the barrel.
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices
With capons make their errands;
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants.
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer,
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
The poor, that else were undone;
Some landlords spend their money worse,
On lust and pride at London.
There the roysters they do play,
Drab and dice their land away,
Which may be ours another day;
And therefore let's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is easèd;
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleasèd.
Though others' purses be more fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that;
Hang sorrow, care will kill a cat,

And therefore let's be merry.

Hark how the wags abroad do call
 Each other forth to rambling;
 Anon you'll see them in the hall,
 For nuts and apples scrambling,
 Hark how the roofs with laughters sound,
 Anon they'll think the house goes round:
 For they the cellar's depths have found,
 And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassel-bowls
 About the streets are singing;
 The boys are come to catch the owls,
 The wild mare in is bringing.
 Our kitchen boy hath broke his box,
 And to the dealing of the ox
 Our honest neighbours come by flocks,
 And here they will be merry.

Now kings and queens poor sheep-cotes have,
 And mate with everybody;
 The honest now may play the knave,
 And wise men play at noddie.
 Some youths will now a mumming go,
 Some others play at rowland-hoe,
 And twenty other gameboys moe;
 Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry days
 Should we, I pray, be duller?
 No, let us sing some roundelays
 To make our mirth the fuller.
 And whilst we thus inspirèd sing,
 Let all the streets with echoes ring;
 Woods, and hills, and everything
 Bear witness we are merry.

A Rocking Hymn

Sweet baby, sleep! what ails my dear,
 What ails my darling thus to cry?
 Be still, my child, and lend thine ear
 To hear me sing thy lullaby.
 My pretty lamb, forbear to weep;
 Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep.

Thou blessed soul, what canst thou fear?
 What thing to thee can mischief do?
 Thy God is now thy father dear,
 His holy Spouse, thy mother too.
 Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
 Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

Though thy conception was in sin,
 A sacred bathing thou hast had;

And, though thy birth unclean hath been,
A blameless babe thou now art made.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep,

While thus thy lullaby I sing,
For thee great blessings ripening be;
Thine eldest brother is a King,
And hath a kingdom bought for thee.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

Sweet baby, sleep and nothing fear,
For whosoever thee offends,
By thy protector threat'ned are,
And God and angels are thy friends.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

When God with us was dwelling here,
In little babes he took delight;
Such innocents as thou, my dear,
Are ever precious in His sight.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

A little infant once was He,
And, strength in weakness, then was laid
Upon His virgin-mother's knee,
That power to thee might be conveyed.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

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In this, thy frailty and thy need,
He friends and helpers doth prepare,
Which thee shall cherish, clothe and feed;
For of thy weal they tender are.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

The King of kings, when he was born,
Had not so much for outward ease;
By Him such dressings were not worn,
Nor such like swaddling-clothes as these.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

Within a manger lodged thy Lord
Where oxen lay and asses fed;
Warm rooms we do to thee afford,
An easy cradle or a bed.
Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

The wants that He did then sustain
Have purchased wealth, my babe, for thee;
And by His torments and His pain
Thy rest and ease secured be.
My baby, then forbear to weep;

Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

Thou hast (yet more) to perfect this,
 A promise and an earnest got
 Of gaining everlasting bliss,
 Though thou, my babe, perceiv'st it not;
 Sweet baby, then forbear to weep;
 Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep.

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The Marigold

When with a serious musing I behold
 The grateful and obsequious marigold,
 How duly every morning she displays
 Her open breast, when Titan spreads his rays;
 How she observes him in his daily walk,
 Still bending towards him her small slender stalk;
 How when he down declines, she droops and mourns,
 Bedewed, as 'twere with tears, till he returns;
 And how she veils her flowers when he is gone,
 As if she scornèd to be lookèd on
 By an inferior eye; or did contemn
 To wait upon a meaner light than him.
 When this I meditate, methinks the flowers
 Have spirits far more generous than ours,
 And give us fair examples to despise
 The servile fawnings and idolatries,
 Wherewith we court these earthly things below,
 Which merit not the service we bestow....

Sonnet: On the Death of Prince Henry

Methought his royal person did foretell
 A kingly stateliness, from all pride clear;
 His look majestic seemèd to compel
 All men to love him, rather than to fear.
 And yet though he were every good man's joy,
 And the alonely comfort of his own,
 His very name with terror did annoy
 His foreign foes so far as he was known.
 Hell drooped for fear; the Turkey moon looked pale;
 Spain trembled; and the most tempestuous sea,
 (Where Behemoth, the Babylonish whale,
 Keeps all his bloody and imperious plea)
 Was swoln with rage, for fear he'd stop the tide
 Of her o'er-daring and insulting pride.

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From a Satire written to King James I

Did I not know a great man's power and might
 In spite of innocence can smother right,
 Colour his villainies to get esteem,
 And make the honest man the villain seem?

I know it, and the world doth know 'tis true,
 Yet I protest if such a man I knew,
 That might my country prejudice or thee
 Were he the greatest or the proudest he,
 That breathes this day; if so it might be found
 That any good to either might redound,
 I unappalled, dare in such a case
 Rip up his foulest crimes before his face,
 Though for my labour I were sure to drop
 Into the mouth of ruin without hope.

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William Browne

To England

Hail, thou my native soil! thou blessed plot
 Whose equal all the world affordeth not!
 Show me who can so many crystal rills,
 Such sweet-clothed valleys or aspiring hills;
 Such wood-ground, pastures, quarries, wealthy mines;
 Such rocks in whom the diamond fairly shines;
 And if the earth can show the like again,
 Yet will she fail in her sea-ruling men.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

The Seasons

The year hath first his jocund spring,
 Wherein the leaves, to birds' sweet carolling,
 Dance with the wind; then sees the summer's day
 Perfect the embryo blossom of each spray;
 Next cometh autumn, when the threshèd sheaf
 Loseth his grain, and every tree his leaf;
 Lastly, cold winter's rage, with many a storm,
 Threats the proud pines which Ida's top adorn,
 And makes the sap leave succourless the shoot,
 Shrinking to comfort his decaying root.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

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May Day Customs

I have seen the Lady of the May
 Set in an arbour, on a holiday,
 Built by the May-pole, where the jocund swains
 Dance with the maidens to the bagpipe's strains,
 When envious night commands them to be gone
 Call for the merry youngsters one by one,
 And for their well performance soon disposes:
 To this a garland interwove with roses,
 To that a carved hook or well-wrought scrip,
 Gracing another with her cherry lip;
 To one her garter, to another then
 A handkerchief cast o'er and o'er again;

And none returneth empty that hath spent
His pains to fill their rural merriment.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

Birds in May

As (woo'd by May's delights) I have been borne
To take the kind air of a wistful morn
Near Tavy's voiceful stream (to whom I owe
More strains than from my pipe can ever flow),
Here have I heard a sweet bird never lin
To chide the river for his clam'rous din;
There seem'd another in his song to tell,
That what the fair stream did he liked well;
And going further heard another too,
All varying still in what the others do;
A little thence, a fourth with little pain
Conn'd all their lessons, and them sung again;
So numberless the songsters are that sing
In the sweet groves of the too-careless spring,
That I no sooner could the hearing lose
Of one of them, but straight another rose,
And perching deftly on a quaking spray,
Nigh tir'd herself to make her hearer stay.

{47}

.
Shrill as a thrush upon a morn of May.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

Music on the Thames

As I have seen when on the breast of Thames
A heavenly bevy of sweet English dames,
In some calm ev'ning of delightful May,
With music give a farewell to the day,
Or as they would, with an admired tone,
Greet Night's ascension to her ebon throne,
Rapt with their melody a thousand more
Run to be wafted from the bounding shore.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

A Concert of Birds

The mounting lark (day's herald) got on wing,
Bidding each bird choose out his bough and sing.
The lofty treble sung the little wren;
Robin the mean, that best of all loves men;
The nightingale the tenor, and the thrush
The counter-tenor sweetly in a bush.
And that the music might be full in parts,
Birds from the groves flew with right willing hearts;
But (as it seem'd) they thought (as do the swains,
Which tune their pipes on sack'd Hibernia's plains)
There should some droning part be, therefore will'd
Some bird to fly into a neighb'ring field,

{48}

In embassy unto the King of Bees,
 To aid his partners on the flowers and trees
 Who, condescending, gladly flew along
 To bear the bass to his well-tuned song.
 The crow was willing they should be beholding
 For his deep voice, but being hoarse with scolding,
 He thus lends aid; upon an oak doth climb,
 And nodding with his head, so keepeth time.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

Flowers

The daisy scatter'd on each mead and down,
 A golden tuft within a silver crown;
 (Fair fall that dainty flower! and may there be
 No shepherd grac'd that doth not honour thee!)
 The primrose, when with six leaves gotten grace
 Maids as a true-love in their bosoms place;
 The spotless lily, by whose pure leaves be
 Noted the chaste thoughts of virginity;
 Carnations sweet with colour like the fire,
 The fit impresas for inflam'd desire;
 The harebell for her stainless azur'd hue
 Claims to be worn of none but those are true;
 The rose, like ready youth, enticing stands,
 And would be cropp'd if it might choose the hands,
 The yellow kingcup Flora them assign'd
 To be the badges of a jealous mind;
 The orange-tawny marigold: the night
 Hides not her colour from a searching sight....
 The columbine in tawny often taken,
 Is then ascrib'd to such as are forsaken;
 Flora's choice buttons of a russet dye
 Is hope even in the depth of misery.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

Morning

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The Muses' friend (grey-eyed Aurora) yet
 Held all the meadows in a cooling sweat,
 The milk-white gossamers not upwards snow'd,
 Nor was the sharp and useful-steering goad
 Laid on the strong-neck'd ox; no gentle bud
 The sun had dried; the cattle chew'd the cud
 Low levell'd on the grass; no fly's quick sting
 Enforc'd the stonehorse in a furious ring
 To tear the passive earth, nor lash his tail
 About his buttocks broad; the slimy snail
 Might on the wainscot, by his many mazes,
 Winding meanders and self-knitting traces,
 Be follow'd where he stuck, his glittering slime
 Not yet wip'd off. It was so early time,
 The careful smith had in his sooty forge
 Kindled no coal; nor did his hammers urge
 His neighbours' patience: owls abroad did fly,

And day as then might plead his in fancy.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

Night

Now great Hyperion left his golden throne
That on the dancing waves in glory shone,
For whose declining on the western shore
The oriental hills black mantles wore,
And thence apace the gentle twilight fled,
That had from hideous caverns ushered
All-drowsy Night, who in a car of jet,
By steeds of iron-grey, which mainly sweat
Moist drops on all the world, drawn through the sky,
The helps of darkness waited orderly.
First thick clouds rose from all the liquid plains;
Then mists from marishes, and grounds whose veins
Were conduit-pipes to many a crystal spring;
From standing pools and fens were following
Unhealthy fogs; each river, every rill
Sent up their vapours to attend her will
These pitchy curtains drew 'twixt earth and heaven
And as Night's chariot through the air was driven,
Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song
And silence girt the woods; no warbling tongue
Talk'd to the Echo; satyrs broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance.
Only the curled streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales that from the green leaf swept
Dry summer's dust, in fearful whisp'rings stirred.
As loath to waken any singing bird.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

A Pleasant Grove

Unto a pleasant grove or such like place,
Where here the curious cutting of a hedge:
There, by a pond, the trimming of the sedge:
Here the fine setting of well-shading trees:
The walks there mounting up by small degrees,
The gravel and the green so equal lie,
It, with the rest, draws on your ling'ring eye:
Here the sweet smells that do perfume the air,
Arising from the infinite repair
Of odoriferous buds and herbs of price,
(As if it were another Paradise)
So please the smelling sense, that you are fain
Where last you walk'd to turn and walk again.
There the small birds with their harmonious notes
Sing to a spring that smileth as she floats:
For in her face a many dimples show,
And often skips as it did dancing go:
Here further down an over-arched alley,
That from a hill goes winding in a valley,
You spy at end thereof a standing lake,

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Where some ingenious artist strives to make
 The water (brought in turning pipes of lead
 Through birds of earth most lively fashioned)
 To counterfeit and mock the sylvans all,
 In singing well their own set madrigal.
 This with no small delight retains your ear,
 And makes you think none blest but who live there.
 Then in another place the fruits that be
 In gallant clusters decking each good tree,
 Invite your hand to crop some from the stem,
 And liking one, taste every sort of them:
 Then to the arbours walk, then to the bowers,
 Thence to the walks again, thence to the flowers,
 Then to birds, and to the clear spring thence,
 Now pleasing one, and then another sense.
 Here one walks oft, and yet anew begin'th,
 As if it were some hidden labyrinth;
 So loath to part and so content to stay,
 That when the gard'ner knocks for you away,
 It grieves you so to leave the pleasures in it,
 That you could wish that you had never seen it.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

An Angler

Now as an angler melancholy standing
 Upon a green bank yielding room for landing,
 A wriggling yellow worm thrust on his hook,
 Now in the midst he throws, then in a nook:
 Here pulls his line, there throws it in again,
 Mendeth his cork and bait, but all in vain,
 He long stands viewing of the curled stream;
 At last a hungry pike, or well-grown bream
 Snatch at the worm, and hasting fast away,
 He knowing it a fish of stubborn sway,
 Pulls up his rod, but soft, as having skill,
 Wherewith the hook fast holds the fish's gill;
 Then all his line he freely yieldeth him,
 Whilst furiously all up and down doth swim
 Th' insnared fish, here on the top doth scud,
 There underneath the banks, then in the mud,
 And with his frantic fits so scares the shoal,
 That each one takes his hide, or starting hole:
 By this the pike, clean wearied, underneath
 A willow lies.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

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A Rill

So when the pretty rill a place espies,
 Where with the pebbles she would wantonize,
 And that her upper stream so much doth wrong her
 To drive her thence, and let her play no longer;
 If she with too loud mutt'ring ran away,
 As being much incens'd to leave her play,

A western, mild and pretty whispering gale
 Came dallying with the leaves along the dale,
 And seem'd as with the water it did chide,
 Because it ran so long unpacified:
 Yea, and methought it bade her leave that coil,
 Or he would choke her up with leaves and soil:
 Whereat the riv'let in my mind did weep,
 And hurl'd her head into a silent deep.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

"Glide soft, ye Silver Floods"

Glide soft, ye silver floods,
 And every spring:
 Within the shady woods
 Let no bird sing!
 Nor from the grove a turtle-dove
 Be seen to couple with her love;
 But silence on each dale and mountain dwell,
 Whilst Willy bids his friend and joy farewell.

But (of great Thetis' train)
 Ye mermaids fair,
 That on the shores do plain
 Your sea-green hair,
 As ye in trammels knit your locks,
 Weep ye; and so enforce the rocks
 In heavy murmurs through the broad shores tell
 How Willy bade his friend and joy farewell.

{53}

Cease, cease, ye murd'ring winds,
 To move a wave;
 But if with troubled minds
 You seek his grave;
 Know 'tis as various as yourselves,
 Now in the deep, then on the shelves,
 His coffin toss'd by fish and surges fell,
 Whilst Willy weeps and bids all joy farewell.

Had he Arion-like
 Been judged to drown,
 He on his lute could strike
 So rare a sowne,
 A thousand dolphins would have come
 And jointly strive to bring him home.
 But he on shipboard died, by sickness fell,
 Since when his Willy bade all joy farewell.

Great Neptune, hear a swain!
 His coffin take,
 And with a golden chain
 For pity make
 It fast unto a rock near land!
 Where ev'ry calmy morn I'll stand,
 And ere one sheep out of my fold I tell,
 Sad Willy's pipe shall bid his friend farewell.

"Venus by Adonis' Side"

Venus by Adonis' side
Crying kiss'd, and kissing cried,
Wrung her hands and tore her hair
For Adonis dying there.

Stay (quoth she) O stay and live!
Nature surely doth not give
To the earth her sweetest flowers
To be seen but some few hours.

{54}

On his face, still as he bled
For each drop a tear she shed,
Which she kiss'd or wip'd away,
Else had drown'd him where he lay.

Fair Proserpina (quoth she)
Shall not have thee yet from me;
Nor my soul to fly begin
While my lips can keep it in.

Here she clos'd again. And some
Say Apollo would have come
To have cur'd his wounded limb,
But that she had smothered him.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

A Song

Gentle nymphs, be not refusing,
Love's neglect is time's abusing,
 They and beauty are but lent you;
Take the one and keep the other;
Love keeps fresh what age doth smother;
 Beauty gone you will repent you.

'Twill be said when ye have proved,
Never swains more truly loved:
 Oh then fly all nice behaviour!
Pity fain would (as her duty)
Be attending still on Beauty,
 Let her not be out of favour.

From *Britannia's Pastorals*.

Spring Morning--I

Thomalin.

Where is every piping lad
That the fields are not yclad

{55}

With their milk-white sheep?
 Tell me: is it holiday,
 Or if in the month of May
 Use they long to sleep?

Piers.

Thomalin, 'tis not too late,
 For the turtle and her mate
 Sitten yet in nest:
 And the thrustle hath not been
 Gath'ring worms yet on the green,
 But attends her rest.
 Not a bird hath taught her young,
 Nor her morning's lesson sung
 In the shady grove:
 But the nightingale in dark
 Singing woke the mounting lark:
 She records her love.
 Not the sun hath with his beams
 Gilded yet our crystal streams;
 Rising from the sea,
 Mists do crown the mountains' tops,
 And each pretty myrtle drops:
 'Tis but newly day.

*The Shepherd's Pipe.***Spring Morning--II***Willie.*

{56}

Roget, droop not, see the spring
 Is the earth enamelling,
 And the birds on every tree
 Greet this morn with melody:
 Hark, how yonder thrustle chants it,
 And her mate as proudly vants it
 See how every stream is dress'd
 By her margin with the best
 Of Flora's gifts; she seems glad
 For such brooks such flow'rs she had.
 All the trees are quaintly tired
 With green buds, of all desired;
 And the hawthorn every day
 Spreads some little show of May:
 See the primrose sweetly set
 By the much-lov'd violet,
 All the banks do sweetly cover,
 As they would invite a lover
 With his lass to see their dressing
 And to grace them by their pressing:
 Yet in all this merry tide
 When all cares are laid aside,
 Roget sits as if his blood
 Had not felt the quick'ning good
 Of the sun, nor cares to play,

Or with songs to pass the day
 As he wont: fie, Roget, fie,
 Raise thy head, and merrily
 Tune us somewhat to thy reed:
 See our flocks do freely feed,
 Here we may together sit,
 And for music very fit
 Is this place; from yonder wood
 Comes an echo shrill and good,
 Twice full perfectly it will
 Answer to thine oaten quill.
 Roget, droop not then, but sing
 Some kind welcome to the spring.

The Shepherd's Pipe.

A Round

All.

Now that the Spring hath fill'd our veins
 With kind and active fire,
 And made green liv'ries for the plains,
 And every grove a quire:

{57}

Sing me a song of merry glee,
 And Bacchus fill the bowl.
 1. Then here's to thee: 2. And thou to me
 And every thirsty soul.

Nor Care nor Sorrow e'er paid debt,
 Nor never shall do mine;
 I have no cradle going yet,
 Not I, by this good wine.

No wife at home to send for me,
 No hogs are in my ground,
 No suit in law to pay a fee,
 Then round, old Jocky, round.

All.

Shear sheep that have them, cry we still,
 But see that no man 'scape
 To drink of the sherry,
 That makes us so merry,
 And plump as the lusty grape.

*Welcome, welcome, do I sing,
 Far more welcome than the spring;
 He that parteth from you never
 Shall enjoy a spring for ever.*

Love, that to the voice is near
 Breaking from your iv'ry pale,

Need not walk abroad to hear
 The delightful nightingale.
 Welcome, welcome, then I sing,
 Far more welcome than the spring;
 He that parteth from you never
 Shall enjoy a spring for ever.

{58}

Love, that looks still on your eyes,
 Though the winter have begun
 To benumb our arteries,
 Shall not want the summer's sun.
 Welcome, welcome, then I sing, &c.

Love that still may see your cheeks,
 Where all rareness still reposes,
 Is a fool, if e'er he seeks
 Other lilies, other roses.
 Welcome, welcome, &c.

Love, to whom your soft lip yields,
 And perceives your breath in kissing,
 All the odours of the fields
 Never, never shall be missing.
 Welcome, welcome, &c.

Love, that question would anew
 What fair Eden was of old,
 Let him rightly study you,
 And a brief of that behold.
 Welcome, welcome, then I &c.

Autumn

Autumn it was when droop'd the sweetest flow'rs,
 And rivers, swoll'n with pride, o'erlook'd the banks;
 Poor grew the day of summer's golden hours,
 And void of sap stood Ida's cedar-ranks.
 The pleasant meadows sadly lay
 In chill and cooling sweats
 By rising fountains, or as they
 Fear'd winter's wastfull threats.

The Shepherd's Pipe.

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The Siren's Song

Steer hither, steer your wingèd pines,
 All beaten mariners,
 Here lie Love's undiscover'd mines,
 A prey to passengers;
 Perfumes far sweeter than the best
 Which makes the Phœnix' urn and nest.
 Fear not your ships,
 Nor any to oppose you save our lips,
 But come on shore,
 Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.

For swelling waves our panting breasts,
 Where never storms arise,
 Exchange; and be awhile our guests:
 For stars gaze on our eyes.
 The compass love shall hourly sing,
 And as he goes about the ring,
 We will not miss
 To tell each point he nameth with a kiss.

CHORUS.

 Then come on shore,
 Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.

The Inner Temple Masque.

The Charm

Son of Erebus and Night,
 Hie away; and aim thy flight
 Where consort none other fowl
 Than the bat and sullen owl;
 Where upon the limber grass
 Poppy and mandragoras
 With like simples not a few
 Hang for ever drops of dew.
 Where flows Lethe without coil
 Softly like a stream of oil.
 Hie thee thither, gentle Sleep:
 With this Greek no longer keep.
 Thrice I charge thee by my wand;
 Thrice with moly from my hand
 Do I touch Ulysses' eyes,
 And with the jaspis: Then arise,
 Sagest Greek....

The Inner Temple Masque.

Cælia

(Sonnets)

Lo, I the man that whilom lov'd and lost,
 Not dreading loss, do sing again of love;
 And like a man but lately tempest-toss'd,
 Try if my stars still inauspicious prove:
 Not to make good that poets never can
 Long time without a chosen mistress be,
 Do I sing thus; or my affections ran
 Within the maze of mutability;
 What last I lov'd was beauty of the mind,
 And that lodg'd in a temple truly fair,
 Which ruin'd now by death, if I can find
 The saint that liv'd therein some otherwhere,
 I may adore it there, and love the cell
 For entertaining what I lov'd so well.

{61}

Why might I not for once be of that sect,
Which hold that souls, when Nature hath her right,
Some other bodies to themselves elect;
And sunlike make the day, and license night?
That soul, whose setting in one hemisphere
Was to enlighten straight another part;
In that horizon, if I see it there,
Calls for my first respect and its desert;
Her virtue is the same and may be more;
For as the sun is distant, so his power
In operation differs, and the store
Of thick clouds interpos'd make him less our.
And verily I think her climate such,
Since to my former flame it adds so much.

Fairest, when by the rules of palmistry
You took my hand to try if you could guess
By lines therein if any wight there be
Ordain'd to make me know some happiness;
I wish'd that those characters could explain,
Whom I will never wrong with hope to win;
Or that by them a copy might be ta'en,
By you alone what thoughts I have within.
But since the hand of Nature did not set
(As providently loath to have it known)
The means to find that hidden alphabet.
Mine eyes shall be th' interpreters alone:
By them conceive my thoughts, and tell me, fair,
If now you see her that doth love me there.

Were't not for you, here should my pen have rest
And take a long leave of sweet poesy;
Britannia's swains, and rivers far by west,
Should hear no more mine oaten melody;
Yet shall the song I sung of them awhile
Unperfect lie, and make no further known
The happy loves of this our pleasant Isle;
Till I have left some record of mine own.
You are the subject now, and, writing you,
I well may versify, not poetize:
Here needs no fiction: for the graces true
And virtues clip not with base flatteries.
Here could I write what you deserve of praise,
Others might wear, but I should win the bays.

{62}

Sing soft, ye pretty birds, while Cælia sleeps,

And gentle gales play gently with the leaves;
 Learn of the neighbour brooks, whose silent deeps
 Would teach him fear, that her soft sleep bereaves
 Mine oaten reed, devoted to her praise,
 (A theme that would befit the Delphian lyre)
 Give way, that I in silence may admire.
 Is not her sleep like that of innocents,
 Sweet as herself; and is she not more fair,
 Almost in death, than are the ornaments
 Of fruitful trees, which newly budding are?
 She is, and tell it, Truth, when she shall lie
 And sleep for ever, for she cannot die.

Visions

(Sonnets)

I saw a silver swan swim down the Lea,
 Singing a sad farewell unto the vale,
 While fishes leapt to hear her melody,
 And on each thorn a gentle nightingale
 And many other birds forbore their notes,
 Leaping from tree to tree, as she along
 The panting bosom of the current floats,
 Rapt with the music of her dying song:
 When from a thick and all-entangled spring
 A neatherd rude came with no small ado,
 Dreading an ill presage to hear her sing,
 And quickly struck her tender neck in two;
 Whereat the birds, methought, flew thence with speed,
 And inly griev'd for such a cruel deed.

A rose, as fair as ever saw the North,
 Grew in a little garden all alone;
 A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
 Nor fairer garden yet was never known:
 The maidens danc'd about it morn and noon,
 And learned bards of it their ditties made;
 The nimble fairies by the pale-faced moon
 Water'd the root and kiss'd her pretty shade.
 But well-a-day, the gard'ner careless grew;
 The maids and fairies both were kept away,
 And in a drought the caterpillars threw
 Themselves upon the bud and every spray.
 God shield the stock! if heaven send no supplies,
 The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

Down in a valley, by a forest's side,
 Near where the crystal Thames rolls on her waves,

I saw a mushroom stand in haughty pride,
 As if the lilies grew to be his slaves;
 The gentle daisy, with her silver crown,
 Worn in the breast of many a shepherd's lass;
 The humble violet, that lowly down
 Salutes the gay nymphs as they trimly pass:
 These, with a many more, methought, complain'd
 That Nature should those needless things produce,
 Which not alone the sun from others gain'd
 But turn it wholly to their proper use:
 I could not choose but grieve that Nature made
 So glorious flowers to live in such a shade.

A gentle shepherd, born in Arcady,
 That well could tune his pipe, and deftly play
 The nymphs asleep with rural minstrelsy,
 Methought I saw, upon a summer's day,
 Take up a little satyr in a wood,
 All masterless forlorn as none did know him,
 And nursing him with those of his own blood,
 On mighty Pan he lastly did bestow him;
 But with the god he long time had not been,
 Ere he the shepherd and himself forgot,
 And most ingrateful, ever stepp'd between
 Pan and all good befell the poor man's lot:
 Whereat all good men griev'd, and strongly swore
 They never would be foster-fathers more.

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Epitaphs

In Obitum M S, X° Maij, 1614

May! Be thou never grac'd with birds that sing,
 Nor Flora's pride!
 In thee all flowers and roses spring,
 Mine only died.

W. B.

On the Countess Dowager of Pembroke

Underneath this sable herse
 Lies the subject of all verse:
 Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
 Death, ere thou hast slain another,
 Fair and learn'd, and good as she,
 Time shall throw a dart at thee.

Marble piles let no man raise
 To her name: for after days
 Some kind woman born as she,

Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

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