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Henry Constable et al.**

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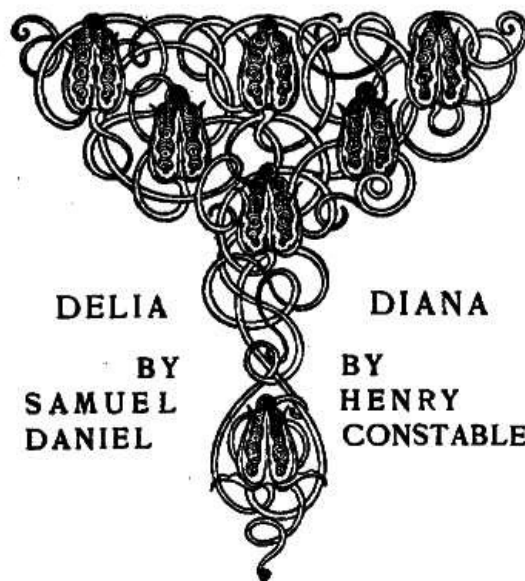
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ELIZABETHAN SONNET-CYCLES: DELIA -
DIANA ***



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ELIZABETHAN SONNET-CYCLES

EDITED BY

MARTHA FOOTE CROW

DELIA

BY

SAMUEL DANIEL

DIANA

BY

HENRY CONSTABLE

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER AND CO.
PATERNOSTER HOUSE LONDON W.C.
1896

DELIA

BY

SAMUEL DANIEL

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SAMUEL DANIEL

Daniel's sonnet series has been by many regarded as the prototype of Shakespeare's. It is true that several of Daniel's themes are repeated in the cycle composed by the greater poet. The ideas of immortality in verse, the transitoriness of beauty, the assurances of truth, the humility and the woes of the lover, the pain of separation and the comfort of night thoughts, shape the mood of both poets. But these motives are also found in the pages of many other sonneteers of the time. All these devotees seem to have had a storehouse of poetic conceits which they held in common, and from which each poet had the right to draw materials to use in his own way. In fact Shakespeare's sonnets are full of echoes from the voices of Sidney, Constable, Davies, Lodge, Watson, Drayton and Barnes, as well as from that mellifluous one of Daniel; and these poetic conceits were tossed forth in the first place by the Italian sonnet makers, led by Petrarch. It is evident that Daniel's *Petrarch* has been well-thumbed. Wood says that Daniel left Oxford without a degree because "his geny" was "more prone to easier and smoother studies than in pecking and hewing at logic," and we may believe that Italian was one of these smoother studies. His translation of Paolo Giovi's work on Emblems, which was published in 1585, was doubtless one fruit of this study, a work that since it took him into the very realm of the *concetti*, was to be a potent influence upon his mental growth. The main theme, the cruelty of the Fair, is the same as that of Petrarch. Daniel follows this master in making the vale echo with his sighs, in appealing to her hand and cruel bosom for mercy, in recounting the number of years he has worshipped her and honored her with sonnets on which he is depending for immortal fame, in upbraiding her for her devotion to the mirror rather than to him, and for ensnaring him with the golden net of her hair and transpiercing him with the darts from her crystalline eyes. In some of Petrarch's nobler flights Daniel does not follow; the higher teachings of love are not revealed to him, the step from human to divine he does not take; yet in the main, the features of the earlier poet re-appear in Daniel's verse, as they do in most of his fellow-sonneteers, including Shakespeare.

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It is also not best to give too much weight to the opinion that Shakespeare has been over-influenced by Daniel in the adoption of the quatrain and couplet structure. The whole period from Wyatt to Shakespeare shows a slow and steady mastery of the native over the foreign tendency. The change was not a sudden leap on the part of Daniel and Shakespeare, but a gradual growth occupying a half century and culminating in the English form. But if we should feel convinced that Shakespeare's memory was influenced by the sound of Daniel's cadences, this need not be considered discreditable to Shakespeare. Daniel's lines are smooth and melodious, and he was perhaps as great a master of the technique of rhyme as was Shakespeare. If we take the sonnets of both poets as criterion, the careful Daniel uses twice as many rhyme colours as Shakespeare, while Shakespeare repeats rhymes twice as often as Daniel. If double rhymes find less favor with

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the captious, we admit that Daniel has a third more than Shakespeare has, but again Shakespeare uses twice as many rhymes on syllables with secondary stress as does Daniel, and Shakespeare's bad rhymes are as bad as Daniel's and more frequent.

Daniel's poetic powers were appreciated to the full in his time. To his contemporaries he was the "well languaged," the "sharp conceited," one by whose verse Rosamond was eternised, one who "divinely sonnetted his Delia." When Judicio in *The Return from Parnassus* makes his inventory of poet's qualities, in giving his judgment on Daniel, he evidently has the *Delia* in mind.

"Sweet honey-dropping Daniel doth wage
War with the proudest big Italian
That melts his heart in sugared sonnetting."

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If Jonson, Daniel's rival as maker of masques for the Court, proclaimed him a good honest man but no poet, Spenser generously said he surpassed "all that afore him came;" and scarcely one of the more prominent of his contemporaries failed to address compliments to him. When Daniel was gentleman extraordinary and groom of the privy chamber to Anne, Queen-consort to James I., the Queen is said to have been a "favourer and encourager of his muse;" and his high social position made it easy for less favoured aspirants to praise him. But the perspective of time brings a more balanced judgment. While Lowell finds in the fact that Daniel was held in high esteem by his contemporaries a proof that noble diction was appreciated then as now, and while he admits that Daniel refined our tongue, yet he decided that Daniel had the thinking and languaging parts of a poet's outfit but lacked the higher creative gift. We shall find Daniel at his best, not when in prosaic soberness he sings

"... the civil wars, tumultuous broils,
And bloody factions of a mighty land."

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not when he is framing stilted tragedies with chorus and declamation in the grand Senecan manner, not in his complimentary addresses to lords, ladies and royalty, nor in the classic masques and philosophical dialogue, but in the less ambitious poems of *Delia* and *Rosamond*, especially in such a sonnet as "Care-charmer Sleep," where we come more near to hearing a human heart beat than in any of the others. It is not a mighty heart, but it is one that is gentle, tender and pure.

A glance at the life of Daniel gives opportunity for an easy conjecture as to the personality of the lady honoured under the name of Delia. At seventeen Daniel was at Oxford, and finished a three years' residence at Magdalen College in 1582. After a visit to Italy, he became established at Wilton as tutor to the sons of Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke. To those early days at Wilton the poet refers, when in 1603 he dedicates his *Defense of Rhyme* to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, his former pupil. In the introduction to this fine essay Daniel declares that in regard to his poetic studies he was "first encouraged and framed thereunto by your most worthy and honourable mother, and received the first notion for the formal ordering of those compositions at Wilton which I must ever acknowledge as my best school, and thereof always am to hold a feeling and grateful memory." At this time the home of the Herberts at Wilton was a literary centre. The Countess was herself an industrious author, and the subject of innumerable dedicatory addresses. She seems to have been as beautiful as she was gracious and gifted. In the Penshurst picture we see her in extreme youth. The long oval and delicate chiselling of the Sidney face are expressed in their finest perfection, and justify the resemblance, found by Spenser, to "her brother dear." The soft hair is of the same golden-brown as his, the colour her eldest son inherited, and which Shakespeare is said to have described in his figure of the marjoram-buds. In the picture by Gheeraedts at the National Portrait Gallery, painted in 1614, she has lost little of her youthful beauty, but has added the special graces of maturity. The hair is still a rich brown. A thoughtful soul sits brooding behind those attentive eyes—a soul that seems to wish to ask the universal unanswerable questions, one that has grappled with doubt and struggled with environing circumstance, but has not yet consented to be baffled. The face is modern and complex. This accomplished lady received at Wilton the most distinguished people of her time. Her guests included Spenser, Raleigh, probably Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, Sir John Harrington, Dr. Donne, and many more; and the Countess's *Pastoral Dialogue in Praise of Astraea* was probably written in honour of a visit from the Queen herself. It would perhaps be strange if the young poet did not surround the personality of this fascinating patroness with a romantic halo and feel that his poetic fame was linked with hers. The Delia of the sonnets has all the excellencies that a sonnet-honoured lady should have, including locks of gold. But the fact that the poet has slyly changed the word "amber" to "snary" in sonnet xiv., and "golden" to "sable" in sonnet xxxviii., looks as if he desired to shield her personality from too blunt a guess. However, many hints are given; she lives in the "joyful North," in "fair Albion;" she is

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"The eternal wonder of our happy Isle."

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And the river by which he sounds her name is the Avon—

"But Avon, poor in fame and poor in waters,
Shall have my song, where Delia hath her seat."

The Wiltshire Avon is the proud brook that flows southward by Wilton, "where Delia hath her seat." If it may seem in any degree unfitting that Daniel should address language so glowing as is found in the *Delia* sonnets to a lady who is established as the head of a household with husband

and sons about her, attention may be called to the fact that the sonnets, though they are characterised by warmth of feeling and extravagance of expression, do not contain one tainted line. Posterity must justify what Daniel in proud humility said of himself:

"I
. . . never had my harmless pen at all
Distained with any loose immodesty,
But still have done the fairest offices
To virtue and the time."

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The respectful dignity of Daniel's prose dedication of *Delia* to Mary Sidney cannot be surpassed; and the introductory sonnet that displaces it in the next edition, while confessing the ardent devotion of the writer, is yet couched in the most reverent terms. Daniel and other sonneteers had the great example of Petrarch in honouring a lady with admiration and love expressed in verses whose warmth might perhaps not have been so excusable, could the poet have been taken at his word. The new sonnets inserted in the editions of 1601 and 1623 show the faithfulness of the poet's homage. A loyal friendship, whether formed upon gratitude only or upon some warmer feeling, inspired the *Delia* although the poet expresses his devotion in the conventional modes. But that Daniel outgrew to some extent the taste for these fanciful devices is shown by the changes he made in successive editions. Four sonnets from the 1591 edition were never reprinted, another was reprinted once and afterwards omitted. In our text the order of the 1623 edition is followed, the edition that was supervised by the poet's brother; but these omitted sonnets will be found at the end under the head of *Rejected Sonnets*. It is certain that they are Daniel's and that he rejected them, and it therefore seems no more than fair to the poet, if they are reprinted at all, to insert them under this head.

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While, then, these rejected sonnets may have been in two cases omitted by the poet because of their too great frankness of expression, in other cases, notably in the phoenix, the wax-image, the tablet-and-siren, the vanquished fort, and the ermelin sonnets, they seem to have lost their charm, not so much for any personal reason as for the artistic defect in the far-fetched nature of the device.

Daniel lived till 1619, experiencing the usual ups and downs in the career of a "Court-dear poet." In later years, the famous Lady Anne Clifford, wife of Mary Sidney's younger son, caused a monument to be erected in his honour, in the inscription upon which she recorded her pride in the fact that he had once been her tutor.

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**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LADY MARY
COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE**

Wonder of these, glory of other times,
O thou whom envy ev'n is forced t'admire!
Great Patroness of these my humble rhymes,
Which thou from out thy greatness dost inspire!
Since only thou has deigned to raise them higher,
Vouchsafe now to accept them as thine own,
Begotten by thy hand and my desire,
Wherein my zeal and thy great might is shown.
And seeing this unto the world is known,
O leave not still to grace thy work in me;
Let not the quickening seed be overthrown
Of that which may be born to honor thee,
Whereof the travail I may challenge mine,
But yet the glory, Madam, must be thine!

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TO DELIA

I

Unto the boundless ocean of thy beauty
Runs this poor river, charged with streams of zeal,
Returning thee the tribute of my duty,
Which here my love, my youth, my plaints reveal.
Here I unclasp the book of my charged soul,
Where I have cast th' accounts of all my care;
Here have I summed my sighs. Here I enrol
How they were spent for thee. Look, what they are.
Look on the dear expenses of my youth,
And see how just I reckon with thine eyes.

Examine well thy beauty with my truth,
And cross my cares ere greater sums arise.
Read it, sweet maid, though it be done but slightly;
Who can show all his love, doth love but lightly.

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II

Go, wailing verse, the infants of my love,
Minerva-like, brought forth without a mother;
Present the image of the cares I prove,
Witness your father's grief exceeds all other.
Sigh out a story of her cruel deeds,
With interrupted accents of despair;
A monument that whosoever reads,
May justly praise and blame my loveless Fair;
Say her disdain hath drièd up my blood,
And starvèd you, in succours still denying;
Press to her eyes, importune me some good,
Waken her sleeping pity with your crying:
Knock at her hard heart, beg till you have moved her,
And tell th'unkind how dearly I have loved her.

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III

If so it hap this offspring of my care,
These fatal anthems, lamentable songs,
Come to their view, who like afflicted are;
Let them yet sigh their own, and moan my wrongs.
But untouched hearts with unaffected eye,
Approach not to behold my soul's distress;
Clear-sighted you soon note what is awry,
Whilst blinded souls mine errors never guess.
You blinded souls, whom youth and error lead;
You outcast eaglets dazzled with your sun,
Do you, and none but you, my sorrows read;
You best can judge the wrongs that she hath done,
That she hath done, the motive of my pain,
Who whilst I love doth kill me with disdain.

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IV

These plaintive verse, the posts of my desire,
Which haste for succour to her slow regard,
Bear not report of any slender fire,
Forging a grief to win a fame's reward.
Nor are my passions limned for outward hue,
For that no colours can depaint my sorrows;
Delia herself, and all the world may view
Best in my face where cares have tilled deep furrows.
No bays I seek to deck my mourning brow,
O clear-eyed rector of the holy hill!
My humble accents bear the olive bough
Of intercession but to move her will.
These lines I use t'unburden mine own heart;
My love affects no fame nor 'steems of art.

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V

Whilst youth and error led my wandering mind,
And set my thoughts in heedless ways to range,
All unawares a goddess chaste I find,
Diana-like, to work my sudden change.
For her, no sooner had mine eye bewrayed,
But with disdain to see me in that place,
With fairest hand the sweet unkindest maid
Casts water-cold disdain upon my face.
Which turned my sport into a hart's despair,
Which still is chased, while I have any breath,
By mine own thoughts set on me by my Fair.
My thoughts like hounds pursue me to my death;
Those that I fostered of mine own accord,
Are made by her to murder thus their lord.

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VI

Fair is my love, and cruel as she's fair;
Her brow shades frowns although her eyes are sunny;
Her smiles are lightning though her pride despair;
And her disdains are gall, her favours honey;
A modest maid, decked with a blush of honour,
Whose feet do tread green paths of youth and love;
The wonder of all eyes that look upon her,
Sacred on earth, designed a saint above.
Chastity and beauty, which were deadly foes,
Live reconciled friends within her brow;
And had she pity to conjoin with those,
Then who had heard the complaints I utter now?
O had she not been fair and thus unkind,
My Muse had slept and none had known my mind!

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VII

For had she not been fair and thus unkind,
Then had no finger pointed at my lightness;
The world had never known what I do find,
And clouds obscure had shaded still her brightness.
Then had no censor's eye these lines surveyed,
Nor graver brows have judged my Muse so vain;
No sun my blush and error had bewrayed,
Nor yet the world had heard of such disdain.
Then had I walked with bold erected face;
No downcast look had signified my miss;
But my degraded hopes with such disgrace
Did force me groan out griefs and utter this.
For being full, should I not then have spoken,
My sense oppressed had failed and heart had broken.

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VIII

Thou, poor heart, sacrificed unto the fairest,
Hast sent the incense of thy sighs to heaven;
And still against her frowns fresh vows reparaest,
And made thy passions with her beauty even.
And you, mine eyes, the agents of my heart,
Told the dumb message of my hidden grief;
And oft, with careful tunes, with silent art,
Did treat the cruel Fair to yield relief.
And you, my verse, the advocates of love,
Have followed hard the process of my case:
And urged that title which doth plainly prove
My faith should win, if justice might have place.
Yet though I see that nought we do can move,
'Tis not disdain must make me cease to love.

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IX

If this be love, to draw a weary breath,
To paint on floods till the shore cry to th'air;
With downward looks still reading on the earth.
These sad memorials of my love's despair;
If this be love, to war against my soul,
Lie down to wail, rise up to sigh and grieve,
The never-resting stone of care to roll,
Still to complain my griefs, whilst none relieve;
If this be love, to clothe me with dark thoughts,
Haunting untrodden paths to wail apart,
My pleasures horror, music tragic notes,
Tears in mine eyes and sorrow at my heart;
If this be love, to live a living death,
Then do I love, and draw this weary breath.

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X

Then do I love and draw this weary breath
For her, the cruel Fair, within whose brow
I written find the sentence of my death

In unkind letters wrote she cares not how.
Thou power that rul'st the confines of the night,
Laughter-loving goddess, worldly pleasures' queen,
Intenerate that heart that sets so light
The truest love that ever yet was seen;
And cause her leave to triumph in this wise
Upon the prostrate spoil of that poor heart
That serves, a trophy to her conquering eyes,
And must their glory to the world impart;
Once let her know sh'hath done enough to prove me,
And let her pity if she cannot love me!

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XI

Tears, vows and prayers gain the hardest hearts,
Tears, vows and prayers have I spent in vain;
Tears cannot soften flint nor vows convert;
Prayers prevail not with a quaint disdain.
I lose my tears where I have lost my love,
I vow my faith where faith is not regarded,
I pray in vain a merciless to move;
So rare a faith ought better be rewarded.
Yet though I cannot win her will with tears,
Though my soul's idol scorneth all my vows,
Though all my prayers be to so deaf ears,
No favour though the cruel Fair allows,
Yet will I weep, vow, pray to cruel she;
Flint, frost, disdain, wears, melts and yields, we see.

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XII

My spotless love hovers with purest wings
About the temple of the proudest frame,
Where blaze those lights, fairest of earthly things;
Which clear our clouded world with brightest flame.
M'ambitious thoughts, confinèd in her face,
Affect no honour but what she can give;
My hopes do rest in limits of her grace;
I weigh no comfort unless she relieve.
For she that can my heart imparadise,
Holds in her fairest hand what dearest is.
My fortune's wheel's the circle of her eyes,
Whose rolling grace deign once a turn of bliss.
All my life's sweet consists in her alone,
So much I love the most unloving one.

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XIII

Behold what hap Pygmalion had to frame
And carve his proper grief upon a stone!
My heavy fortune is much like the same;
I work on flint and that's the cause I moan.
For hapless lo, even with mine own desires
I figured on the table of my heart
The fairest form that the world's eye admires,
And so did perish by my proper art.
And still I toil to change the marble breast
Of her whose sweetest grace I do adore,
Yet cannot find her breathe unto my rest.
Hard is her heart, and woe is me therefore.
O happy he that joyed his stone and art!
Unhappy I, to love a stony heart!

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XIV

Those snary locks are those same nets, my dear,
Wherewith my liberty thou didst surprise
Love was the flame that firèd me so near,
The dart transpiercing were those crystal eyes.
Strong is the net, and fervent is the flame;
Deep is the wound my sighs can well report.
Yet I do love, adore, and praise the same,
That holds, that burns, that wounds in this sort;

And list not seek to break, to quench, to heal,
The bond, the flame, the wound that festereth so,
By knife, by liquor, or by salve to deal;
So much I please to perish in my woe.
Yet lest long travails be above my strength,
Good Delia, loose, quench, heal me, now at length!

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XV

If that a loyal heart and faith unfeigned,
If a sweet languish with a chaste desire,
If hunger-starven thoughts so long retained,
Fed but with smoke, and cherished but with fire;
And if a brow with care's characters painted
Bewray my love with broken words half spoken
To her which sits in my thoughts' temple sainted,
And lays to view my vulture-gnawn heart open;
If I have done due homage to her eyes,
And had my sighs still tending on her name,
If on her love my life and honour lies,
And she, th'unkindest maid, still scorns the same;
Let this suffice, that all the world may see
The fault is hers, though mine the hurt must be.

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XVI

Happy in sleep, waking content to languish,
Embracing clouds by night, in daytime mourn,
My joys but shadows, touch of truth my anguish,
Griefs ever springing, comforts never born;
And still expecting when she will relent,
Grown hoarse with crying, "mercy, mercy give,"
So many vows and prayers having spent
That weary of my life I loathe to live;
And yet the hydra of my cares renews
Still new-born sorrows of her fresh disdain;
And still my hope the summer winds pursues,
Finding no end nor period of my pain;
This is my state, my griefs do touch so nearly,
And thus I live because I love her dearly.

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XVII

Why should I sing in verse? Why should I frame
These sad neglected notes for her dear sake?
Why should I offer up unto her name,
The sweetest sacrifice my youth can make?
Why should I strive to make her live for ever,
That never deigns to give me joy to live?
Why should m'afflicted Muse so much endeavour
Such honour unto cruelty to give?
If her defects have purchased her this fame,
What should her virtues do, her smiles, her love?
If this her worst, how should her best inflame?
What passions would her milder favours move?
Favours, I think, would sense quite overcome;
And that makes happy lovers ever dumb.

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XVIII

Since the first look that led me to this error,
To this thoughts' maze to my confusion tending,
Still have I lived in grief, in hope, in terror,
The circle of my sorrows never ending;
Yet cannot leave her love that holds me hateful;
Her eyes exact it, though her heart disdains me.
See what reward he hath that serves th'ungrateful?
So true and loyal love no favour gains me.
Still must I whet my young desires abated,
Upon the flint of such a heart rebelling;
And all in vain; her pride is so innated,
She yields no place at all for pity's dwelling.
Oft have I told her that my soul did love her,

And that with tears; yet all this will not move her.

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XIX

Restore thy tresses to the golden ore,
Yield Cytherea's son those arks of love;
Bequeath the heavens the stars that I adore,
And to the orient do thy pearls remove;
Yield thy hands' pride unto the ivory white;
T'Arabian odours give thy breathing sweet;
Restore thy blush unto Aurora bright;
To Thetis give the honour of thy feet.
Let Venus have the graces she resigned,
And thy sweet voice give back unto the spheres;
But yet restore thy fierce and cruel mind
To Hyrcan tigers and to ruthless bears;
Yield to the marble thy hard heart again;
So shalt thou cease to plague, and I to pain.

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XX

What it is to breathe and live without life;
How to be pale with anguish, red with fear,
T'have peace abroad, and nought within but strife:
Wish to be present, and yet shun t'appear;
How to be bold far off, and bashful near;
How to think much, and have no words to speak;
To crave redress, yet hold affliction dear;
To have affection strong, a body weak,
Never to find, yet evermore to seek;
And seek that which I dare not hope to find;
T'affect this life and yet this life disleek,
Grateful t'another, to myself unkind:
This cruel knowledge of these contraries,
Delia, my heart hath learned out of those eyes.

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XXI

If beauty thus be clouded with a frown,
That pity shines no comfort to my bliss,
And vapours of disdain so overgrown,
That my life's light wholly indarkened is,
Why should I more molest the world with cries,
The air with sighs, the earth below with tears,
Since I live hateful to those ruthless eyes,
Vexing with untuned moan her dainty ears!
If I have loved her dearer than my breath,
My breath that calls the heaven to witness it!—
And still hold her most dear until my death,
And if that all this cannot move one whit,
Yet sure she cannot but must think apart
She doth me wrong to grieve so true a heart.

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XXII

Come Time, the anchor hold of my desire,
My last resort whereto my hopes appeal;
Cause once the date of her disdain t'expire,
Make her the sentence of her wrath repeal.
Rob her fair brow, break in on beauty, steal
Power from those eyes which pity cannot spare;
Deal with those dainty cheeks, as she doth deal
With this poor heart consumed with despair.
This heart made now the pròspective of care
By loving her, the cruelst fair that lives,
The cruelst fair that sees I pine for her,
And never mercy to thy merit gives.
Let her not still triumph over the prize
Of mine affections taken by her eyes.

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XXIII

Time, cruel Time, come and subdue that brow

Which conquers all but thee, and thee too stays,
As if she were exempt from scythe or bow,
From love or years unsubject to decays.
Or art thou grown in league with those fair eyes,
That they may help thee to consume our days?
Or dost thou spare her for her cruelties,
Being merciless like thee that no man weighs?
And yet thou seest thy power she disobeys,
Cares not for thee, but lets thee waste in vain,
And prodigal of hours and years betrays
Beauty and youth t'opinion and disdain.
Yet spare her, Time; let her exempted be;
She may become more kind to thee or me.

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XXIV

These sorrowing sighs, the smoke of mine annoy,
These tears, which heat of sacred flame distils,
Are those due tributes that my faith doth pay
Unto the tyrant whose unkindness kills.
I sacrifice my youth and blooming years
At her proud feet, and she respects not it;
My flower, untimely's withered with my tears,
By winter woes for spring of youth unfit.
She thinks a look may recompense my care,
And so with looks prolongs my long-looked ease;
As short that bliss, so is the comfort rare;
Yet must that bliss my hungry thoughts appease.
Thus she returns my hopes so fruitless ever;
Once let her love indeed, or eye me never!

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XXV

False hope prolongs my ever certain grief,
Traitor to me, and faithful to my love.
A thousand times it promised me relief,
Yet never any true effect I prove.
Oft when I find in her no truth at all,
I banish her, and blame her treachery;
Yet soon again I must her back recall,
As one that dies without her company.
Thus often, as I chase my hope from me,
Straightway she hastes her unto Delia's eyes;
Fed with some pleasing look, there shall she be,
And so sent back. And thus my fortune lies;
Looks feed my hope, hope fosters me in vain;
Hopes are unsure when certain is my pain.

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XXVI

Look in my griefs, and blame me not to mourn,
From care to care that leads a life so bad;
Th'orphan of fortune, born to be her scorn,
Whose clouded brow doth make my days so sad.
Long are their nights whose cares do never sleep,
Loathsome their days who never sun yet joyed;
The impression of her eyes do pierce so deep,
That thus I live both day and night annoyed.
Yet since the sweetest root yields fruit so sour,
Her praise from my complaint I may not part;
I love th'effect, the cause being of this power;
I'll praise her face and blame her flinty heart,
Whilst we both make the world admire at us,
Her for disdain, and me for loving thus.

[Pg 42]

XXVII

Reignin my thoughts, fair hand, sweet eye, rare voice!
Possess me whole, my heart's triumvirate!
Yet heavy heart, to make so hard a choice
Of such as spoil thy poor afflicted state!
For whilst they strive which shall be lord of all,
All my poor life by them is trodden down;

They all erect their trophies on my fall,
And yield me nought that gives them their renown.
When back I look, I sigh my freedom past,
And wail the state wherein I present stand,
And see my fortune ever like to last,
Finding me reined with such a heavy hand.
What can I do but yield? and yield I do;
And serve all three, and yet they spoil me too!

[Pg 43]

XXVIII

Alluding to the sparrow pursued by a hawk, that flew into the bosom of Zenocrates

Whilst by thy eyes pursued, my poor heart flew
Into the sacred refuge of thy breast;
Thy rigour in that sanctuary slew
That which thy succ'ring mercy should have blest.
No privilege of faith could it protect,
Faith being with blood and five years witness signed,
Wherein no show gave cause of least suspect,
For well thou saw'st my love and how I pined.
Yet no mild comfort would thy brow reveal,
No lightning looks which falling hopes erect;
What boots to laws of succour to appeal?
Ladies and tyrants never laws respect.
Then there I die from whence my life should come,
And by that hand whom such deeds ill become.

[Pg 44]

XXIX

Still in the trace of one perplexèd thought,
My ceaseless cares continually run on,
Seeking in vain what I have ever sought,
One in my love, and her hard heart still one.
I who did never joy in other sun,
And have no stars but those that must fulfil
The work of rigour, fatally begun
Upon this heart whom cruelty will kill,
Injurious Delia!—yet, I love thee still,
And will whilst I shall draw this breath of mine;
I'll tell the world that I deserved but ill,
And blame myself, t'excuse that heart of thine;
See then who sins the greater of us twain,
I in my love, or thou in thy disdain.

[Pg 45]

XXX

Oft do I marvel whether Delia's eyes
Are eyes, or else two radiant stars that shine;
For how could nature ever thus devise
Of earth, on earth, a substance so divine?
Stars, sure, they are, whose motions rule desires,
And calm and tempest follow their aspects;
Their sweet appearing still such power inspires,
That makes the world admire so strange effects.
Yet whether fixed or wandering stars are they,
Whose influence rules the orb of my poor heart;
Fixed, sure, they are, but wandering make me stray
In endless errors whence I cannot part.
Stars, then, not eyes, move you with milder view
Your sweet aspect on him that honours you!

[Pg 46]

XXXI

The star of my mishap imposed this pain
To spend the April of my years in grief;
Finding my fortune ever in the wane,
With still fresh cares, supplied with no relief.
Yet thee I blame not, though for thee 'tis done;
But these weak wings presuming to aspire,
Which now are melted by thine eyes' bright sun
That makes me fall from off my high desire;
And in my fall I cry for help with speed,
No pitying eye looks back upon my fears;

No succour find I now when most I need:
My heats must drown in th'ocean of my tears,
Which still must bear the title of my wrong,
Caused by those cruel beams that were so strong.

[Pg 47]

XXXII

And yet I cannot reprehend the flight,
Or blame th'attempt, presuming so to soar;
The mounting venture for a high delight
Did make the honour of the fall the more.
For who gets wealth, that puts not from the shore?
Danger hath honours, great designs their fame,
Glory doth follow, courage goes before;
And though th'event oft answers not the same,
Suffice that high attempts have never shame.
The mean observer whom base safety keeps,
Lives without honour, dies without a name,
And in eternal darkness ever sleeps.
And therefore, Delia, 'tis to me no blot
To have attempted though attained thee not.

[Pg 48]

XXXIII

Raising my hopes on hills of high desire,
Thinking to scale the heaven of her heart,
My slender means presumed too high a part,
Her thunder of disdain forced me retire,
And threw me down to pain in all this fire,
Where lo, I languish in so heavy smart
Because th'attempt was far above my art;
Her pride brooked not poor souls should come so nigh her.
Yet, I protest, my high desiring will
Was not to dispossess her of her right;
Her sovereignty should have remained still;
I only sought the bliss to have her sight.
Her sight, contented thus to see me spill,
Framed my desires fit for her eyes to kill.

[Pg 49]

XXXIV

Why dost thou, Delia, credit so thy glass,
Gazing thy beauty deigned thee by the skies,
And dost not rather look on him, alas!
Whose state best shows the force of murdering eyes?
The broken tops of lofty trees declare
The fury of a mercy-wanting storm;
And of what force thy wounding graces are
Upon myself, you best may find the form.
Then leave thy glass, and gaze thyself on me;
That mirror shows what power is in thy face;
To view your form too much may danger be,
Narcissus changed t'a flower in such a case.
And you are changed, but not t'a hyacinth;
I fear your eye hath turned your heart to flint.

[Pg 50]

XXXV

I once may see when years shall wreck my wrong,
And golden hairs shall change to silver wire,
And those bright rays that kindle all this fire,
Shall fail in force, their working not so strong,
Then beauty, now the burden of my song,
Whose glorious blaze the world doth so admire,
Must yield up all to tyrant Time's desire;
Then fade those flowers that decked her pride so long.
When if she grieve to gaze her in her glass,
Which then presents her whiter-withered hue,
Go you, my verse, go tell her what she was,
For what she was, she best shall find in you.
Your fiery heat lets not her glory pass,
But phoenix-like shall make her live anew.

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XXXVI

Look, Delia, how w'esteem the half-blown rose,
The image of thy blush, and summer's honour,
Whilst yet her tender bud doth undisclose
That full of beauty time bestows upon her.
No sooner spreads her glory in the air,
But straight her wide-blown pomp comes to decline;
She then is scorned that late adorned the fair;
So fade the roses of those cheeks of thine.
No April can revive thy withered flowers,
Whose springing grace adorns thy glory now;
Swift speedy time, feathered with flying hours,
Dissolves the beauty of the fairest brow.
Then do not thou such treasure waste in vain,
But love now whilst thou mayst be loved again.

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XXXVII

But love whilst that thou mayst be loved again,
Now whilst thy May hath filled thy lap with flowers,
Now whilst thy beauty bears without a stain,
Now use thy summer smiles, ere winter lowers.
And whilst thou spread'st unto the rising sun,
The fairest flower that ever saw the light,
Now joy thy time before thy sweet be done;
And, Delia, think thy morning must have night,
And that thy brightness sets at length to west,
When thou wilt close up that which now thou showest,
And think the same becomes thy fading best,
Which then shall most inveil and shadow most.
Men do not weigh the stalk for that it was,
When once they find her flower, her glory pass.

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XXXVIII

When men shall find thy flower, thy glory pass,
And thou with careful brow sitting alone
Receivèd hast this message from thy glass
That tells the truth, and says that all is gone;
Fresh shalt thou see in me the wounds thou mad'st,
Though spent thy flame, in me the heat remaining.
I that have loved thee thus before thou fad'st,
My faith shall wax when thou art in thy waning.
The world shall find this miracle in me,
That fire can burn when all the matter's spent;
Then what my faith hath been thyself shalt see,
And that thou wast unkind thou mayst repent.
Thou mayst repent that thou hast scorned my tears,
When winter snows upon thy sable hairs.

[Pg 54]

XXXIX

When winter snows upon thy sable hairs,
And frost of age hath nipped thy beauties near,
When dark shall seem thy day that never clears,
And all lies withered that was held so dear;
Then take this picture which I here present thee,
Limned with a pencil not all unworthy;
Here see the gifts that God and nature lent thee,
Here read thyself and what I suffered for thee.
This may remain thy lasting monument,
Which happily posterity may cherish;
These colours with thy fading are not spent,
These may remain when thou and I shall perish.
If they remain, then thou shalt live thereby;
They will remain, and so thou canst not die.

[Pg 55]

XL

Thou canst not die whilst any zeal abound
In feeling hearts than can conceive these lines;
Though thou a Laura hast no Petrarch found,

In base attire yet clearly beauty shines.
And I though born within a colder clime,
Do feel mine inward heat as great—I know it;
He never had more faith, although more rhyme;
I love as well though he could better show it.
But I may add one feather to thy fame,
To help her flight throughout the fairest isle;
And if my pen could more enlarge thy name,
Then shouldst thou live in an immortal style.
For though that Laura better limnèd be,
Suffice, thou shalt be loved as well as she!

[Pg 56]

XLII

Be not displeas'd that these my papers should
Bewray unto the world how fair thou art;
Or that my wits have showed the best they could
The chastest flame that ever warmèd heart.
Think not, sweet Delia, this shall be thy shame,
My muse should sound thy praise with mournful warble.
How many live, the glory of whose name
Shall rest in ice, while thine is grav'd in marble!
Thou mayst in after ages live esteem'd,
Unburied in these lines, reserved in pureness;
These shall entomb those eyes, that have redeem'd
Me from the vulgar, thee from all obscureness.
Although my careful accents never mov'd thee,
Yet count it no disgrace that I lov'd thee.

[Pg 57]

XLIII

Delia, these eyes that so admireth thine,
Have seen those walls which proud ambition reared
To check the world, how they entomb'd have lain
Within themselves, and on them ploughs have eared;
Yet never found that barbarous hand attain'd
The spoil of fame deserved by virtuous men,
Whose glorious actions luckily had gain'd
Th'eternal annals of a happy pen.
And therefore grieve not if thy beauties die
Though time do spoil thee of the fairest veil
That ever yet cover'd mortality,
And must instar the needle and the rail.
That grace which doth more than inwoman thee,
Lives in my lines and must eternal be.

[Pg 58]

XLIV

Most fair and lovely maid, look from the shore,
See thy Leander striving in these waves,
Poor soul quite spent, whose force can do no more.
Now send forth hope, for now calm pity saves,
And waft him to thee with those lovely eyes,
A happy convoy to a holy land.
Now show thy power, and where thy virtue lies;
To save thine own, stretch out the fairest hand.
Stretch out the fairest hand, a pledge of peace,
That hand that darts so right and never misses;
I shall forget old wrongs, my griefs shall cease;
And that which gave me wounds, I'll give it kisses.
Once let the ocean of my care find shore,
That thou be pleas'd, and I may sigh no more.

[Pg 59]

XLV

Read in my face a volume of despairs,
The wailing Iliads of my tragic woe;
Drawn with my blood, and painted with my cares,
Wrought by her hand that I have honour'd so.
Who whilst I burn, she sings at my soul's wrack,
Looking aloft from turret of her pride;
There my soul's tyrant joys her in the sack
Of her own seat, whereof I made her guide.

There do these smokes that from affliction rise,
Serve as an incense to a cruel dame;
A sacrifice thrice-grateful to her eyes,
Because their power serves to exact the same.
Thus ruins she to satisfy her will,
The temple where her name was honoured still.

[Pg 60]

XLV

My Delia hath the waters of mine eyes,
The ready handmaids on her grace t'attend,
That never fail to ebb, but ever rise;
For to their flow she never grants an end.
The ocean never did attend more duly
Upon his sovereign's course, the night's pale queen,
Nor paid the impost of his waves more truly,
Than mine unto her cruelty hath been.
Yet nought the rock of that hard heart can move,
Where beat these tears with zeal, and fury drives;
And yet, I'd rather languish in her love,
Than I would joy the fairest she that lives.
And if I find such pleasure to complain,
What should I do then if I should obtain?

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XLVI

How long shall I in mine affliction mourn,
A burden to myself, distressed in mind;
When shall my interdicted hopes return
From out despair wherein they live confined?
When shall her troubled brow charged with disdain
Reveal the treasure which her smiles impart?
When shall my faith the happiness attain,
To break the ice that hath congealed her heart?
Unto herself, herself my love doth summon,
(If love in her hath any power to move)
And let her tell me, as she is a woman,
Whether my faith hath not deserved her love?
I know her heart cannot but judge with me,
Although her eyes my adversaries be.

[Pg 62]

XLVII

Beauty, sweet love, is like the morning dew,
Whose short refresh upon the tender green
Cheers for a time but till the sun doth show,
And straight 'tis gone as it had never been.
Soon doth it fade that makes the fairest flourish,
Short is the glory of the blushing rose,
The hue which thou so carefully dost nourish,
Yet which at length thou must be forced to lose.
When thou, surcharged with burden of thy years,
Shalt bend thy wrinkles homeward to the earth,
And that in beauty's lease expired appears
The date of age, the kalends of our death,—
But ah! no more, this must not be foretold,
For women grieve to think they must be old.

[Pg 63]

XLVIII

I must not grieve my love, whose eyes would read
Lines of delight, whereon her youth might smile;
Flowers have a time before they come to seed,
And she is young, and now must sport the while.
Ah sport, sweet maid, in season of these years,
And learn to gather flowers before they wither.
And where the sweetest blossoms first appears,
Let love and youth conduct thy pleasures thither.
Lighten forth smiles to clear the clouded air,
And calm the tempest which my sighs do raise;
Pity and smiles do best become the fair,
Pity and smiles shall yield thee lasting praise.
Make me to say, when all my griefs are gone,

Happy the heart that sighed for such a one!

[Pg 64]

XLIX

At the Author's going into Italy

Ah whither, poor forsaken, wilt thou go,
To go from sorrow and thine own distress,
When every place presents like face of woe,
And no remove can make thy sorrows less!
Yet go, forsaken! Leave these woods, these plains,
Leave her and all, and all for her that leaves
Thee and thy love forlorn, and both disdains,
And of both wrongful deems and ill conceives.
Seek out some place, and see if any place
Can give the least release unto thy grief;
Convey thee from the thought of thy disgrace,
Steal from thyself and be thy cares' own thief.
But yet what comforts shall I hereby gain?
Bearing the wound, I needs must feel the pain.

[Pg 65]

L

This Sonnet was made at the Author's being in Italy

Drawn with th'attractive virtue of her eyes,
My touched heart turns it to that happy coast,
My joyful north, where all my fortune lies,
The level of my hopes desired most;
There where my Delia, fairer than the sun,
Decked with her youth whereon the world doth smile,
Joys in that honour which her eyes have won,
Th'eternal wonder of our happy isle.
Flourish, fair Albion, glory of the north!
Neptune's best darling, held between his arms;
Divided from the world as better worth,
Kept for himself, defended from all harms!
Still let disarmèd peace deck her and thee;
And Muse-foe Mars abroad far fostered be!

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LI

Care-charmer sleep, son of the sable night,
Brother to death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth;
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow;
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

[Pg 67]

LII

Let others sing of knights and paladins,
In agèd accents and untimely words,
Paint shadows in imaginary lines
Which well the reach of their high wits records;
But I must sing of thee and those fair eyes
Authentic shall my verse in time to come,
When yet th'unborn shall say, Lo, where she lies,
Whose beauty made him speak that else was dumb!
These are the arks, the trophies I erect,
That fortify thy name against old age;
And these thy sacred virtues must protect
Against the dark and time's consuming rage.
Though th'error of my youth in them appear,
Suffice, they show I lived and loved thee, dear.

LIII

As to the Roman that would free his land,
 His error was his honour and renown;
 And more the fame of his mistaking hand
 Than if he had the tyrant overthrown.
 So Delia, hath mine error made me known,
 And my deceived attempt deserved more fame,
 Than if had the victory mine own,
 And thy hard heart had yielded up the same.
 And so likewise renowned is thy blame;
 Thy cruelty, thy glory; O strange case,
 That errors should be graced that merit shame,
 And sin of frowns bring honour to the face.
 Yet happy Delia that thou wast unkind,
 Though happier far, if thou would'st change thy mind.

LIV

Like as the lute delights or else dislikes
 As is his art that plays upon the same,
 So sounds my Muse according as she strikes
 On my heart-strings high tuned unto her fame.
 Her touch doth cause the warble of the sound,
 Which here I yield in lamentable wise,
 A wailing descant on the sweetest ground,
 Whose due reports give honour to her eyes;
 Else harsh my style, untunable my Muse;
 Hoarse sounds the voice that praiseth not her name;
 If any pleasing relish here I use,
 Then judge the world her beauty gives the same.
 For no ground else could make the music such,
 Nor other hand could give so sweet a touch.

LV

None other fame mine unambitious Muse
 Affected ever but t'eternise thee;
 All other honours do my hopes refuse,
 Which meaner prized and momentary be.
 For God forbid I should my papers blot
 With mercenary lines with servile pen,
 Praising virtues in them that have them not,
 Basely attending on the hopes of men.
 No, no, my verse respects not Thames, nor theatres;
 Nor seeks it to be known unto the great;
 But Avon, poor in fame, and poor in waters,
 Shall have my song, where Delia hath her seat.
 Avon shall be my Thames, and she my song;
 No other prouder brooks shall hear my wrong.

LVI

Unhappy pen, and ill-accepted lines
 That intimate in vain my chaste desire,
 My chaste desire, which from dark sorrow shines,
 Enkindled by her eyes' celestial fire;
 Celestial fire, and unrespecting powers
 Which pity not the wounds made by their might,
 Showed in these lines, the work of careful hours,
 The sacrifice here offered to her sight.
 But since she weighs them not, this rests for me:
 I'll moan myself, and hide the wrong I have,
 And so content me that her frowns should be
 To m'infant style the cradle and the grave.
 What though my Muse no honour get thereby;
 Each bird sings to herself, and so will I.

LVII

Lo here the impost of a faith entire,
 That love doth pay, and her disdain extorts;
 Behold the message of a chaste desire

That tells the world how much my grief imports.
These tributary passions, beauty's due,
I send those eyes, the cabinets of love;
That cruelty herself might grieve to view
Th'affliction her unkind disdain doth move.
And how I live, cast down from off all mirth,
Pensive, alone, only but with despair;
My joys abortive perish in their birth,
My griefs long-lived and care succeeding care.
This is my state, and Delia's heart is such;
I say no more, I fear I said too much.

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REJECTED SONNETS

[The following four sonnets were Numbers 3, 10, 12 and 16 in Newman's edition of 1591. They do not appear in any other editions.]

I

The only bird alone that nature frames,
When weary of the tedious life she lives,
By fire dies, yet finds new life in flames,
Her ashes to her shape new essence gives.
When only I, the only wretched wight,
Weary of life that breathes but sorrow's blast,
Pursue the flame of such a beauty bright,
That burns my heart, and yet my life still lasts.
O sovereign light, that with thy sacred flame
Consumes my life, revive me after this!
And make me, with the happy bird, the same
That dies to live, by favour of thy bliss!
This deed of thine will show a goddess' power,
In so long death to grant one living hour.

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II

The sly enchanter when to work his will
And secret wrong on some forespoken wight,
Frames wax in form to represent aright
The poor unwitting wretch he means to kill,
And pricks the image framed by magic's skill,
Whereby to vex the party day and night;
Like hath she done, whose show bewitched my sight
To beauty's charms, her lover's blood to spill.
For first, like wax she framed me by her eyes,
Whose rays sharp-pointed set upon my breast
Martyr my life and plague me in this wise
With ling'ring pain to perish in unrest.
Nought could, save this, my sweetest fair suffice,
To try her art on him that loves her best.

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III

The tablet of my heavy fortunes here
Upon thine altar, Paphian Power, I place.
The grievous shipwreck of my travels dear
In bulgèd bark, all perished in disgrace.
That traitor Love was pilot to my woe;
My sails were hope, spread with my sighs of grief;
The twin lights which my hapless course did show
Hard by th'inconstant sands of false relief,
Were two bright stars which led my view apart.
A siren's voice allured me come so near
To perish on the marble of her heart,
A danger which my soul did never fear.
Lo, thus he fares that trusts a calm too much;
And thus fare I whose credit hath been such!

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IV

Weigh but the cause, and give me leave to plain me,
For all my hurt, that my heart's queen hath wrought it;
She whom I love so dear, the more to pain me,

Withholds my right where I have dearly bought it.
Dearly I bought that was so slightly rated,
Even with the price of blood and body's wasting;
She would not yield that ought might be abated,
For all she saw my love was pure and lasting,
And yet now scorns performance of the passion,
And with her presence justice overruleth.
She tells me flat her beauty bears no action;
And so my plea and process she excludeth.
What wrong she doth, the world may well perceive it,
To accept my faith at first, and then to leave it.

[Pg 77] [This sonnet was Number 8 in Newman's edition of 1591, is found in the editions of '92 and '94, but was omitted thereafter.]

V

Oft and in vain my rebel thoughts have ventured
To stop the passage of my vanquished heart;
And shut those ways my friendly foe first entered,
Hoping thereby to free my better part.
And whilst I guard the windows of this fort,
Where my heart's thief to vex me made her choice,
And thither all my forces do transport,
Another passage opens at her voice.
Her voice betrays me to her hand and eye,
My freedom's tyrant, conquering all by art;
But ah! what glory can she get thereby,
With three such powers to plague one silly heart!
Yet my soul's sovereign, since I must resign,
Reign in my thoughts, my love and life are thine!

[Pg 78] [The following two sonnets appear for the first time in the second edition of 1592, where they are marked 31 and 30, the 30 being evidently a misprint for 32. They are not found in later editions.]

VI

Like as the spotless ermelin distressed
Circumpassed round with filth and lothsome mud,
Pines in her grief, imprisoned to her nest,
And cannot issue forth to seek her good;
So I invironed with a hatefull want,
Look to the heavens; the heavens yield forth no grace;
I search the earth, the earth I find as scant,
I view myself, myself in wofull case.
Heaven nor earth will not, myself cannot make
A way through want to free my soul from care;
But I must pine, and in my pining lurk
Lest my sad looks bewray me how I fare.
My fortune mantled with a cloud s'obscure,
Thus shades my life so long as wants endure.

[Pg 79]

VII

My cares draw on mine everlasting night,
In horror's sable clouds sets my life's sun;
My life's sweet sun, my dearest comfort's light
Shall rise no more to me whose day is done.
I'll go before unto the myrtle shades,
T'attend the presence of my world's dear;
And there prepare her flowers that never fades,
And all things fit against her coming there.
If any ask me why so soon I came,
I'll hide her sin and say it was my lot.
In life and death I'll tender her good name;
My life nor death shall never be her blot.
Although this world may seem her deed to blame,
The Elysian ghosts shall never know the same.

DIANA

BY

HENRY CONSTABLE

[Pg 83]

HENRY CONSTABLE

The sonnet-cycle in the hands of Henry Constable seems to have been in the first place rather a record of a succession of "moment's monuments" than a single dramatic scheme, even an embryonic one. The quaint preface found in the Harleian transcript of the *Diana* shows this, and at the same time tells what freedom was at that period allowed in the structure and dove-tailing of a sonnet-cycle. It is as follows:

"The Sonnets following are divided into 3 parts, each parte contayning 3 several arguments and every argument 7 sonets.

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"The first parte is of variable affections of love: wherein the first 7 be of the beginning and byrth of his love; the second 7, of the prayse of his mistresse; the thyrd 7, of severall accidents hapning in the tyme of his love.

"The second is the prayse of perticulars: wherein the first 7 be of the generall honoure of this ile, through the prayses of the heads thereof, the Q. of England and K. of Scots; the second 7 celebrate the memory of perticular ladies whoe the author most honoureth: the thyrd 7 be to the honoure of perticulars, presented upon severall occasions.

"The thyrd parte is tragicall, conteyning only lamentations: wherein the first 7 be complaynts onlye of misfortunes in love, the second 7, funerall sonets of the death of perticulars; the last 7, of the end and death of his love."

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The four sonnets to that distinguished "perticular," the King of Scotland, seem to have won for the author a great deal of fame, for Bolton mentions one of them as a witness to his opinion that "noble Henry Constable was a great master in English tongue, nor had any gentleman of our nation a more pure, quick, or higher delivery of conceit." The King himself the poet is said to have met personally when on his propagandist tours in Scotland; for Constable was an ardent Roman Catholic, and spent most of his life in plots for the re-establishment of that faith in England. Among the other "perticulars" addressed, the Queen is of course bounteously favoured, and a number of ladies of her Court are honoured; the series therefore lacks all pretense of unity. In fact, the title of the 1594 edition declares that the "excellent conceitful sonnets of Henry Constable" are "augmented with divers quartorzains of honourable and learned personages;" and Sidney has been found to be one of the "honourable and learned personages" whose works were laid under contribution to make the book; but since the whole first and second decades are the same as in the earlier volume by "H.C." which contained also the King James sonnets attributed by numerous contemporaries to Henry Constable, and since as yet, beside the ten by Sidney, no more of the sonnets have by antiquarian research been traced to their sources in the mazes of Elizabethan common-place books, it seems but fair to leave the *Diana* of 1594 in the hands of Constable. All three books, the '92 and '94 editions and the manuscript volume, show a like taste for orderly arrangement not found in general in the sonnet-cycles.

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Constable was a Cambridge man and was thirty years old when the *Diana* was first printed. He lived until 1613 and bore an excellent reputation in his day. He was the friend of Ben Jonson, who speaks of his "ambrosaic Muse," of Sidney, Harington, Tofte, and other literary men. If toying with the sonnet in *Diana* seems to indicate a light and trifling spirit, we have to yield that with Constable as with Fletcher the graver matters of state policy formed the chief interest in life to the author. In Constable's case the interest was religious and the poet was personally a man of devout feeling. Writing from the Tower, where for a time he was detained, he says, "Whether I remain in prison or go out, I have learned to live alone with God." At the conclusion of the third part of the Harleian Miscellany transcript, the author says: "When I had ended this last sonnet, and found that such vain poems as I had by idle hours writ, did amount just to the diametrical number 63, methought it was high time for my folly to die, and to employ the remnant of my wit to other calmer thoughts less sweet and less bitter." It was probably in a mood like this that the poet turned from his devotion to an earthly love and began to write his "Sonnets in honor of God and his Saints." In this group, as in the other, he expresses that passion for beauty characteristic of the renaissance, but here he shows the lack of a clear conception as to where the line should be drawn between earthly and heavenly beauty. In Constable we see the new revelation barely emerging from the darkness, the human hand reaching out in art toward the divine, but not knowing how to take and hold the higher in its grasp. These sonnets are as "conceitful" as the others, but the collection illustrates an early effort to turn the poetic energy into a new field, to broaden the scope of subject-matter possible in sonnet-form. The poet was evidently a close student of the sonnet-structure. He used the Italian and the English form in about an equal number of cases but he experiments on a large variety of rime-arrangements besides.

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As to the personality honoured under the name of Diana, there seems to be much obscurity. From the sonnet *To his Mistress*, we learn that though he addresses several he loves but one.

"Grace full of grace, though in these verses here
My love complains of others than of thee,
Yet thee alone I loved, and they by me,
Thou yet unknown, only mistaken were."

[Pg 89] So he loved her, it seems, while she was "yet unknown," something quite possible in the sonneteer's world: and her personality, though shadowed under various names, is to the poet a distinct conception. To the honour of being this poet's inspirer, there are two claimants; one the Lady Rich, the Stella of Sidney, the other the ill-fated Arabella Stuart. It is noteworthy that the only one of all the sonnets addressed personally to particular ladies that is retained in the edition of 1594, is one to Lady Rich. But this sonnet tells us little except that "wished fortune" had once made it possible for him to see her in all her beauty of roses and lilies, stars and waves of gold: but this might have happened if he had once seen that beautiful lady pass along the street in the queen's glittering train. Other sonnets to or about the Lady Rich are equally uncommunicative; and if the ill-starred Penelope Devereux is the one alone that Constable loved, Time has shut the secret tightly in his heart and will not give it up.

[Pg 90] The other guess is but little nearer to certainty. During the years that Constable was pursuing his shadowy schemes, Arabella Stuart was an object of admiration and of political jealousy; the house where she lived was constantly spied upon, her very tutors were suspected, the wildest schemes were formed upon her royal connections, and it would not be strange if the heart of our poetical zealot turned toward this star of his cause. We may be sure that he would not have been averse to a clandestine meeting, for in writing to that arch-plotter, the Countess of Shrewsbury, Arabella's doting grandmother, he says: "It is more convenient to write unto your Ladyship, than to come unto you or to make any other visits either by day or night till I have further liberty granted me;" besides this, the Earl of Shrewsbury was distantly related to Constable's family, and this fact of kinship may have opened the way; while his sonnet to the Countess intimates that his heart had been touched by some beauty in her Venus' camp. If not Arabella, who could this be?

"To you then, you, the fairest of the wise,
And wisest of the fair I do appeal.
A warrior of your camp by force of eyes
Me prisoner took, and will with rigour deal,
Except you pity in your heart will place,
At whose white hands I only seek for grace."

As before, the sonnets addressed to Arabella give no definite information. The first is in the usual strain of praise, and closes:

"My drift was this,
Some earthly shadow of thy worth to show
Whose heavenly self above world's reason is."

The second is as follows:

[Pg 91] "Only hope of our age, that virtues dead
By your sweet breath should be revived again;
Learning discouraged long by rude disdain
By your white hands is only cherished.
Thus others' worth by you is honoured.
But who shall honour yours? Poor wits, in vain
We seek to pay the debts which you pertain
Till from yourself some wealth be borrowed.
Lend some your tongues, that every nation may
In his own hear your virtuous praises blaze;
Lend them your wit, your judgment, memory,
Lest they themselves should not know what to say;
And that thou mayst be loved as much as praised,
My heart thou mayst lend them which I gave thee."

The last of Constable's sonnets in the edition of 1592 is this dedicatory address:

"My mistress' worth gave wings unto my muse
And my muse wings did give unto her name,
So, like twin birds, my muse bred with her fame
Together now do learn their wings to use.
And in this book, which here you may peruse,
Abroad they fly, resolved to try the same
Adventure in their flight; and thee, sweet dame,
Both she and I for our protection choose;
I by my vow, and she by farther right
Under your phoenix (wing) presume to fly;
That from all carrion beaks in safety might

By one same wing be shrouded, she and I.
O happy, if I might but flutter there
Where you and she and I should be so near."

[Pg 92] The value of this author's praise, however, is somewhat impaired by the extravagances in certain sonnets where, for instance, he honours a lady whose soul, he says, was "endued in her lifetime with infinite perfections as her divine poems do testify," when she on earth did sing poet-wise angels in heaven prayed for her company, and when she died, her "fair and glittering rays increased the light of heaven;" where again he calls on the Countess of Essex to revenge the death of her first husband, Sir Philip Sidney, upon the Spanish people by murdering them *en masse* with her eyes, and where he calls the Countess of Shrewsbury "chieftain of Venus's host," and places her crowned in heaven beside the Virgin Mary. Constable's zealous publisher was not far wrong when he claimed that in this poet "conceit first claimed his birthright to enjoy," and since we do not find either in the sonnets to Lady Rich or in those to Lady Arabella any special tone of sincerity that leads us to have confidence in our conjecture, we shall be compelled to leave this puzzle unsolved.

[Pg 93]

DIANA

UNTO HER MAJESTY'S SACRED HONOURABLE MAIDS

Eternal Twins! that conquer death and time,
Perpetual advocates in heaven and earth!
Fair, chaste, immaculate, and all divine,
Glorious alone, before the first man's birth;
Your twofold charities, celestial lights,
Bow your sun-rising eyes, planets of joy,
Upon these orphan poems; in whose rights
Conceit first claimed his birthright to enjoy.
If, pitiful, you shun the song of death,
Or fear the stain of love's life-dropping blood,
O know then, you are pure; and purer faith
Shall still keep white the flower, the fruit, and bud.
Love moveth all things. You that love, shall move
All things in him, and he in you shall love.

RICHARD SMITH. [\[A\]](#)

[Pg 94]

TO HIS MISTRESS

Grace full of grace, though in these verses here
My love complains of others than of thee,
Yet thee alone I loved, and they by me,
Thou yet unknown, only mistaken were.
Like him which feels a heat now here now there,
Blames now this cause now that, until he see
The fire indeed from whence they causèd be;
Which fire I now do know is you, my dear,
Thus diverse loves dispersèd in my verse
In thee alone for ever I unite,
And fully unto thee more to rehearse;
To him I fly for grace that rules above,
That by my grace I may live in delight,
Or by his grace I never more may love.

[Pg 95]

TO HIS ABSENT DIANA

Severed from sweet content, my live's sole light,
Banished by over-weening wit from my desire,
This poor acceptance only I require:
That though my fault have forced me from thy sight
Yet that thou would'st, my sorrows to requite,
Review these sonnets, pictures of thy praise;
Wherein each woe thy wondrous worth doth raise,
Though first thy worth bereft me of delight.
See them forsaken; for I them forsook,
Forsaken first of thee, next of my sense;
And when thou deign'st on their black tears to look,
Shed not one tear, my tears to recompence;
But joy in this, though fate 'gainst me repine,
My verse still lives to witness thee divine.

THE FIRST DECADE

I

Only of the birth and beginning of love

Resolved to love, unworthy to obtain,
 I do no favour crave; but, humble wise,
 To thee my sighs in verse I sacrifice,
 Only some pity and no help to gain.
 Hear then, and as my heart shall aye remain
 A patient object to thy lightning eyes,
 A patient ear bring thou to thund'ring cries;
 Fear not the crack, when I the blow sustain.
 So as thine eye bred mine ambitious thought,
 So shall thine ear make proud my voice for joy.
 Lo, dear, what wonders great by thee are wrought,
 When I but little favour do enjoy!
 The voice is made the ear for to rejoice,
 And your ear giveth pleasure to my voice.

II

An excuse to his mistress for resolving to love so worthy a creature

Blame not my heart for flying up so high,
 Sith thou art cause that it this flight begun;
 For earthly vapours drawn up by the sun,
 Comets become, and night suns in the sky.
 Mine humble heart, so with thy heavenly eye
 Drawn up aloft, all low desires doth shun;
 Raise thou me up, as thou my heart hast done,
 So during night in heaven remain may I.
 I say again, blame not my high desire,
 Sith of us both the cause thereof depends.
 In thee doth shine, in me doth burn a fire,
 Fire draws up other, and itself ascends.
 Thine eye a fire, and so draws up my love;
 My love a fire, and so ascends above.

III

Of the birth of his love

Fly low, dear love, thy sun dost thou not see?
 Take heed, do not so near his rays aspire;
 Lest, for thy pride, inflamed with wreakful ire,
 It burn thy wings, as it hath burnèd me.
 Thou haply sayst thy wings immortal be,
 And so cannot consumèd be with fire;
 And one is hope, the other is desire,
 And that the heavens bestowed them both on thee.
 A muse's words made thee with hope to fly,
 An angel's face desire hath begot,
 Thyself engendered by a goddess' eye;
 Yet for all this, immortal thou art not.
 Of heavenly eye though thou begotten art,
 Yet art thou born but of a mortal heart.

IV

Of his mistress, upon occasion of a friend of his which dissuaded him from loving

A friend of mine, pitying my hopeless love,
 Hoping by killing hope my love to stay,
 "Let not," quoth he, "thy hope, thy heart betray;
 Impossible it is her heart to move."
 But sith resolvèd love cannot remove
 As long as thy divine perfections stay,
 Thy godhead then he sought to take away.
 Dear, seek revenge and him a liar prove;
 Gods only do impossibilities.
 "Impossible," saith he, "thy grace to gain."
 Show then the power of divinities

By granting me thy favour to obtain.
So shall thy foe give to himself the lie;
A goddess thou shall prove, and happy I!

[Pg 100]

V

Of the conspiracy of his lady's eyes and his own to engender love

Thine eye the glass where I behold my heart,
Mine eye the window through the which thine eye
May see my heart, and there thyself espy
In bloody colours how thou painted art.
Thine eye the pile is of a murdering dart;
Mine eye the sight thou tak'st thy level by
To hit my heart, and never shoot'st awry.
Mine eye thus helps thine eye to work my smart.
Thine eye a fire is both in heat and light;
Mine eye of tears a river doth become.
O that the water of mine eye had might
To quench the flames that from thine eye doth come,
Or that the fires kindled by thine eye,
The flowing streams of mine eyes could make dry.

[Pg 101]

VI

Love's seven deadly sins

Mine eye with all the deadly sins is fraught.
First *proud*, sith it presumed to look so high.
A watchman being made, stood gazing by,
And *idle*, took no heed till I was caught.
And *envious*, bears envy that by thought
Should in his absence be to her so nigh.
To kill my heart, mine eye let in her eye;
And so consent gave to a *murder* wrought.
And *covetous*, it never would remove
From her fair hair, gold so doth please his sight.
Unchaste, a bawd between my heart and love.
A *glutton* eye, with tears drunk every night.
These sins procurèd have a goddess' ire,
Wherefore my heart is damned in love's sweet fire.

[Pg 102]

VII

Of the slander envy gives him for so highly praising his mistress

Falsely doth envy of your praises blame
My tongue, my pen, my heart of flattery,
Because I said there was no sun but thee.
It called my tongue the partial trump of fame,
And saith my pen hath flatterèd thy name,
Because my pen did to my tongue agree;
And that my heart must needs a flatterer be,
Which taught both tongue and pen to say the same.
No, no, I flatter not when thee I call
The sun, sith that the sun was never such;
But when the sun thee I compared withal,
Doubtless the sun I flatterèd too much.
Witness mine eyes, I say the truth in this,
They have seen thee and know that so it is.

[Pg 103]

VIII

Of the end and death of his love

Much sorrow in itself my love doth move,
More my despair to love a hopeless bliss,
My folly most to love whom sure to miss
O help me, but this last grief to remove;
All pains, if you command, it joy shall prove,
And wisdom to seek joy. Then say but this,
"Because my pleasure in thy torment is,
I do command thee without hope to love!"
So when this thought my sorrow shall augment

That my own folly did procure my pain,
Then shall I say to give myself content,
"Obedience only made me love in vain.
It was your will, and not my want of wit;
I have the pain, bear you the blame of it!"

[Pg 104]

IX

Upon occasion of her walking in a garden

My lady's presence makes the roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush with shame.
The lily's leaves for envy pale became,
And her white hands in them this envy bred.
The marigold the leaves abroad doth spread,
Because the sun's and her power is the same.
The violet of purple colour came,
Dyed in the blood she made my heart to shed.
In brief, all flowers from her their virtue take;
From her sweet breath their sweet smells do proceed;
The living heat which her eyebeams doth make
Warmeth the ground and quickeneth the seed.
The rain wherewith she watereth the flowers,
Falls from mine eyes which she dissolves in showers.

[Pg 105]

X

To the Lady Rich

Heralds at arms do three perfections quote,
To wit, most fair, most rich, most glittering;
So when those three concur within one thing,
Needs must that thing of honour be a note.
Lately I did behold a rich fair coat,
Which wishèd fortune to mine eyes did bring.
A lordly coat, yet worthy of a king,
In which one might all these perfections note.
A field of lilies, roses proper bare;
Two stars in chief; the crest was waves of gold.
How glittering 'twas, might by the stars appear;
The lilies made it fair for to behold.
And rich it was as by the gold appeareth;
But happy he that in his arms it weareth!

[Pg 106]

THE SECOND DECADE

I

Of the end and death of his love

If true love might true love's reward obtain,
Dumb wonder only might speak of my joy;
But too much worth hath made thee too much coy,
And told me long ago I sighed in vain.
Not then vain hope of undeservèd gain
Hath made me paint in verses mine annoy,
But for thy pleasure, that thou might'st enjoy
Thy beauty's praise, in glasses of my pain.
See then, thyself, though me thou wilt not hear,
By looking on my verse. For pain in verse,
Love doth in pain, beauty in love appear.
So if thou would'st my verses' meaning see,
Expound them thus, when I my love rehearse:
"None loves like he!" that is, "None fair like me!"

[Pg 107]

II

How he encouraged himself to proceed in love, and to hope for favour in the end at love's hands

It may be, love my death doth not pretend,
Although he shoots at me, but thinks it fit
Thus to bewitch thee for thy benefit,
Causing thy will to my wish to condescend.
For witches which some murder do intend,

Do make a picture and do shoot at it;
And in that part where they the picture hit,
The party's self doth languish to his end.
So love, too weak by force thy heart to taint,
Within my heart thy heavenly shape doth paint;
Suffering therein his arrows to abide,
Only to th'end he might by witches' art,
Within my heart pierce through thy picture's side,
And through thy picture's side might wound my heart.

[Pg 108]

III

Of the thoughts he nourished by night when she was retired to bed

The sun, his journey ending in the west,
Taket h his lodging up in Thetis' bed;
Though from our eyes his beams be banishèd,
Yet with his light th' antipodes be blest.
Now when the sun-time brings my sun to rest,
Which me too oft of rest hath hinderèd,
And whiter skin with white sheet coverèd,
And softer cheek doth on soft pillow rest,
Then I, O sun of suns! and light of lights!
Wish me with those antipodes to be,
Which see and feel thy beams and heat by nights.
Well, though the night both cold and darksome is,
Yet half the day's delight the night grants me,
I feel my sun's heat, though his light I miss.

[Pg 109]

IV

Of his lady's praise

Lady, in beauty and in favour rare,
Of favour, not of due, I favour crave.
Nature to thee beauty and favour gave;
Fair then thou art, and favour thou may'st spare.
Nor when on me bestowed your favours are,
Less favour in your face you shall not have;
If favour then a wounded soul may save,
Of murder's guilt, dear Lady, then beware.
My loss of life a million fold were less
Than the least loss should unto you befall;
Yet grant this gift; which gift when I possess,
Both I have life and you no loss at all.
For by your favour only I do live,
And favour you may well both keep and give.

[Pg 110]

V

Of the end and death of his love

My reason absent did mine eyes require
To watch and ward and such foes to descry
As they should ne'er my heart approaching spy;
But traitor eyes my heart's death did conspire,
Corrupted with hope's gifts; let in desire
To burn my heart; and sought no remedy,
Though store of water were in either eye,
Which well employed, might well have quenched the fire.
Reason returnèd; love and fortune made
Judges, to judge mine eyes to punishment.
Fortune, sith they by sight my heart betrayed
From wishèd sight, adjudged them banishment;
Love, sith by fire murdered my heart was found,
Adjudgèd them in tears for to be drowned.

[Pg 111]

VI

Of several complaints of misfortune in love only

Wonder it is and pity is't that she
In whom all beauty's treasure we may find,
That may unrich the body and the mind,

Towards the poor should use no charity.
My love has gone a begging unto thee.
And if that beauty had not been more kind
That pity, long ere this he had been pined;
But beauty is content his food to be.
O pity have when such poor orphans beg!
Love, naked boy, hath nothing on his back;
And though he wanteth neither arm nor leg,
Yet maimed he is sith he his sight doth lack.
And yet though blind he beauty can behold,
And yet though naked he feels more heat than cold.

[Pg 112]

VII

Of several complaints of misfortune in love only

Pity refusing my poor love to feed,
A beggar starved for want of help he lies;
And at your mouth, the door of beauty, cries,
That thence some alms of sweet grants might proceed.
But as he waiteth for some almè deed,
A cherry tree before the door he spies.
"O dear," quoth he, "two cherries may suffice.
Two only may save life in this my need."
But beggars, can they nought but cherries eat?
Pardon my love, he is a goddess' son,
And never feedeth but on dainty meat,
Else need he not to pine, as he hath done;
For only the sweet fruit of this sweet tree
Can give food to my love and life to me.

[Pg 113]

VIII

Of his lady's veil wherewith she covered her

The fowler hides as closely as he may
The net, where caught the silly bird should be,
Lest he the threatening poison should but see,
And so for fear be forced to fly away.
My lady so, the while she doth assay
In curlèd knots fast to entangle me,
Put on her veil, to th' end I should not flee
The golden net wherein I am a prey.
Alas, most sweet! what need is of a net
To catch a bird that is already ta'en?
Sith with your hand alone you may it get,
For it desires to fly into the same.
What needs such art my thoughts then to entrap,
When of themselves they fly into your lap?

[Pg 114]

IX

To his lady's hand upon occasion of her glove which in her absence he kissed

Sweet hand, the sweet but cruel bow thou art,
From whence at me five ivory arrows fly;
So with five wounds at once I wounded lie,
Bearing my breast the print of every dart.
Saint Francis had the like, yet felt no smart,
Where I in living torments never die.
His wounds were in his hands and feet; where I
All these five helpless wounds feel in my heart.
Now, as Saint Francis, if a saint am I,
The bow that shot these shafts a relic is;
I mean the hand, which is the reason why
So many for devotion thee would kiss:
And some thy glove kiss as a thing divine,
This arrows' quiver, and this relic's shrine.

[Pg 115]

X

Of his lady's going over early to bed, so depriving him too soon of her sight

Fair sun, if you would have me praise your light,

When night approacheth wherefore do you fly?
 Time is so short, beauties so many be,
 As I have need to see them day and night,
 That by continual view my verses might
 Tell all the beams of your divinity;
 Which praise to you and joy should be to me,
 You living by my verse, I by your sight;
 I by your sight, and not you by my verse,
 Need mortal skill immortal praise rehearse?
 No, no, though eyes were blind, and verse were dumb,
 Your beauty should be seen and your fame known;
 For by the wind which from my sighs do come,
 Your praises round about the world are blown.

[Pg 116]

THE THIRD DECADE

I

Complaint of his lady's sickness

Uncivil sickness, hast thou no regard,
 But dost presume my dearest to molest,
 And without leave dar'st enter in that breast
 Whereto sweet love approach yet never dared?
 Spare thou her health, which my life hath not spared;
 Too bitter such revenge of my unrest!
 Although with wrongs my thought she hath opprest,
 My wrongs seek not revenge, they crave reward
 Cease, sickness, cease in her then to remain;
 And come and welcome, harbour thou in me
 Whom love long since hath taught to suffer in!
 So she which hath so oft my pain increased,
 O God, that I might so revengèd be,
 By my poor pain might have her pain released!

[Pg 117] [The Sonnets numbered II to VIII in this Decade are by Sidney, and were printed among the *Certaine Sonets* in the 1598 edition of the *Arcadia*.]

IX

Woe to mine eyes, the organs of mine ill;
 Hate to my heart, for not concealing joy;
 A double curse upon my tongue be still,
 Whose babbling lost what else I might enjoy!
 When first mine eyes did with thy beauty joy,
 They to my heart thy wondrous virtues told;
 Who, fearing lest thy beams should him destroy,
 Whate'er he knew, did to my tongue unfold.
 My tell-tale tongue, in talking over bold,
 What they in private council did declare,
 To thee, in plain and public terms unrolled;
 And so by that made thee more coyer far.
 What in thy praise he spoke, that didst thou trust;
 And yet my sorrows thou dost hold unjust.

[Pg 118]

X

Of an Athenian young man have I read,
 Who on blind fortune's picture doated so,
 That when he could not buy it to his bed,
 On it he gazing died for very woe.
 My fortune's picture art thou, flinty dame,
 That settest golden apples to my sight;
 But wilt by no means let me taste the same.
 To drown in sight of land is double spite.
 Of fortune as thou learn'dst to be unkind,
 So learn to be unconstant to disdain.
 The wittiest women are to sport inclined.
 Honour is pride, and pride is nought but pain.
 Let others boast of choosing for the best;
 'Tis substances not names must make us blest.

[Pg 119]

THE FOURTH DECADE

I

Of the end and death of his love

Needs must I leave and yet needs must I love;
In vain my wit doth tell in verse my woe;
Despair in me, disdain in thee, doth show
How by my wit I do my folly prove.
All this my heart from love can never move.
Love is not in my heart. No, Lady, no,
My heart is love itself. Till I forego
My heart I never can my love remove.
How can I then leave love? I do intend
Not to crave grace, but yet to wish it still;
Not to praise thee, but beauty to commend;
And so, by beauty's praise, praise thee I will;
For as my heart is love, love not in me,
So beauty thou, beauty is not in thee.

[Pg 120]

II

Of the prowess of his lady

Sweet sovereign, since so many minds remain
Obedient subjects at thy beauty's call,
So many hearts bound in thy hairs as thrall,
So many eyes die with one look's disdain,
Go, seek the honour that doth thee pertain,
That the Fifth Monarchy may thee befall!
Thou hast such means to conquer men withal,
As all the world must yield or else be slain.
To fight, thou need'st no weapons but thine eyes,
Thine hair hath gold enough to pay thy men,
And for their food thy beauty will suffice;
For men and armour, Lady, care have none;
For one will sooner yield unto thee than
When he shall meet thee naked all alone.

[Pg 121]

III

Of the discouragement he had to proceed in love, through the multitude of his lady's perfections and his own lowness

When your perfections to my thoughts appear,
They say among themselves, "O happy we,
Whichever shall so rare an object see!"
But happy heart, if thoughts less happy were!
For their delights have cost my heart full dear,
In whom of love a thousand causes be,
And each cause breeds a thousand loves in me,
And each love more than thousand hearts can bear.
How can my heart so many loves then hold,
Which yet by heaps increase from day to day?
But like a ship that's o'ercharged with gold,
Must either sink or hurl the gold away.
But hurl not love; thou canst not, feeble heart;
In thine own blood, thou therefore drownèd art!

[Pg 122]

IV

Fools be they that inveigh 'gainst Mahomet,
Who's but a moral of love's monarchy.
But a dull adamant, as straw by jet,
He in an iron chest was drawn on high.
In midst of Mecca's temple roof, some say,
He now hangs without touch or stay at all.
That Mahomet is she to whom I pray;
May ne'er man pray so ineffectual!
Mine eyes, love's strange exhaling adamants,
Un'wares, to my heart's temple's height have wrought
The iron idol that compassion wants,
Who my oft tears and travails sets at nought.
Iron hath been transformed to gold by art;
Her face, limbs, flesh and all, gold; save her heart.

Ready to seek out death in my disgrace,
 My mistress 'gan to smooth her gathered brows,
 Whereby I am reprieved for a space.
 O hope and fear! who half your torments knows?
 It is some mercy in a black-mouthed judge
 To haste his prisoner's end, if he must die.
 Dear, if all other favour you shall grudge,
 Do speedy execution with your eye;
 With one sole look you leave in me no soul!
 Count it a loss to lose a faithful slave.
 Would God, that I might hear my last bell toll,
 So in your bosom I might dig a grave!
 Doubtful delay is worse than any fever,
 Or help me soon, or cast me off for ever!

VI

Of the end and death of his love

Each day, new proofs of new despair I find,
 That is, new deaths. No marvel then, though I
 Make exile my last help; to th'end mine eye
 Should not behold the death to me assigned.
 Not that from death absence might save my mind,
 But that it might take death more patiently;
 Like him, the which by judge condemned to die,
 To suffer with more ease, his eyes doth blind.
 Your lips in scarlet clad, my judges be,
 Pronouncing sentence of eternal "No!"
 Despair, the hangman that tormenteth me;
 The death I suffer is the life I have.
 For only life doth make me die in woe,
 And only death I for my pardon crave.

VII

The richest relic Rome did ever view
 Was' Cæsar's tomb; on which, with cunning hand,
 Jove's triple honours, the three fair Graces, stand,
 Telling his virtues in their virtues true.
 This Rome admired; but dearest dear, in you
 Dwelleth the wonder of the happiest land,
 And all the world to Neptune's furthest strand,
 For what Rome shaped hath living life in you.
 Thy naked beauty, bounteously displayed,
 Enricheth monarchies of hearts with love;
 Thine eyes to hear complaints are open laid;
 Thine eyes' kind looks requite all pains I prove;
 That of my death I dare not thee accuse;
 But pride in me that baser chance refuse.

VIII

Why thus unjustly, say, my cruel fate,
 Dost thou adjudge my luckless eyes and heart,
 The one to live exiled from that sweet smart,
 Where th' other pines, imprisoned without date?
 My luckless eyes must never more debate
 Of those bright beams that eased my love apart;
 And yet my heart, bound to them with love's dart,
 Must there dwell ever to bemoan my state.
 O had mine eyes been suffered there to rest,
 Often they had my heart's unquiet eased;
 Or had my heart with banishment been blest,
 Mine eye with beauty never had been pleased!
 But since these cross effects hath fortune wrought,
 Dwell, heart, with her; eyes, view her in my thought!

[The Sonnet numbered IX is by Sidney, and is found in the *Certaine Sonets* printed in the 1598 edition of the *Arcadia*.]

Hope, like the hyaena, coming to be old,
Alters his shape, is turned into despair.
Pity my hoary hopes, Maid of clear mould!
Think not that frowns can ever make thee fair.
What harm is it to kiss, to laugh, to play?
Beauty's no blossom, if it be not used.
Sweet dalliance keeps the wrinkles long away;
Repentance follows them that have refused.
To bring you to the knowledge of your good,
I seek, I sue. O try and then believe!
Each image can be chaste that's carved of wood.
You show you live, when men you do relieve.
Iron with wearing shines; rust wasteth treasure.
On earth but love there is no other pleasure.

[Pg 128]

THE FIFTH DECADE

I

Ay me, poor wretch, my prayer is turned to sin!
I say, "I love!" My mistress says "'Tis lust!"
Thus most we lose where most we seek to win.
Wit will make wicked what is ne'er so just.
And yet I can supplant her false surmise.
Lust is a fire that for an hour or twain
Giveth a scorching blaze and then he dies;
Love a continual furnace doth maintain.
A furnace! Well, this a furnace may be called;
For it burns inward, yields a smothering flame,
Sighs which, like boiled lead's smoking vapour, scald.
I sigh apace at echo of sighs' name.
Long have I served; no short blaze is my love.
Hid joys there are that maids scorn till they prove.

[Pg 129]

II

I do not now complain of my disgrace,
O cruel fair one! fair with cruel crost;
Nor of the hour, season, time, nor place;
Nor of my foil, for any freedom lost;
Nor of my courage, by misfortune daunted;
Nor of my wit, by overweening struck;
Nor of my sense, by any sound enchanted;
Nor of the force of fiery-pointed hook;
Nor of the steel that sticks within my wound;
Nor of my thoughts, by worser thoughts defaced;
Nor of the life I labour to confound.
But I complain, that being thus disgraced,
Fired, feared, frantic, fettered, shot through, slain,
My death is such as I may not complain.

[Pg 130]

III

If ever sorrow spoke from soul that loves,
As speaks a spirit in a man possest,
In me her spirit speaks. My soul it moves,
Whose sigh-swoll'n words breed whirlwinds in my breast;
Or like the echo of a passing bell,
Which sounding on the water seems to howl;
So rings my heart a fearful heavy knell,
And keeps all night in consort with the owl.
My cheeks with a thin ice of tears are clad,
Mine eyes like morning stars are bleared and red.
What resteth then but I be raging mad,
To see that she, my cares' chief conduit-head,
When all streams else help quench my burning heart,
Shuts up her springs and will no grace impart.

[Pg 131]

IV

You secret vales, you solitary fields,
You shores forsaken and you sounding rocks!
If ever groaning heart hath made you yield,

Or words half spoke that sense in prison locks,
Then 'mongst night shadows whisper out my death.
That when myself hath sealed my lips from speaking,
Each tell-tale echo with a weeping breath,
May both record my truth and true love's breaking.
You pretty flowers that smile for summer's sake,
Pull in your heads before my wat'ry eyes
Do turn the meadows to a standing lake,
By whose untimely floods your glory dies!
For lo, mine heart, resolved to moistening air,
Feedeth mine eyes which double tear for tear.

[Pg 132]

V

His shadow to Narcissus well presented,
How fair he was by such attractive love!
So if thou would'st thyself thy beauty prove,
Vulgar breath-mirrors might have well contented,
And to their prayers eternally consented,
Oaths, vows and sighs, if they believe might move;
But more thou forc'st, making my pen approve
Thy praise to all, least any had dissented.
When this hath wrought, thou which before wert known
But unto some, of all art now required,
And thine eyes' wonders wronged, because not shown
The world, with daily orisons desired.
Thy chaste fair gifts, with learning's breath is blown,
And thus my pen hath made thy sweets admired.

[Pg 133]

VI

I am no model figure, or sign of care,
But his eternal heart's-consuming essence,
In whom grief's commentaries written are,
Drawing gross passion into pure quintessence,
Not thine eye's fire, but fire of thine eye's disdain,
Fed by neglect of my continual grieving,
Attracts the true life's spirit of my pain,
And gives it thee, which gives me no relieving.
Within thine arms sad elegies I sing;
Unto thine eyes a true heart love-torn lay I:
Thou smell'st from me the savours sorrows bring;
My tears to taste my truth to touch display I.
Lo thus each sense, dear fair one, I importune;
But being care, thou flyest me as ill fortune.

[Pg 134]

VII

But being care, thou flyest me as ill fortune;—
Care the consuming canker of the mind!
The discord that disorders sweet hearts' tune!
Th' abortive bastard of a coward mind!
The lightfoot lackey that runs post by death,
Bearing the letters which contain our end!
The busy advocate that sells his breath,
Denouncing worst to him, is most his friend!
O dear, this care no interest holds in me;
But holy care, the guardian of thy fair,
Thine honour's champion, and thy virtue's fee,
The zeal which thee from barbarous times shall bear,
This care am I; this care my life hath taken.
Dear to my soul, then leave me not forsaken!

[Pg 135]

VIII

Dear to my soul, then, leave, me not forsaken!
Fly not! My heart within thy bosom sleepeth;
Even from myself and sense I have betaken
Me unto thee for whom my spirit weepeth,
And on the shore of that salt teary sea,
Couched in a bed of unseen seeming pleasure,
Where in imaginary thoughts thy fair self lay;
But being waked, robbed of my life's best treasure,

I call the heavens, air, earth, and seas to hear
My love, my truth, and black disdained estate,
 Beating the rocks with bellowings of despair,
 Which still with plaints my words reverberate,
Sighing, "Alas, what shall become of me?"
Whilst echo cries, "What shall become of me?"

[Pg 136]

IX

Whilst echo cries, "What shall become of me?"
 And desolate, my desolations pity,
 Thou in thy beauty's carack sitt'st to see
 My tragic downfall, and my funeral ditty.
No timbrel, but my heart thou play'st upon,
 Whose strings are stretched unto the highest key;
 The diapason, love; love is the unison;
 In love my life and labours waste away.
Only regardless to the world thou leav'st me,
 Whilst slain hopes, turning from the feast of sorrow,
 Unto despair, their king, which ne'er deceives me,
 Captives my heart, whose black night hates the morrow,
And he in truth of my distressed cry
Plants me a weeping star within mine eye.

[Pg 137]

X

Prometheus for stealing living fire
 From heaven's king, was judged eternal death;
 In self-same flame with unrelenting ire
 Bound fast to Caucasus' low foot beneath.
So I, for stealing living beauty's fire
 Into my verse that it may always live,
 And change his forms to shapes of my desire,
 Thou beauty's queen, self sentence like dost give.
Bound to thy feet in chains of life I lie;
 For to thine eyes I never dare aspire;
 And in thy beauty's brightness do I fry,
 As poor Prometheus in the scalding fire;
Which tears maintain as oil the lamp revives;
Only my succour in thy favour lies.

[Pg 138]

THE SIXTH DECADE

I

One sun unto my life's day gives true light.
 One moon dissolves my stormy night of woes.
 One star my fate and happy fortune shows.
One saint I serve, one shrine with vows I dight.
One sun transfix'd hath burnt my heart outright,
 One moon opposed my love in darkness throws.
 One star hath bid my thoughts my wrongs disclose.
Saints scorn poor swains, shrines do my vows no right.
 Yet if my love be found a holy fire,
Pure, unstained, without idolatry,
 And she nathless in hate of my desire,
Lives to repose her in my misery,
 My sun, my moon, my star, my saint, my shrine,
 Mine be the torment but the guilt be thine!

[Pg 139]

II

To live in hell, and heaven to behold;
 To welcome life, and die a living death;
 To sweat with heat, and yet be freezing cold;
 To grasp at stars, and lie the earth beneath;
To treat a maze that never shall have end;
 To burn in sighs, and starve in daily tears;
 To climb a hill, and never to descend;
 Giants to kill, and quake at childish fears;
To pine for food, and watch th' Hesperian tree;
 To thirst for drink, and nectar still to draw;
 To live accurs'd whom men hold blest to be,

And weep those wrongs which never creature saw:
If this be love, if love in these be founded,
My heart is love, for these in it are grounded.

[Pg 140]

III

A carver, having loved too long in vain,
Hewed out the portraiture of Venus' son
In marble rock, upon the which did rain
Small drizzling drops, that from a fount did run:
Imagining the drops would either wear
His fury out, or quench his living flame;
But when he saw it bootless did appear,
He swore the water did augment the same.
So I, that seek in verse to carve thee out,
Hoping thy beauty will my flame allay,
Viewing my verse and poems all throughout,
Find my will rather to my love obey,
That with the carver I my work do blame,
Finding it still th' augments of my flame.

[Pg 141]

IV

Astronomers the heavens do divide
Into eight houses, where the god remains;
All which in thy perfections do abide.
For in thy feet, the queen of silence reigns;
About thy waist Jove's messenger doth dwell,
Inchanting me as I thereat admire;
And on thy dugs the queen of love doth tell
Her godhead's power in scrolls of my desire;
Thy beauty is the world's eternal sun;
Thy favours force a coward's heart to dare,
And in thy hairs Jove and his riches won.
Thy frowns hold Saturn; thine's the fixèd stars.
Pardon me then, divine, to love thee well,
Since thou art heaven, and I in heaven would dwell!

[Pg 142]

V

Weary of love, my thoughts of love complained,
Till reason told them there was no such power,
And bade me view fair beauty's richest flower,
To see if there a naked boy remained.
Dear, to thine eyes, eyes that my soul hath pained,
Thoughts turned them back in that unhappy hour
To see if love kept there his royal bower,
For if not there, then no place him contained.
There was he not, nor boy, nor golden bow;
Yet as thou turned thy chaste fair eye aside,
A flame of fire did from thine eyelids go,
Which burnt my heart through my sore wounded side;
Then with a sigh, reason made thoughts to cry,
"There is no god of love, save that thine eye!"

[Pg 143]

VI

Forgive me, dear, for thundering on thy name;
Sure 'tis thyself that shows my love distress.
For fire exhaled in freezing clouds possessed,
Warring for way, makes all the heavens exclaim.
Thy beauty so, the brightest living flame,
Wrapt in my cloudy heart, by winter prest,
Scorning to dwell within so base a nest,
Thunders in me thy everlasting flame.
O that my heart might still contain that fire!
Or that the fire would always light my heart!
Then should'st thou not disdain my true desire,
Or think I wronged thee to reveal to my smart;
For as the fire through freezing clouds doth break,
So not myself but thou in me would'st speak.

[Pg 144]

VII

My heart mine eye accuseth of his death,
 Saying his wanton sight bred his unrest;
 Mine eye affirms my heart's unconstant faith
 Hath been his bane, and all his joys repressed.
 My heart avows mine eye let in the fire,
 Which burns him with an everliving light.
 Mine eye replies my greedy heart's desire
 Let in those floods, which drown him day and night.
 Thus wars my heart which reason doth maintain,
 And calls my eye to combat if he dare,
 The whilst my soul impatient of disdain,
 Wrings from his bondage unto death more near;
 Save that my love still holdeth him in hand;
 A kingdom thus divided cannot stand!

[Pg 145]

VIII

Unhappy day, unhappy month and season,
 When first proud love, my joys away adjourning,
 Poured into mine eye to her eye turning
 A deadly juice, unto my green thought's reason.
 Prisoner I am unto the eye I gaze on;
 Eternally my love's flame is in burning;
 A mortal shaft still wounds me in my mourning;
 Thus prisoned, burnt and slain, the spirit, soul and reason.
 What tides me then since these pains which annoy me,
 In my despair are evermore increasing?
 The more I love, less is my pain's releasing;
 That cursèd be the fortune which destroys me,
 The hour, the month, the season, and the cause,
 When love first made me thrall to lovers' laws.

[Pg 146]

IX

Love hath I followed all too long, nought gaining;
 And sighed I have in vain to sweet what smarteth,
 But from his brow a fiery arrow parteth,
 Thinking that I should him resist not plaining.
 But cowardly my heart submit remaining,
 Yields to receive what shaft thy fair eye darteth.
 Well do I see thine eye my bale imparteth,
 And that save death no hope I am detaining.
 For what is he can alter fortune's sliding?
 One in his bed consumes his life away,
 Other in wars, another in the sea;
 The like effects in me have their abiding;
 For heavens avowed my fortune should be such,
 That I should die by loving far too much.

[Pg 147]

X

My God, my God, how much I love my goddess,
 Whose virtues rare, unto the heavens arise!
 My God, my God, how much I love her eyes
 One shining bright, the other full of hardness!
 My God, my God, how much I love her wisdom,
 Whose works may ravish heaven's richest maker!
 Of whose eyes' joys if I might be partaker
 Then to my soul a holy rest would come.
 My God, how much I love to hear her speak!
 Whose hands I kiss and ravished oft rekisseth,
 When she stands wotless whom so much she blesseth.
 Say then, what mind this honest love would break;
 Since her perfections pure, withouten blot,
 Makes her beloved of thee, she knoweth not?

[Pg 148]

THE SEVENTH DECADE

I

The first created held a joyous bower,
 A flowering field, the world's sole wonderment,
 High Paradise, from whence a woman's power

Enticed him to fall to endless banishment.
This on the banks of Euphrates did stand,
Till the first Mover, by his wondrous might,
Planted it in thine eyes, thy face, thy hands,
From whence the world receives his fairest light.
Thy cheeks contain choice flowers; thy eyes, two suns;
Thy hands, the fruit that no life blood can stain;
And in thy breath, that heavenly music wons,
Which, when thou speak'st, angels their voices strain.
As from the first thy sex exiled me,
So to this next let me be called by thee!

[Pg 149]

II

Fair grace of graces, muse of muses all,
Thou Paradise, thou only heaven I know!
What influence hath bred my hateful woe,
That I from thee and them am forced to fall?
Thou falled from me, from thee I never shall,
Although my fortunes thou hast brought so low;
Yet shall my faith and service with thee go,
For live I do, on heaven and thee to call.
Banish'd all grace, no graces with me dwell;
Compelled to muse, my muses from me fly;
Excluded heaven, what can remain but hell?
Exiled from paradise, in hate I lie,
Cursing my stars; albeit I find it true,
I lost all these when I lost love and you.

[Pg 150]

III

What viewed I, dear, when I thine eyes beheld?
Love in his glory? No, him Thyrsis saw,
And stood the boy, whilst he his darts did draw,
Whose painted pride to baser swains he telled.
Saw I two suns? That sight is seen but seld.
Yet can their brood that teach the holy law
Gaze on their beams, and dread them not a straw,
Where princely looks are by their eyes repelled.
What saw I then? Doubtless it was Amen,
Armed with strong thunder and a lightning's flame,
Who bridegroom like with power was riding then,
Meaning that none should see him when he came.
Yet did I gaze; and thereby caught the wound
Which burns my heart and keeps my body sound.

[Pg 151]

IV

When tedious much and over weary long,
Cruel disdain reflecting from her brow,
Hath been the cause that I endured such wrong
And rest thus discontent and weary now.
Yet when posterity in time to come,
Shall find th' uncanceled tenour of her vow,
And her disdain be then confessed of some,
How much unkind and long, I find it now,
O yet even then—though then will be too late
To comfort me; dead, many a day, ere then—
They shall confess I did not force her heart;
And time shall make it known to other men
That ne'er had her disdain made me despair,
Had she not been so excellently fair.

[Pg 152]

V

Had she not been so excellently fair,
My muse had never mourned in lines of woe;
But I did too inestimable weigh her,
And that's the cause I now lament me so.
Yet not for her contempt do I complain me:
Complaints may ease the mind, but that is all;
Therefore though she too constantly disdain me,
I can but sigh and grieve, and so I shall.

Yet grieve I not because I must grieve ever;
And yet, alas, waste tears away, in vain;
I am resolvèd truly to persèver,
Though she persisteth in her old disdain.
But that which grieves me most is that I see
Those which most fair, the most unkindest be.

[Pg 153]

VI

Thus long imposed to everlasting plaining,
Divinely constant to the worthiest fair,
And movèd by eternally disdainning,
Aye to persèver in unkind despair:
Because now silence wearily confined
In tedious dying and a dumb restraint,
Breaks forth in tears from mine unable mind
To ease her passion by a poor complaint;
O do not therefore to thyself suggest
That I can grieve to have immured so long
Upon the matter of mine own unrest;
Such grief is not the tenour of my song,
That 'bide so zealously so bad a wrong.
My grief is this; unless I speak and plain me,
Thou wilt persèver ever to disdain me.

[Pg 154]

VII

Thou wilt persèver ever to disdain me;
And I shall then die, when thou will repent it.
O do not therefore from complaint restrain me,
And take my life from me, to me that lent it!
For whilst these accents, weepingly exprest
In humble lines of reverentest zeal,
Have issue to complaint from mine unrest,
They but thy beauty's wonder shall reveal;
And though the grieved muse of some other lover,
Whose less devotions knew but woes like mine,
Would rather seek occasion to discover
How little pitiful and how much unkind,
They other not so worthy beauties find.
O, I not so! but seek with humble prayer,
Means how to move th' unmercifullest fair.

[Pg 155]

VIII

As draws the golden meteor of the day
Exhaled matter from the ground to heaven,
And by his secret nature, there to stay
The thing fast held, and yet of hold bereaven;
So by th' attractive excellence and might,
Born to the power of thy transparent eyes,
Drawn from myself, ravished with thy delight,
Whose dumb conceits divinely sirenise,
Lo, in suspense of fear and hope upholden,
Diversely poised with passions that pain me,
No resolution dares my thoughts embolden,
Since 'tis not I, but thou that dost sustain me.
O if there's none but thou can work my woe,
Wilt thou be still unkind and kill me so?

[Pg 156]

IX

Wilt thou be still unkind and kill me so,
Whose humbled vows with sorrowful appeal
Do still persist, and did so long ago
Intreat for pity with so pure a zeal?
Suffice the world shall, for the world can say
How much thy power hath power, and what it can;
Never was victor-hand yet moved to slay
The rendered captive, or the yielding man.
Then, O, why should thy woman-thought impose
Death and disdain on him that yields his breath,
To free his soul from discontent and woes,

And humble sacrifice to a certain death?
O since the world knows what the power can do,
What were't for thee to save and love me too?

[Pg 157]

X

I meet not mine by others' discontent,
For none compares with me in true devotion;
Yet though my tears and sighs to her be spent,
Her cruel heart disdains what they do motion.
Yet though persisting in eternal hate,
To aggravate the cause of my complaining,
Her fury ne'er confineth with a date,
I will not cease to love, for her disdain.
Such puny thoughts of unresolvèd ground,
Whose inaudacity dares but base conceit,
In me and my love never shall be found.
Those coward thoughts unworthy minds await.
But those that love well have not yet begun;
Persèver ever and have never done!

[Pg 158]

THE EIGHTH DECADE

I

Persèver ever and have never done,
You weeping accent of my weary song!
O do not you eternal passions shun,
But be you true and everlasting long!
Say that she doth requite you with disdain;
Yet fortified with hope, endure your fortune;
Though cruel now she will be kind again;
Such haps as those, such loves as yours importune.
Though she protests the faithfullest severity
Inexcrable beauty is inflicting,
Kindness in time will pity your sincerity,
Though now it be your fortune's interdicting.
For some can say, whose loves have known like passion,
"Women are kind by kind, and coy for fashion."

[Pg 159]

II

Give period to my matter of complaining,
Fair wonder of our time's admiring eye,
And entertain no more thy long disdain,
Or give me leave at last that I may die.
For who can live, perpetually secluded
From death to life, that loathes her discontent?
Lest by some hope seducively deluded,
Such thoughts aspire to fortunate event;
But I that now have drawn mal-pleasant breath
Under the burden of thy cruel hate,
O, I must long and linger after death,
And yet I dare not give my life her date;
For if I die and thou repent t' have slain me,
'Twill grieve me more than if thou didst disdain me.

[Pg 160]

III

'Twill grieve me more than if thou didst disdain me,
That I should die; and thou, because I die so.
And yet to die, it should not know to pain me,
If cruel beauty were content to bid so.
Death to my life, life to my long despair
Prolonged by her, given to my love and days,
Are means to tell how truly she is fair,
And I can die to testify her praise.
Yet not to die, though fairness me despiseth,
Is cause why in complaint I thus persèver;
Though death me and my love inparadiseth,
By interdicting me from her for ever.
I do not grieve that I am forced to die,
But die to think upon the reason why.

My tears are true. Though others be divine,
 And sing of wars and Troy's new rising frame,
 Meeting heroic feet in every line,
 That tread high measures in the scene of fame,
 And I, though disaccustoming my muse,
 And sing but low songs in an humble vein,
 May one day raise my style as others use,
 And turn Elizon to a higher strain.
 When re-intombing from oblivious ages
 In better stanzas her surviving wonder,
 I may opposed against the monster rage
 That part desert and excellence asunder;
 That she though coy may yet survive to see,
 Her beauty's wonder lives again in me.

Conclusion of the whole

Sometimes in verse I praised, sometimes in verse sighed;
 No more shall pen with love and beauty mell,
 But to my heart alone my heart shall tell
 How unseen flames do burn it day and night,
 Lest flames give light, light bring my love to sight,
 And my love prove my folly to excel.
 Wherefore my love burns like the fire of hell,
 Wherein is fire and yet there is no light;
 For if one never loved like me, then why
 Skill-less blames he the thing he doth not know?
 And he that so hath loved should favour show,
 For he hath been a fool as well as I.
 Thus shall henceforth more pain, more folly have;
 And folly past, may justly pardon crave.

**A CALCULATION UPON THE BIRTH OF AN HONOURABLE LADY'S DAUGHTER, BORN
 IN THE YEAR 1588 AND ON A FRIDAY**

Fair by inheritance, whom born we see
 Both in the wondrous year and on the day
 Wherein the fairest planet beareth sway,
 The heavens to thee this fortune doth decree!
 Thou of a world of hearts in time shall be
 A monarch great, and with one beauty's ray
 So many hosts of hearts thy face shall slay,
 As all the rest for love shall yield to thee,
 But even as Alexander when he knew
 His father's conquests wept, lest he should leave
 No kingdom unto him for to subdue:
 So shall thy mother thee of praise bereave;
 So many hearts already she hath slain,
 As few behind to conquer shall remain.

**SONNETS FROM THE MANUSCRIPT EDITION, NOT FOUND IN THAT OF
 1594**

Of the sudden surprising of his heart, and how unawares he was caught

Delight in your bright eyes my death did breed,
 As light and glittering weapons babes allure
 To play with fire and sword, and so procure
 Then to be burnt and hurt ere they take heed,
 Thy beauty so hath made me burn and bleed;
 Yet shall my ashes and my blood assure
 Thy beauty's fame forever to endure;
 For thy fame's life from my death doth proceed;
 Because my heart to ashes burnèd giveth
 Life to thy fame, thou right a phoenix art,
 And like a pelican thy beauty liveth
 By sucking blood out of my breast and heart.

Lo why with wonder we may thee compare
Unto the pelican and phoenix rare!

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II

An exhortation to the reader to come and see his mistress's beauty

Eyes curious to behold what nature can create,
Come see, come see, and write what wonder you do see,
Causing by true report our next posterity
Curse fortune for that they were born too late!
Come then and come ye all, come soon lest that
The time should be too short and men too few should be;
For all be few to write her least part's history,
Though they should ever write and never write but that.
Millions look on her eyes, millions think on her wit,
Millions speak of her, millions write of her hand.
The whole eye on the lip I do not understand;
Millions too few to praise but some one part of it,
As either of her eye or lip or hand to write,
The light or black, the taste or red, the soft or white.

[Pg 166]

III

Of the excellency of his lady's voice

Lady of ladies, the delight alone
For which to heaven earth doth no envy bear;
Seeing and hearing thee, we see and hear
Such voice, such light, as never sung nor shone.
The want of heaven I grant yet we may moan,
Not for the pleasure of the angels there,
As though in face or voice they like thee were,
But that they many be, and thou but one.
The basest notes which from thy voice proceed,
The treble of the angels do exceed,
So that I fear their choir to beautify,
Lest thou to some in heaven shall sing and shine.
Lo, when I hear thee sing, the reason why
Sighs of my breast keep time with notes of thine!

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IV

Of her excellency both in singing and instruments

Not that thy hand is soft, is sweet, is white,
Thy lips sweet roses, breast sweet lily is,
That love esteems these three the chiefest bliss
Which nature ever made for lips' delight;
But when these three to show their heavenly might
Such wonders do, devotion then for this
Commandeth us with humble zeal to kiss
Such things as work miracles in our sight.
A lute of senseless wood, by nature dumb,
Touched by thy hand doth speak divinely well;
And from thy lips and breast sweet tunes do come
To my dead heart, the which new life do give.
Of greater wonders heard we never tell
Than for the dumb to speak, the dead to live.

[Pg 168]

V

Of the envy others bear to his lady for the former perfections

When beauty to the world vouchsafes this bliss,
To show the one whose other there is not,
The whitest skins red blushing shame doth blot,
And in the reddest cheeks pale envy is.
The fair and foul come thus alike by this;
For when the sun hath our horizon got,
Venus herself doth shine no more, God wot,
Than the least star that takes the light from his.
The poor in beauty thus content remain
To see their jealous cause revenged in thee,

And their fair foes afflicted with like pain.
Lo, the clear proof of thy divinity;
For unto God is only due this praise
The highest to pluck down, the low to raise!

[Pg 169]

VI

To his mistress, upon occasion of a Petrarch he gave her, showing her the reason why the Italian commenters dissent so much in the exposition thereof

Miracle of the world! I never will deny
That former poets praise the beauty of their days;
But all those beauties were but figures of thy praise,
And all those poets did of thee but prophesy.
Thy coming to the world hath taught us to descry
What Petrarch's Laura meant, for truth the lip bewrays.
Lo, why th' Italians, yet which never saw thy rays,
To find out Petrarch's sense such forged glosses try!
The beauties which he in a veil enclosed beheld
But revelations were within his surest heart
By which in parables thy coming he foretold;
His songs were hymns of thee, which only now before
Thy image should be sung; for thou that goddess art
Which only we without idolatry adore.

[Pg 170]

VII

Complaint of misfortune in love only

Now, now I love indeed, and suffer more
In one day now then I did in a year;
Great flames they be which but small sparkles were,
And wounded now, I was but pricked before.
No marvel then, though more than heretofore
I weep and sigh; how can great wounds be there
Where moisture runs not out? and ever, where
The fire is great, of smoke there must be store.
My heart was hitherto but like green wood,
Which must be dried before it will burn bright;
My former love served but my heart to dry;
Now Cupid for his fire doth find it good:
For now it burneth clear, and shall give light
For all the world your beauty to espy.

[Pg 171]

VIII

Complaint of his lady's melancholiness

If that one care had our two hearts possessed,
Or you once (felt) what I long sufferèd,
Then should thy heart accuse in my heart's stead
The rigour of itself for mine unrest.
Then should thine arm upon my shoulder rest,
And weight of grief sway down thy troubled head;
Then should thy tears upon my sheet be shed,
And then thy heart should pant upon my breast.
But when that other cares thy heart do seize,
Alas, what succour gain I then by this,
But double grief for thine and mine unease?
Yet when thou see'st thy hurts to wound my heart,
And so art taught by me what pity is,
Perhaps thy heart will learn to feel my smart.

[Pg 172]

IX

Dear, though from me your gracious looks depart,
And of that comfort do myself bereave,
Which both I did deserve and did receive,
Triumph not over much in this my smart.
Nay, rather they which now enjoy thy heart
For fear just cause of mourning should conceive,
Lest thou inconstant shouldst their trust deceive
Which like unto the weather changing art.
For in foul weather birds sing often will

In hope of fair, and in fair time will cease,
For fear fair time should not continue still;
So they may mourn which have thy heart possessed
For fear of change, and hope of change may ease
Their hearts whom grief of change doth now molest.

[Pg 173]

X

If ever any justly might complain
Of unrequited service, it is I;
Change is the thanks I have for loyalty,
And only her reward is her disdain;
So as just spite did almost me constrain,
Through torment her due praises to deny,
For he which vexèd is with injury
By speaking ill doth ease his heart of pain.
But what, shall torture make me wrong her name?
No, no, a pris'ner constant thinks it shame,
Though he (were) racked his first truth to gainsay.
Her true given praise my first confession is;
Though her disdain do rack me night and day,
This I confessed, and will deny in this.

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FOOTNOTES:

[A] Richard Smith was the publisher of the 1594 edition of the *Diana*.

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