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Author: Nathaniel Ingelo

Author: George Mackenzie

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The Augustan Reprint Society

Prefaces to Four Seventeenth-Century Romances

Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill, Preface to *Parthenissa* (1655)
Sir George Mackenzie, "Apologie for Romances,"
prefixed to *Aretina, the Serious Romance* (1660)
Nathaniel Ingelo, Preface to *Bentivolio and Urania* (1660)
Robert Boyle, Preface to *Theodora and Didymus* (1687)

With an Introduction by
Charles Davies

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INTRODUCTION

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The four *Prefaces* here reprinted occupy a place in the long argument about Romance somewhat apart from the developments which preceded the emergence of the novel proper in eighteenth-century England. The secret antinomy in their authors with regard to the art they are practising is as clearly revealed by the compulsion to give Romance a new and, above all, a serious purpose as by the embarrassing discovery of so much that was otiose in the already existing forms. At heart they shared with Arnauld the opinion he expressed of Scudéry's *Clelie* in his famous letter to Perrault. "Que ce soit, si vous voulez, le plus beau de tous les Romans; mais enfin c'est un Roman. C'est tout dire."

A further insight into their ideas and purposes is gained if one remembers the part they played (Mackenzie and Robert Boyle especially) in the experimental crisis through which seventeenth-century rhetoric was passing. All four works were written in self-imposed styles and were attempts to discover the nature of a common measure for the narrative prose their age demanded. Romance à la Scudéry was never indigenous in English soil. Even Roger Boyle had never succumbed wholeheartedly to its sophistications which explains why his book was so lamely sponsored by diffidence, dubiety and want of will. His language could never compass the idiom in its entirety nor could "the matchless Orinda" (who was Boyle's friend) command as zealous or intelligent a following as that which crowded the Hôtel de Rambouillet. "*Parthenissa* is now my company," writes Dorothy Osborne, "... I am not very much taken with it though he makes his people say fine handsome things to one another, yet they are not easy and Naïve like the french." A long tradition, culminating in the *Poetics* of Scaliger, had established the kind of "truth" both poet and romancer were in search of and contrived a set of *schema* amenable to variations by even a mediocre talent. Broghill's plan pays due attention to suspense and elaboration, without which, as Ménage said, "the end would arrive too soon." He, like others, resorted to history for the balance of the parts and the establishment of *vraisemblance* in terms of what would address itself to the reader as representative and probable. These were now the commonplaces of the romancer's art. In his *Preface to Birinthea* (1664) John Bulteel sets his face against those who "can relish no Romance that is not forced with Extravagant Impossibilities." The tale, however told, should be limited to the scope of "that predominant faculty of the Soul, the Judgement." And in 1665, John Crowne, amusingly enough in the *Preface to Pandion and Amphigenia* had maintained, with an eye to character, that "my endeavours have been rather to delineate humors and affections, than to affect humorous delineations." Whole volumes filled with "Phlegmatic conceits" and "such empty inflations, inherit the Office of a foot-ball." But alas! while Romance endeavoured to bring the heroic into stricter, more reasonable consonance with its ordinary, realistic counterpart of everyday, the extension of range brought about by all the means of emotional contagion produced none but amorphous results. It was Madame de la Fayette who finally achieved the expression of the personal will in a universe of privately conflicting motives, but only by the rigorous exclusion of those elements, literary and historical, which had confused Roger Boyle.

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The stylistic aspect of the Romancer's problem is well illustrated by the *Apologie* prefaced to his *Aretina* (1660) by Sir George Mackenzie. This is the critical exercise of a young man in search of a style. Sidney, Scudéry, Barkley and Broghill are his saints and patrons if only because they had shown a distaste for "things impracticable ... above the reach of man's power" such as filled the pages of *Amadis de Gaulle*. But *serious* Romance (and *Aretina* is

that) can “strain the christal streams of vertue from the puddle of interest”; it allures “lazy Ladies and luxurious Gallants ... to spend in their Chambers some hours, which else, the one would consecrate to the bed and the other to the Bordell.” The one real contribution he makes, however, is in his insistence on avoiding “the style which because of its soaring pitch was inimitable.” In his own writing there is much that savours of copy-book conceits but a style “flourished with similies,” such as “Barrasters” use, is by no means to be condemned. Mackenzie seems to be in two minds, pulled this way and that in response to two guiding notions and allegiances. In his *Idea Eloquentiae Forensis Hodierna* (1681) he maintains that “Eloquence is not only allowable, but necessary ... where Passions are to be excited.” To “the profluvium Asiaticum” of the Codex and the (so-called) novels of the lawyers, he opposes the narrowness of “the short or Laconick Way” which was the only excellence of judges. In his condemnation of bombastic periphrasis and the “carminated” hyperbole of Browne and Charlton, he would have included some, at least, of the pretty effects so carefully studied by “a ridiculous caball of Ladies at Paris.” Nevertheless the one style he recommends is that “where the cadence is sweet, and the epithets well adapted ... and this is that style which is used at Court, and is patterned to us by eloquent Scuderie.” He never attained to that kind of writing himself in *Aretina* but the new style, for all that, was presently to be succinctly catalogued in all its essentials by the members of the Royal Society and was to provide the staple of the English novel when it ventured outside “the circumference of wit” and attained popularity in Defoe and Fielding.

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Ingelo takes us at once into the narrower realm of traditional commonplace. “The whole Rhapsody of Homer’s Iliads and Odysseis,” he quotes, “beginning and End, is but a woman.” Even the chastest delights are dangerous to the “Dignity of Reasonable Souls.” Like Ascham, he castigates all those whose “chief design is to put fleshly Lust into long Stories” and laments “the Excellent Wits thrown away in writing great stories of Nothing.” There is nothing new in this or in his effort “to lay the design of Romance deeper than the Shallows of Fancy,” though to do it, he inured himself and his readers “to ingenious schemes of Discourse—Apologues, Parables and such-like modes of signification,” the object being to keep in mind the schematic range of moral values that recommended itself to “little capacities.” There is in him more than a hint of Spenser’s allegory and a curious but uninspired anticipation of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. In the *Preface* to the second part (Books 5 and 6 in the second edition, 1669) he admits he has been prolix and “shorter in the Historical Narrations.” The sisters Theonoe and Irene are concerned to give a better account of their Time to Almighty God than mere narrative can comprehend and Ingelo’s task is to turn men’s minds from the gross errors of the Atheists, the Epicureans, the Scepticks and all those who magnify “the Degeneracy of Humane Nature.” *C’est tout dire*. The gravamen of his charge against the degenerate beasts of *Theriagene* and “the Reproach of Many Falshoods” in his concluding book, of the *Elenchus*, is essentially a recognition that his method is inadequate to the demands he has made on it. The arguments of Hobbes could only be countered by a morality that adopted the subtle calculus of a Descartes and revealed the passions for what they are in the wide orbit and common perspectives of human nature.

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Robert Boyle, author of Boyle’s Law, Fellow of the Royal Society, and like Roger Boyle, a son of the great Earl of Cork, makes an odd appearance in this company. His *Preface to Theodora and Didymus* (1687) has psychological rather than historical significance. He, too, considered gravely the claims of history against the rival attractions of fiction and imagination but his remarks have the merit of focussing a problem which was of immediate importance to him and called for nicety and skill in finding a solution. The story he was contriving into a “voluminous romance” was one of tragic import. There is nothing that savours of Cyrus or Oroondates. “True examples,” he maintains, “do arm and fortify the Mind far more efficaciously than Imaginary or Fictitious ones can do.” Yet how could this effect be realized when the scanty materials provided were insufficient to give body to his book? Besides, the nature of the theme forbade those “Imbellishments which, in other themes, are wont to supply the deficiencies of the matter.” Boyle is not won over by the siren voices which might have urged him to give imagination full rein. His integrity makes such a course impossible, but he fully realizes the nature of his quandary. Theodora’s sad choice between death or ravishment and her request to Didymus that he should kill her with his sword rather than let her be dishonoured, opened a new vein for the sentimental school and set a problem in speculative ethics of which Richardson, with his nicely adjusted views of heavenly rather than poetic justice, would exploit with resounding success in *Clarissa Harlowe*. There is a hint, even in Boyle, that these vicarious pleasures are concocted to a recipe that is intended to please the guests at the feast rather than the cooks who prepared it. Defoe’s principle that all should be left to “the gust and palate of the reader” receives perhaps its first expression here and helped create a sense of the relativity of all values without which, in every age, the novelist would find it difficult to pursue his avocations or stimulate his readers’ interest.

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Charles Davies

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NOTE

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PARTHENISSA,
A
ROMANCE.

In Four Parts.

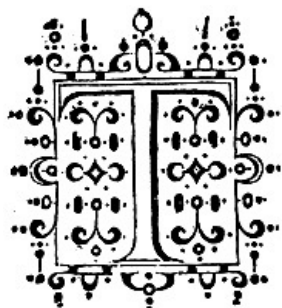
Dedicated to the Lady
NORTHUMBERLAND,
And the Lady
SUNDERLAND.

The First Part.

LONDON,
Printed for *Humphrey Moseley* and are to be sold at his
Shop at the sign of the Prince's Arms in S^t
Paul's Church-yard. 1655.



THE PREFACE.



hough a Preface before a booke of this Nature is seldome writt, and seldomer Read, yet I could not herein Confine my selfe unto the Examples of others, but have rather elected to decline a Generall Practice, to follow my owne Inclination, than observe one, to immitate the inclination of others.

Amongst my many Faults, I know none which had a lesse Disputed Assendent over me, then a Detestation to Readeing and Studdy, in which vast unhappinesse I continued 'till I went to see the VWorld, and makeing some Residence in France, I assotiated my selfe with Persons of my owne Age, where I soone found, that he who was Ignorant of the Romances of these Times, was as fitt an Object for VVonder, as a Phylosopher would be, who had never heard of Aristotle, or a Methematician of Euclyd. This inforc't me to reade, Necessity performing what should have sprung from a handsomer Principle. In the Perusall of those Bookes, I mett with the names, & some of the Actions, of those Hero's, whome I had heard off, in the Scoole; This gave me a passionate desire to seperate the Truth from the Fixion, in the effecting whereof, I became as much a Freind to readeing, as I had bin an Enemy to it. This experiment I esteem'd an ingratitude to Conceale; & I have cause to beleieve since Romances Acted a Cure upom me, thy cannot

fayle of doing the Like upon any other; & by the knowledge I haue of my selfe & according to a Proportionate Degree of operation, much more upon Any other, then they have done upon me.

All the Readers of Parthenissa may wonder at my makeing of Spartacus and Perolla contemporaries, & that Artabbanes & Spartacus should be the same Person &c. But I hope they will noe Longer doe so, when I Minde them, that I write a Romance, not a History, and that therefore though all I Relate be not the Truth, yet if a Part be, I performe more then what the Title of my Booke does confyne me to. The Latter of these they will finde I doe, in the warre of Spartacus; In the warre betweene Rome and Carthage called the second Punick warre; In the warre betweene the Romans, and the Parthians, and in the warre termed the Metrydaticke; In the Relations whereof I have punctually followed those Authors, who have most celebratedly bestowd the History of those Times to Posterrity, and where I have found any contradictions (as in most Historyes I have found some) I have gon according to the seeming'st Truth. Only in the second Punick warre, I have followed exactly Polibius, & the Excellent Sir VValter Rawly in who's Generall History of the VWorld, I finde more Harmony then ever I did in any perticuler History, of any Part of it. But to Evidence Chronologie is not essentiall in Romances, Virgill (who writes a Romance in Numbers, & who is as Famous now, as he was in Augustus Times) makes Æneas and Dido Lovers, when according to most Chronologers the Troian Preceeded her, at lest two Centuries and a Halfe of Yeares; The Former Living in the Yeare of the VWorld 2771; and the Latter in the Yeare of the VWorld 3058, or as Alsted an Excellent Modern Chronologer will haue it, in the Yeare 3077. I Instance this for my Iustification, or at least to evidence I Err by a Famous and Authentique Example. Neither doe I thinke but such a Fault may be Pardonable, when by it I Present the Reader with two such signall, and True Historyes, as that of Hanniball, and that of Spartacus, which doe both contayne things worthy the Perusall, especially the Latter, which Past ages cannot Parrallell, neither doe I beleive the Future will. The Reuolt of Matho & Spendius from the Carthaginians in Antient Times, and of Massaniello from the King of Spayne in the Present, though they are Admirable Actions, yet are rather Foyles, then Paralels to Spartacus'es, who from a private Slaue, after the winning of many a Battell brought the Empire of Rome to the Stake in One, in which had he had successe, Pompey might have Lost the Name of The Great, or else have had a better Title to it, then he Deriu'd from his Asian or Priattike Victories.

I shall not here tell you in what Places I have intrench't upon, or borrowed of Truth, since that might silence a Curiosity, the raising wherof is one of my cheefest ends in writeing this Booke. Neither shall I here endeavour to Apologize for Romances, for though I thinke I could say something for them, yet I am certaine I can say more against them, & so much, that had I bin of the same Minde when this Romance was first Designed, as I am now of, at the finishing of the Fourth Tome, I had never begun the First; And if I should continue the two remaineing Last Tomes, it shalbe as a Penance for having writt the foure First. Yet I may say that this way of writing Romances is lesse ill, than any I have yet seene Originally in our Language; for all that have bin presented to the VWorld First in English have bin Purely Fabulous; This contayning much of Truth 'tis like Ore in which the Refyner will have Drosse, and Mettle, and indeede almost the best Historians, differ herein, not in the Quallity, but the Quantity; at least as to the causes & retayles of VVars, sometimes even in the very events; Though many Historyans, write the same History, yet they write not the same things; now it being impossible that there should be but one Truth, 'tis as impossible that those Disagreeing writers should all write that Truth; which cleerely evinces, that Historyes are for the most Part but mixt Romances, and yet the Pure Romance Part, may be as Instructiue as, if not more than, the Historicall; since 'tis not the Truth of a wise Councell, or Ingenious Designe which inuites Men to an immitation thereof, but the Rationallity and Probability of it, whither it be reall or Imaginary; had the Histories of Cæsar or Hanniball bin as meere a fable as they are the Contrary we might yet have Deriu'd from thence as much instruction as wee now can, or doe. Besides, Romances tell us what may be, whereas true Historyes tell vs what is, or has bin, now what may be, is more vncircumscrib'd than what is, or has bin, and consequently affoards a Larger Feild for instruction, and inuention.

But I feare I doe herein speake against what I have spoken, I shall therefore only add. That though a desperate Cure (for so I account of reading Romances, as an inuitation to Study) be not alwaies to be made use of, yet it is not alwaies to be declyn'd; That this Romance is the Idle Fruit of some Idle Time; That I have euident't my weaknesse in Print but to let those Freinds see the Power they have ouer me, which could inuite me to it; And in the Last place I must desire the Reader to mend the faults in the Printing, which I cannot but conclude are too many since they almost equall those in the VWriting.



ARETINA;
Or, The Serious
ROMANCE.

Written originally in English.

Part First.

EDINBURGH,
Printed for Robert Brown, at the
sign of the Sun, on the Northside
of the Street, 1660.



To all the LADIES of this NATION.

Fair Ladies,

I Do, like Moses trembling mother, leave this my first born upon the banks of envies current, exposed to the muddy and impetuous streams of merciless censure; wishing, that the fair hands of the meanest of your number would vouchsafe to dandle it in the lapp of your protection; It is but an abortive birth, posted to the world before its time, by an unavoidable emergent, and so I fear shall never prove strong, nor be able to go much abroad: Yet if it be admitted to suck the breasts of your favour, it may possibly prove strong enough (shielded by your affection) to grapple with malice, and all other opposition. Whilst my winged curiositie, pilgrimaged through all the corners of my memory; desirous to know wherewith it was fittest to adorn the porch of this mean structure; duty at last pleaded, that it was lese-majesty against your supremacy, even to doubt whether it was fit to give you the precedency. For, since the best eyed fancy, cannot observe any traite in your peerless faces, wherein nature hath not prodigalled her charmes; so perfection were imprudent, and so no perfection, if it palaced not it self in such accomplit creatures. And if there be any

Orthodox maxime in Phisognomy, we may conclude, that such excellent faces are assorted with excellent souls: Providence being like these prudent Artists, who bestow the choisest cases only upon the richest pieces. And seing one look darted from your irresistible eyes, is able to conquer, in a moment, these over whom neither reason, nor courage, could never raise their trophies; we may conclude that there is something in you, which nothing in man (who seigneurises over all other creatures, and who can pretend to nothing stronger then courage and reason) can ever equal. It is to pleasure you that wit is studied, and were it not that ye might be pleased, certainly providence had placed wit beyond the reach of our studies: it is to sooth your humor that men school themselves in patience; and by your miraculous voice, the storms of their passions are calmed; from your beauty, cowards borrow courage, and niggards liberality; so that all these scattered colonies of vertues, which are squandred amongst men, are all originated from your example. But as it was duty, so it is prudence in me to beg your patronage; for how can the body of this Book be abissed, and sink in the gulf of scorn, if its head be handed up by such admired beauties; neither think I, that malice can be so malicious, as to along a thurst at the author, who ensconces himself behinde such sacred persons; lest the blow destined for him should wound them who targets him. I have chosen so many patronesses, to evidence that there is none of your never enough admired sex, but may lay claime to the patronage of all that drops from my pen; as also, fearing that among such a number, I should scarce finde one who would be so excessively hospitall, as to lodge in her Cabinet or Chamber such an unacknowledged Orphelin. The disappointment of my fears in this, is rather the wish, then the expectation of,

Fair Ladies,
Your most humble Servant.



An Apologie for ROMANCES.

It hath been rather the fate, then merit of Romances in all ages, to be asperst with these vices, whereof they were not only innocent, but to whose ante-doting vertues they might justly pretend: for whereas they are judged to be both the fire, and faggots, wherby Lov'd flames are both kindled and alimented; I believe verily, that there is nothing can so easily extinguish them, for as these who have at Court, seen numbers of peerless and wel deckt beauties, can hardly become enamoured of an ordinary Country-maid; So these who have seen a Philoclea, or Cleopatra, depenciled by the curious wits of Sidney, and Scuderie, will hardly be invassalled by the (to them scarce approaching) treats of these, whom this age garlands for admired beauties. Others forsooth accuse them, for robbing us of our precious time; but this reproach is ill founded; for if the Romance be abject, none will trifle away their time in reading it, except these who would mispend it however, and if they be excellent, then time is rather spent then mispent in leafing them over. There is also a third race of detractors, who condemn them as lies; but since their Authors propose them, not with an intention to deceive, they cannot properly be reputed such: And albeit they seem but fables, yet who would unkernel them, would finde budled up in them reall truthes; and as naturalists observe, these kernels are best where the shells are hardest; and these mettals are noblest, which are mudded over with most earth. But so leave such Phanaticks in the bedlame of their own fancies, who should blush to trace in these paths, which the famous Sidney, Scuderie, Barkley, and Broghill hath beaten for them, besides thousands of Ancients, and Moderns Ecclesiasticks, and Laicks, Spaniards, French, and Italians, to remunerat whose endeavours, fame hath Wreathed Garlands (to betemple their ingenious and ingenuous heads) which shall never fade whilest Learning flourishes. I shall speak nothing of that noble Romance, written by a Bishop, which the entreaty of all the Eastern Churches could never prevail with him to disown; and I am confident, that where Romances are written by excellent wits, and perused by intelligent Readers, that the judgement may pick more sound information from them, then from History, for the one teacheth us onely what was done, and the other what should be done; and whereas Romances presents to us, vertue in its holy-day robes, History presents her only to us in these ordinary, and spotted sutes which she wears whilst she is busied in her servile, and lucrative employments: and as many would be incited to vertue and generosity, by reading in Romances, how much it hath been honoured; So contrary wise, many are deterred by historical experience from being vertuous, knowing that it hath been oftner punished then acknowledged. Romances are these vessels which strain the christal streams of vertue from the puddle of interest; whereas history suffers the memory to quaff them of in their mixt impuritie; by these likewise lazy Ladies and luxurious Gallants, are allured to spend in their Chambers some

hours, which else, the one would consecrate to the Bed, and the other to the Bordell: and albeit essays be the choicest Pearls in the Jewel house of moral Philosophy, yet I ever thought that they were set off to the best advantage, and appeared with the greatest lustre, when they were laced upon a Romance; that so the curiosity might be satisfied, as well as the judgement informed, especially in this age wherein the appetit of mens judgements is become so queasie, that it can relish nothing that is not either vinegared with Satyres, or sugared with Eloquence.

I know that these who have devanced us in this employment, will as our oldest brothers in time, have a double portion of fame bestowed upon them, and no wonder, seeing they had store both of expression and invention to make choice of, and if any of us use their expressions, albeit we were only debtor to our own invention for them, yet we should be thought to plagiarize: wherefore he who writes now, should read what hath been written formerly; not to the intent that he may borrow, but least he should borrow any thing that is theirs. I perceive there have been two errors committed by the first writers of Romances: the first was, that they stuffed their Books with things impracticable, which because they were above the reach of mans power, they should never have fallen within the circle of his observation: and such was Amadis de Gaule, Palmeron de Oliva &c. The other error was in the style, which because of its soaring pitch was inimitable: and as the first hath been the fault of the first writers, so the last hath been the fault of the last writers, wherefore the famous Scuderie hath written so, as that his invention may suit well with our practice, and his style with our discourse, and especially in his Clelia, wherein he professes that he hath adapted all to the present converse of the French Nation and that is really the mould wherein all true Romances should be casten. There are some who embroider their discourse with Latin and Greek termes, thinking, like these who are charmers, that the charme loses its energie, if the words be not used in Latine. But this is as ridiculous, as if one who desires to make his face seem pleasant, should enamble it with red, blew, green, and other colours; which though they are in themselves pleasant, yet are ridiculous when placed there. And this is an university style, which favours too much its pedant, and is at best but bastard oratory, seeing the scope of all Orators is to perswade, and there can be no perswasion where the term is not understood; examples of this are Brown, Charletoun, &c. The second style, is that of moral Philosophers, where the periods are short, and the sense strong, and our experience teacheth us, that the shorter any thing be, it is the stronger: this style suits best with Preachers, whose it is to debit the grand misteries of Faith and Religion; for, seeing sentences there should be weighty, if they were either many, or long, they would burden too much the hearers. The third style, is that of Barrasters, which is flourished with similees, and where are used long winded periods; and of all others, this is the most preferable, for seeing similitude is but a harmony, this style shews that excellent harmony; and rapport, which God intended in the first Creation; and which the Philosophers of all ages have ever since admired. This Lawyers have learned from the paucitie of all humane Lawes, which makes them oft recurr to that topick, which teaches them to argument from the paritie of reason. And in this they resemble Mechanicks, who, by applying a cord, whose length they know, to any body whose length they ignore, do thereby learn its measures also. And by this way Nathan in the old Testament, and our Saviour in the new, reprimands the errors of David and the self conceated Jewes. The fourth style is where the cadence is sweet, and the epithets well adapted, without any other varnish whatsoever: and this is that style which is used at Court, and is paterned to us by eloquent Scuderie. I hear there is now a ridiculous caball of Ladies at Paris, who terme themselves the precious, and who paraphrase every thing they speak of, terming a mirrour, the conselour of beauty, and a chair, the commoditie of conversation, &c. And thus they have progressed from painting of faces to paint expressions.

As for my self, since I expect no applause, I need fear no censure; and if I satisfie not others, I shall at least satisfie my self, for it was to form to my self a style that I undertook this Piece, whose defects I hope the sober readers will pardon, since their clemency will not be oft tempted with crimes of this nature: only this I begg, that these who will not do me the favour to read the last part, will not do me the wrong to read the first part; for as the Lord Baken very well observes, our thoughts are like our years, whereof the first are alwayes the worst; and it is no wonder, for boyling youth customarily throws the scum upmost. I have concealed my name till I see how my undertaking is relished; for which reason likewise, I have sent this Piece to the world unaccompanied, as a swatch of what I intend, reserving the web, till I see how the Stuff pleases. The subject hath made this first part serious, and my inclination shall make the second pleasant.

BENTIVOLIO

AND

URANIA,
IN
FOUR BOOKES.

By *N. I. D. D.*



LONDON:
Printed by *J. G.* for RICHARD MARRIOT, and are to be
sold at his shop in Saint *Dunstans* Church-yard *Fleetstreet.*
MDCLX.

A
PREFACE
TO THE
READER,
CONCERNING
The DESIGN of this BOOK.



*I*t is justly esteemed by those which know themselves, as the onely work that is worthy of wise men, so to employ their better faculties and improve their time, that at last they may obtain an End, in which they may rejoyce eternally: After a sincere intention of this End, to prosecute it with a constant use of fit means, is the Character of a Prudent and Good man. Those which govern not their life by this Principle, do either suffer themselves to be benum'd with Idleness, or abuse the activity of their Souls in some vain employment.

The first of these two out of their great love to do nothing, can make no better wish for themselves, then that they might sleep out the other half of their time; and it is rationally to do so, if his Rule were good for any thing, who said, He values his life at a just rate, who would be content to forgoe it for a Dream.

The other make their bargain but a little better; for whilest they entertain themselves with things which correspond not with the Dignity of Reasonable Souls, instead of perfecting those rare Capacities with which their Natures are invested, by a generous endeavour to obtain that Happiness which God doth not envy us, they lessen themselves, clip the wings of their Souls, and bring them down from those degrees of Excellency which they actually enjoy, and make them degenerate into a brutish incapacity, though many times they take no notice of the weakness of their judgements: till they meet it in the miserable Consequences of their Actions.

It is not my purpose here to reckon up all the impertinencies of Mankind, which are the several instances of the forementioned folly, I would onely give a charitable notice of one, viz. the VVriting and Reading of Romances. This I put into the number, because for the most part it is verified in them what Justin Martyr said of Homers Poetry, Ἔστι γὰρ ἡ πᾶσα ῥαψωδία Ἰλιάδος τε καὶ Ὀδυσσεΐας, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος, γυνὴ, i.e. The whole Rhapsody of Homers Iliads and Odysseis, beginning and end, is but a VVoman. Yet they dote so much upon that subject, that they think with those amorous Trojans, that Helen was not onely worthy of all the labours of Homers Quill, but also of the sharp contentions of the Greek and Trojan swords.

Οὐ' νέμεσις Τρωες καὶ εὐκνημιδαὶ Ἀχαιοὶ

Τοιη δ' ἀμφι γυναικι πολυν χρονον αλγεα πασχειν: *i.e.*

A ten years VVar is no unworthy sight,
VWhen Greece and Troy for such a VWoman fight.

She was a brave Woman indeed, and it was but fit that so many Gallant men should destroy one another in the Revenge and Defence of her Adultery. But Maximus Tyrius in his 15th. Dissertation doth justly reprove the folly of their opinion, and condemn the unreasonableness of that lavish praise.

I am not ignorant that Homer wrote upon another design, then to tell so many tales of Helen and Paris, and that Horace hath said in his Commendation,

*Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chrysippo & Crantore dicit: i.e.*

He what is fair, what foul, what good, what not,
Better then Crantor and Chrysippus wrot.

*It may be so; for though Chrysippus was so great a man, that he was esteemed the onely support of the Stoick School, according to the Proverbiall speech recorded by Diogenes Laertius, Εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν Χρύσιππος, οὐκ ἄν ἦν Στοά. Yet quite contrary to the vertuous design of prudent Socrates, he spoil'd the Doctrine of good manners, and unwisely changed the substantiall precepts of a morall life for the uselesse subtilties of nice disputation. Or what if Crantor, whom he yokes with him in the disparagement, made no great proficiency either by Plato, to whose School he belonged, or Homer himself, who was his delight? For all this fair verdict, which Horace hath passed in favour of his Brother Poet, the Morall Vertues, which so highly concern the felicity of the World, ought to be discours'd in another manner then he useth; for he, as it may be said also of other Romancers, hath made the fabulous rind so thick, that few can see through it into the usefull sense. I do not deny what Plutarch saies, that his Verses were not written onely for pleasure, ἀλλὰ γὰρ βαθύτερός ἐστι τοὺς ἐνκεκρυμμένους τοὺς ἐπεσι, *i.e.* but that a deeper meaning is hid under his Poems; but he hath sunk it so deep, that very few can come at it. And some of those who applaud him for a Philosopher, confesse that such onely can make a gain of him, that have already attain'd a mature judgement by long study; that is, such may possibly learn of him, who are able to teach him: But he is so unfit for others, that Plato desired they might not see him, ἵνα μὴ μύθους οἰησοῦντο γράφειν τοῦ Ἡρώα, *i.e.* for fear they should think that the Hero wrote fables, which he had good reason to expect upon the perusal.*

Besides this, as many others do, he hath so form'd the representations of Vertue and Vice, that it is hard to say, which is commended and which reprov'd; whil'st the Gods are frequently brought in practising Immoralities, he doth at least equall Vice to Vertue, and nourish that which he should eradicate. For, why should men endeavour to be better then their Gods? So he in the Comedy made the Adultery of Jupiter an apology for his lust.

—Et quia consimilem luserat
Jam olim ille ludum———
Ego homuncio hoc non facerem: *Terent. Eunuch.*

By these and such like instances the Greek Fathers did convince the Heathens of the imperfection of their best Authors. So one may perceive in some Romances of a later date, that the pictures of Heroes, which they have drawn far exact patterns of the most rais'd vertue are often blotted with notorious defects, as Impatience, Revenge, and the like.

But this sort of Books is most to be blamed, because for the greater part, as I said before, their chief Design is to put fleshly Lust into long stories, and sometimes not without very unhandsome mixtures, tending onely to the service of brutish Concupiscence, the nourishment of dishonorable affections, and by exciting in the Readers muddy fancies, to indispose them for their attendance upon God by their better part. For some such reason, I suppose, the great Sidney before his death charg'd his friend Sir Fulk Grevill, who had the onely Copy of his Arcadia, that he should never permit it to be made publick.

The other pieces, which fill up the intervalls of the story, and grace it with pleasing varieties, are commonly frivolous devices of wit in some contemptible matter, and serve but to some such slight purpose, as doth the writing of Verses in the form of an Egge or Hatchet, where the measures of words and sense are constrain'd to suite with the odde proportions of such figures. These are fine rarities of no use, the intertexture of the by-accidents being as triviall as the principall Design.

'Tis true, some of these Authors written in divers Languages, are applauded for the Elegancy of each particular Tongue, and are here and there interspers'd with good Sentences: but they are so deeply infected with noisome words, immodest Tales and Discourses, which do fatally corrupt the manners of Youth, that I cannot but assent to the Opinion of many wise men, who judge them, for all that, well worthy of the fire. Neither do I think it improper to use the words, which the old Sages of Troy silently mutter'd, when they perceived the dangers which attended the beauty of Helen, which the young men extoll'd as equall to that of the heavenly Goddesses.

Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ὧς τοίηπερ ἔους' ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω
μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσσι τ' ὀπίσω πῆμα λίποιτο, *i.e.*

But though She's such, let her return, and make
An end of what we suffer for her sake.

I could easily name them, but that Labour is needless to such as know books: and to those which do not, I ought not, by making a Catalogue, to give notice of such as I could wish burnt. If they were, they would not be greatly miss'd, as to that propriety of speech unto which they lay claim, and for which they are magnified by their Readers; because the best Languages used in the world, may as well be learn'd from Authors that are as Elegant as Chaste.

*For these reasons I think the Noble Mountaigne gave a great proof of his early wisdom, in that, as he saies, Quant aux Amadis, et telles sortes d'escrits, ils n'ont pas eu le credit d'arrester seulement mon enfance, *i.e.* Amadis and such like trash of VWriting; had not so much credit with him, as to allure his youth to delight in them. And upon the same considerations one may well judge some Excellent Wits thrown away in writing great stories of Nothing; and that others lose their unvaluable Time whilst they read them. And the rather, because, besides the direct losse, they leave the Memory so full of fantastical images of things which are not, that they cannot easily dismisse them: the Fancy being held in the amusement of those foolish Dreames, as we are in Sleep with the various representations of severall things, which never were nor will be in such Ridiculous Conjunctions. And when the Reader considers how prettily he hath abused himself, yet cannot he presently dispossesse his fancy of those vain Imaginations which he hath entertain'd, but is still haunted with them, and much indispos'd in Mind for more worthy Considerations; as troublesome Dreams often leave the Body not so well affected.*

There is no doubt but that most Readers of such things, ingenuously examining what beneficial use they could make of the gains reaped from their Studies, would find themselves hard put to it to name a better than the Great VVit was forc'd to, who said, when he thought to retire from his Extravagancies, and to repose his wearied Spirit, and it still pester'd him with an orderlesse rabble of troublesome Chimæras, he resolv'd to keep a Register of them, hoping by that meanes one day to make it asham'd, and blush at it self.

It is no wonder that these Fooleries are not easily thrown off, because of that deep impression which they make upon the affectionate part, through the cunning invegements of Fancy. For men having indulg'd Imagination, and play'd carelessly with its Fantasms, unawares take vehement pleasure in things which they do not believe, and weep for such inconsiderable reasons, that afterward they laugh at themselves for it, and read Fables with such affections, as if their own or their friends best interest were wrapp'd up in them. What strong Expectation have they for the Issue of a doubtful Design? How unsatisfied are they till the End of a paper-Combate? What fears possesse them for the Knight whose part they take? How passionately are they delighted with the Description of a Castle built in the aire? How ravish'd upon the conceit of Beauties which owe themselves only to the paint which came out of the Poets Ink-pot? How are they taken with pleasure and sorrow for the good and bad success of the Romantick Lovers? They are apt also to draw to themselves or their friends such things as they read in far-fetch'd references: if the resemblances suite in some little points, they seem to do and suffer such things; and what fits not they endeavour to patch up with some feign'd coherency.

But if in the midst of this busie Idleness they would admit a severe consideration of more important duties neglected the while, a few disentangled thoughts would rout the Troop of their fond Imaginations.

Some peradventure not altogether satisfied with that which I have said, may reply, What, then is Fancy uselesse? Is it not one of the naturall faculties of the Soul? Were any of them made to no purpose? Is there any more proper entertainment for it then the Conceit and Language of a well-form'd Romance? Many books, which pretend to declare better matters to us, do it so jejune, that it is a work of more then ordinary patience to give them the reading; and we are put into a doubt, whether or no those who wrote them did intend any should make use of their Understandings in the perusal of them, or whether they were able to give that which others would expect as a reasonable satisfaction. Besides, we perceive many Books of grave Titles so afflicted with Disputes about troublesome niceties and trifling Capriccio's, that wise persons find the books as little of kin to their Names, as the Contents are of small Furtherance to their best Concernments.

To these things I answer; Fancy is not uselesse, and may as lawfully be gratified with excellent forms of Invention, as the Eye may entertain it self with the Beauty of well-plac'd Colours, or the Sense of Smelling please it self with the odours of a delicious Rose. But though it be a Naturall Faculty, yet it is under discipline of the Supreme Governesse of Soul and Body, Reason; and when it wanders without its Keeper, out-staying its time in allowed diversions, or transgressing the limits of such Subjects as sound Judgement permits, it returns abus'd with hurtfull delight, and instead of being us'd decently, is unworthily prostituted: in whose behalf the Rationall Guide, which is not farre off, will take notice and complain, as it doth often, and whip the Vagrant, and not spare to reproach it with the cheap reward of foolish recreation, for the enjoyment of which she mispent the time which she

took from her Prayers, and, it may be, for the reading of an Idle Story neglected the Examination of her Conscience; and afterward is made to understand that the same pleasure which was pretended to be sought abroad, is to be found at Home. For Reason is no such severe Mistress as to detain us with Awe that is void of Love and Joy; but besides the solid Complacencies of Vertue, allows also the chearfull entertainments of Wit and Fancy. There are Books good store where Truths of greatest Importance are presented neither besmeared with loathsome Nonsense, nor blended with unprofitable Disputes, which adde nothing to Religion, but trouble and darknesse, and where Excellent sense and good words offer themselves in such lovely Embraces, that they are a perfect content to all beholders but such as cannot Fancy, Understand and Love. Wit and ability of mind do so shine in many Religious Discourses, that we cannot justly make that pretended defect an Excuse for our deferring of sober studies. Now God forbid that we should think his Gifts so imprudently thrown amongst men, that none should be able to get them that would use them to the adorning of that which most deserves it, Vertue; which, though by reason of its innate beauty it least needs any adventitious ornament, yet doth not scorn the light vaile of Romance, if it be of that fashion which I shall by and by describe.

It were a thing to be wondred at, that by many nothing is esteem'd witty, except Poetry and Romances, but that want of Judgement doth notoriously discover it self in those persons who are highly pleas'd with pittifull things. Divers of their admired Authors are so empty of true worth, that if the entire sense of their books were summ'd up, it would onely amount to some small matter as triviall as uselesse: And if most of them, whether Antient or Modern, were examined with a Judicious Eye, they would appear to be full of the grossest Indecorum's of Invention, as odious misrepresentations of Divinity, unnaturall Descriptions of Humane Life, Improper and Prophane Allusions to Sacred Things, frequent and palpable Contradictions, Sottish stories, and in short, all the absurdities of wild Imagination. I need not verifie this by bringing together those great multitudes of Instances which abound in that sort of books written in the Greek, Latin, Italian and French Languages. If any desire, they may see it done largely in the Extravagant Shepheard, especially in the Speech of Clarimond in the 13th. book, not long since translated by Mr. Davies.

For my own part I do not desire that all books should be as dull as many are, and none compos'd, as all are not, to delight; but I would have that delight true, and the quicknesse not evaporate into Lightnesse and Vanity. Is there no joy but laughter? Doth nothing recreate but what is fabulous? Such as do not like true happinesse, because it is a serious thing, have a reasonable Soul bestowed upon them in vain, and would have been better pleas'd if God had made them worse, and more content if God had not design'd them to so Noble an End. But those which like nothing except what goes in a plain Rode of talk, may as reasonably desire every body to spell, when they read. Such as would not have Truth presented in ingenious Schemes of Discourse, do foolishly condemn the wisdom of the Antients, some of which we may not reprove without a kind of Blasphemy: and whilst they understand not the Excellent use of Apologues, Parables, and such like Modes of signification, they are sufficiently answer'd by the Confession of their own Ignorance. There are severall spirits in the World; some will take a thing one way, that will not another. A Physitian will not wisely quarrell with his Patient, because he refuseth to take the Pill unless it be guilded. There are also some persons that need to have some things told them, which because they are guarded with the stately Circumstance of Worldly Quality, one cannot so easily come near them as in a Disguise.

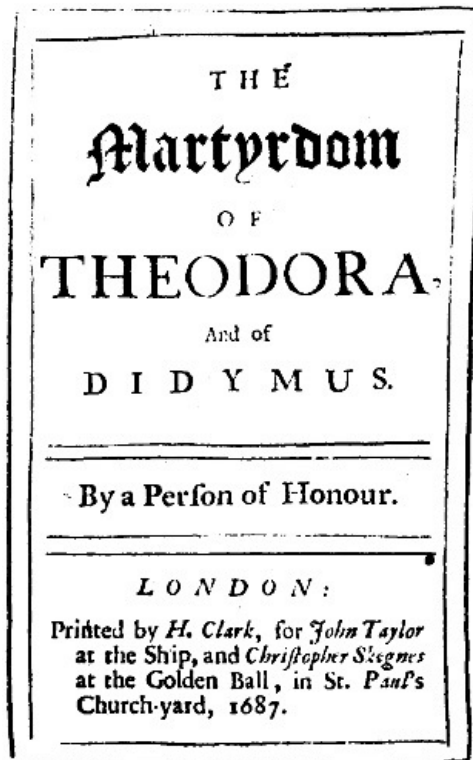
There are some brave minds, in whom Riches of Conceit are attended with incomparable Expression: and Truth is not unwilling to be dress'd by such; and those which revile them for their paines, are justly abhorr'd for their Envy, or pitied for their Ignorance. Its a mischief that distresses most little Capacities, impotently to desire that all others should be constituted after their size; and having passionately, but foolishly, wish'd such a thing a great while, at last they begin to believe that what they desire is so indeed.

It is an ungratefull folly and a pride to be laugh'd at, when men are unwilling that others should endeavour to further their Good, because they gave them not leave to prescribe them the way for doing of it: but they should consider, that there may be such in the world which understand that which themselves do not, and are delighted with such things as they contemn.

But some that mean well, and think they are not mistaken in the sense of their proposition, humbly desire that those Excellent Wits would lay their design of Romance deeper then the Shallows of Fancy; that so the Reader may not stick upon every Shelf of Fiction, and that the streams of Wit be made navigable for the Importation of such Wisdom as is necessary for our best life. The design to please is then as well accomplished; but not terminating in the surface of Recreation, it is improv'd into a higher advantage of those nobler faculties which God hath given us.

They think also that the Way to this End is miss'd, when the Authors account their Contrivance poor, unless they can sail under water too. As when there is no morall design of making men better, the Work is done but by the Halves, as we say: so if that lie under ground in such deep conceits as but few can dive into the bottom of them, their labour is so far only not lost, as that some who are more ingenious will take the pains to understand what they meant.

To conclude, I have not all this while spoke my own Hopes concerning what I have perform'd in this work, but my wishes were hearty that it might neither displease nor be unprofitable. Whereas I have in severall places reprov'd some things frequently found amongst Men, I only plead, that since they make no scruple of acting unworthily, I though: I might much more justly take liberty to talk of it. And since you have had the patience to be acquainted with what I would have done, if any body be pleas'd with that which is written, I shall not be discouraged, but if they be profited too, then I shall think that I have not laboured in vain.



THE
Martyrdom
OF
THEODORA,
And of
DIDYMUS.

By a Person of Honour.

LONDON:
Printed by *H. Clark*, for *John Taylor*
at the Ship, and *Christopher Skegnes*
at the Golden Ball, in *St. Paul's*
Church-yard, 1687.

SUCH AN
ACCOUNT
Of the following
BOOK,
Sent with it to a

FRIEND;

As may serve instead of a

PREFACE.

To convince you, Sir, how much more I am concern'd to have you think, I can Obey well, than Write well; I venture to send you the *Account*, (as imperfect and unpolish'd as it is) that you are pleas'd to command *Of the last Hours of Theodora*. But I must beg your leave to accompany it with another *Account* (though but a short one) how I came to meddle with this Subject; and why what I present you about it, is so much Maim'd, and has no more Uniformity.

Having had occasion many years ago to turn over a Martyrology, and some other Books, that related to the Sufferings of the Primitive Christians; I chanc'd to light on those of a Virgin, who, though (to my wonder) she was left unnam'd by the other Writers that mentioned her, seem'd plainly to be the same, that is by one of them expresly call'd *Theodora*: I own, I was not a little affected, at the reading of such moving and uncommon adventures as hers: and finding her story to be related, by the Author that nam'd both her and her Lover, not only very succinctly and imperfectly, but very dully too; I found my self tempted so to enlarge this Story, as that it might be contriv'd into a somewhat voluminous Romance: But upon second thoughts, it appeared incongruous to turn a Martyr into a Nymph or an Amazon: And I consider'd too, that (to omit what else might be objected against that sort of Composures) as true Pearls are Cordials and Antidotes, which counterfeit ones, how fine soever they may appear, are not; so True Examples do arm and fortify the mind far more efficaciously, than Imaginary or Fictitious ones can do; and the fabulous labours of *Hercules*, and Exploits of *Arthur of Britain*, will never make men aspire to Heroick Vertue half so powerfully, as the real Examples of Courage and Gallantry afforded by *Jonathan Cæsar*, or the *Black Prince*. But yet, thinking it great pity, that so shining a Vertue as *Theodora's* should prove Exemplary, but to her own time, and to one City; and remembring, that soon after the Age which she Ennobl'd, it was counted among the Primitive Christians an act of Piety, to build fair Monuments, upon the formerly abject Graves of the Martyrs; to repay, by Honours done to their Memories, the indignities and Disgraces they had suffer'd in their Persons; I thought fit to try, if I could rescue from more unskilful Hands than even mine, a story that abundantly deserv'd to be well told.

But upon further thoughts, I soon foresaw, that this Task was not more worthy to be undertaken, than it would prove difficult to be well perform'd: For the Martyrologist having allow'd scarce one whole Page, to a Relation, that perhaps merited a Volume, had left so many Chasms, and so many necessary things unmentioned, that I plainly perceiv'd, I wanted a far greater number of Circumstances, than that he had supply'd me with to make up so maim'd a story tolerably compleat. And as the Relation deny'd me matter enough to work upon, so the nature of the Subject refus'd most of those Imbellishments which in other Themes, where young Gallants and fair Ladies are the chief Actors, are wont to supply the deficiencies of the matter. Besides, my task was not near so easie as it would have been, if I had been only to recite the Intrigues of an Amour, with the liberty to feign surprizing adventures, to adorn the Historical part of the account, and to make a Lover speak as Passionately as I could, and his Mistress as Kindly as the indulgentest laws of decency would permit. But I was to introduce a Christian and pious Lover, who was to contain the expressions of his Flame within the narrow bounds of his Religion; and a Virgin, who, being as modest and discreet as handsom, and as devout as either, was to own a high Esteem for an excellent Lover, and an uncommon Gratitude to a transcendent Benefactor, without intrrenching either upon her Vertue, or her Reservedness. And I perceiv'd the difficulty of my Task would be encreas'd, by that of Reconciling *Theodora's* Scrupulousness to the humours of some young Persons of Quality of either Sex, who were earnest to engage my Pen on this occasion, and would expect that I should make *Theodora* more kind, than I thought her great Piety and strict Modesty would permit. But for all this; the esteem I had for the fair Martyrs Excellencies, and the compliance I had for those that desir'd to receive an account of so rare a Persons actions and Sufferings, made me resolve to try what I could do. Which I adventur'd upon with the less Reluctancy, because, though I esteem'd it a kind of Profaneness, to transform a piece of Martyrology into a Romance; yet I thought it allowable enough, where a Narrative was written so concisely, and left so unperfect, as That I had to descant upon; to make such supplements of Circumstances, as were not improbable in the nature of the thing, and were little less than necessary to the clearness and entireness of the Story, and the decent connection of the parts it should consist of. I suppos'd too, that I needed not scruple, to lend Speeches to the Persons I brought upon the Stage, provided they were suitable to the Speakers, and Occasions; since I was warranted by the Examples of *Livy*, *Plutarch*, and other Grave and Judicious Historians, who make no scruple to give us set Orations, of their own framing, and sometimes put them into the mouths of Generals at the head of their Armies, just going to give Battel: though at such times the hurry and distraction that both they and their Auditors must be in, must make it very unlikely, either that they should make elaborate Speeches, or their Hearers mind and remember them well enough to repeat them to the Historians.

Encourag'd by these Liberties, which I thought I might justly allow my self: I drew up, as

well as I could, what you have been told I wrote about *Theodora*. This I thought fit to divide into two parts; in the first whereof, (which was less remote from being Romantick) I gave somewhat at large the Characters of them both. I mention'd the rise and progress of *Didymus's* Love; the degeneracy of the then Christians, which provok'd Divine Providence, to expose them to a very Bloody Persecution: I declar'd, how *Theodora* being involv'd in it, was brought before the *President of Antioch*; how she resolutely own'd her Religion before him, answer'd His Arguments, and resisted both his Promises, and his Menaces; how thereupon the Judge doom'd her either to Sacrifice, or to be prostituted in the publick *Stews*. How she, after an eager Debate in her own mind, refusing to offer sacrifice, was, (notwithstanding her silence) led away to the infamous place; how being shut up there alone in a Room, she employ'd the little time, that was granted her to consider whether she would yet burn Incense to the *Roman* Idols, in fervent Prayer to the true God, for a rescue of her Purity, not her Life; in order whereunto, she design'd and hop'd by Resistance and Contumelies to provoke her first Assailant, to become her Murderer, rather than her Ravisher.

These were the chief Contents of the first Book. Those of the second, were more Historical; and consisted of an account of the last hours of her Life, and particularly of those Sufferings that ended in her and *Didymus's* glorious Martyrdom. This piece having been perus'd by those for whose sake I wrote it; was so fortunate, that it having, without my leave, been ventur'd into several hands, as a Book of a nameless and unknown Author, it was lucky enough to be, by some indulgent Readers, attributed to One, and by some to Another, of the two Persons, that were at that time counted the best writers of disguis'd Histories. But among the many Hands it pass'd through, it seems it fell into some, out of which a great part of the loose sheets, (which were not bound in a Book, but only tack'd together) were not to be retriev'd: whether it were by the negligence, or the contempt, that some had of so unpolish'd a Work; or whether there were some fatality in the Business, that *Theodora's* Sufferings should outlive her, and her Story be as ill us'd as her Person had been. This loss, (if it can deserve that name) I did not much regret: Since I intended not to make the lost Papers publick, and had receiv'd much greater approbation and thanks than they merited, from the particular Persons they were design'd for. But after I had for many years worn out, not only the sense, but the memory of this loss: It was made more troublesom to me, than ever it was at first, by the earnest solicitations of some eminent Persons, that had a great power over me, and some of them the repute of great Judges of this kind of Composures. For having seen several Sheets, that I accidentally lighted on, in tumbling over some long neglected Papers; they oblig'd me to cause those old rude sheets to be transcrib'd. And tho' almost all the first Book was wanting, (upon which account, I could not be remov'd from my Resolution not to trouble my self about it) yet there was so much of the Second Book, but in parts no way Coherent, little by little retriev'd, that a pretence was afforded to press me to repair those Breaches, and restore out of my memory, or otherwise, a piece, which they would needs perswade me might do some good, by rendring Vertue Amiable, and recommending Piety to a sort of Readers, that are much more affected by shining Examples, and pathetical Expressions, than by dry Precepts, and grave Discourses.

If some of your more scrupulous Friends shall object, that I have mentioned *Theodora's* Beauty more often and advantagously, and represented her Lovers Passion more Pathetically, than the subject of the story exacted, and the truth requir'd in History would warrant; I shall not altogether deny the Charge: Being rather content to have it thought, that a youthful and heated fancy transported my Pen, somewhat beyond the narrow bounds of History, than that so Pious a person as *Didymus* did not keep both his Flame, and the Expressions of it, within the limits of Reason and Religion. But though I pretend not to justifie, all that has been said in the strain of an Encomiast, or a Lover, yet I hop'd that I may much Extenuate, if not Excuse it, by representing such things as these.

That I have been careful, that *Theodora* should not be made to do, or say, any thing, that, the great Obligations she had to her Rescuer consider'd, do intrench either upon her Piety, or her Vertue, or so much as upon her Reserv'dness.

That as for *Didymus*; I might say, that probably he thought, those Celebrations that would have been Flattery to another Lady, were but Justice to a Person so Extraordinary, and so accomplish'd as his Mistress; and that he thought it allowable, not to suppress the chast effects of a Passion, that has not only been incident to Heroes, but perhaps help'd to make them such. But I will rather say, that those only are like to find much fault with his Expressions, *who* consider not how free they are from any degree of Prophaneness or Immodesty: And *who* are not accustomed to the reading of Stories, where Lovers are introduc'd, and made to Praise and Complement in a far more Bold and Romantick way, than I allowed my self in the following Paper. In which, all the Deference, wherewith *Irene* as well as *Didymus* treat *Theodora*, may be accounted for by this; That I remember'd to have, in some Author or other, found Mention made of a Person about *Dioclesian's* time, Whom I took for our Martyr, that was intimated to be of high Quality, if not a *Princess*, which Title I had without scruple given Her, If I had been half as sure that she Was a *Princess*, as that she Deserv'd to be One.

That perhaps I was not unwilling, both to shew the Persons I wrote for, that One might have glittering *Idea's* of Beauty, without being dazl'd by them; and also to convince them, that high Compliments and passionate expressions, are no certain Marks of His being really

Smitten (to speak in a Lovers Phrase) that can Employ them; since I retain'd my wanted freedom of mind, while I was Writing; and presented them by the mouth of *Didymus*, but what Fancy, not Passion indited.

And lastly, I was induc'd to allow my self a more fashionable Stile, than would perhaps be suitable to a meer Sermon, or Book of Divinity, because I fear'd, that the Youthful Persons of Quality of both Sexes, that I was chiefly to regard, would scarce be sufficiently affected by unfortunate Vertue, if the interweaving of passages relating to Beauty and Love, did not help to make the Tragical story, Delightful, add the Excellent Sufferers Piety, Amiable.

If it be objected, that in some of the discourses of the two Martyrs, there are Passages that argue more Knowledge, than is likely to have been found in Lay Persons no Elder than they. I answer, that such Discourses indeed were somewhat strange, if they were ascrib'd to a young Gallant, and a younger Lady, of Our degenerate Times; wherein so many Persons of that sort, make Diversion their grand Business; and, having as little Leisure as Concern to mind any thing, but their Pleasures and petty Interests, think it their Priviledge to know little of Religion, and leave to meaner People the study of things Serious and Useful. But, *though* among this sort of Persons, it were so difficult to find many that would Emulate such Knowledge and Vertue as shin'd in *Theodora*, that I fear they would not so much as believe them; *yet* among better qualify'd Judges, the lately propos'd objection will be of no great force, if it be consider'd, that *Didymus* and *Theodora* liv'd in the Primitive and devout times of the Church, and in the *Roman* Empire, when the Christian Religion was as diligently Taught by Excellent Divines, as frequently Oppos'd by Arguments, and violently assaulted by Persecutions. Upon which scores, the zealous Candidates of Martyrdom, many of which obtain'd the Crown of it, even in their greener Age, were early and skilfully instructed in the truths of their own Religion, and furnish'd with good Arguments, both to Defend It, and Confute the Erroneous Opinions and Impious worships of their Heathen Adversaries. Nor is it any wonder, that they should think That Religion worth Studying, that they thought worth Dying for. I will not here examine, whether the Ignorance wont to be imputed to Women, be Their fault, or that of their Accusers, and whether it is any natural want of Capacity, or rather want of Instruction, that keeps most of them from Knowledge, though This regards not Sexes. But without inquiry, whether it be not our Interest, or our Envy, that Makes Women what we are wont to decry them for Being; I shall not scruple to own, that I have sometimes had the honour to converse with Ladys, that convinc'd me, That, to attain to a great proficiency in Knowledge, 'tis not necessary to be a Doctor of Divinity, or so much as a Man, since they discours'd of Divine things, with no less Wit than Piety. And to return to our Martyr, if we may judge by the Effects, we may reasonably suppose, that our Virgins Parents not only thought it their Duty, but took much Pleasure, to Cultivate so excellent and promising a Subject as their fair Daughter. Since great advantages of Nature and general Grace should rather Invite, than Excuse, Improvements by Education; as even the *Garden of Eden*, though an admirably fertile Soil, and planted by God's own Hands, was not so left to itself, but that *Adam* was appointed to dress it, and to keep it. And if the Discourses of our Martyrs are sometimes less short than they might have been made; I hope it may be some excuse, that I was not unwilling, to lay hold now and then of the Rises afforded me by some occasions, to shew, that Romantick Subjects are not, as too many Persons of Quality think them, the Only ones, that may be treated of in a Gentleman-like stile; and that even some noble Questions in Divinity, and some of the severer Dictates of the Christian Morals, may be discours'd of, without the harshness of the School Terms, or the downright plainness of some better Meant, than Pen'd, Books of Theology and Devotion.

'Tis like Sir, you will think it strange, that I make so Pious a Person as *Theodora*, offer her Breast to *Didymus's* Sword, and by soliciting him to Kill her, tempt him to an Action, which would make *her* guilty of a Murder, and make *him* greatly accessory to it. But possibly her Action would not appear very strange, if we were not too enclinable to estimate the Affairs of Past Times, and Remote Regions, by the Opinions and Customes of our own Age and Countrys. For, what ever we now justly think of the sinfulness of Destroying a Mans self, whether immediately or otherwise, yet I must not deny, but that divers of the Ancient Christians thought it not Criminal, when it was necessary for the preservation of Chastity. And, if I much misremember not, St. *Jerom* himself, where he speaks of the unlawfulness of Self-destroying, intimates, that he excepts the Case of an inevitable danger of a Rape. But my chief answer is, that having found the Virgin Martyrs proposal expresly deliver'd by the Author I was to follow, I judg'd it the part of an Historian not to suppress it; which I acknowledge, I the rather declin'd to do, because *Theodoras* offer was a noble evincement, both of her Gratitude and her Generosity. And therefore, instead of Omitting so considerable an Action of hers, I chose rather to Set my thoughts a work, to find a plausible Colour for it. Which whether I have happily done, by supplying her with the Example of a Prophet, who, though he would not cast Himself into the Sea, yet solicited Others to cast him, (and that having first bound him) I must leave You to judge.

I freely confess, Sir, that, if the following Piece had been written by One, that I were fond of Censuring, I could my self find enough in it to Criticize upon; and should object against it, besides the want of Uniformity throughout, That if judg'd of by the strict Rules of Art, it ought to pass for an Irregular Piece. And therefore I shall not wonder, if Nicer Criticks, and more vers'd in Exquisite Composures than I pretend to be, shall find fault with this Artless one of mine. But the reception that the following Papers met with, from the Persons for whom they were chiefly written, affords me the Consolation derivable from the ingenious

saying of that excellent Wit, who declar'd, *He had rather the Dishes serv'd up at his Treat, should please the Guests, than the Cooks.* And I might say too, that some of the Passages that may meet with Censure, would perhaps escape it; if in writing this Book many years agoe, I had not had some Aims, that I then thought more fit to be Pursu'd, than I now do to be Declar'd. Yet I will not here dissemble, that I know it may be thought by some, that this Paper should have consisted less of Conversations, and more of Narratives. But I chose the way of Writing I have employ'd, *partly* because the Authors I met with furnish'd me with so very few matters of Fact, that if I would have confin'd my self to Relations; I must have compriz'd this piece in a very few Pages, and have finish'd it presently after I had begun it: And *partly* too, (and indeed much more) because (as I lately began to intimate) my chief design was not so much, to perform the Office of a meer Historian, as to take Rises from the several Circumstances I should relate, to convey unperceivedly, into the minds of those young Persons of Quality for whom I wrote, Sentiments of true Piety and Vertue. And these I thought would not so happily gain admittance and entertainment, if they were presented in a Scholar like Discourse, or a profess'd Book of devotion, as when they were taken, not from common places but from the Nature of the Things and Persons Introduc'd; and without formality Instill'd by the occasional discourses of a young Gentleman and fair Lady, for whom the Beauty and the Merit ascrib'd to the Speakers, had given the Hearers a great Esteem and Kindness. And I shall not scruple to own, that I, who value time above most other things, did not think it worth the expence of mine, to give my self the trouble of Writing a Book, only to give others a Divertisement in Reading it. And whilst I was Conversing with such Excellent Company, as our noble Martyrs, and Meditating on such Serious Subjects, as are Death, and the Worth of that Heavenly Religion for whose sake They despis'd It; I found my self Incited, and thought my self Oblig'd, to aim less at the Pleasing of some few Nice Exactors of Regularity, than to Possess many Readers with high and noble Sentiments of the Christian Religion, and the sublime Dictates of it; and thereby both Elevate their minds to a generous Contempt of all they can lose and suffer for it, and Fill them with bright *Idea's* of Heroick Vertue, and of the much brighter Glories that will Crown it. By such Reflections, I was induc'd not to omit some Passages that seem'd likely to further the main Ends I pursu'd, though I foresaw, that perhaps some rigid Judges would say, that they might have been spar'd. For *as* I writ not a Romance, wherein Authors are wont to aim no higher, than to Delight the Delicate Readers, and Escape the Critical ones, by making their Composures Diverting and Regular; *so* I presum'd that to employ a more Useful, though less Fashionable way of Writing, was allowable for Me, who ought *to* endeavour in such a piece as This, rather to propose Patterns of Vertue, than Models of Skill or Eloquence; and *to* think it more Successful, if the Readers shall upon perusing it, Imitate our excellent Martyrs Piety, than if they should only Applaud their History. Which both as to Stile and Reasonings, is freely submitted to your Judgment, by

Sir,
your most &c.

ERRATA.

Preface Page 3. line 19. read Jonathan Cæsar, &c. p. 5. l. 11. r. *feign Contents* Ch. 1. r. *Chamber*. Ch. 3. r. *thinking*. P. 80. l. 16. r. *manifest Danger*, &c. p. 89. l. 14. r. *and let her see*, &c. p. 152. l. 14. r. *enough*. p. 222. l. 17. r. *her Kindness*, &c. p. 227. l. 1. for *having*, r. *did*. *ibid.* l. 4. for *assum'd*, r. *assume*. p. 238, l. 15. r. *of all other*, &c.

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8. Rabin's *De Carmine Pastoralis*, translated by Creech (1684).

9. T. Hanmer's (?) *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* (1736).

10. Corbyn Morris' *Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, etc.* (1744).

11. Thomas Purney's *Discourse on the Pastoral* (1717).

12. Essays on the Stage, selected, with an Introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch.

THIRD YEAR (1948-1949)

13. Sir John Falstaff (pseud.), *The Theatre* (1720).
14. Edward Moore's *The Gamester* (1753).
15. John Oldmixon's *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter to Harley* (1712); and Arthur Mainwaring's *The British Academy* (1712).
16. Nevil Payne's *Fatal Jealousy* (1673).
17. Nicholas Rowe's *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare* (1709).
18. "Of Genius," in *The Occasional Paper*, Vol. III, No. 10 (1719); and Aaron Hill's Preface to *The Creation* (1720).

FOURTH YEAR (1949-1950)

19. Susanna Centlivre's *The Busie Body* (1709).
20. Lewis Theobald's *Preface to The Works of Shakespeare* (1734).
21. *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela* (1754).
22. Samuel Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749) and *Two Rambler papers* (1750).
23. John Dryden's *His Majesties Declaration Defended* (1681).
24. Pierre Nicole's *An Essay on True and Apparent Beauty in Which from Settled Principles is Rendered the Grounds for Choosing and Rejecting Epigrams*, translated by J. V. Cunningham.

FIFTH YEAR (1950-51)

25. Thomas Baker's *The Fine Lady's Airs* (1709).
26. Charles Macklin's *The Man of the World* (1792).
27. Frances Reynolds' *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Taste, and of the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty, etc.* (1785).
28. John Evelyn's *An Apologie for the Royal Party* (1659); and *A Panegyric to Charles the Second* (1661).
29. Daniel Defoe's *A Vindication of the Press* (1718).
30. Essays on Taste from John Gilbert Cooper's *Letters Concerning Taste*, 3rd edition (1757), & John Armstrong's *Miscellanies* (1770).

SIXTH YEAR (1951-1952)

31. *Thomas Gray's An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard* (1751); and *The Eton College Manuscript*.
32. Prefaces to Fiction; Georges de Scudéry's Preface to *Ibrahim* (1674), etc.
33. Henry Gally's *A Critical Essay on Characteristic-Writings* (1725).
34. Thomas Tyers' *A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Samuel Johnson* (1785).
35. James Boswell, Andrew Erskine, and George Dempster. *Critical Strictures on the New Tragedy of Elvira, Written by Mr. David Malloch* (1763).
36. Joseph Harris's *The City Bride* (1696).
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38. John Phillips' *A Satyr Against Hypocrites*.
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