

ECHO VERSES.

Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood,
In sight of sea, and at my back an ancient hoary wood,
I saw a fair young lady come, her secret fears to wail,
Clad all in colour of a nun, and covered with a veil;
Yet (for the day was calm and clear) I might discern her face,
As one might see a damask rose hid under crystal glass.
Three times, with her soft hand, full hard on her left side she knocks,
And sigh'd so sore as might have mov'd some pity in the rocks;
From sighs and shedding amber tears into sweet song she brake,
When thus the echo answered her to every word she spake:
Oh heavens ! who was the first that bred in me this fever ? Vere (Ver.)
Who was the first that gave the wound whose fear I wear for ever ? Vere.
What tyrant, Cupid, to my harm usurps thy golden quiver ? Vere.
What sight first caught this heart and can from bondage it deliver ? Vere.
Yet who doth most adore this sight, oh hollow caves tell true ? You.
What nymph deserves his liking best, yet doth in sorrow rue ? You.
What makes him not reward good will with some reward or ruth ? Youth.
What makes him show besides his birth, such pride and such untruth ?
Youth.

May I his favour match with love, if he my love will try? Ay.
May I requite his birth with faith ? Then faithful will I die ? Ay.
And I, that knew this lady well,
Said, Lord how great a miracle,
To her how Echo told the truth,
As true as Phoebus' oracle.

The Earle of Oxforde.

LOVE THY CHOICE.

Who taught thee first to sigh, alas, my heart ?
Who taught thy tongue the woeful words of plaint ?
Who filled your eyes with tears of bitter smart ?
Who gave thee grief and made thy joys to faint ?
Who first did paint with colours pale thy face ?
Who first did break thy sleeps of quiet rest ?
Above the rest in court who gave thee grace ?
Who made thee strive in honour to be best ?
In constant truth to bide so firm and sure,
To scorn the world regarding but thy friends ?
With patient mind each passion to endure,
In one desire to settle to the end ?
Love then thy choice wherein such choice thou bind,
As nought but death may ever change thy mind.

Earle of Oxenforde.

WHAT CUNNING CAN EXPRESS.

What cunning can express
The favour of her face ?
To whom in this distress,
I do appeal for grace.
A thousand Cupids fly
About her gentle eye.
From which each throws a dart,
That kindleth soft sweet fire:
Within my sighing heart,
Possessed by Desire.

No sweeter life I try,
Than in her love to die.
The lily in the field,
That glories in his white,
For pureness now must yield,
And render up his right;
Heaven pictured in her face,
Doth promise joy and grace.
Fair Cynthia's silver light,
That beats on running streams,
Compares not with her white,
Whose hairs are all sun-beams;
So bright my Nymph doth shine,
As day unto my eyne.
With this there is a red,
Exceeds the Damask-Rose;
Which in her cheeks is spread,
Whence every favour grows.
In sky there is no star,
But she surmounts it far.
When Phoebus from the bed
Of Thetis doth arise,
The morning blushing red,
In fair carnation wise;
He shows in my Nymph's face,
As Queen of every grace.
This pleasant lily white,
This taint of roseate red;
This Cynthia's silver light,
This sweet fair Dea spread;
These sunbeams in mine eye,
These beauties make me die.
THE MEETING WITH DESIRE.
The lively lark stretched forth her wing
The messenger of Morning bright;
And with her cheerful voice did sing
The Day's approach, discharging Night;
When that Aurora blushing red,
Descried the guilt of Thetis' bed.
I went abroad to take the air,
And in the meads I met a knight,
Clad in carnation colour fair;
I did salute this gentle wight:
Of him I did his name inquire,
He sighed and said it was Desire.
Desire I did desire to stay;
And while with him I craved talk,
The courteous knight said me no nay,
But hand in hand with me did walk;
Then of Desire I ask'd again,
What things did please and what did pain.
He smiled and thus he answered than [then]:
Desire can have no greater pain,
Than for to see another man,

The things desired to attain;
Nor greater joy can be than this:
That to enjoy that others miss.
WHAT IS DESIRE ?
What is Desire, which doth approve,
To set on fire each gentle heart ?
A fancy strange, or God of Love,
Whose pining sweet delight doth smart;
In gentle minds his dwelling is.
Is he god of peace or war ?
What be his arms ? What is his might ?
His war is peace, his peace is war;
Each grief of his is but delight;
His bitter ball is sugared bliss.
What be his gifts ? How doth he pay ?
When is he seen ? or how conceived ?
Sweet dreams in sleep, new thoughts in day,
Beholding eyes, in mind received;
A god that rules and yet obeys.
Why is he naked painted ? Blind ?
His sides with shafts ? His back with brands ?
Plain without guile, by hap to find;
Pursuing with fair words that withstands (mistranscribed),
And when he craves he takes no nays.
What were his parents ? Gods or no ?
That living long is yet a child;
A goddess' son? Who thinks not so?
A god begot, beguiled;
Venus his mother, Mars his sire.
What labours doth this god allow?
What fruits have lovers for their pains?
Sit still and muse to make a vow
T.' their ladies, if they true remain;
A good reward for true desire.
FOND DESIRE.
Come hither, shepherd swain!
Sir, what do you require?
I pray thee show to me thy name;
My name is Fond Desire.
When wert thou born, Desire?
In pride and pomp of May.
By whom, sweet boy, wert thou begot?
By fond conceit men say.
Tell me who was thy nurse?
Fresh youth, in sugar'd joy.
What was thy meat and daily food?
Sad sighs and great annoy.
What had'st thou then to drink?
Unfeigned lover's tears.
What cradle wert thou rocked in?
In hope devoid of fears.
What lulled thee to thy sleep
Sweet thoughts that liked one best.
And where is now thy dwelling place?

In gentle hearts I rest.
Doth company displease?
It doth in many one.
Where would Desire then choose to be?
He loves to muse alone.
What feedeth most thy sight?
To gaze on beauty still.
Whom find'st thou most thy foe?
Disdain of my good will.
Will ever age or death
Bring thee unto decay?
No, no, Desire both lives and dies
A thousand times a day.
Then, Fond Desire, farewell;
Thou art no mate for me;
I should be loath, methinks, to dwell
With such a one as thee.
Earle of Oxenforde.
Fortune and Love.
Faction that ever dwells
In court, where wit excels.
Hath set defiance:
Fortune and Love have sworn,
That they were never born
Of one alliance.
Cupid, which doth aspire,
To be God of Desire,
Swears he gives laws;
That where his arrows hit,
Some joy, some sorrow it,
Fortune no cause.
Fortune swears weakest hearts
(The books of Cupid's arts)
Turn'd with her wheel.
Senseless themselves shall prove
Venter hath place in love,
Ask them that feel.
This discord it begot
Atheists, that honour not.
Stature thought good,
Fortune should ever dwell
In court, where wits excel,
Love keep the wood.
So to the wood went I,
With love to live and lie,
Fortune's forlorn.
Experience of my youth,
Made me think humble Truth
In deserts born.
My saint I keep to me,
And Joan herself is she,
Joan fair and true.
She that doth only move
Passions of love with love

Fortune adieu !

LABOUR AND ITS REWARD.

The labouring man that tills the fertile soil,
And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed
The gain, but pain; and if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord will have the seed.
The manchet fine falls not unto his share;
On coarsest cheat his hungry stomach feeds.
The landlord doth possess the finest fare;
He pulls the flowers, he plucks but weeds.
The mason poor that builds the lordly halls,
Dwells not in them; they are for high degree;
His cottage is compact in paper walls,
And not with brick or stone, as others be.
The idle drone that labours not at all,
Sucks up the sweet of honey from the bee;
Who worketh most to their share least doth fall,
With due desert reward will never be.
The swiftest hare unto the mastive slow
Oft-times doth fall, to him as for a prey;
The greyhound thereby doth miss his game we know
For which he made such speedy haste away.
So he that takes the pain to pen the book,
Reaps not the gifts of goodly golden muse;
But those gain that, who on the work shall look,
And from the sour the sweet by skill doth choose,
For he that beats the bush the bird not gets,
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets.

LETTER I

To my loving friend Thomas Bedingfield Esquire,
one of Her Majesty's gentlemen pensioners.
After I had perused your letters, good Master Bedingfield, finding in them
your request far differing from the desert of your labour, I could not
choose but greatly doubt whether it were better for me to yield you your
desire, or execute mine own intention towards the publishing of your book.
For I do confess the affections that I have always borne towards you could
move me not a little. But when I had thoroughly considered in my mind of
sundry and divers arguments, whether it were best to obey mine affections
or the merits of your studies, at the length I determined it better to
deny your unlawful request than to grant or condescend to the concealment
of so worthy a work. Whereby as you have been profited in the translating,
so many may reap knowledge by the reading of the same, that shall comfort
the afflicted, confirm the doubtful, encourage the coward, and lift up the
base-minded man, to achieve to any true sum or grade of virtue, whereto
ought only the noble thoughts of men to be inclined.
And because next to the sacred letters of divinity, nothing doth persuade
the same more than philosophy, of which your book is plentifully stored, I
thought myself to commit an unpardonable error, to have murdered the same
in the waste bottoms of my chests; and better I thought it were to
displease one, than to displease many: further considering so little a
trifle cannot procure so great a breach of our amity, as may not with a
little persuasion of reason be repaired again. And herein I am forced like
a good and politic captain oftentimes to spoil and burn the corn of his
own country, lest his enemies thereof do take advantage. For rather than

so many of your countrymen should be deluded through my sinister means of your industry in studies (whereof you are bound in conscience to yield them an account) I am content to make spoil and havoc of your request, and that, that might have wrought greatly in me in this former respect, utterly to be of no effect or operation: and when you examine yourself what doth avail a mass of gold to be continually imprisoned in your bags, and never to be employed to your use? I do not doubt even so you think of your studies and delightful Muses. What do they avail, if you do not participate them to others? Wherefore we have this Latin proverb: Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter. What doth avail the tree unless it yield fruit unto another? What doth avail the vine unless another delighteth in the grape? What doth avail the rose unless another took pleasure in the smell? Why should this tree be accounted better than that tree, but for the goodness of his fruit? Why should this vine be better than that vine, unless it brought forth a better grape than the other? Why should this rose be better esteemed than that rose, unless in pleasantness of smell it far surpassed the other rose?

And so it is in all other things as well as in man. Why should this man be more esteemed than that man, but for his virtue, through which every man desireth to be accounted of? Then you amongst men I do not doubt, but will aspire to follow that virtuous path, to illuster yourself with the ornament of virtue. And in mine opinion as it beautifieth a fair woman to be decked with pearls and precious stones, so much more it ornifieth a gentleman to be furnished in mind with glittering virtues.

Wherefore considering the small harm I do to you, the great good I do to others, I prefer mine own intention to discover your volume before your request to secret the same; wherein I may seem to you to play the part of the cunning and expert mediciner or physician, who, although his patient in the extremity of his burning fever is desirous of cold liquor or drink to qualify his sore thirst, or rather kill his languishing body, yet for the danger he doth evidently know by his science to ensue, denieth him the same. So you being sick of too much doubt in your own proceedings, through which infirmity you are desirous to bury and insevill your works in the grave of oblivion, yet I, knowing the discommodities that shall redound to yourself thereby (and which is more, unto your countrymen) as one that is willing to salve so great an inconvenience, am nothing dainty to deny your request.

Again, we see if our friends be dead, we cannot show or declare our affection more than by erecting them of tombs; whereby when they be dead indeed, yet make we them live as it were again through their monument; but with me, behold, it happeneth far better, for in your lifetime I shall erect you such a monument, that as I say [in] your lifetime you shall see how noble a shadow of your virtuous life shall hereafter remain when you are dead and gone. And in your lifetime, again I say, I shall give you that monument and remembrance of your life, whereby I may declare my good will, though with your ill will as yet that I do bear you in your life. Thus earnestly desiring you in this one request of mine (as I would yield to you in a great many) not to repugn the setting forth of your own proper studies, I bid you farewell. From my new country muses at Wivenghole, wishing you as you have begun, to proceed in these virtuous actions. For when all things shall else forsake us, virtue yet will ever abide with us, and when our bodies fall into the bowels of the earth, yet that shall mount with our minds into the highest heavens.

By your loving and assured friend,

E. Oxenford.

LOSS OF GOOD NAME.

Fram'd in the front of forlorn hope past all recovery,
I stayless stand, to abide the shock of shame and infamy.
My life, through ling'ring long, is lodg'd in lair of loathsome ways;
My death delay'd to keep from life the harm of hapless days.
My sprites, my heart, my wit and force, in deep distress are drown'd;
The only loss of my good name is of these griefs the ground.
And since my mind, my wit, my head, my voice and tongue are weak,
To utter, move, devise, conceive, sound forth, declare and speak,
Such piercing plaints as answer might, or would my woeful case,
Help crave I must, and crave I will, with tears upon my face,
Of all that may in heaven or hell, in earth or air be found,
To wail with me this loss of mine, as of these griefs the ground.
Help Gods, help saints, help sprites and powers that in the heaven do
dwell,
Help ye that are aye wont to wail, ye howling hounds of hell;
Help man, help beasts, help birds and worms, that on the earth do toil;
Help fish, help fowl, that flock and feed upon the salt sea soil,
Help echo that in air doth flee, shrill voices to resound,
To wail this loss of my good name, as of these griefs the ground.

E.O.

REVENGE OF WRONG.

Fain would I sing, but fury makes me fret,
And Rage hath sworn to seek revenge of wrong;
My mazed mind in malice so is set,
As Death shall daunt my deadly dolours long;
Patience perforce is such a pinching pain,
As die I will, or suffer wrong again.
I am no sot, to suffer such abuse
As doth bereave my heart of his delight;
Nor will I frame myself to such as use,
With calm consent, to suffer such despite;
No quiet sleep shall once possess mine eye
Till Wit have wrought his will on Injury.
My heart shall fail, and hand shall lose his force,
But some device shall pay Despite his due;
And Fury shall consume my careful corse,
Or raze the ground whereon my sorrow grew.
Lo, thus in rage of ruthless mind refus'd,
I rest reveng'd on whom I am abus'd.

Earle of Oxenforde.

LOVE AND ANTAGONISM

The trickling tears that fall along my cheeks,
The secret sighs that show my inward grief,
The present pains perforce that Love aye seeks,
Bid me renew my cares without relief;
In woeful song, in dole display,
My pensive heart for to betray.
Betray thy grief, thy woeful heart with speed;
Resign thy voice to her that caused thee woe;
With irksome cries, bewail thy late done deed,
For she thou lov'st is sure thy mortal foe;
And help for thee there is none sure,

But still in pain thou must endure.
The stricken deer hath help to heal his wound,
The haggard hawk with toil is made full tame;
The strongest tower, the cannon lays on ground,
The wisest wit that ever had the fame,
Was thrall to Love by Cupid's slights;
Thell weigh my cause with equal wights (weights>.
She is my joy, she is my care and woe;
She is my pain, she is my ease therefore;
She is my death, she is my life also,
She is my salve, she is my wounded sore:
In fine, she hath the hand and knife,
That may both save and end my life.
And shall I live on earth to be her thrall'
And shall I live and serve her all in vain?
And kiss the steps that she lets fall,
And shall I pray the Gods to keep the pain
From her that is so cruel still?
No, no, on her work all your will.
And let her feel the power of all your might,
And let her have her most desire with speed,
And let her pine away both day and night,
And let her moan, and none lament her need;
And let all those that shall her see,
Despise her state and pity me.

E.O.

SONG: THE FORSAKEN MAN.

A crown of bays shall that man wear,
That triumphs over me;
For black and tawny will I wear,
Which mourning colours be.
The more I follow'd one,
The more she fled away,
As Daphne did full long ago
Apollo's wishful prey.
The more my complaints I do resound
The less she pities me;
The more I sought the less I found,
Yet mine she meant to be.
Melpomene alas, with doleful tunes help than; [then]
And sing Bis, woe worth on me forsaken man.
Then Daphne's bays shall that man wear,
That triumphs over me;
For black and tawny will I wear,
Which mourning colours be.
Drown me with trickling tears,
You wailful wights of woe;
Come help these hands to rend my hairs,
My rueful hap to show.
On whom the scorching flame
Of love doth feed you see;
Ah a lalalantida, my dear dame
Hath thus tormented me.
Wherefore you muses nine, with doleful tunes help than,

And sint, Bis, woe worth on me forsaken man.
Then Daphne's bays shall that man wear,
That triumphs over me;
For black and tawny will I wear,
Which mourning colours be;
An anchor's life to icad,
With nails to scratch my grave,
Where earthly worms on me shall feed,
Is all the ioy I crave;
And hide myself from shame,
Since that mine eyes do see,
Ah a lalalantida, my dear dame
Hath thus tormented me.
And all that present be, with doleful tunes help than,
And sing Bis wot worth, on me forsaken man.
E O.

'I AM NOT AS I SEEM TO BE'.
I am not as I seem to be,
For when I smile I am not glad;
A thrall, although you count me free,
I, most in mirth, most pensive sad,
I smile to shade my bitter spite
As Hannibal that saw in sight
His country soil with Carthage town,
By Roman force defaced down.
And Caesar that presented was,
With noble Pompey's princely head;
As 'twere some judge to rule the case,
A flood of tears he seemed to shed;
Although indeed it sprung of joy;
Yet others thought it was annoy.
Thus contraries be used I find,
Of wise to cloak the covert mind
I, Hannibal that smile for grief;
And let you Csesar's tears suffice;
The one that laughs at his mischief;
The other all for joy that cries.
I smile to see me scorned so,
You weep for joy to see me woe;
And I, a heart by Love slain dead,
Present in place of Pompey s head.
O cruel hap and hard estate,
That forceth me to love my foe;
Accursed be so foul a fate,
My choice for to prefix it so.
So long to fight with secret sore
And find no secret salve therefore;
Some purge their pain by plaint I find,
But I in vain do breathe my wind.

E.O.

CARE AND DISSAPPOINTMENT.

Ev'n as the wax doth melt, or dew consume away
Before the sun, so I, behold, through careful thoughts decay;
For my best luck leads me to such sinister state,

That I do waste with others' love, that hath myself in hate.
And he that beats the bush the wished bird not gets,
But such, I see, as sitteth still and holds the fowling nets.
The drone more honey sucks, that laboureth not at all,
Than doth the bee, to whose most pain least pleasure doth befall:
The gard'ner sows the seeds, whereof the flowers do grow,
And others yet do gather them, that took less pain I throw.
So I the pleasant grape have pulled from the vine,
And yet I languish in great thirst, while others drink the wine.
Thus like a woeful wight I wove the web of woe,
The more I would weed out my cares, the more they seemed to grow:
The which betokeneth, forsaken is of me,
That with the careful culver climbs the worn and withered tree,
To entertain my thoughts, and there my hap to moan,
That never am less idle, lo! than when I am alone.

E. Ox.

'LOVE IS A DISCORD'.

Love is a discord and a strange divorce
Betwixt our sense and rest, by whose power,
As mad with reason, we admit that force
Which wit or labour never may divorce (?):
It is a will that brooketh no consent;
It would refuse yet never may repent.
Love's a desire, which, for to wait a time,
Doth lose an age of years, and so doth pass
As doth the shadow sever'd from his prime;
Seeming as though it were, yet never was;
leaving behind naught but repentant thought
Of days ill spent of that which profits nought.
It's now a peace and then a sudden war,
A hope consumed before it is conceived;
At hand it fears, and menaceth afar;
And he that gains is most of all deceived.
Love whets the dullest wits, his plagues be such,
But makes the wise by pleasing dote as much.

REASON AND AFFECTION.

If care or skill could conquer vain desire,
Or Reason's reins my strong affection stay:
There should my sighs to quiet breast retire,
And shun such signs as secret thoughts betray;
Uncomely Love which now lurks in my breast
Should cease, my grief through Wisdom's power oppress'd.
But who can leave to look on Venus' face,
Or yieldeth not to Juno's high estate ?
What wit so wise as gives not Pallas place ?
These virtues rare each (sic) Gods did yield a mate;
Save her alone, who yet on earth doth reign,
Whose beauty's string no God can well distraint (sic).
What worldly wight can hope for heavenly hire,
When only sighs must make his secret moan ?
A silent suit doth sold to grace aspire,
My hapless hay doth roll the restless stone.
Yet Phoebe fair disdained the heavens above,
To joy on earth her poor Endymion's love.

Rare is reward where none can justly crave,
For chance is choice where Reason makes no claim;
Yet luck sometimes despairing souls doth save,
A happy star made Giges joy attain.
A slavish smith, of rude and rascal race,
Found means in time to gain a Goddess' grace.
Then lofty Love thy sacred sails advance,
My sighing seas shall flow with streams of tears;
Amidst disdains drive forth thy doleful chance,
A valiant mind no deadly danger fears;
Who loves aloft and sets his heart on high
Deserves no pain, though he do pine and die.
E.O.

LOVE AND WIT.

My meaning is to work
What wonders love hath wrought,
Wherewith I muse, why men of wit
Have love so dearly bought.
For love is worse than hate,
And eke more harm hath done;
Record I take of those that rede
Of Paris, Priam's son.
It seemed the god of sleep
Had mazed so much his wits,
When he refused wit for love,
Which cometh but by fits.
But why accuse I him,
Whom th' earth hath covered long?
There be of his posterity
Alive, I do him wrong.
Whom I might well condemn,
To be a cruel judge
Unto myself, who hath the crime
In others that I grudge.
E.O.

WOMAN'S CHANGEABLENESS.

If women could be fair and yet not fond,
Or that their love were firm not fickle, still,
I would not marvel that they make men bond,
By service long to purchase their good will;
But when I see how frail those creatures are,
I muse that men forget themselves so far.
To mark the choice they make, and how they change,
How oft from Phacbus do they flee to Pan,
Unsettled still like haggards wild they range,
These gentle birds that fly from man to man;
Who would not scorn and shake them from the fist
And let them fly fair fools which way they list.
Yet for disport we fawn and flatter both,
To pass the time when nothing else can please,
And train them to our lure with subtle oath,
Till, weary of their wiles, ourselves we ease;
And then we say when we their fancy try,
To play with fools, O what a fool was I.

Earle of Oxenforde.

WERE I A KING.

Were I a king I might command content;
Were I obscure unknown would be my cares,
And were I dead no thoughts should me torment,
Nor words, nor wrongs, nor love, nor hate, nor fears;
A doubtful choice of these things which to crave,
A kingdom or a cottage or a grave.
Vere.

SIDNEY'S ANSWER:

Wert thou a King yet not command content,
Since empire none thy mind could yet suffice,
Wert thou obscure still cares would thee torment;
But wert thou dead, all care and sorrow dies;
An easy choice of these things which to crave,
No kingdom nor a cottage but a grave.

DOTH SORRY FRET THY SOUL.

Doth sorrow fret thy soul? O direful sprite.
Doth pleasure feed thy heart? O blessed man.
Hast thou been happy once? O heavy plight.
Are thy mishaps forepast? O happy than (then)
Or hast thou bliss in eld? O bliss too late:
But hast thou bliss in youth? O sweet estate.
E. of O.

GRIEF OF MIND

What plague is greater than the grief of mind?
The grief of mind that eats in every vein;
In every vein that leaves such clots behind;
Such clots behind as breed such bitter pain;
So bitter pain that none shall ever find,
What plague is greater than the grief of mind.
E. of ox

VERSES ASCRIBED TO QUEEN ELIZABETH.

When I was fair and young then favour graced me;
Of many was I sought their mistress for to be.
But I did scorn them all, and answered them therefore,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

How many weeping eyes I made to pine in woe;
How many sighing hearts I have no skill to show;
Yet I the prouder grew, and answered them therefore,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious boy,
And said, you dainty dame, since that you be so coy,
I will so pluck your plumes that you shall say no more
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

When he had spake these words such change grew in my breast,
That neither night nor day I could take any rest.
Then, lo ! I did repent, that I had said before
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

