

The measure is quick, spritely, and colloquial, suitable to the vulgarity of the words and the levity of the sentiments. But such numbers and such diction can gain regard only when they are used by a writer whose vigour of fancy and copiousness of knowledge entitle him to contempt of ornaments, and who, in confidence of the novelty and justness of his conceptions, can afford to throw metaphors and epithets away. To another that conveys common thoughts in careless versification, it will only be said, "Pauper videri Cinna vult, & est pauper."<sup>1</sup> The meaning and diction will be worthy of each other, and criticism may justly doom them to perish together.

Nor even though another Butler should arise, would another Hudibras obtain the same regard. Burlesque consists in a disproportion between the style and the sentiments, or between the adventitious sentiments and the fundamental subject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All disproportion is unnatural; and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleasure which novelty produces. We admire it awhile as a strange thing; but, when it is no longer strange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequent repetition detects itself; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the spectator turns away from a second exhibition of those tricks, of which the only use is to shew that they can be played.

<sup>1</sup> Martial, *Epigr.* viii. 19.







ROCHESTER.



THE END



## ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rochester, the son of Henry Earl of Rochester, better known by the title of Lord Wilmot, so often mentioned in Clarendon's History, was born April 10, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordshire. After a grammatical education at the school of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham College, in 1659, only twelve years old; and in 1661, at fourteen, was, with some other persons of high rank, made master of arts by Lord Clarendon in person.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and, at his return devoted himself to the Court. In 1665 he went to sea with Sandwich,<sup>1</sup> and distinguished himself at Bergen by uncommon intrepidity; and the next summer served again on board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a message of reproof to send to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who, in an open boat, went and returned amidst the storm of shot.

But his reputation for bravery was not lasting: he was reproached with slinking away in street quarrels, and leaving his companions to shift as they could without him; and Sheffield Duke of Buckingham has left a story of his refusal to fight him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which

<sup>1</sup> To lie in wait for the Dutch East India fleet. The Dutch ships ran into Bergen, and an attack was therefore made on that port.



he totally subdued in his travels; but, when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himself to dissolute and vicious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He lost all sense of religious restraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was resolved not to obey, sheltered his wickedness behind infidelity.

As he excelled in that noisy and licentious merriment which wine incites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in excess, and he willingly indulged it; till, as he confessed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or so much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be master of himself.

In this state he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we should remember, and which are not now distinctly known. He often pursued low amours in mean disguises, and always acted with great exactness and dexterity the characters which he assumed.

He once erected a stage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank; and, having made physick part of his study, is said to have practised it successfully.

He was so much in favour with King Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and comptroller of Woodstock Park.

Having an active and inquisitive mind, he never, except in his paroxysms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of study: he read what is considered as polite learning so much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amused himself with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himself to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English Cowley.

Thus in a course of drunken gaiety, and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an



avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard to every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one and thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet,<sup>1</sup> to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the course of his life, and from whom he received such conviction of the reasonableness of moral duty, and the truth of Christianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of those salutary conferences is given by Burnet, in a book intituled, "Some Passages of the Life and Death of John Earl of Rochester;" which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year; and was so worn away by long illness, that life went out without a struggle.

Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and sallies of extravagance.<sup>2</sup> The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, Gilbert, Bishop of Salisbury (1643-1715), born in Edinburgh, educated at Aberdeen. A prominent figure in political life, and singularly effective preacher, he received the unusual compliment of being thanked by the House of Commons for his poems; but he is best known to us from his history of his own times, which is invaluable as a candid narrative and work of reference.

<sup>2</sup> The best portrait of Lord Rochester is the Sir Peter Lely, at Hinchinbrooke, the seat of the Earl of Sandwich. There is a large engraving of him by R. White (1681), considered the best print of him.



man whose name was heard so often, were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguished; and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reason to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write. I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineness was ascertained. The first edition was published the year of his death, with an air of concealment, professing in the title page to be printed at *Antwerp*.<sup>1</sup>

Of some of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The "Imitation of Horace's Satire," the "Verses to Lord Mulgrave," the "Satire against Man," the "Verses upon *Nothing*," and perhaps some others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps most of those which the late collection<sup>2</sup> exhibits.

As he cannot be supposed to have found leisure for any course of continued study, his pieces are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution would produce.

His songs have no particular character: they tell, like other songs, in smooth and easy language, of scorn and kindness, dismissal and desertion, absence and inconstancy, with the common places of artificial courtship. They are commonly smooth and easy; but have little nature, and little sentiment.

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has since been very frequent, of ancient poetry to present times; and perhaps few will be found where the parallelism is better preserved than in this.

<sup>1</sup> With the date 1680.

<sup>2</sup> The collection, that is, for which these lives were written.



The versification is indeed sometimes careless, but it is sometimes vigorous and weighty.

The strongest effort of his Muse is his poem upon "Nothing." He is not the first who has chosen this barren topick for the boast of his fertility. There is a poem called "Nihil" in Latin by Passerat, a poet and critick of the sixteenth century in France;<sup>1</sup> who, in his own epitaph, expresses his zeal for good poetry thus:

"—Molliter ossa quiescent  
Sint modo carminibus non onerata malis."

His works are not common, and therefore I shall subjoin his verses.

In examining this performance, "Nothing" must be considered as having not only a negative but a kind of positive signification; as I need not fear thieves, I have *nothing*; and *nothing* is a very powerful protector. In the first part of the sentence it is taken negatively; in the second it is taken positively, as an agent. In one of Boileau's lines it was a question, whether he should use *à rien faire*, or *à ne rien faire*; and the first was preferred, because it gave *rien* a sense in some sort positive. *Nothing* can be a subject only in its positive sense, and such a sense is given it in the first line:

"Nothing, thou elder brother ev'n to shade."

In this line, I know not whether he does not allude to a curious book "de Umbra," by Wowerus,<sup>2</sup> which, having told the qualities of *Shade*, concludes with a poem in which are these lines:

<sup>1</sup> Jean Passerat (1534-1602). Professor of Eloquence in the *Collège de France*. This celebrated man was a great student of Cicero. His works are numerous and highly esteemed.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Wowveri. *Dies Æstiva sive De Umbra Pægnion*, 1610. The author, born 1576, died 1635, is described as "of Hamburg."



“Jam primum terram validis circumspice claustris  
 Suspensam totam, decus admirabile mundi  
 Terrasque tractusque maris, camposque liquentes  
 Aeris & vasti laqueata palatia cœli—  
 Omnibus UMBRA prior.”

The positive sense is generally preserved, with great skill, through the whole poem; though sometimes, in a subordinate sense, the negative *nothing* is injudiciously mingled. Passerat confounds the two senses.

Another of his most vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop,<sup>1</sup> who, in a poem called “The Praise of Satire,” had some lines like these:<sup>2</sup>

“He who can push into a midnight fray  
 His brave companion, and then run away,  
 Leaving him to be murder'd in the street,  
 Then put it off with some buffoon conceit;  
 Him, thus dishonour'd, for a wit you own,  
 And court him as top fidler of the town.”

This was meant of Rochester, whose *buffoon conceit* was, I suppose, a saying often mentioned, that *every Man would be a Coward if he durst*; and drew from him those furious verses; to which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending with these lines:

“Thou canst hurt no man's fame with thy ill word;  
 Thy pen is full as harmless as thy sword.”

<sup>1</sup> *Sir Car Scroop*, Bart. date of birth unknown, but was at Wadham College in 1664, and died 1680. He translated from Ovid and Virgil; wrote *The Defence of Satyr*, &c. &c. He is jeered at by Rochester as a “Purblind Knight, who squints more in his judgment than his sight.” *Poems*, ed. Rymer, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> I quote from memory.—JOHNSON. On Johnson's powerful memory, and his mode of slightly altering obscure quotations to suit his purpose, see Malone, in Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. pp. 130-32, and for his own saying, “Memory will play us strange tricks,” &c. *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 50.



Of the satire against *Man*, Rochester can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part<sup>1</sup> is taken away.

In all his works<sup>2</sup> there is sprightliness and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which study might have carried to excellence. What more can be expected from a life spent in ostentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men began to be displayed?<sup>3</sup>

“Poema<sup>4</sup> Cl. V. JOANNIS PASSERATII,

“Regii in Academia Parisiensi Professoris.

“Ad ornatissimum virum ERRICUM MEMMIUM.

“Janus adest, festæ poscunt sua dona Kalendæ,  
Munus abest festis quod possim offerre Kalendis.  
Siccine Castalius nobis exaruit humor?  
Usque adeò ingenii nostri est exhausta facultas,  
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor anni?  
Quod nusquam est, potius nova per vestigia quæram.

<sup>1</sup> See Boileau's Eighth Satire à M.M. (Morel), *Docteur de Sorbonne*, called by the author *La Satire de l'homme*, composed 1667, and published the following year separately, and then in the third edition of his Satires.

<sup>2</sup> The best edition of Rochester's Poems is that of 1691. A few of his songs are included in Ward's *Sel. Eng. Poets*, vol. ii. p. 425.

<sup>3</sup> Dryden dedicated to him his *Marriage à la Mode* (1673), Otway his *Titus and Berenice* (1677), and Crowne his *Charles the Eighth of France* (1672). In Dryden's dedication there is a remarkable passage: “Your Lordship (he has been praising ‘some papers of verses’ which he had seen) has but another step to make, and from the patron of wit you may become its tyrant, and oppress our little reputations with more ease than you now protect them.” This was prophetic. He oppressed Dryden, Otway, and Crowne, lampooned all three, and had Dryden cudgelled.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>4</sup> NIHIL. *Per Ioannem Passeratium. P. R.* Paris, 1588; afterwards in *Kalendæ Januariæ et varia quædam poemata.* Paris, 1597. Reprinted 1603.



Ecce autem partes dum sese versat in omnes  
 Invenit mea Musa NIHIL, ne despice munus.  
 Nam NIHIL est gemmis, NIHIL est pretiosius auro.  
 Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos :  
 Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,  
 Ausonii & Graii dixerunt cætera vates,  
 Ausoniæ indictum NIHIL est Græcæque Camœnæ.

E cœlo quacunque Ceres sua prospicit arva,  
 Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis  
 Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.  
 Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum.  
 Quòd si hinc majestas & vis divina probatur,  
 Num quid honore deûm, num quid dignabimur aris ?  
 Conspectu lucis NIHIL est jucundius almæ,  
 Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formosius horto,  
 Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura ;  
 In bello sanctum NIHIL est, Martisque tumultu :  
 Justum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL est in fœdere tutum.  
 Felix cui NIHIL est, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)  
 Non timet insidias : fures, incendia temnit :  
 Sollicitas sequitur nullo sub iudice lites.  
 Ille ipse invictis qui subjicit omnia fatis  
 Zenonis sapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.  
 Socraticique gregis fuit ista scientia quondam,  
 Scire NIHIL, studio cui nunc incumbitur uni.  
 Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didicisse juventus,  
 Ad magnus quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum.  
 Nosce NIHIL, nosces fertur quod Pythagoreæ  
 Grano hæerere fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.  
 Multi Mercurio freti duce viscera terræ  
 Pura liquefaciunt simul, & patrimonia miscent,  
 Arcano instantes operi, & carbonibus atris,  
 Qui tandem exhausti damnis, fractique labore,  
 Inveniunt atque inventum NIHIL usque requirunt.  
 Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda possit :  
 Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ :  
 Et Phœbo ignotum NIHIL est, NIHIL altius astris.  
 Tùque, tibi licet eximium sit mentis acumen,  
 Omnem in naturam penetrans, & in abdita rerum,



Pace tua, Memmi, NIHIL ignorare vidêris.  
 Sole tamen NIHIL est, & puro clarius igne.  
 Tange NIHIL, dicesque NIHIL sine corpore tangi.  
 Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL absque colore.  
 Surdum audit loquitúrque NIHIL sine voce, volátque  
 Absque ope pennarum, & graditur sine cruribus ullis.  
 Absque loco motuque NIHIL per inane vagatur.  
 Humano generi utilius NIHIL arte medendi.  
 Ne rhombos igitur, neu Thessala murmura tentet  
 Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,  
 Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vertice gramen.  
 Vulneribus sævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.  
 Vexerit & quemvis trans mœstas portitor undas,  
 Ad superos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.  
 Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,  
 Parcarúmque colos, & inexorabile pensum  
 Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes  
 Fulmineo sensit NIHIL esse potentius ictu :  
 Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi .  
 Diique NIHIL metuunt. Quid longo carmine plura  
 Commemorem ? virtute NIHIL præstantius ipsa,  
 Splendidius NIHIL est ; NIHIL est Jove denique majus.  
 Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis :  
 Ne tibi si multa laudem mea carmina charta,  
 De NIHILO NIHILI pariant fastidia versus."



The first part of the history is devoted to a general description of the country, its situation, extent, and natural resources. The author then proceeds to a detailed account of the various tribes and nations that inhabit the region, describing their customs, manners, and political organization. The second part of the history relates the events of the war between the British and the Indians, from its commencement to its conclusion. The author describes the various battles, sieges, and military operations, and the conduct of the different parties. The third part of the history is a general history of the country, from the first settlement to the present time. The author relates the progress of the colony, its increase in population and wealth, and the various improvements that have been made in its agriculture, commerce, and government. The fourth part of the history is a general history of the world, from the first settlement to the present time. The author relates the progress of the world, its increase in population and wealth, and the various improvements that have been made in its agriculture, commerce, and government.



ROSCOMMON.







## R O S C O M M O N .

WENTWORTH DILLON, Earl of Roscommon,<sup>1</sup> was the son of James Dillon and Elizabeth Wentworth, sister to the Earl of Strafford. He was born in Ireland,<sup>2</sup> during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being both his uncle and his godfather, gave him his own surname. His father, the third earl of Roscommon, had been converted by Usher to the protestant religion; and when the popish rebellion broke out, Strafford thinking the family in great danger from the fury of the Irish, sent for his godson, and placed him at his own seat in Yorkshire, where he was instructed in Latin; which he learned so as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to retain the rules of grammar.

Such is the account given by Mr. Fenton, from whose notes on Waller<sup>3</sup> most of this account must be borrowed, though I know not whether all that he relates is certain. The instructor whom he assigns to Roscommon is one Dr. Hall, by whom he cannot mean the famous Hall,<sup>4</sup> then an old man and a bishop.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson wrote a *Life of Roscommon* for the *Gentleman's Magazine* of May, 1748.

<sup>2</sup> 1633.

<sup>3</sup> The works of Edmund Waller, Esq. in verse and prose, published by Mr. Fenton. Lond. Tonson. 1729. 4to. p. cxxxiv. For a notice of this "splendid edition," *vid. infr.* vol. *Life of Fenton*.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid. supr.* p. 112 n. Roscommon's tutor may have been a son of the



When the storm broke out upon Strafford, his house was a shelter no longer; and Dillon, by the advice of Usher,<sup>1</sup> was sent to *Caen*, where the Protestants had then an university, and continued his studies under *Bochart*.<sup>2</sup>

Young Dillon, who was sent to study under *Bochart*, and who is represented as having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. Strafford went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was sent to *Caen*, is certain; that he was a great scholar, may be doubted.

At *Caen* he is said to have had some preternatural intelligence of his father's death.

“The lord Roscommon, being a boy of ten years of age at *Caen* in Normandy, one day was, as it were, madly extravagant in playing, leaping, getting over the table-boards, &c. He was wont to be sober enough; they said God grant this bodes no ill-luck to him! In the heat of this extravagant fit, he cries out, *My father is dead*. A fortnight after, news came from Ireland that his father was dead. This account I had from Mr. Knolles, who was his governor and then with him,—since secretary to the earl of Strafford; and I have heard his lordship's relations confirm the same.” *Aubrey's Miscellany*.

famous Bishop of Norwich—Robert, who was Archdeacon of Cornwall or George (1612-1668), Fellow of Exeter Coll. Oxon, afterwards Bishop of Chester.

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Armagh, *vid. supr.* p. 112. “The great luminary of the Irish Church; and a greater no church could boast of: at least in modern times.” Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. p. 130. He was in England in 1623, engaged, in connection with *Bochart*, in preparing for the controversy with the Jesuits.

<sup>2</sup> *Bochart* (1599-1667). This learned Frenchman was pastor of the Protestant Church at *Caen*, where he held his celebrated conferences and disputes with the Jesuits. He had visited London before 1628.



The present age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind, nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit: it ought not, however, to be omitted, because better evidence of a fact cannot easily be found than is here offered, and it must be by preserving such relations that we may at last judge how much they are to be regarded. If we stay to examine this account, we shall see difficulties on both sides; here is a relation of a fact given by a man who had no interest to deceive, and who could not be deceived himself; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect; the order of nature is interrupted, to discover not a future but only a distant event, the knowledge of which is of no use to him to whom it is revealed. Between these difficulties, what way shall be found? Is reason or testimony to be rejected? I believe what Osborne<sup>1</sup> says of an appearance of sanctity may be applied to such impulses or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly slight them, because they may be true: but do not easily trust them, because they may be false.*

The state both of England and Ireland was at this time such, that he who was absent from either country had very little temptation to return: and therefore Roscommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amused himself with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon skill.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Osborne (1589-1659). A writer of considerable ability, whose works were collected and published in 1689, and again in 1722. This quotation is from "*Advice to a Son; or Directions for your better Conduct through the various and most important Encounters of this Life.*" Oxford, 5th edition, 1656; p. 153: "Despise not a profession of Holiness because it may be true: But have a care how you trust it for feare it should be false. The coat of Christ being more in fashion than his Practice." This book was extremely popular among the young students, but supposed to be atheistical and altogether so objectionable that it was proposed to burn it publicly. This was never done, but the sale was strictly forbidden.



At the Restoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain of the band of pensioners, and learned so much of the dissoluteness of the court, that he addicted himself immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brought upon him its usual concomitants, extravagance and distress.

After some time a dispute about part of his estate forced him into Ireland, where he was made by the duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and met with an adventure thus related by Fenton.

“He was at Dublin as much as ever distempered with the same fatal affection for play, which engaged him in one adventure that well deserves to be related. As he returned to his lodgings from a gaming-table, he was attacked in the dark by three ruffians, who were employed to assassinate him. The Earl defended himself with so much resolution, that he dispatched one of the aggressors; whilst a gentleman, accidentally passing that way, interposed, and disarmed another; the third secured himself by flight. This generous assistant was a disbanded officer, of a good family and fair reputation; who, by what we call the partiality of fortune, to avoid censuring the iniquities of the times, wanted even a plain suit of cloaths to make a decent appearance at the castle. But his lordship, on this occasion, presenting him to the Duke of Ormond, with great importunity prevailed with his grace, that he might resign his post of captain of the guards to his friend; which for about three years the gentleman enjoyed, and, upon his death the duke returned the commission to his generous benefactor.”

When he had finished his business, he had returned to London; was made Master of the Horse to the Dutchess of York; and married the Lady Frances, daughter of the Earl of Burlington, and widow of Colonel Courteney.



He now busied his mind with literary projects, and formed the plan of a society for refining our language, and fixing its standard; *in imitation*, says Fenton,<sup>1</sup> *of those learned and polite societies with which he had been acquainted abroad.* In this design his friend Dryden is said to have assisted him.

The same design, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift<sup>2</sup> in the ministry of Oxford; but it has never since been publickly mentioned, though at that time great expectations were formed by some of its establishment and its effects. Such a society might, perhaps, without much difficulty, be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it, may be doubted.

The Italian academy seems to have obtained its end. The language was refined, and so fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined

<sup>1</sup> These learned and polite societies were, doubtless, the Academy Della Crusca in Florence, established in 1588; and eclipsing all the numerous academies of Italy; the Academy of Humorists in Rome; the Rozzi and the Intronati in Siena; and possibly the Lincei in Rome; although its founder Cesi died in 1630; and it did not very long survive the loss of its chief. This academy stood on a higher level than the rest. Its members cultivated poetry and elegant literature, but physical science was their peculiar object. Porta, Galileo, Colonna, and many other distinguished men were enrolled among the Lynsees. The French Academy, established 1635, had, by the time of Roscommon's travels, attained great distinction. Its famous criticism on Corneille's *Tragedie du Cid* was published in 1637, and in 1649 the epoch making *Rémarques sur la Langue Française*, by Vaugelas. Its great labour, the *Standard National Dictionary*, was slowly proceeding (published 1694, and revised and perfected 1700), but the French Academy had been so judicious in the choice of members and the general tenor of its proceedings, that it stood very high in public estimation, and a voluntary deference was commonly shown to its authority. See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 525.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. infr.* vol. iii. *Life of Swift* for Johnson's remarks on Swift's Letter to the Earl of Oxford, a "*Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue*, vol. iii. p. 369.



their language, and doubtless thought rightly; but the event has not shewn that they fixed it; for the French at the present time is very different from that of the last century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academicians's place were profitable, it would be given by interest; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the least disgust. Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly.

But suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In absolute governments, there is sometimes a general reverence paid to that which has the sanction of power, and the countenance of greatness. How little this is the state of our country need not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of publick sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an English academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be sure to disobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; but what prevention can be found? The present manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer should criticise himself.

All hopes of new literary institutions were quickly suppressed by the contentious turbulence of King James's reign;<sup>1</sup> and Roscommon, foreseeing that some violent commotion of the State was at hand, purposed to retire to Rome, alleging, that *it was best to sit near the chimney which the chamber smoaked*; a sentence, of which the application seems not very clear.

<sup>1</sup> Into which Lord Roscommon did not live. Roscommon died before the 21st of January, 1684-5, and Charles II. on the 6th February, 1684-5.—P. CUNNINGHAM.



His departure was delayed by the gout; and he was so impatient either of hinderance or of pain, that he submitted himself to a French empirick, who is said to have repelled the disease into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice that expressed the most fervent devotion, two lines of his own version of *Dies Iræ*:

“My God, my Father, and my Friend,  
Do not forsake me in my end.”

—He died in 1684; and was buried with great pomp in Westminster-Abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton:

“In his writings,” says Fenton, “we view the image of a mind which was naturally serious and solid; richly furnished and adorned with all the ornaments of learning, unaffectedly disposed in the most regular and elegant order. His imagination might have probably been more fruitful and sprightly, if his judgement had been less severe. But that severity (delivered in a masculine, clear, succinct style) contributed to make him so eminent in the didactical manner, that no man, with justice, can affirm he was ever equalled by any of our nation, without confessing at the same time that he is inferior to none. In some other kinds of writing his genius seems to have wanted fire to attain the point of perfection; but who can attain it?”

From this account of the riches of his mind, who would not imagine that they had been displayed in large volumes and numerous performances? Who would not, after the perusal of this character, be surprised to find that all the proofs of this genius, and knowledge and judgement, are not sufficient to form a single book, or to appear otherwise than in conjunction with the work of some other writer of the same petty size? But thus it is that characters are written: we know somewhat, and we imagine the rest.



The observation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and spritely if his judgement had been less severe, may be answered, by a remarker somewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary supposition, that his judgement would probably have been less severe, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppose judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have necessarily less of one as they have more of the other.

We must allow of Roscommon, what Fenton has not mentioned to distinctly as he ought, and what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verse before Addison; and that, if there are not so many or so great beauties in his compositions as in those of some contemporaries, there are at least fewer faults. Nor is this his highest praise; for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

“ Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,  
Roscommon only boasts unspotted lays.”<sup>1</sup>

His great work is his “*Essay on Translated Verse*,” of which Dryden writes thus in the preface to his *Miscellanies*:<sup>3</sup>

“It was my Lord Roscommon's ‘*Essay on Translated Verse*,’” says Dryden, “which made me uneasy, till I tried whether or no I was capable of following his rules, and reducing the speculation into practice. For many a fair precept in poetry is like a seeming demonstration in mathematics, very specious in the diagram, but failing in the mechanick operation. I think I have generally observed his instructions: I am sure my reason is sufficiently con-

<sup>1</sup> First Ep. 2nd Bk. Horace. Ald. *Pope*, vol. iii. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> First edition. Lond. Tonson, 1684.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to the second *Miscellany*, published 1685, S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 282. The first *Miscellany* had no preface.



vinced both of their truth and usefulness ; which, in other words, is to confess no less a vanity than to pretend that I have, at least in some places, made examples to his rules."

This declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found little more than one of those cursory civilities which one author pays to another ; for when the sum of lord Roscommon's precepts is collected, it will not be easy to discover how they can qualify their reader for a better performance of translation than might have been attained by his own reflections.

He that can abstract his mind from the the elegance of the poetry, and confine it to the sense of the precepts, will find no other direction than that the author should be suitable to the translator's genius ; that he should be such as may deserve a translation ; that he who intends to translate him should endeavour to understand him ; that perspicuity should be studied, and unusual and uncouth names sparingly inserted : and that the style of the original should be copied in its elevation and depression. These are the rules that are celebrated as so definite and important ; and for the delivery of which to mankind so much honour has been paid. Roscommon has indeed deserved his praises, had they been given with discernment, and bestowed not on the rules themselves, but the art with which they are introduced, and the decorations with which they are adorned.

The Essay, though generally excellent, is not without its faults. The story of the Quack,<sup>1</sup> borrowed from Boileau,<sup>2</sup> was not worth the importation : he has confounded the British and Saxon mythology :

"I grant that from some mossy idol oak,  
In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden* spoke."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ess. Trans. Verse*, ed. 1685, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Boileau, *L'Art Poétique*, Chant iv. *Œuvres*, tom. ii. p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> *Ess. Trans. Verse*, p. 24.



The oak, as I think Gildon<sup>1</sup> has observed, belonged to the British druids, and *Thor* and *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he so liberally supposes, he certainly had no knowledge.

His interposition of a long paragraph<sup>2</sup> of blank verses is unwarrantably licentious. Latin poets might as well have introduced a series of iambicks among their heroicks.

His next work is the translation of the *Art of poetry*; which has received, in my opinion, not less praise than he deserves. Blank verse, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly support itself without bold figures and striking images. A poem frigidly didactick, without rhyme, is so near to prose, that the reader only scorns it for pretending to be verse.

Having disentangled himself from the difficulties of rhyme, he may justly be expected to give the sense of Horace with great exactness, and to suppress no subtilty of sentiment for the difficulty of expressing it. This demand, however, his translation will not satisfy; what he found obscure, I do not know that he has ever cleared.

Among the smaller works, the *Eclogue* of "Virgil" and "Dies Iræ" are well translated; though the best line in the "Dies Iræ" is borrowed from Dryden. In return, succeeding poets have borrowed from Roscommon.

In the verses on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you*

<sup>1</sup> *The Laws of Poetry*, &c. 1721, p. 343. Gildon also points out, p. 332, that Roscommon did not beautify but debase Boileau's fine episode. In fact, the story is transformed and its point lost.

<sup>2</sup> "An Essay on blanc Verse out of the 6th Book of *Paradise Lost*." This interpolation was made by Roscommon in the 2nd edition of the 'Essay,' pp. 24-25. It is to this epitome, almost a parody or caricature, that Addison refers in *Spectator*, No. 333, as rendering unnecessary his further enumeration of the beauties of the 6th book.

<sup>3</sup> The translation of the *Art of Poetry* preceded the *Essay on Translated Verse*, being published in 1680.



are offensively confounded; and the turn at the end is from Waller.

His versions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which is not recompensed by much elegance or vigour.

His poetical verses are spritely, and when they were written must have been very popular.

Of the scene of "Guarini," and the prologue to "Pompey," Mrs. Phillips,<sup>1</sup> in her letters<sup>2</sup> to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the history.

"Lord Roscommon," says she,<sup>3</sup> "is certainly one of the most promising young noblemen in Ireland. He has paraphrased a Psalm admirably, and a scene of 'Pastor Fido' very finely, in some places much better than Sir Richard Fanshaw. This was undertaken merely in compliment to me, who happened to say that it was the best scene in Italian, and the worst in English. He was only two hours about it. It begins thus:

' Dear happy groves, and you the dark retreat  
Of silent horror, Rest's eternal seat.' "

From these lines, which are since somewhat mended, it appears that he did not think a work of two hours fit to endure the eye of criticism without revisal.

When Mrs. Phillips was in Ireland, some ladies that had seen her translation of "Pompey," resolved to bring it on the stage at Dublin; and, to promote their design, Lord Roscommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edward Dering

<sup>1</sup> Katharine Philips (1631-1664). In her day "The matchless Orinda" was compared to Sappho and Sulpitia, and found her admirers among the greatest poets of the age. Dr. Jeremy Taylor addressed to her his *Measures and Offices of Friendship*, and Cowley wrote an ode upon her death.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*. Lond. 1705, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> In a letter dated Dublin, Oct. 19, 1662.



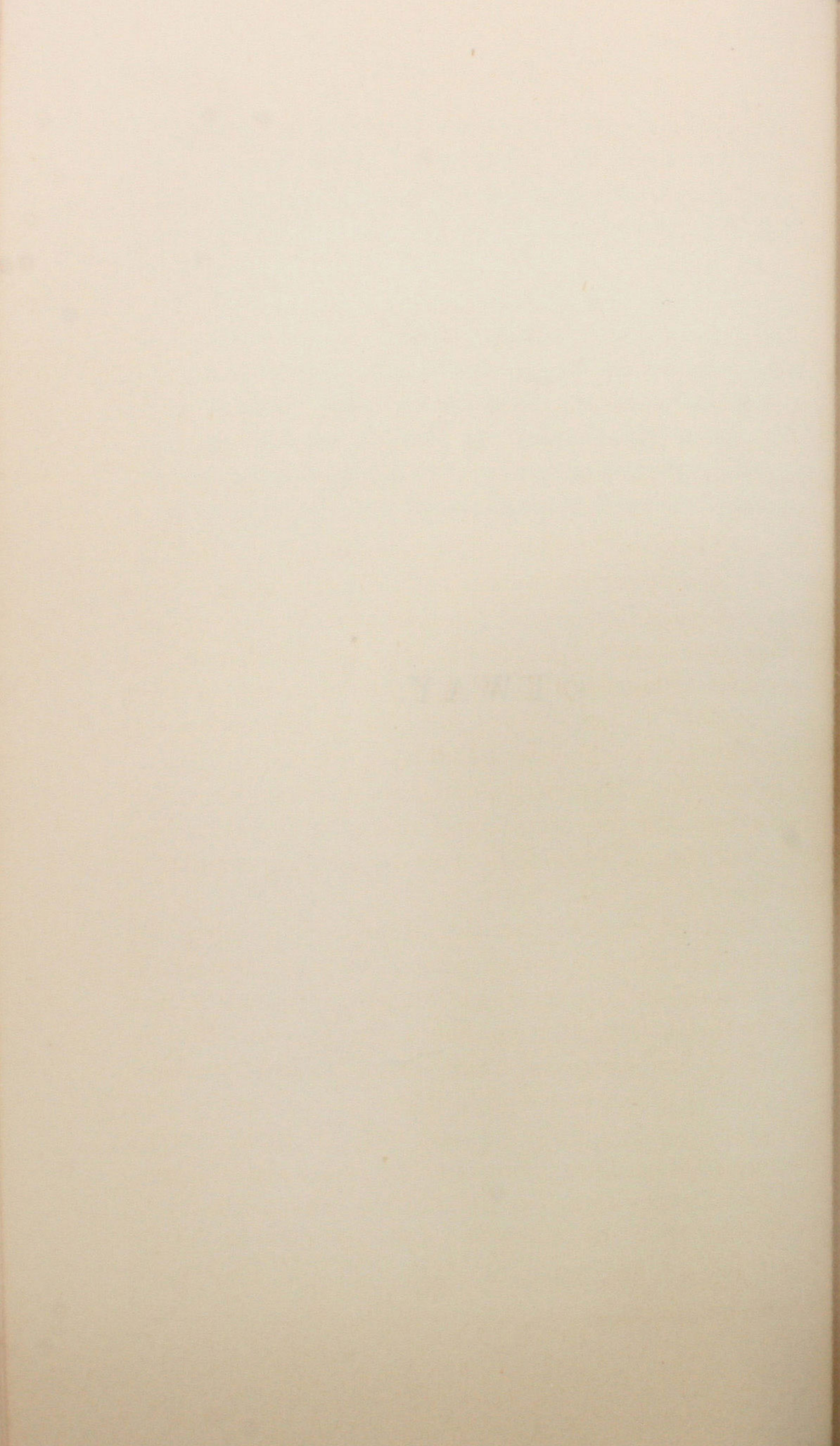
an Epilogue; "which," says she, "are the best performances of those kinds I ever saw." If this is not criticism, it is at least gratitude. The thought of bringing Cæsar and Pompey into Ireland, the only Country over which Cæsar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roscommon's works, the judgement of the publick seems to be right. He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties, and he seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigorous, and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to English literature.



O T W A Y .







## O T W A Y .

**O**F Thomas Otway, one of the first names in the English drama, little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleasure in relating.

He was born at Trotton in Sussex, March 3, 1651, the son of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of Woolbedding. From Winchester-school, where he was educated, he was entered<sup>1</sup> in 1669 a commoner of Christ-church; but left the university without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical restraint, or mere eagerness to mingle with the world, is not known.

It seems likely that he was in hope of being busy and conspicuous: for he went to London, and commenced player; but found himself unable to gain any reputation on the stage.

This kind of inability he shared with Shakspeare and Jonson, as he shared likewise some of their excellences. It seems reasonable to expect that a great dramattick poet should without difficulty become a great actor; that he who can feel, could express; that he who can excite passion, should exhibit with great readiness its external modes: but since experience has fully proved that of those powers, whatever be their affinity, one may be possessed in a great degree by him who has very little of the other; it must be allowed that they depend upon different faculties, or on different use of the same faculty; that the actor must

<sup>1</sup> The college books give "May 27th, 1669, aged 17."



have a pliancy of mien, a flexibility of countenance, and a variety of tones, which the poet may be easily supposed to want; or that the attention of the poet and the player have been differently employed; the one has been considering thought, and the other action; one has watched the heart, and the other contemplated the face.

Though he could not gain much notice as a player, he felt in himself such powers as might qualify for a dramatick author; and in 1675, his twenty-fifth year, produced "Alcibiades," a tragedy; whether from the "Alcibiade" of Palaprat,<sup>1</sup> I have not means to enquire. Langbain, the great detector of plagiarism, is silent.

In 1677 he published "Titus and Berenice," translated from Rapin,<sup>2</sup> with the "Cheats of Scapin" from Moliere; and in 1678 "Friendship in Fashion," a comedy, which whatever might be its first reception, was, upon its revival at Drury-lane in 1749, hissed off the stage for immorality and obscenity.

Want of morals, or of decency, did not in those days exclude any man from the company of the wealthy and the gay, if he brought with him any powers of entertainment, and Otway is said to have been at this time a favourite companion of the dissolute wits. But, as he who desires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himself, those whom Otway frequented had no purpose of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They desired only to drink and laugh; their fondness was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendship. Men of wit, say

<sup>1</sup> Palaprat (1650-1721). A French poet, whose works, in one volume were published in 1711. He was afterwards associated with Bruyere and their joint works, in five vols. 1775, brought them great reputation. That Palaprat wrote no play of this name, and that the *Alcibiade* of Compiestron was not brought on the French stage till December, 1685, has been observed by several commentators.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably an overlooked printer's error. Otway's *Titus and Berenice* is a free translation, with large omissions, of Racine's *Berenice*.



one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the Great but to share their riots; *from which they were dismissed again to their own narrow circumstances. Thus they languished in poverty without the support of imminence.*<sup>1</sup>

Some exception, however, must be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural sons, procured for him a cornet's commission in some troops then sent into Flanders. But Otway did not prosper in his military character; for he soon left his commission behind him, whatever was the reason, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rochester mentions with merciless insolence in the "Session of the Poets:"

"Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,  
And swears for heroicks he writes best of any;  
Don Carlos his pockets so amply had fill'd,  
That his mange was quite cured, and his lice were all kill'd.  
But Apollo had seen his face on the stage,  
And prudently did not think fit to engage  
The scum of a play-house, for the prop of an age." }

"Don Carlos," from which he is represented as having received so much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the Lampon, to have had great success, and is said to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reasonable to doubt, as so long a continuance of one play upon the stage is a very wide deviation from the practice of that time; when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffused through the whole people, and the audience, consisting nearly of the same persons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The "Orphan" was exhibited in 1680. This is one of the few plays that keep possession of the stage, and has

<sup>1</sup> From a sketch of the life of Otway, prefixed to an early edition of his works. Dr. Johnson, in quoting this passage, has altered the sense of it, by substituting imminence for innocence. THORNTON, p. xiv.



pleased for almost a century, through all the vicissitudes of dramattick fashion. Of this play nothing new can easily be said. It is a domestick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehension of thought, or elegance of expression. But if the heart is interested, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be missed.

The same year produced "The History and Fall of Caius Marius;" much of which is borrowed from the "Romeo and Juliet" of Shakspeare.

In 1683<sup>1</sup> was published the first, and next year the second,<sup>2</sup> parts of "The Soldier's Fortune, two comedies now forgotten; and in 1685 his last and greatest dramattick work, "Venice preserved," a tragedy, which still continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithstanding the want of morality in the original design, and the despicable scenes of vile comedy with which he has diversified his tragick action. By comparing this with his "Orphan," it will appear that his images were by time become stronger, and his language more energetick. The striking passages are in every mouth; and the publick seems to judge rightly of the faults and excellences of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by consulting nature in his own breast.

Together with those plays he wrote the poems which are in the late collection,<sup>3</sup> and translated from the French the "History of the Triumvirate."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This should be 1681.

<sup>2</sup> The second part of the *Soldier's Fortune* was called *The Atheist*, and was published in 1684, and is therefore Otway's last work. There is a copy of *Venice Preserved* in the British Museum, dated 1682.

<sup>3</sup> Known as Johnson's *British Poets*, 1781. *vid. supr.* p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Published after his death, 8vo, 1686. The French original was *Histoire des deux Triumvirats*, par Citri De la Guette, 1681.



All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died<sup>1</sup> April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his necessities to contract debts, and hunted, as is supposed, by the terriers of the law, he retired to a publick house on Tower-hill, where he is said to have died of want; or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by swallowing, after a long fast, a piece of bread which charity had supplied. He went out, as is reported, almost naked, in the rage of hunger, and finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the first mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; and there is this ground of better hope, that Pope who lived near enough to be well informed, relates in Spence's memorials,<sup>2</sup> that he died of a fever caught by violent pursuit of a thief that had robbed one of his friends. But that indigence, and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, pressed hard upon him, has never been denied, whatever immediate cause might bring him to the grave.<sup>3</sup>

Of the poems<sup>4</sup> which the late collection admits, the longest is the "Poet's Complaint of his Muse," part of which I do not understand; and in that which is less obscure I find little to commend. The language is often gross, and the numbers are harsh. Otway had not much cultivated versification, nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving

<sup>1</sup> Otway was buried on the 16th April, 1685, in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes. "His person was of the middle size, about 5 feet 7 in. in height, inclinable to fatness. He had a thoughtful, speaking eye, and that was all." W. G. in *Gent. Mag.* for 1745, p. 99.

P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> Spence, ed. *Singer*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph was first added by Johnson in this edition (1783).

<sup>4</sup> The best edition is that by Thornton. London, 1813. 8vo. 3 vols.



the passions,<sup>1</sup> to which Dryden<sup>2</sup> in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears, by some of his verses to have been a zealous royalist: and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Walter Scott thought that "More tears have been shed, probably, for the sorrows of Belvidera and Ronimia than for those of Juliet and Desdemona." *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. vi. p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> In his preface to Fresnoy's *Art of Painting* (Lintot, 1750, p. xli.



WALLER'S

WALLER.



## PREFATORY NOTE.

Of the many editions of Waller's Poems, the first genuine appeared in 1645. The best is Fenton's, published by Tonson, with the addition of the Prose Works in 1729. 4to. "A very splendid edition." *vid. infra* *Life of Fenton*.

The edition referred to in the notes as '*Works*' is Fenton's, as published by Tonson, 1730. 12mo.

See criticism on Waller, by E. Gosse, in Ward's *Select English Poets*, p. 270, where also is a small selection of his poems.



## WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER<sup>1</sup> was born on the third of March, 1605, at Colshill in Hertfordshire. His father was Robert Waller, Esquire, of Agmondesham in Buckinghamshire, whose family was originally a branch of the Kentish Wallers; and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden, of Hampden in the same county, and sister to Hampden, the zealot of rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

His father died while he was yet an infant, but left him an yearly income of three thousand five hundred pounds; which, rating together the value of money and the customs of life, we may reckon more than equivalent to ten thousand at the present time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother, at Eaton; and removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge.<sup>3</sup> He was sent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his sixteenth year, and frequented the court of James the First, where he heard a very remarkable conversation, which the writer of the Life prefixed to his Works,<sup>4</sup> who seems to have been well informed of facts, though he may

<sup>1</sup> For various readings in the *Life of Waller*, see Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Waller's brother William married Elizabeth Cromwell, aunt of Oliver, and was the father of John Hampden, so that Waller and John Hampden were first cousins. See *Life of Waller*, by Rev. J. Gilfillan, prefixed to Works, Edinburgh, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> Waller matriculated fellow commoner of King's, 21st June, 1621.

<sup>4</sup> *Poems, &c.* The 8th edition to which is prefixed the Author's Life (said by Mr. Cunningham to be by Atterbury), London. Tonson, 1711. p. viii.



sometimes err in chronology, has delivered as indubitably certain.

“He found Dr. Andrews, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Neale, bishop of Durham, standing behind his Majesty's chair; and there happened something extraordinary,” continues this writer, “in the conversation those prelates had with the king, on which Mr. Waller did often reflect. His Majesty asked the bishops, “My Lords, cannot I take my subjects money, when I want it, without all this formalitie of parliament?” The bishop of Durham readily answered, ‘God forbid, Sir, but you should: you are the breath of our nostrils.’ Whereupon the King turned and said to the bishop of Winchester, “Well, my Lord, what say you?” ‘Sir,’ replied the bishop, ‘I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases.’ The King answered, “No put-offs, my Lord; answer me presently.” ‘Then, Sir,’ said he, ‘I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neale's money; for he offers it.’ Mr. Waller said, the company was pleased with this answer, and the wit of it seemed to affect the King; for, a certain lord coming in soon after, his Majesty cried out, “Oh, my lord, they say you lig with my Lady.” ‘No, Sir,’ says his Lordship in confusion; ‘but I like her company, because she has so much wit.’ “Why then,” says the King, “do you not lig with my Lord of Winchester there?”

Waller's political<sup>1</sup> and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that appears first in his works, on “the Prince's Escape<sup>2</sup> at St.

<sup>1</sup> Waller obtained a seat in the House of Commons for Aymesham in the 3rd parliament of James I. when he was only sixteen years of age. “I was but sixteen when I sate first,” said Waller himself in a debate reported in Grey's *Debates*, p. 355, but according to Clarendon, Waller was not known as a poet till he was thirty years of age. Clarendon's *Life*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> From shipwreck, on his return from Spain, where he had been “solliciting a marriage with the Infanta of Spain,” the 5th October, 1623.



Andero;" a piece which justifies the observation made by one of his editors, that he attained, by a felicity like instinct, a style which perhaps will never be obsolete; and that, "were we to judge only by the wording, we could not know what was wrote at twenty, and what at fourscore." His versification was, in his first essay, such as it appears in his last performance. By the perusal of Fairfax's translation of Tasso, to which, as Dryden<sup>1</sup> relates, he confessed himself indebted for the smoothness of his numbers, and by his own nicety of observation, he had already formed such a system of metrical harmony as he never afterwards much needed, or much endeavoured, to improve. Denham corrected his numbers by experience, and gained ground gradually upon the ruggedness of his age; but what was acquired by Denham, was inherited by Waller.

The next poem,<sup>2</sup> of which the subject seems to fix the time, is supposed by Mr. Fenton to be the Address to the Queen, which he considers as congratulating her arrival, in Waller's twentieth year. He is apparently mistaken; for the mention of the nation's obligations to her frequent pregnancy, proves that it was written when she had brought many children. We have therefore no date of any other poetical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham<sup>3</sup> occasioned: the steadiness with which the King received the news in the chapel, deserved indeed to be rescued from oblivion.

Neither of these pieces that seem to carry their own dates, could have been the sudden effusion of fancy. In the verses on the Prince's escape, the prediction of his

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to his *Fables*.

<sup>2</sup> There are two poems, one *To the Queen, occasioned by the sight of her Majesty's Picture*, p. 13, and a much later one, *Of the Queen*, p. 15, which contains the allusion to which Johnson refers.

<sup>3</sup> August, 1628.



marriage with the princess of France, must have been written after the event; in the other, the promises of the King's kindness to the descendants of Buckingham, which could not be properly praised till it had appeared by its effects, shew that time was taken for revision and improvement. It is not known that they were published till they appeared long afterwards with other poems.<sup>1</sup>

Waller was not one of those idolaters of praise who cultivate their minds at the expence of their fortunes. Rich as he was by inheritance, he took care early to grow richer by marrying Mrs. Banks,<sup>2</sup> a great heiress in the city, whom the interest of the court was employed to obtain for Mr. Crofts. Having brought him a son, who died young, and a daughter, who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer, of Oxfordshire, she died in child-bed, and left him a widower of about five and twenty, gay and wealthy, to please himself with another marriage.

Being too young to resist beauty, and probably too vain to think himself resistible, he fixed his heart, perhaps half fondly and half ambitiously, upon the Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he courted by all the poetry in which Sacharissa is celebrated; the name is derived from the Latin appellation of *sugar*, and implies, if it means any thing, a spiritless mildness and dull good-nature, such as excites rather tenderness than esteem, and such as, though always treated with kindness, is never honoured or admired.

<sup>1</sup> The earliest volume of verse published by Waller is his *Poems* 12mo, 1645. His first printed poem is *Upon Ben Jonson*, part of the *Jonsonus Viribius*, 4to. 1638. P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cunningham states that this marriage took place at St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 15th, 1631.

<sup>3</sup> Of Rousham, where is still to be seen a very fine portrait of Waller; the grounds of Rousham were laid out by Pope. P. CUNNINGHAM.



Yet he describes Sacharissa as a sublime predominating beauty, of lofty charms, and imperious influence, on whom he looks with amazement rather than fondness, whose chains he wishes, though in vain, to break, and whose presence is *wine that inflames to madness*.<sup>1</sup>

His acquaintance with this high-born dame gave wit no opportunity of boasting its influence; she was not to be subdued by the powers of verse, but rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain, and drove him away to solace his disappointment with Amoret or Phillis. She married in 1639 the Earl of Sunderland, who died at Newberry in the king's cause; and, in her old age, meeting somewhere with Waller, asked him, when he would again write such verses upon her; "When you are as young, Madam," said he, "and as handsome, as you were then."<sup>2</sup>

In this part of his life it was that he was known to Clarendon, among the rest of the men who were eminent in that age for genius and literature; but known so little to his advantage, that they who read his character<sup>3</sup> will not much condemn Sacharissa, that she did not descend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence comprised in wit.

The Lady was, indeed, inexorable; but his uncommon qualifications, though they had no power upon her, recommended him to the scholars and statesmen; and undoubtedly many beauties of that time, however they might receive his love, were proud of his praises. Who they were, whom he dignifies with poetical names, cannot now be known. Amoret, according to Mr. Fenton, was the Lady Sophia Murray.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps by traditions preserved in families more may be discovered.

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 45.      <sup>2</sup> *Life of Waller*, prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. pp. 58-79.

<sup>4</sup> *Observations on some of Mr. Waller's Poems*, by Mr. Fenton, p. lxxii.



From the verses written at Penshurst,<sup>1</sup> it has been collected that he diverted his disappointment by a voyage; and his biographers, from his poem on the Whales,<sup>2</sup> think it not improbable that he visited the Bermudas; but it seems much more likely that he should amuse himself with forming an imaginary scene, than that so important an incident, as a visit to America, should have been left floating in conjectural probability.

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year, he wrote his pieces on the Reduction of Sallee; on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the panegyrick on the Queen Mother; the two poems to the Earl of Northumberland; and perhaps others, of which the time cannot be discovered.

When he had lost all hopes of Sacharissa, he looked round him for an easier conquest, and gained a Lady of the family of Bresse, or Breaux. The time of his marriage is not exactly known. It has not been discovered that this wife was won by his poetry; nor is any thing told of her, but that she brought him many children. He doubtless praised some whom he would have been afraid to marry; and perhaps married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow; and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There are charms made only for distant admiration. No spectacle is nobler than a blaze.

Of this wife, his biographers have recorded that she gave him five sons and eight daughters.

During the long interval of parliament, he is represented as living among those with whom it was most honourable to converse, and enjoying an exuberant fortune with that independence and liberty of speech and conduct which

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, pp. 33, 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55.



wealth ought always to produce. He was however considered as the kinsman of Hampden, and was therefore supposed by the courtiers not to favour them.

When the parliament was called in 1640, it appeared that Waller's political character had not been mistaken. The King's demand of a supply produced one of those noisy speeches which disaffection and discontent regularly dictate; a speech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances. "They," says he,<sup>1</sup> "who think themselves already undone can never apprehend themselves in danger, and they who have nothing left can never give freely." Political truth is equally in danger from the praises of courtiers, and the exclamations of patriots.

He then proceeds to rail at the clergy, being sure at that time of a favourable audience. His topick is such as will always serve its purpose; an accusation of acting and preaching only for preferment: and he exhorts the Commons *carefully to provide for their protection against Pulpit Law.*<sup>2</sup>

It always gratifies curiosity to trace a sentiment. Waller has in this speech quoted Hooker in one passage; and in another has copied him, without quoting. "Religion," says Waller, "ought to be the first thing in our purpose and desires; but that which is first in dignity is not always to precede in order of time; for well-being supposes a being; and the first impediment which men naturally endeavour to remove, is the want of those things without which they cannot subsist. God first assigned unto Adam maintenance of life, and gave him a title to the rest of the creatures before he appointed a law to observe."<sup>3</sup>

"God first assigned Adam," says Hooker, "maintenance of life, and then appointed him a law to observe.—True it

<sup>1</sup> Speech to the House of Commons, April 22nd, 1640. *Works*, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.



is, that the kingdom of God must be the first thing in our purpose and desires; but inasmuch as a righteous life presupposeth life, inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible, except we live; therefore the first impediment which naturally we endeavour to remove is penury, and want of things without which we cannot live.”<sup>1</sup>

The speech is vehement; but the great position, that grievances ought to be redressed before supplies are granted, is agreeable enough to law and reason: nor was Waller, if his biographer<sup>2</sup> may be credited, such an enemy to the King, as not to wish his distresses lightened; for he relates, “that the King sent particularly to Waller, to second his demand of some subsidies to pay off the army; and Sir Henry Vane objecting against first voting a supply, because the King would not accept unless it came up to his proportions, Mr. Waller spoke earnestly to Sir Thomas Jermyn, comptroller of the household, to save his master from the effects of so bold a falsity; ‘for, he said, I am but a country gentleman, and cannot pretend to know the King’s mind:’ but Sir Thomas durst not contradict the secretary; and his son, the Earl of St. Albans, afterwards told Mr. Waller, that his father’s cowardice ruined the King.”

In the Long Parliament, which, unhappily for the nation, met Nov. 3, 1640, Waller represented Agmondesham the third time; and was considered by the discontented party as a man sufficiently trusty and acrimonious to be employed in managing the prosecution of Judge Crawley,<sup>3</sup> for

<sup>1</sup> Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. i. section x. p. 2. *Works*, ed. Keble, 1841, vol. i. p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, ed. 1711, p. xx.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Crawley was made Justice of the Common Pleas in 1632, his judgment in the Ship money Case declared that it was a royal prerogative to impose taxes without the consent of parliament. Waller’s speech July 6th, 1641, at a conference of both Houses, maintaining the impeachment of Judge Crawley (*Works*, p. 267) was highly applauded and



his opinion in favour of ship-money ; and his speech shews that he did not disappoint their expectations. He was probably the more ardent, as his uncle Hampden<sup>1</sup> had been particularly engaged in the dispute, and by a sentence which seems generally to be thought unconstitutional particularly injured.

He was not however a bigot to his party, nor adopted all their opinions. When the great question, whether Episcopacy ought to be abolished, was debated, he spoke against the innovation so coolly, so reasonably, and so firmly, that it is not without great injury to his name that his speech, which was as follows, has been hitherto omitted in his works :

\* “ There is no doubt but the sense of what this nation hath suffered from the present Bishops, hath produced these complaints ; and the apprehensions men have of suffering the like, in time to come, make so many desire the taking away of Episcopacy : but I conceive it is possible that we may not, now, take a right measure of the minds of the people by their petitions ; for, when they subscribed them, the Bishops were armed with a dangerous commission of making new canons, imposing new oaths, and the like ; but now we have disarmed them of that power. These petitioners, lately, did look upon Episcopacy as a beast armed with horns and claws ; but now that we have cut and pared them, (and may, if we see cause, yet reduce it into narrower bounds) it may, perhaps, be more agreeable. Howsoever, if they be still in passion, it be-

\* This speech has been retrieved, from a paper printed at that time, by the writers of the *Parliamentary History*.—  
JOHNSON.<sup>2</sup>

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“ Twenty thousand of ’em sold in one day.” *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, p. xxi.

<sup>1</sup> Waller was first cousin to John Hampden, and his uncle Hampden had married an aunt of Oliver Cromwell.

<sup>2</sup> Cobbett’s *Parliamentary History*, vol. ii. p. 826.



comes us soberly to consider the right use and antiquity thereof; and not to comply further with a general desire than may stand with a general good.

“ We have already shewed, that episcopacy, and the evils thereof, are mingled like water, and oil; we have also, in part, severed them; but I believe you will find, that our laws and the present government of the church are mingled like wine and water; so inseparable, that the abrogation of, at least, a hundred of our laws is desired in these petitions. I have often heard a noble answer of the Lords, commended in this house, to a proposition of like nature, but of less consequence; they gave no other reason of their refusal but this, *Nolumus mutare Leges Angliæ*: it was the bishops who so answered then; and it would become the dignity and wisdom of this house to answer the people, now, with a *Nolumus mutare*.

“ I see some are moved with a number of hands against the Bishops; which, I confess, rather inclines me to their defence: for I look upon episcopacy as a counterscarp, or out-work; which, if it be taken by this assault of the people, and, withall, this mystery once revealed, *That we must deny them nothing when they ask it thus in troops*, we may, in the next place, have as hard a task to defend our property, as we have lately had to recover it from the Prerogative. If, by multiplying hands and petitions, they prevail for an equality in things ecclesiastical, the next demand perhaps may be *Lex Agraria*, the like equality in things temporal.

“ The Roman story tells us, That when the people began to flock about the senate, and were more curious to direct and know what was done, than to obey, that Commonwealth soon came to ruin: their *Legem rogare* grew quickly to be a *Legem ferre*; and after, when their legions had found that they could make a Dictator, they never suffered the senate to have a voice any more in such election.



“ If these great innovations proceed, I shall expect a flat and level in learning too, as well as in church-preferments: *Honos alit Artes*. And though it be true, that grave and pious men do study for learning-sake, and embrace virtue for itself; yet it is true, that youth, which is the season when learning is gotten, is not without ambition; nor will ever take pains to excell in any thing, when there is not some hope of excelling others in reward and dignity.

“ There are two reasons chiefly alleged against our church-government.

“ First, Scripture, which, as some men think, points out another form.

“ Second, The abuses of the present superiors.

“ For Scripture, I will not dispute it in this place; but I am confident that, whenever an equal division of lands and goods shall be desired, there will be as many places in Scripture found out, which seem to favour that, as there are now alleged against the prelacy or preferment in the church. And, as for abuses, where you are now, in the Remonstrance, told, what this and that poor man hath suffered by the bishops, you may be presented with a thousand instances of poor men that have received hard measure from their landlords; and of worldly goods abused, to the injury of others, and disadvantage of the owners.

“ And therefore, Mr. Speaker, my humble motion is, That we may settle men's minds herein; and, by a question, declare our resolution, *to reform, that is not to abolish, Episcopacy.*”

It cannot but be wished that he, who could speak in this manner, had been able to act with spirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to set the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is said to have withdrawn from the house, and to have returned with the king's permission; and, when the king set up his standard, he sent him a



thousand broad-pieces.<sup>1</sup> He continued, however, to sit in the rebellious conventicle; but "spoke," says Clarendon, "with great sharpness and freedom, which, now there was no danger of being outvoted, was not restrained; and therefore used as an argument against those who were gone upon pretence that they were not suffered to deliver their opinion freely in the house, which could not be believed, when all men knew what liberty Mr. Waller took, and spoke every day with impunity against the sense and proceedings of the house."<sup>2</sup>

Waller, as he continued to sit, was one of the commissioners nominated by the parliament to treat with the king at Oxford; and when they were presented, the King said to him, "Though you are the last, you are not the lowest nor the least in my favour."<sup>3</sup> Whitlock, who being another of the commissioners, was witness of this kindness, imputes it to the king's knowledge of the plot in which Waller appeared afterwards to have been engaged against the parliament. Fenton, with equal probability, believes that his attempt to promote the royal cause arose from his sensibility of the king's tenderness. Whitlock says nothing of his behaviour at Oxford: he was sent with several others to add pomp to the commission, but was not one of those to whom the trust of treating was imparted.

The engagement, known by the name of Waller's plot, was soon afterwards discovered. Waller had a brother-in-law, Tomkyns, who was clerk of the Queen's council, and at the same time had a very numerous acquaintance, and great influence, in the city. Waller and he, conversing with great confidence, told both their own secrets and those of their friends; and, surveying the wide extent of

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of the Rebellion*, ed. 1826, vol. iv. p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Whitelocke's Memorials*, pp. 67, 70, ed. 1732.



their conversation, imagined that they found in the majority of all ranks great disapprobation of the violence of the Commons, and unwillingness to continue the war. They knew that many favoured the king, whose fear concealed their loyalty; and many desired peace, though they durst not oppose the clamour for war; and they imagined that if those who had these good intentions could be informed of their own strength, and enabled by intelligence to act together, they might overpower the fury of sedition, by refusing to comply with the ordinance for the twentieth part, and the other taxes levied for the support of the rebel army, and by uniting great numbers in a petition for peace. They proceeded with great caution. Three only met in one place, and no man was allowed to impart the plot to more than two others, so that if any should be suspected or seized, more than three could not be endangered.

Lord Conway joined in the design, and, Clarendon imagines,<sup>1</sup> incidentally mingled, as he was a soldier, some martial hopes or projects, which however were only mentioned, the main design being to bring the loyal inhabitants to the knowledge of each other; for which purpose there was to be appointed one in every district, to distinguish the friends of the king, the adherents to the parliament, and the neutrals. How far they proceeded does not appear; the result of their enquiry, as Pym declared,\* was, that within the walls for one that was for the Royalists, there were three against them; but that without

\* *Parliamentary History*, vol. xii.—JOHNSON.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. pp. 60, 61.

<sup>2</sup> This is from Pym's *Narrative of Waller's Plot*, as he delivered it at the Guildhall on the 8th June, 1643, being the orator chosen to speak for the deputation sent by the Commons. Pym died in December of the same year. *Parliamentary History*, vol. iii. p. 125.



the walls for one that was against them, there were five for them. Whether this was said from knowledge or guess, was perhaps never enquired.

It is the opinion of Clarendon,<sup>1</sup> that in Waller's plan no violence or sanguinary resistance was comprised; that he intended only to abate the confidence of the rebels by publick declarations, and to weaken their powers by an opposition to new supplies. This, in calmer times, and more than this, is done without fear; but such was the acrimony of the commons, that no method of obstructing them was safe.

About this time another design was formed by Sir Nicholas Crispe, a man of loyalty that deserves perpetual remembrance; when he was a merchant in the city, he gave and procured the king, in his exigences, an hundred thousand pounds; and, when he was driven from the Exchange, raised a regiment, and commanded it.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Nicholas flattered himself with an opinion, that some provocation would so much exasperate, or some opportunity so much encourage, the King's friends in the city, that they would break out in open resistance, and then would want only a lawful standard, and an authorised commander; and extorted from the King, whose judgment too frequently yielded to importunity, a commission of array, directed to such as he thought proper to nominate, which was sent to London by the Lady Aubigney.<sup>3</sup> She knew not what she carried, but was to deliver it on the

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> He survived the Restoration, and dying 26th Feb. 1665, was buried in Hammersmith Church in which he had ordered to be erected a brass bust of Charles I. "as a grateful commemoration of that glorious martyr." The bust is still in the church.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Howard, then the widow of Lord Aubigny, who fell at Edge Hill. She was imprisoned for her share in Waller's plot; escaped to the Hague, married the Earl of Newburgh, and died abroad in 1649.—P. CUNNINGHAM.



communication of a certain token which Sir Nicholas imparted.

This commission could be only intended to lie ready till the time should require it. To have attempted to raise any forces, would have been certain destruction; it could be of use only when the forces should appear. This was, however, an act preparatory to martial hostility. Crispe would undoubtedly have put an end to the session of parliament, had his strength been equal to his zeal; and out of the design of Crispe, which involved very little danger, and that of Waller, which was an act purely civil, they compounded a horrid and dreadful plot.

The discovery of Waller's design is variously related. In Clarendon's "History" it is told,<sup>1</sup> that a servant of Tomkyns, lurking behind the hangings when his master was in conference with Waller, heard enough to qualify him for an informer, and carried his intelligence to Pym. A manuscript, quoted in the "Life of Waller,"<sup>2</sup> relates, that "he was betrayed by his sister Price, and her presbyterian chaplain Mr. Goode, who stole some of his papers; and if he had not strangely dreamed the night before, that his sister had betrayed him, and thereupon burnt the rest of his papers by the fire that was in his chimney, he had certainly lost his life by it." The question cannot be decided. It is not unreasonable to believe that the men in power, receiving intelligence from the sister, would employ the servant of Tomkyns to listen at the conference, that they might avoid an act so offensive as that of destroying the brother by the sister's testimony.

The plot was published in the most terrifick manner. On the 31st of May (1643), at a solemn fast, when they were listening to the sermon, a messenger entered the

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xxviii.



church,<sup>1</sup> and communicated his errand to Pym, who whispered it to others that were placed near him, and then went with them out of the church, leaving the rest in solicitude and amazement. They immediately sent guards to proper places, and that night apprehended Tomkyns and Waller; having yet traced nothing but that letters had been intercepted, from which it appeared that the parliament and the city were soon to be delivered into the hands of the cavaliers.

They perhaps yet knew little themselves, beyond some general and indistinct notices. "But Waller," says Clarendon, "was so confounded with fear, that he confessed whatever he had heard, said, thought, or seen; all that he knew of himself, and all that he suspected of others, without concealing any person, of what degree or quality soever, or any discourse which he had ever upon any occasion entertained with them; what such and such ladies of great honour, to whom, upon the credit of his wit and great reputation, he had been admitted, had spoke to him in their chambers upon the proceedings in the Houses, and how they encouraged him to oppose them; what correspondence and intercourse they had with some Ministers of State at Oxford, and how they had conveyed all intelligence thither."<sup>2</sup> He accused the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway as co-operating in the transaction; and testified that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himself disposed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the Parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

He undoubtedly confessed much, which they could never have discovered, and perhaps somewhat which they would wish to have been suppressed; for it is inconvenient, in the

<sup>1</sup> St. Margaret's, Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon's *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 67, ed. 1826.



conflict of factions, to have that disaffection known which cannot safely be punished.

Tomkyns was seized on the same night with Waller, and appears likewise to have partaken of his cowardice; for he gave notice of Crispe's commission of array, of which Clarendon never knew how it was discovered. Tomkyns had been sent with the token appointed, to demand it from Lady Aubigney, and had buried it in his garden, where, by his direction, it was dug up; and thus the rebels obtained, what Clarendon confesses them to have had, the original copy.

It can raise no wonder that they formed one plot out of these two designs, however remote from each other, when they saw the same agent employed in both, and found the commission of array in the hands of him who was employed in collecting the opinions and affections of the people.

Of the plot, thus combined, they took care to make the most. They sent Pym among the citizens, to tell them of their imminent danger, and happy escape; and inform them, that the design was to seize the "Lord Mayor and all the Committee of Militia, and would not spare one of them." They drew up a vow and covenant, to be taken by every member of either house, by which he declared his detestation of all conspiracies against the parliament, and his resolution to detect and oppose them. They then appointed a day of thanksgiving for this wonderful delivery; which shut out, says Clarendon,<sup>1</sup> all doubts whether there had been such a deliverance, and whether the plot was real or fictitious.

On June 11, the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway were committed, one to the custody of the mayor, and the other of the sheriff; but their lands and goods were not seized.

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 70.



Waller was still to immerse himself deeper in ignominy. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge, and there was no evidence against them but the confession of Waller, of which undoubtedly many would be inclined to question the veracity. With these doubts he was so much terrified, that he endeavoured to persuade Portland to a declaration like his own, by a letter extant in Fenton's edition.<sup>1</sup> "But for me," says he, "you had never known any thing of this business, which was prepared for another; and therefore I cannot imagine why you should hide it so far as to contract your own ruin by concealing it, and persisting unreasonably to hide that truth, which, without you, already is, and will every day be made more, manifest. Can you imagine yourself bound in honour to keep that secret, which is already revealed by another; or possible it should still be a secret, which is known to one of the other sex?—If you persist to be cruel to yourself for their sakes who deserve it not, it will nevertheless be made appear, ere long, I fear, to your ruin. Surely, if I had the happiness to wait on you, I could move you to compassionate both yourself and me, who, desperate as my case is, am desirous to die with the honour of being known to have declared the truth. You have no reason to contend to hide what is already revealed—inconsiderately to throw away yourself, for the interest of others, to whom you are less obliged than you are aware of."

This persuasion seems to have had little effect. Portland sent (June 29) a letter to the Lords, to tell them, that he "is in custody, as he conceives, without any charge; and that, by what Mr. Waller hath threatened him with since he was imprisoned, he doth apprehend a very cruel, long, and ruinous restraint:—He therefore prays, that he may not find the effects of Mr. Waller's threats, by a long

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 280.



and close imprisonment; but may be speedily brought to a legal trial, and then he is confident the vanity and falsehood of those informations which have been given against him will appear."

In consequence of this letter, the Lords ordered Portland and Waller to be confronted; when the one repeated his charge, and the other his denial. The examination of the plot being continued (July 1), Thinn, usher of the house of Lords, deposed, that Mr. Waller having had a conference with the Lord Portland in an upper room, Lord Portland said, when he came down, "Do me the favour to tell my Lord Northumberland, that Mr. Waller has extremely pressed me to save my own life and his, by throwing the blame upon the Lord Conway and the Earl of Northumberland."

Waller, in his letter to Portland, tells him of the reasons which he could urge with resistless efficacy in a personal conference; but he over-rated his own oratory; his vehemence, whether of persuasion or intreaty, was returned with contempt.

One of his arguments with Portland is, that the plot is already known to a woman. This woman was doubtless Lady Aubigny, who, upon this occasion, was committed to custody; but who, in reality, when she delivered the commission, knew not what it was.

The parliament then proceeded against the conspirators, and committed their trial to a council of war. Tomkyns and Chaloner were hanged near their own doors. Tomkyns, when he came to die, said it was a *foolish business*; and indeed there seems to have been no hope that it should escape discovery; for though never more than three met at a time, yet a design so extensive must, by necessity, be communicated to many, who could not be expected to be all faithful, and all prudent. Chaloner was attended at his execution by Hugh Peters. His crime was that he had



commission to raise money for the King; but, it appears not that the money was to be expended upon the advancement of either Crispe or Waller's plot.

The Earl of Northumberland, being too great for prosecution, was only once examined before the Lords. The Earl of Portland and lord Conway persisting to deny the charge, and no testimony but Waller's yet appearing against them, were, after a long imprisonment, admitted to bail. Hassel, the King's messenger, who carried the letters to Oxford, died the night before his trial. Hampden escaped death, perhaps by the interest of his family; but was kept in prison to the end of his life. They whose names were inserted in the commission of array were not capitally punished, as it could not be proved that they had consented to their own nomination; but they were considered as malignants, and their estates were seized.

"Waller, though confessedly," says Clarendon,<sup>2</sup> "the most guilty, with incredible dissimulation affected such a remorse of conscience, that his trial was put off, out of Christian compassion, till he might recover his understanding." What use he made of this interval, with what liberality and success he distributed flattery and money, and how, when he was brought (July 4) before the House, he confessed and lamented, and submitted and implored, may be read in the "History of the Rebellion," (B. vii.). The speech, to which Clarendon ascribes the preservation of his *dear-bought life*, is inserted in his works. The great historian, however, seems to have been mistaken<sup>3</sup> in relating that *he prevailed* in the principal part of his supplication, *not to be tried by a Council of War*; for, according to Whitlock,<sup>4</sup> he was by expulsion from the House aban-

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hampden, a kinsman of John Hampden.—P. COXINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Whitlocke, p. 70, ed. 1732.



done to the tribunal which he so much dreaded, and, being tried and condemned, was reprieved by Essex; but after a year's imprisonment, in which time resentment grew less acrimonious, paying a fine of ten thousand pounds, he was permitted *to recollect himself in another country.*<sup>1</sup>

Of his behaviour<sup>2</sup> in this part of his life, it is not necessary to direct the reader's opinion. "Let us not," says his last ingenious biographer,<sup>3</sup> "condemn him with untempered severity, because he was not a prodigy which the world hath seldom seen, because his character included not the poet, the orator, and the hero."

For the place of his exile he chose France, and staid some time at Roan,<sup>4</sup> where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite, and his amanuensis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great splendor and hospitality; and from time to time amused himself with poetry, in which he sometimes speaks of the rebels, and their usurpation, in the natural language of an honest man.

At last it became necessary, for his support, to sell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he said, at last *to the rump jewel*, he solicited from Cromwell permission to return, and obtained it by the interest of colonel Scroop, to whom his sister was married. Upon the remains of a fortune, which the danger of his life had very much diminished, he lived at Hall-barn, a house built by him-

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Hist. Rebell.* vol. iv. p. 79, ed. 1826.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, p. 146, 5th ed. Bohn, speaks thus plainly,

"Waller, for being more a knave than the rest, and impeaching his complices, was permitted to buy his life for £10,000." See also Waller's Letter to Arthur Goodwyn, given in Nugent's *Memorials of Hampden*, vol. ii. p. 419. Lond. 1832.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Waller*, by Percival Stockdale, prefixed to his Works. Lond. 1772, p. lxxiii.

<sup>4</sup> Rouen.



self, very near to Beaconsfield,<sup>1</sup> where his mother resided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cause, and, when Cromwell visited her, used to reproach him; he, in return, would throw a napkin at her, and say he would not dispute with his aunt; but finding in time that she acted for the king, as well as talked, he made her a prisoner to her own daughter, in her own house. If he would do any thing, he could not do less.

Cromwell, now protector, received Waller, as his kinsman, to familiar conversation. Waller, as he used to relate, found him sufficiently versed in ancient history; and when any of his enthusiastick friends came to advise or consult him, could sometimes overhear him discoursing in the cant of the times: but, when he returned, he would say, "Cousin Waller, I must talk to these men in their own way:" and resumed the common style of conversation.<sup>2</sup>

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous panegyrick,<sup>3</sup> which has been always considered as the first of his poetical productions. His choice of encomiastick topicks is very judicious; for he considers Cromwell in his exaltation, without enquiring how he attained it; there is consequently no mention of the rebel or the regicide. All the former part of his hero's life is veiled with shades; and nothing is brought to view but the chief, the governor, the defender of England's honour, and the

<sup>1</sup> The manor of Beaconsfield, which had previously appertained to Burnham Abbey, belonged to Waller's family. He himself died at Hall-barn and his widow continued to live there till her death in 1708. The part of the property called "Gregories" had been sold previously, and was bought eventually by Burke, whose genial hospitality long made that house, rebuilt and adorned, the resort of persons of distinction, both English and foreign. See *Life of Edmund Burke*, by Peter Burke, 1853, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, p. 113. Mr. Cunningham observes that Waller did not include this poem in any edition of his poems.



enlarger of her dominion. The act of violence by which he obtained the supreme power is lightly treated, and decently justified. It was certainly to be desired that the detestable band should be dissolved, which had destroyed the church, murdered the King, and filled the nation with tumult and oppression; yet Cromwell had not the right of dissolving them, for all that he had before done could be justified only by supposing them invested with lawful authority. But combinations of wickedness would overwhelm the world by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not those who have long practised perfidy, grow faithless to each other.

In the poem on the war with Spain<sup>1</sup> are some passages at least equal to the best parts of the panegyrick; and in the conclusion, the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery, by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell was very desirous, as appears from his conversation, related by Whitlock,<sup>2</sup> of adding the title to the power of monarchy, and is supposed to have been with-held from it partly by fear of the army, and partly by fear of the laws, which, when he should govern by the name of King, would have restrained his authority. When therefore a deputation was solemnly sent to invite him to the Crown, he, after a long conference, refused it; but is said to have fainted in his coach, when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector<sup>3</sup> seems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the same occasion;<sup>4</sup> but they were young men, struggling into notice, and hoping for some favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Whitlock gives a long conversation with Cromwell to this effect. *Memorials*, pp. 548-551. Lond. 1732.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> These three poems were published together. Lond. 1659. 4to.



expect: he had received nothing but his pardon from Cromwell, and was not likely to ask any thing from those who should succeed him.

Soon afterwards the Restoration supplied him with another subject; and he exerted his imagination, his elegance, and his melody, with equal alacrity, for Charles the Second. It is not possible to read, without some contempt and indignation, poems of the same author, ascribing the highest degree of *power and piety* to Charles the First, then transferring the same *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell; now inviting Oliver to take the Crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his testimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praises as effusions of reverence; they could consider them but as the labour of invention, and the tribute of dependence.

Poets, indeed, profess fiction; but the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth; and he that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be scorned as a prostituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue.

The Congratulation was considered as inferior in poetical merit to the Panegyrick; and it is reported, that when the king told Waller of the disparity, he answered, "Poets, Sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth."<sup>1</sup>

The Congratulation is indeed not inferior to the Panegyrick, either by decay of genius, or for want of diligence; but because Cromwell had done much, and Charles had done little. Cromwell wanted nothing to raise him to heroick excellence but virtue; and virtue his poet thought himself at liberty to supply. Charles had yet only the merit of struggling without success, and suffering without despair. A life of escapes and indigence could supply poetry with no splendid images.

<sup>1</sup> *Menagiana*, vol. ii. p. 47.



In the first parliament summoned by Charles the Second (March 8, 1661), Waller sat for Hastings in Sussex, and served for different places in all the parliaments of that reign. In a time when fancy and gaiety were the most powerful recommendations to regard, it is not likely that Waller was forgotten. He passed his time in the company that was highest, both in rank and wit, from which even his obstinate sobriety did not exclude him. Though he drank water, he was enabled by his fertility of mind to heighten the mirth of Bacchanalian assemblies; and Mr. Saville said, that "no man in England should keep him company without drinking but Ned Waller."<sup>1</sup>

The praise given him by St. Evremond<sup>2</sup> is a proof of his reputation; for it was only by his reputation that he could be known, as a writer, to a man who, though he lived a great part of a long life upon an English pension, never condescended to understand the language of the nation that maintained him.

In parliament, "he was," says Burnet,<sup>3</sup> "the delight of the house, and though old said the liveliest things of any among them." This, however, is said in his account of the year seventy-five, when Waller was only seventy. His name as a speaker occurs often in Grey's "Collections;"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xlvii.

<sup>2</sup> Charles de St. Evremond (1613-1703), a French scholar and soldier. Exiled from France in 1670, he was invited to England by Charles II. who gave him a pension of £300 a year. His fame, during a long life, as a brilliant star in the polished aristocracy of France and England, "gave for a time," says Hallam, "a lustre to his writings, the general character of which is most trifling, though he sometimes rises to literary criticism." His works were collected after his death. His chief merit is his style and manner. See Pope's character of him, Spence, *Anec.* ed. Singer, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Debates of the House of Commons, from 1667 to 1694*, by Anchitell Grey, 10 vols. 1763.



but I have found no extracts that can be more quoted as exhibiting sallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.<sup>1</sup>

He was of such consideration, that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, it drew says Burnet, a lively reflection from Waller the celebrated wit. "He said, the house of commons had resolved that the duke should not reign after the king's death; but the king, in opposition to them, had resolved that he should reign even in his life."<sup>2</sup> If there appear no extraordinary *liveliness* in this *remark*, yet its reception proves the speaker to have been a *celebrated wit*, to have had a name which the men of wit were proud of mentioning.

He did not suffer his reputation to die gradually away which may easily happen in a long life, but renewed his claim to poetical distinction from time to time, as occasions were offered, either by publick events or private incidents and, contenting himself with the influence of his muse, loving quiet better than influence, he never accepted any office of magistracy.

He was not, however, without some attention to his fortune; for he asked from the King (in 1665) the provostship of Eaton College, and obtained it; but Clarendon refused to put the seal to the grant, alleging that it could be held only by a clergyman. It is known that Sir Henry Wotton qualified himself for it by Deacon's orders.

To this opposition, the "*Biographia*"<sup>3</sup> imputes the

<sup>1</sup> But Waller asked some searching questions of the House. On April 15th, 1641, he went to the root of the matter, by enquiring, "what were the fundamental laws of England?" *Gardiner, Hist. Engl.* vol. iii. p. 336; and on Nov. 6th, 1641, he characterized Pym's *Additional Declaration* as a "declaration that the House was absolved from its duty" because Strafford had declared the King absolved from all rules of government. *Ibid.* vol. x. p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Burnet's *Hist. Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 416, ed. 1823.

<sup>3</sup> *Biographia Britannica*, vol. vi. p. 411. 1766.



violence and acrimony with which Waller joined Buckingham's faction in the prosecution of Clarendon. The motive was illiberal and dishonest, and showed that more than sixty years had not been able to teach him morality. His accusation is such as conscience can hardly be supposed to dictate without the help of malice. "We were to be governed by janizaries instead of parliaments, and are in danger from a worse plot than that of the fifth of November; then, if the Lords and commons had been destroyed, there had been a succession; but here both had been destroyed for ever." This is the language of a man who is glad of an opportunity to rail, and ready to sacrifice truth to interest at one time, and to anger at another.

A year after the Chancellor's banishment, another vacancy gave him encouragement for another petition, which the King referred to the council, who after hearing the question argued by lawyers for three days, determined that the office could be held only by a clergyman, according to the act of uniformity, since the provosts<sup>1</sup> had always received institution, as for a parsonage, from the bishops of Lincoln. The King then said, he could not break the law which he had made; and Dr. Zachary Cradock,<sup>2</sup> famous for a single sermon, at most for two sermons, was chosen by the Fellows.

That he asked anything else is not known; it is certain that he obtained nothing, though he continued obsequious to the court through the rest of Charles's reign.

At the accession of King James (in 1685) he was chosen for parliament, being then fourscore, at Saltash in Corn-

<sup>1</sup> Of Eton.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Zachary Cradock (1633-1695), Canon of Chichester, Fellow of Eton and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to Charles II. Celebrated as a preacher. The famous sermon was preached before the king, Feb. 10th, 1677-8. It was published and went through five editions before 1695, and was reprinted in 1740 and 1742. Another sermon was issued posthumous, in 1706.



wall; and wrote a "Presage of the Downfall of the Turkish Empire," which he presented to the King on his birthday. It is remarked, by his commentator Fenton, that in reading Tasso he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity to the Turks, which never left him. James, however, having soon after begun what he thought a holy war at home, made haste to put all molestation of the Turks out of his power.

James treated him with kindness and familiarity, which instances are given by the writer of his "Life." One day, taking him into the closet, the King asked him how he liked one of the pictures: "My eyes," said Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The king said, it was the princess of Orange. "She is," said Waller, "like the greatest woman in the world." The King asked who was that? and was answered, Queen Elizabeth. "I wonder," said the King, "you should think so; but I must confess she had a wise council." "And, Sir," said Waller, "did you ever know a fool chuse a wise one?" Such is the story,<sup>1</sup> which I once heard of some other man. Pointed axioms, and acute replies, fly loose about the world, and are assigned successively to those whom it may be the fashion to celebrate.

When the King knew that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch,<sup>2</sup> a clergyman, he ordered a French gentleman to tell him, that "the King wondered he could think of marrying his daughter to a falling church." "The King," says Waller, "does me great honour, in taking notice of my domestick affairs; but I have lived long enough to observe that this falling church has got a trick of rising again."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, pp. li. lii.

<sup>2</sup> Birch, Peter, D.D. born 1652, of Ch. Ch. Oxford, Prebendary of Westminster, author of some political sermons.

<sup>3</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, p. lii.



He took notice to his friends of the King's conduct ; and said, that " he would be left like a whale upon the strand." Whether he was privy to any of the transactions which ended in the Revolution, is not known. His heir joined the prince of Orange.

Having now attained an age beyond which the laws of nature seldom suffer life to be extended, otherwise than by a future state, he seems to have turned his mind upon preparation for the decisive hour, and therefore consecrated his poetry to devotion. It is pleasing to discover that his piety was without weakness ; that his intellectual powers continued vigorous ; and that the lines which he composed when *he, for age, could neither read nor write*, are not inferior to the effusions of his youth.

Towards the decline of life, he bought a small house, with a little land, at Colshill ; and said, " he should be glad to die, like the stag, where he was roused." <sup>1</sup> This, however, did not happen. When he was at Beaconsfield, he found his legs grow tumid : he went to Windsor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then attended the King, and requested him, as both a friend and physician, to tell him, *what that swelling meant*. " Sir," answered Scarborough, " your blood will run no longer." Waller repeated some lines of Virgil, and went home to die. <sup>2</sup>

As the disease increased upon him, he composed himself for his departure ; and calling upon Dr. Birch to give him the holy sacrament, he desired his children to take it with him, and made an earnest declaration of his faith in Christianity. It now appeared, what part of his conversation with the great could be remembered with delight. He related, that being present when the duke of Buckingham talked profanely before King Charles, he said to him, " My Lord, I am a great deal older than your grace, and have, I believe, heard more arguments for atheism than

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. lvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. lvi.



ever your grace did; but I have lived long enough to see there is nothing in them; and so, I hope, your grace will." <sup>1</sup>

He died October 21, 1687, and was buried at Beaconsfield, with a monument erected by his son's executors, for which Rymer wrote the inscription, and which I hope is now rescued from dilapidation.

He left several children by his second wife; of whom his daughter was married to Dr. Birch. Benjamin, the eldest son, was disinherited, and sent to New Jersey, as wanting common understanding. Edmund, the second son, inherited the estate, and represented Agmondesham in parliament, but at last turned Quaker. William, the third son, was a merchant in London. Stephen, the fourth, was an eminent Doctor of Laws, and one of the Commissioners for the Union. There is said to have been a fifth, of whom no account has descended. <sup>2</sup>

The character of Waller, both moral and intellectual has been drawn by Clarendon, to whom he was familiarly known, with nicety, which certainly none to whom he was not known can presume to emulate. It is therefore inserted here, with such remarks as others have supplied; after which, nothing remains but a critical examination of his poetry.

"Edmund Waller," says Clarendon, "was born to a very fair estate, by the parsimony, or frugality, of a wise father and mother; and he thought it so commendable an advantage, that he resolved to improve it with his utmost care, upon which in his nature he was too much intent; and, in order to that, he was so much reserved and retired, that he was scarce ever heard of, till by his address and dexterity he had gotten a very rich wife in the city, against

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. lvii.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson and Boswell found a great grandson of Waller at Aberdeen. Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. v. p. 63.



all the recommendation and countenance and authority of the Court, which was thoroughly engaged on the behalf of Mr. Crofts ; and which used to be successful in that age, against any opposition. He had the good fortune to have an alliance and friendship with Dr. Morley, who had assisted and instructed him in the reading many good books, to which his natural parts and promptitude inclined him, especially the poets ; and at the age when other men used to give over writing verses (for he was near thirty years when he first engaged himself in that exercise ; at least, that he was known to do so), he surprised the town with two or three pieces of that kind ; as if a tenth Muse had been newly born, to cherish drooping poetry. The Doctor at that time brought him into that company, which was most celebrated for good conversation ; where he was received and esteemed, with great applause and respect. He was a very pleasant discourser, in earnest and in jest, and therefore very grateful to all kind of company, where he was not the less esteemed for being very rich.

“He had been even nursed in parliaments, where he sat when he was very young ; and so, when they were resumed again (after a long intermission), he appeared in those assemblies with great advantage ; having a graceful way of speaking, and, by thinking much on several arguments (which his temper and complexion, that had much of melancholic, inclined him to), he seemed often to speak upon the sudden, when the occasion had only administered the opportunity of saying what he had thoroughly considered, which gave a great lustre to all he said ; which yet was rather of delight than weight. There needs no more be said to extol the excellence and power of his wit, and pleasantness of his conversation, than that it was of magnitude enough to cover a world of very great faults ; that is, so to cover them, that they were not taken notice of



to his reproach; viz. a narrowness in his nature to the lowest degree; an abjectness and want of courage to support him in any virtuous undertaking; an insinuation and servile flattery to the height, the vainest and most imperious nature could be contented with; that it preserved and won his life from those who were most resolved to take it, and in an occasion in which he ought to have been ambitious to have lost it; and then preserved him again, from the reproach and contempt that was due to him, for so preserving it, and for vindicating it at such a price; that it had power to reconcile him to those, whom he had most offended and provoked; and continued to his age with that rare felicity, that his company was acceptable, where his spirit was odious; and he was at least pitied, where he most detested.”<sup>1</sup>

Such is the account of Clarendon; on which it may not be improper to make some remarks.

“He was very little known till he had obtained a rich wife in the city.”

He obtained a rich wife about the age of three-and-twenty; an age before which few men are conspicuous much to their advantage. He was known, however, in parliament and at court: and, if he spent part of his time in privacy, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he endeavoured the improvement of his mind as well as of his fortune.

That Clarendon might misjudge the motive of his retirement is the more probable, because he has evidently mistaken the commencement of his poetry, which he supposes him not to have attempted before thirty. As his first pieces were perhaps not printed, the succession of his compositions was not known; and Clarendon, who cannot be imagined to have been very studious of poetry, did not rectify his first opinion by consulting Waller's book.

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Life*, vol. i. p. 53, ed. 1827.



Clarendon observes, that he was introduced to the wits of the age by Dr. Morley; <sup>1</sup> but the writer of his Life <sup>2</sup> relates that he was already among them, when, hearing a noise in the street, and enquiring the cause, they found a son of Ben Jonson under an arrest. This was Morley, whom Waller set free at the expence of one hundred pounds, took him into the country as director of his studies, and then procured him admission into the company of the friends of literature. Of this fact, Clarendon had a nearer knowledge than the biographer, and is therefore more to be credited.

The account of Waller's parliamentary eloquence is seconded by Burnet, who, though he calls him "the delight of the house," adds, that "he was only concerned to say that, which should make him be applauded, he never laid the business of the House to heart, being a vain and empty though a witty man." <sup>3</sup>

Of his insinuation and flattery it is not unreasonable to believe that the truth is told. Ascham, in his elegant description of those whom in modern language we term Wits, says, that they are *open flatterers, and privy mockers*. Waller shewed a little of both, when, upon sight of the Dutchess of Newcastle's verses on the death of a Stag, he declared that he would give all his own compositions to have written them; and, being charged with the exorbitance of his adulation, answered, that "nothing was too much to be given, that a Lady might be saved from the disgrace of such a vile performance." <sup>4</sup> This, however, was no very mischievous or very unusual deviation from truth: had his hypocrisy been confined to such transactions, he might have been forgiven, though not praised; for who forbears to flatter an author or a lady?

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Life*, vol. i. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Burnet's *Hist. Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 81, ed. 1823.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, p. 206, ed. 1705.



Of the laxity of his political principles, and the weakness of his resolution, he experienced the natural effect, by losing the esteem of every party. From Cromwell he had only his recall; and from Charles the Second, who delighted in his company, he obtained only the pardon of his relation Hampden, and the safety of Hampden's son.

As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing, and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His deviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden, for whose sake he prosecuted Crawley with great bitterness: and the invective which he pronounced on that occasion was so popular, that twenty thousand copies are said by his biographer to have been sold in one day.

It is confessed that his faults still left him many friends, at least many companions. His convivial power of pleasing is universally acknowledged; but those who conversed with him intimately, found him not only passionate, especially in his old age, but resentful; so that the interposition of friends was sometimes necessary.

His wit and his poetry naturally connected him with the polite writers of his time: he was joined with Lord Buckhurst in the translation of Corneille's *Pompey*; and is said to have added his help to that of Cowley in the original draught of the *Rehearsal*.<sup>1</sup>

The care of his fortune, which Clarendon imputes to him in a degree little less than criminal, was either not constant or not successful; for, having inherited a patrimony of three thousand five hundred a year in the time of James the First, and augmented it at least by one wealthy marriage, he left, about the time of the Revolution, an income of not more than twelve or thirteen hundred; which, when the different value of money is reckoned, will be found

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xlvii.



perhaps not more than a fourth part of what he once possessed.

Of this diminution, part was the consequence of the gifts which he was forced to scatter, and the fine which he was condemned to pay at the detection of his plot; and if his estate, as is related in his Life, was sequestered, he had probably contracted debts when he lived in exile; for we are told that at Paris he lived in splendor, and was the only Englishman, except the Lord St. Albans, that kept a table.

His unlucky plot compelled him to sell a thousand a year; of the waste of the rest there is no account, except that he is confessed by his biographer to have been a bad economist. He seems to have deviated from the common practice; to have been a hoarder in his first years, and a squanderer in his last.

Of his course of studies, or choice of books, nothing is known more than that he professed himself unable to read Chapman's translation of Homer<sup>1</sup> without rapture. His opinion concerning the duty of a poet is contained in his declaration,<sup>2</sup> that "he would blot from his works any line that did not contain some motive to virtue."<sup>3</sup>

The characters, by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings, are spriteliness and dignity; in his smaller pieces, he endeavours to be gay; in the larger, to be great.

<sup>1</sup> Pope acknowledges "that a free daring spirit animates this translation, which is something like what one might imagine Homer himself would have written before he arrived at years of discretion." *Warton*, vol. iv. p. 269, and Keats's grand sonnet (No. XI. p. 40, *Palgrave's Keats*) on first looking into Chapman's *Homer*, is too well known to need repetition.

<sup>2</sup> Fenton's *Observations* at the end of Waller's *Poems*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell thinks that in this Life Johnson "satisfies his readers how nobly he might have executed a *Tory History* of his country." *Boswell's Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 5.



Of his airy and light productions, the chief source is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence, which has descended to us from the Gothic ages. As his poems are commonly occasional, and his addresses personal, he was not so liberally supplied with grand as with soft images; for beauty is more easily found than magnanimity.

The delicacy, which he cultivated, restrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the slightest matter. He has therefore in his whole volume nothing burlesque, and seldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He seems always to do his best; though his subjects are often unworthy of his care. It is not easy to think without some contempt on an author, who is growing illustrious in his own opinion by verses, at one time, "To a Lady, who can do any thing, but sleep, when she pleases." At another, "To a Lady, who can sleep, when she pleases." Now, "To a Lady, on her passing through a crowd of people." Then, "On a braid of divers colours woven by four fair Ladies:" "On a tree cut in paper:" or, "To a Lady, from whom he received the copy of verses on the paper-tree, which for many years had been missing."

Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We still read the "Dove" of Anacreon, and "Sparrow" of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleases himself with a performance, which owes nothing to the subject. But compositions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful: they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration; or they are blossoms to be valued only as they foretell fruits.

Among Waller's little poems are some, which their excellency ought to secure from oblivion; as, "To Amoret,"

<sup>1</sup> Fenton's edition, 1730, p. 44.



comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and *Sacharissa*; and the verses "On Love," that begin, *Anger in hasty words or blows*.<sup>1</sup>

In others he is not equally successful; sometimes his thoughts are deficient, and sometimes his expression.

The numbers are not always musical; as,

"Fair Venus, in thy soft arms  
The god of rage confine;  
For thy whispers are the charms  
Which only can divert his fierce design.  
What though he frown, and to tumult do incline;  
Thou the flame  
Kindled in his breast canst tame,  
With that snow which unmelted lies on thine."<sup>2</sup>

He seldom indeed fetches an amorous sentiment from the depths of science; his thoughts are for the most part easily understood, and his images such as the superficies of nature readily supplies; he has a just claim to popularity, because he writes to common degrees of knowledge, and is free at least from philosophical pedantry, unless perhaps the end of a song "To the Sun" may be excepted, in which he is too much a Copernican. To which may be added, the simile of the "Palm" in the verses "On her passing through a crowd;" and a line in a more serious poem on the "Restoration," about vipers and treacle, which can only be understood by those who happen to know the composition of the "Theriaca."<sup>3</sup>

His thoughts are sometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural:

"——The plants admire,  
No less than those of old did Orpheus' lyre;  
If she sit down, with tops all tow'rds her bow'd;  
They round about her into arbours crowd:

<sup>1</sup> P. 60.

<sup>2</sup> P. 19.

<sup>3</sup> This Greek poem by Nicander (B.C. *circ.* 185-135), first published 1499, treats of venomous animals and the wounds inflicted by them.



Or if she walks, in even ranks they stand,  
Like some well-marshal'd and obsequious band." <sup>1</sup>

In [an] other place :

"While in the park I sing, the listening deer  
Attend my passion, and forget to fear :  
When to the beeches I report my flame,  
They bow their heads, as if they felt the same :  
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,  
With loud complaints they answer me in showers.  
To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,  
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven !" <sup>2</sup>

On the head of a Stag : <sup>3</sup>

"O fertile head ! which every year  
Could such a crop of wonder bear !  
The teeming earth did never bring  
So soon, so hard, so huge a thing :  
Which might it never have been cast,  
Each year's growth added to the last,  
These lofty branches had supply'd  
The Earth's bold son's prodigious pride :  
Heaven with these engines had been scal'd,  
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd."

Sometimes, having succeeded in the first part, he makes a feeble conclusion. In the song of "Sacharissa's and Amoret's Friendship," the two last stanzas ought to have been omitted.

His images of gallantry are not always in the highest degree delicate. <sup>4</sup>

"Then shall my love this doubt displace,  
And gain such trust, that I may come  
And banquet sometimes on thy face,  
But make my constant meals at home."

Some applications may be thought too remote and un- consequential : as in the verses on the "Lady dancing :

"The sun in figures such as these,  
Joys with the moon to play :

<sup>1</sup> P. 33.

<sup>2</sup> P. 42.

<sup>3</sup> P. 84.

<sup>4</sup> P. 66.



To the sweet strains they advance,  
Which do result from their own spheres ;  
As this nymph's dance  
Moves with the numbers which she hears." <sup>1</sup>

Sometimes a thought, which might perhaps fill a distich, is expanded and attenuated till it grows weak and almost evanescent.

" Chloris ! since first our calm of peace  
Was frightened hence, this good we find,  
Your favours with your fears increase,  
And growing mischiefs make you kind.  
So the fair tree, which still preserves  
Her fruit, and state, while no wind blows,  
In storms from that uprightness swerves ;  
And the glad earth about her strows  
With treasure from her yielding boughs." <sup>2</sup>

His images are not always distinct ; as, in the following passage, he confounds *Love* as a person with *love* as a passion :

" Some other nymphs, with colours faint,  
And pencil slow, may Cupid paint,  
And a weak heart in time destroy ;  
She has a stamp, and prints the Boy :  
Can, with a single look, inflame  
The coldest breast, the rudest tame." <sup>3</sup>

His sallies of casual flattery are sometimes elegant and happy, as that *in return for the Silver Pen* ; and sometimes empty and trifling, as that *upon the Card torn by the Queen*. There are a few lines *written in the Dutchess's Tasso*, which he is said by Fenton to have kept a summer under correction. It happened to Waller, as to others, that his success was not always in proportion to his labour.

Of these petty compositions, neither the beauties nor the faults deserve much attention. The amorous verses have this to recommend them, that they are less hyperbolic than those of some other poets. Waller is not

<sup>1</sup> P. 76.

<sup>2</sup> P. 79.

<sup>3</sup> P. 80.



always at the last gasp; he does not die of a frown, nor live upon a smile. There is however too much love, and too many trifles. Little things are made too important; and the Empire of Beauty is represented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human passions, and the variety of human wants. Such books therefore may be considered as shewing the world under a false appearance, and, so far as they obtain credit from the young and unexperienced, as misleading expectation, and misguiding practice.

Of his nobler and more weighty performances, the greater part is panegyrical; for of praise he was very lavish, as is observed by his imitator, Lord Lansdown:

“No satyr stalks within the hallow'd ground,  
But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound;  
Glory and arms and love are all the sound.”<sup>1</sup>

In the first poem, on the danger of the Prince on the coast of Spain, there is a puerile and ridiculous mention of Arion at the beginning; and the last paragraph, on the *Cable*, is in part ridiculously mean, and in part ridiculously tumid. The poem, however, is such as may be justly praised, without much allowance for the state of our poetry and language at that time.

The two next poems are upon the King's *behaviour at the death of Buckingham*, and upon his *Navy*.

He has, in the first, used the pagan deities with great propriety<sup>2</sup>:

“'Twas want of such a precedent as this  
Made the old heathen frame their gods amiss.”

In the poem on the Navy, those lines are very noble,

<sup>1</sup> “No satyr lurks within this hallow'd ground,  
But nymphs and heroines, kings and gods abound;  
Glory, and arms, and Love, is all the sound.”

Lord Lansdowne, *To the immortal memory of Mr. Edmund Waller*,  
*Works*, 1736, vol. i. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> P. 7.



which suppose the King's power secure against a second Deluge; so noble, that it were almost criminal to remark the mistake of *centre* for *surface*, or to say that the empire of the sea would be worth little if it were not that the waters terminate in land.

The poem upon Salle<sup>1</sup> has forcible sentiments; but the conclusion is feeble. That on the Repairs of St. Paul's has something vulgar and obvious; such as the mention of Amphion; and something violent and harsh, as

“So all our minds with his conspire to grace  
The Gentiles' great apostle, and deface  
Those state-obscuring sheds, that like a chain  
Seem'd to confine, and fetter him again:  
Which the glad saint shakes off at his command,  
As once the viper from his sacred hand.  
So joys the aged oak, when we divide  
The creeping ivy from his injur'd side.”<sup>2</sup>

Of the two last couplets, the first is extravagant, and the second mean.

His praise of the Queen is too much exaggerated; and the thought, that she “saves lovers, by cutting off hope, as gangrenes are cured by lopping the limb,” presents nothing to the mind but disgust and horror.

Of the “Battle of the Summer Islands,”<sup>3</sup> it seems not easy to say whether it is intended to raise terror or merriment. The beginning is too splendid for jest, and the conclusion too light for seriousness. The versification is studied, the scenes are diligently displayed, and the images artfully amplified; but as it ends neither in joy nor sorrow, it will scarcely be read a second time.

The “Panegyrick” upon Cromwell<sup>4</sup> has obtained from the publick a very liberal dividend of praise, which however cannot be said to have been unjustly lavished; for such a series of verses had rarely appeared before in the

<sup>1</sup> P. 9.<sup>2</sup> P. 11.<sup>3</sup> P. 52.<sup>4</sup> P. 113.



English language. Of the lines some are grand, some are graceful, and all are musical. There is now and then a feeble verse, or a trifling thought; but its great fault is the choice of its hero.

The poem of "The War with Spain"<sup>1</sup> begins with lines more vigorous and striking than Waller is accustomed to produce. The succeeding parts are variegated with better passages and worse. There is something too far-fetched in the comparison of the Spaniards drawing the English on, by saluting St. Lucar with cannon, *to lambs awakening the lion by bleating*. The fate of the Marquis and his Lady, who were burnt in their ship, would have moved more, had the poet not made him die like the Phœnix, because he had spices about him, nor expressed their affection and their end by a conceit at once false and vulgar:

"Alive, in equal flames of love they burn'd,  
And now together are to ashes turn'd."<sup>2</sup>

The verses to Charles<sup>3</sup> on his Return, were doubtless intended to counterbalance the panegyric on Cromwell. If it has been thought inferior to that with which it is naturally compared, the cause of its deficiency has been already remarked.

The remaining pieces it is not necessary to examine singly. They must be supposed to have faults and beauties of the same kind with the rest. The Sacred Poems, however, deserve particular regard; they were the work of Waller's declining life, of those hours in which he looked upon the fame and the folly of the time past with the sentiments which his great predecessor Petrarch bequeathed to posterity,<sup>4</sup> upon his review of that love and poetry which have given him immortality.

<sup>1</sup> P. 121.

<sup>2</sup> P. 123.

<sup>3</sup> P. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Sonnet I. Johnson probably had in his mind an edition of the *Sonnets and Odes of Petrarch*, Italian on one page, English on the other,



That natural jealousy which makes every man unwilling to allow much excellence in another, always produces a disposition to believe that the mind grows old with the body; and that he, whom we are now forced to confess superior, is hastening daily to a level with ourselves. By delighting to think this of the living, we learn to think it of the dead; and Fenton, with all his kindness for Waller, has the luck to mark the exact time when his genius passed the zenith, which he places at his fifty-fifth year. This is to allot the mind but a small portion. Intellectual decay is doubtless not uncommon; but it seems not to be universal.<sup>1</sup> Newton was in his eighty-fifth year improving his Chronology, a few days before his death; and Waller appears not, in my opinion, to have lost at eighty-two any part of his poetical power.

published anonymously in 1777, just at the time when the scheme for the *Lives of the Poets* was first proposed to him. The conclusion of the English version of Sonnet I. runs thus:—

“ Oft on my cheek the conscious crimson glows,  
 And sad reflection tells—ungrateful thought!—  
 How jeering crowds have mocked my love-lorn woes;  
 But folly’s fruits are penitence, and shame;  
 With this just maxim, I’ve too dearly bought,  
 That man’s applause is but a transient dream.”

<sup>1</sup> Johnson himself was sixty-eight when he began to write the *Lives of the Poets*, and as Longfellow sang in *Morituri Salutamus*:

“ Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles  
 Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides  
 Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers  
 When each had numbered more than four-score years;  
 And Theophrastes at four-score and ten  
 Had but begun his *Characters of Men*.  
 Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,  
 At sixty wrote his *Canterbury Tales*;  
 Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
 Completed *Faust* when eighty years were past.”

And what feats might we not record of the grand old men of our day!



His Sacred Poems do not please like some of his other works; but before the fatal fifty-five, had he written on the same subjects, his success would hardly have been better.

It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verse has been too little applied to the purposes of worship, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry; that they have very seldom attained their end is sufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miscarried.

Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactick poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of Nature, the flowers of the spring, and the harvests of Autumn, the vicissitudes of the Tide, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praise the Maker for his works in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God.

Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topicks of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but, few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds



from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel the imagination: but religion must be shewn as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already.

From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topicks of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that pious verse can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestick for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere.

As much of Waller's reputation was owing to the softness and smoothness of his Numbers; it is proper to consider those minute particulars to which a versifyer must attend.



He certainly very much excelled in smoothness most of the writers who were living when his poetry commenced. The Poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation, which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. Fairfax was acknowledged by him as his model; and he might have studied with advantage the poem of Davis,<sup>1</sup> which, though merely philosophical, yet seldom leaves the ear ungratified.

But he was rather smooth than strong; of *the full resounding line*,<sup>2</sup> which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given very few examples. The critical decision has given the praise of strength to Denham, and of sweetness to Waller.

His excellence of versification has some abatements. He uses the expletive *do* very frequently; and though he used<sup>3</sup> to see it almost universally ejected, was not more careful to avoid it in his last compositions than in his first. Praise had given him confidence; and finding the world satisfied, he satisfied himself.

His rhymes are sometimes weak words: *so* is found to make the rhyme twice in ten lines, and occurs often as a rhyme through his book.

His double rhymes, in heroick verse, have been censured by Mrs. Phillips, who was his rival in the translation of Corneille's "Pompey;" and more faults might be found, were not the enquiry below attention.

He sometimes uses the obsolete termination of verbs, as

<sup>1</sup> *Nosce Teipsum, or Poem on the Soul of Man*, by Sir John Davies, 1599. Professor Masson says, this "is, in fact, a treatise on Psychology in the interest of the Intuitional or Transcendental Philosophy as opposed to the Empirical, and there is not a finer metrical treatise of the sort in the language, or one in which metrical exposition comes closer to the borders of real poetry." *M. M.* vol. i. p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> "The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine;"

Ald. *Pope*, vol. iii. p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> misprint for *lived*?



*amazeth, affecteth*; and sometimes retains the final syllable of the preterite, as *amazed, supposed*; of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

Of triplets he is sparing; but he did not wholly forbear them: of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

The general character of his poetry<sup>1</sup> is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetick, and very rarely sublime. He seems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are such as a liberal conversation and large acquaintance with life would easily supply. They had however then, perhaps, that grace of novelty, which they are now often supposed to want by those who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them first. This treatment is unjust. Let not the original author lose by his imitators.

Praise however should be due before it is given. The author of Waller's "Life" ascribes to him the first practice, of what Erythræus<sup>2</sup> and some late critics call *Alliteration*, of using in the same verse many words beginning with the same letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was so frequent among early writers, that Gascoign,<sup>3</sup> a writer of the sixteenth century, warns the young poet against affecting it; Shakspeare in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" is supposed to ridicule it; and in another play the sonnet of Holofernes fully displays it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. pp. 461-462.

<sup>2</sup> Rossi, the author of the *Pinacotheca virorum illustrium*, was known by the name of *Erythræus*. Hallam describes him as a profuse and indiscriminating panegyrist of his contemporaries.

<sup>3</sup> He advises him not to hunt a letter to death. Gascoigne's *Certayne. Notes of Instruction*, 1575.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>4</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV. Scene 2. "The preylful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket," &c. Globe edition, *Shakspeare*, p. 145.



He borrows too many of his sentiments and illustrations from the old Mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of ancient poets: the deities which they introduced so frequently, were considered as realities, so far as to be received by the imagination, whatever sober reason might even then determine. But of these images time has tarnished the splendor. A fiction, not only detected but despised, can never afford a solid basis to any position, though sometimes it may furnish a transient allusion, or slight illustration. No modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that, as Hercules had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

But of the praise of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Tasso said, with equal spirit and justice of himself and Guarini, when, having perused the "*Pastor Fido*," he cried out, "If he had not read '*Aminta*,' he had not excelled it."

As Waller professed himself to have learned the art of versification from Fairfax,<sup>1</sup> it has been thought proper to subjoin a specimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's translation,<sup>2</sup> will perhaps not be soon reprinted. By knowing the state in which Waller found our poetry, the reader may judge how much he improved it.

<sup>1</sup> *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recouerie of Jerusalem*. Done into English Heroicall Verse, by Edw. Fairfax, Gent. 1600. fol. Campbell has called this "one of the glories of Elizabeth's reign." The first English version of Tasso's *Jerusalem* was made by Carew in 1594. See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. ii. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Jerusalem Delivered, an Heroic Poem*: translated from the Italian of Torq. Tasso, by John Hoole. Lond. 1762. The dedication to Queen Charlotte was written by Johnson.



## 1.

"Erminiaes steed (this while) his mistresse bore  
 Through forrests thicke among the shadie treene,  
 Her feeble hand the bridle raines forlore,  
 Halfe in a swoune she was for feare I weene ;  
 But her flit courser spared nere the more,  
 To beare her through the desart woods unseene  
 Of her strong foes, that chas'd her through the plaine,  
 And still pursu'd, but still pursu'd in vaine.

## 2.

"Like as the wearie hounds at last retire,  
 Windlesse, displeased, from the fruitlesse chace,  
 When the slie beast Tapisht in bush and brire,  
 No art nor paines can rowse out of his place :  
 The Christian knights so full of shame and ire  
 Returned backe, with faint and wearie pace !  
 Yet still the fearefull Dame fled, swift as winde,  
 Nor euer staid, nor euer lookt behinde.

## 3.

"Through thicke and thinne, all night, all day, she driued,  
 Withouten comfort, companie or guide,  
 Her plaints and teares with euery thought reuiued,  
 She heard and saw her greefes, but nought beside.  
 But when the sunne his burning chariot diued  
 In Thetis waue, and wearie teame vntide,  
 On Iordans sandie banks her course she staid,  
 At last, there downe she light, and downe she laid.

## 4.

"Her teares, her drinke ; her food, her sorrowings,  
 This was her diet that vnhappie night :  
 But sleepe (that sweet repose and quiet brings)  
 To ease the greefes of discontented wight,  
 Spred foorth his tender, soft, and nimble wings,  
 In his dull armes foulding the virgin bright ;  
 And loue, his mother, and the graces kept  
 Strong watch and warde, while this faire Ladie slept.