

Renascence Editions

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Editions

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe

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COLIN CLOVTS Come home againe.



By Ed. Spenser.

LONDON.
Printed for *VWilliam Ponsonbie.*
1595.

TO THE RIGHT worthy and noble Knight

Sir *Walter Raleigh*, Captaine of her Maiesties
Guard, Lord Wardein of the Stanneries,
and *Lieutenant of the Countie of Cornwall*.

(.)

SIR, that you may see that I am not alwaies ydle as ye thinke, though not greatly well occupied, nor altogether vndutifull, though not precisely officious, I make you present of this simple pastorall, vnworthie of your higher conceit for the meanesse of the stile, but agreeing with the truth in circumstance and matter. The which I humbly beseech you to accept in part of paiment of the infinite debt in which I acknowledge my selfe bounden vnto you, for your singular fauours and sundrie good turnes shewed to me at my late being in England, and with your good countenance protect against the malice of euill mouthes, which are alwaies wide open to carpe at and misconstrue my simple meaning.

I pray continually for your happinesse. From my house

*of Kilcoman, the 27. of December.
1591.*

Yours euer humbly.

Ed. Sp.

COLIN CLOVTS

come home againe.



He shepherds boy (best known by that name)
 That after *Tityrus* first sung his lay,
 Laies of sweet loue, without rebuke or blame,
 Sate (as his custome was) vpon a day,
 Charming his oaten pipe vnto his peres,
 The shepheard swaines, that did about him play:
 Who all the while with greedie listfull eares,

Did stand astonisht at his curious skill,
 Like hartlesse deare, dismayed with thunders sound.

At last when as he piped had his fill, 10
 He rested him: and sitting then around,
 One of those groomes (a iolly groome was he,
 As euer piped on an oaten reed,
 And lou'd this shepheard dearest in degree,
 Hight *Hobbinol*) gan thus to him areed.

Colin my lief, my life, how great a losse
 Had all the shepherds nation by thy lacke?
 And I poore swaine of many greatest crosse:
 That sith thy *Muse* first since thy turning backe
 Was heard to sound as she was wont on hye, 20
 Hast made vs all so blessed and so blythe.
 Whilest thou wast hence, all dead in dole did lye:
 The woods were heard to waile full many a sythe,
 And all their birds with silence to complaine:
 The fields with faded flowers did seem to mourne,
 And all their flocks from feeding to refraine:
 The running waters wept for thy returne,
 And all their fish with langour did lament:
 But now both woods and fields, and floods reuiue,
 Sith thou art come, their cause of meriment, 30
 That vs late dead, hast made againe alieue:
 But were it not too painfull to repeat
 The passed fortunes, which to thee befell
 In thy late voyage, we thee would entreat,
 Now at thy leisure them to vs to tell.

To whom the shepheard gently answered thus,
Hobbin thou temptest me to that I couet:
 For of good passed newly to discus,
 By dubble vsurie doth twice renew it.
 And since I saw that Angels blessed eie, 40
 Her worlds bright sun, her heauens fairest light,
 My mind full of my thoughts satietie,
 Doth feed on sweet contentment of that sight:
 Since that same day in nought I take delight,

Ne feeling haue in any earthly pleasure,
 But in remembrance of that glorious bright,
 My lifes sole blisse, my hearts eternall threasure.
 Wake then my pipe, my sleepeie *Muse* awake,
 Till I haue told her praises lasting long:
Hobbin desires, thou maist it not forsake,
 Harke then ye iolly shepherds to my song.

50

With that they all gan throng about him neare,
 With hungrie eares to heare his harmonie:
 The whiles their flocks deuoyd of dangers feare,
 Did round about them feed at libertie.

One day (quoth he) I sat, (as was my trade)
 Vnder the foot of *Mole* that mountaine hore,
 Keeping my sheepe amongst the cooly shade,
 Of the greene alders by the *Mullaes* shore:
 There a straunge shepherd chaunst to find me out,
 Whether allured with my pipes delight,
 Whose pleasing sound yshrilled far about,
 Or thither led by chaunce, I know not right:
 VVhom when I asked from what place he came,
 And how he hight, himselfe he did ycleepe,
 The shepherd of the Ocean by name,
 And said he came far from the main-sea deepe.
 He sitting me beside in that same shade,
 Prouoked me to plaie some pleasant fit,
 And when he heard the musicke which I made,
 He found himselfe full greatly pleased at it:
 Yet æmuling my pipe, he tooke in hond
 My pipe before that æmuled of many,
 And plaid thereon; (for well that skill he cond)
 Himselfe as skilfull in that art as any.
 He pip'd, I sung; and when he sung, I piped,
 By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery,
 Neither enuying other, nor enuied,
 So piped we, vntill we both were weary,

60

70

There interrupting him, a bonie swaine,
 That *Cuddy* hight, him thus atweene bespake:
 And should it not thy ready course restraine,
 I would request thee *Colin*, for my sake,
 To tell what thou didst sing, when he did plaie.
 For well I weene it worth recounting was,
 VVhether it were some hymne, or morall laie,
 Or carol made to praise thy loued lasse.

80

Nor of my loue, nor of my losse (quoth he)
 I then did sing, as then occasion fell:
 For loue had me forlorne, forlorne of me, 90
 That made me in that desart chose to dwell.
 But of my riuier *Bregogs* loue I soong,
 VWhich to the shiny *Mulla* he did beare,
 And yet doth beare, and euer will, so long
 As water doth within his bancks appeare.

Of fellowship (said then that bony Boy)
 Record to vs that louely lay againe:
 The staie whereof, shall nought these eares annoy,
 VWho all that *Colin* makes, do couet faine.

Heare then (quoth he) the tenor of my tale, 100
 In sort as I it to that shepheard told:
 No leasing new, nor Grandams fable stale,
 But auncient truth confirm'd with credence old.

Old father *Mole*, (*Mole* hight that mountain gray
 That walls the Northside of *Armulla* dale)
 He had a daughter fresh as floure of May,
 VWhich gaue that name vnto that pleasant vale;
Mulla the daughter of old *Mole*, so hight
 The Nimph, which of that water course has charge,
 That springing out of *Mole*, doth run downe right 110
 to *Butteuant* where spreding forth at large,
 It giueth name vnto that auncient Cittie,
 VWhich *Kilnemullah* cleped is of old:

VWhose ragged ruines breed great ruth and pittie,
 To travailers, which it from far behold.
 Full faine she lou'd, and was belou'd full faine,
 Of her owne brother riuier, *Bregog* hight,
 So hight because of this deceitfull traine,
 VWhich he with *Mulla* wrought to win delight.

But her old sire more carefull of her good, 120
 And meaning her much better to preferre,
 Did thinke to match her with the neighbour flood,
 VWhich *Allo* hight, Broad water called farre:
 And wrought so well with his continuall paine,
 That he that riuier for his daughter wonne:
 The dowre agreed, the day assigned plaine,
 The place appointed where it should be doone.
 Nath lesse the Nymph her former liking held;
 For loue will not be drawne, but must be ledde,
 And *Bregog* did so well her fancie weld,

That her good will he got her first to wedde. 130
 But for her father sitting still on hie,
 Did warily still watch which way she went,
 And eke from far obseru'd with iealous eie,
 VWhich way his course the wanton *Bregog* bent,
 Him to deceiue for all his watchfull ward,
 The wily loue did devise this slight:
 First into many parts his streame he shar'd,
 That whilest the one was watcht, the other might
 Passe vnespide to meete her by the way; 140
 And then besides, those little streames so broken
 He vnder ground so closely did conuay,
 That of their passage doth appeare no token,
 Till they into the *Mullaes* water slide.
 So secretly did he his loue enioy:
 Yet not so secret, but it was descried,
 And told her father by a shepherds boy.
 Who wondrous wroth for that so foule despight,
 In great auenge did roll downe from his hill
 Huge mightie stones, the which encomber might 150
 His passage, and his water-courses spill.
 So of a Riuer, which he was of old,
 He none was made, but scattred all to nought,
 And lost emong those rocks into him rold,
 Did lose his name: so deare his loue he bought.
 Which hauing said, him *Thestylis* bespake,
 Now by my life this was a mery lay:
 Worthie of *Colin* selfe, that did it make.
 But read now eke of friendship I thee pray,
 What dittie did that other shepherd sing? 160
 For I do couet most the same to heare,
 As men vse most to couet forreine thing
 That shall I eke (quoth he) to you declare.
 His song was all a lamentable lay,
 Of great vnkindnesse, and of vsage hard,
 Of *Cynthia* the Ladie of the sea,
 Which from her presence faultlesse him debard.
 And euer and anon with singults rife,
 He cryed out, to make his vndersong
 Ah my loues queene, and goddesse of my life, 170
 Who shall me pittie, when thou doest me wrong?
 Then gan a gentle bonylasse to speake,
 That *Marin* hight, Right well he sure did plaine:
 That could great *Cynthiaes* sore displeasure breake,

And moue to take him to her grace againe.
 But tell on further *Colin*, as befell
 Twixt him and thee, that thee did hence dissuade.

When thus our pipes we both had wearied well,
 (Quoth he) and each an end of singing made,
 He gan to cast great lyking to my lore,
 And great dislyking to my lucklesse lot:
 That banisht had my selfe, like wight forlore,
 Into that waste, where I was quite forgot.
 The which to leaue, thenceforth he counseld mee,
 Vnmeet for man, in whom was ought regardfull,
 And wend with him, his *Cynthia* to see:
 Whose grace was great, & bounty most rewardful.

180

Besides her peerlesse skill in making well
 And all the ornaments of wondrous wit,
 Such as all womankynd did far excell:
 Such as the world admyr'd and praised it:
 So what with hope of good, and hate of ill,
 He me perswaded forth with him to fare.
 Nought tooke I with me, but mine oaten quill:
 Small needments else need shepheard to prepare.
 So to the sea we came; the sea? that is
 A world of waters heaped vp on hie,
 Rolling like mountaines in wide wilderness,
 Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse crie.

190

And is the sea (quoth *Coridon*) so fearfull?

200

Fearful much more (quoth he) the[n] hart can fear:
 Thousand wyld beasts with deep mouthes gaping direfull
 Therein stil wait poore passengers to teare.
 Who life doth loath, and longs death to behold,
 Before he die, alreadie dead with feare,
 And yet would liue with heart halfe stonie cold,
 Let him to sea, and he shall see it there.
 Before he die, alreadie dead with feare:
 And yet as ghastly dreadfull, as it seemes,
 Bold men presuming life for gaine to sell,
 Dare tempt that gulf, and in those wandring stremes
 Seek waies vnknowne, waies leading down to hell.
 For as we stood there waiting on the strond,
 Behold an huge great vessell to vs came,
 Dauncing vpon the waters back to lond,
 As if it scornd the daunger of the same;
 Yet it was but a wooden frame and fraile,

210

Glewed together with some subtile matter,
 Yet had it armes and wings, and head and taile,
 And life to moue it selfe vpon the water.
 Strange thing, how bold & swift the monster was, 220
 That neither car'd for wynd, nor haile, nor raine,
 Nor swelling waues, but thorough them did passe
 So proudly, that she made them roare againe.
 The same aboard vs gently did receaue,
 And without harme vs farre away did beare,
 So farre that land our mother vs did leaue,
 And nought but sea and heauen to vs appeare.
 Then hartlesse quite and full of inward feare,
 That shepherd I besought to me to tell,
 Vnder what skie, or in what world we were, 230
 In which I saw no liuing people dwell,
 Who me recomforting all that he might,
 Told me that that same was the Regiment
 Of a great shepherdesse, that *Cynthia* hight,
 His leige his Ladie, and his lifes Regient.
 If then (quoth I) a shepherdesse she bee,
 Where be the flockes and heards, which she doth keep?
 And where may I the hills and pastures see,
 On which she vseth for to feede her sheepe?
 These be the hills (quoth he) the surges hie, 240
 On which faire *Cynthia* her heards doth feed:
 Her heards be thousand fishes with their frie,
 Which in the bosome of the billowes breed.
 Of them the shepherd which hath charge in chief,
 Is *Triton* blowing loud his wreathed horne:
 At sound whereof, they all for their relief
 Wend too and fro at euening and at morne.
 And *Proteus* eke with him does driue his heard
 Of stinking Seales and Porcpisces together,
 With hoary head and deawy dropping beard, 250
 Compelling them which way he list, and whether.
 And I among the rest of many least,
 Haue in the Ocean charge to me assigned:
 Where I will liue or die at her beheast,
 And serue and honour her with faithfull mind.
 Besides an hundred Nymphs all heauenly borne,
 And of immortall race, doo still attend
 To wash faire *Cynthiaes* sheep whe[n] they be shorne,
 And fold them vp, when they haue made an end.
 Those be the shepherds which my *Cynthia* serue,

At sea, beside a thousand moe at land: 260
 Froe land and sea my *Cynthia* doth deserue
 To haue in her commandement at hand.
 Thereat I wondred much, till wondring more
 And more, at length we land far off descryde:
 Which sight much gladded me; for much afore
 I feard, least land we neuer should haue eyde:
 Thereto our ship her course directly bent,
 As if the way she perfectly had knowne.
 We *Lunday* passe; by that same name is ment 270
 An Island, which the first to west was showne.
 From thence another world of land we kend,
 Floting amid the sea in ieopardie,
 And round about with mightie white rocks hemd,
 Against the seas encroaching crueltie.
 Those same the shepheard told me, were the fields
 In which dame *Cynthia* her landheards fed:
 Faire goodly fields, then which *Armulla* yields
 None fairer, nor more fruitfull to be red.
 The first to which we nigh approched, was 280
 An high headland thrust far into the sea,
 Like to an horne, whereof the neame it has,
 Yet seemd to be a goodly pleasant lea:
 There did a loftie mount at first vs greet,
 Which did a stately heape of stones vpreare,
 That seemd amid the surges for to fleet,
 Much greater then that frame, which vs did beare:
 There did our ship her fruitfull womb vnlade,
 And put vs all ashore on *Cynthias* land.

What land is that thou meanst (then *Cuddy* sayd) 290
 And is there other, then whereon we stand?
 Ah *Cuddy* (then quoth *Colin*) thous a fon,
 That hast not seene least part of natures work:
 Much more there is vnkend, then thou doest kon,
 And much more that does from mens knowledge lurke.
 For that same land much larger is then this,
 And other men and beasts and birds doth feed:
 There fruitfull corne, faire trees, fresh herbage is
 And all things else that liuing creatures need.
 Besides most goodly riuers there appeare, 300
 No whit inferiour to thy *Funchins* praise,
 Or vnto *Allo* or to *Mulla* cleare:
 Nought hast thou foolish boy seene in thy daies,

But if that land be there (quoth he) as here,
 And is theyr heauen likewise there all one?
 And if like heauen, be heauenly graces there,
 Like as in this same world where we do wone?

Both heauen and heauenly graces do much more
 (Quoth he) abound in that same land, then this.

For there all happie peace and plenteous store
 Conspire in one to make contented bliss:

310

No wayling there nor wretchednesse is heard,
 No bloodie issues nor no leprosies,
 No griesly famine, nor no raging sward,
 No nightly bo[r]drags, nor no hue and cries;
 The shepherds there abroad may safely lie,
 On hills and downes, withouten dread or daunger:
 No rauenous wolues the good mans hope destroy,
 Nor outlawes fell affray the forest raunger.

There learned arts do florish in great honor,

320

And Poets wits are had in peerlesse price:

Religion hath lay powre to rest vpon her,

Aduauncing vertue and suppressing vice.

For end, all good, all grace it gratefully to vse:

For God his gifts there plenteously bestowes,

But gracelesse men them greatly do abuse.

But say on further, then said *Corylas*,

The rest of thine aduentures, that betyded.

Foordth on our voyage we by land did passe,

330

(Quoth he) as that same shepherd still vs guyded,

Vntill that we to *Cynthiaes* presence came:

Whose glorie greater then my simple thought,

I found much greater then the former fame;

Such greatnes I cannot compare to ought:

But if I her like ought on earth might read,

I would her lyken to a crowne of lillies,

Vpon a virgin brydes adorned head,

With Roses dight and Goolds and Daffadillies;

Or like the circlet of a Turtle true,

340

In which all colours of the rainbow bee;

Or like faire *Phebes* garlond shining new,

In which all pure perfection one may see.

But vaine it is to thinke by paragone

Of earthly things, to iudge of things diuine:

Her power, her mercy, and her wisdom, none

Can deeme, but who the Godhead can define.

Why then do I base shepheard bold and blind,
 Presume the things so sacred to prophane?
 More fit it is t'adore with humble mind, 350
 The image of the heauens in shape humane.

With that *Alexis* broke his tale asunder,
 Saying, By wondring at thy *Cynthiaes* praise:
Colin, thy selfe thou mak'st vs more to wonder,
 And her vpraising, Doest thy selfe vpraise.
 But let vs heare what grace she shewed thee,
 And how that shepheard strange, thy cause advanced?

The shepheard of the Ocean (quoth he)
 Vnto that Goddesse grace me first enhanced,
 And to mine oaten pipe enclin'd her eare, 360
 That she thenceforth therein gan take delight,
 And it desir'd at timely houres to heare,
 All were my notes but rude and roughly dight;
 For not by measure of her owne great mynd,
 And wondrous worth she mott my simple song,
 But ioyd that country shepheard ought could fynd
 Worth harkening to, emongst the learned throng.

Why? (said *Alexis* then) what needeth shee
 That is so great a shepheardesse her selfe,
 And hath so many shepheards in her fee, 370
 To heare thee sing, a simple silly Elfe?
 Or be the shepheardes which do serue her laesie,
 That they list not their mery pipes applie?
 Or be their pipes vntunable and craesie,
 That they cannot her honour worthy lie?

Ah nay (said *Colin*) neither so, nor so:
 For better shepheards be not vnder skie,
 Nor better hable, when they list to blow,
 Their pipes aloud, her name to glorifie.
 There is good *Harpalus* now woxen aged, 380
 In faithfull seruice of faire *Cynthia*:

And there is *Corydon*, though meanly waged,
 Yet hablest wit of most I know this day.
 And there is sad *Alcyon* bent to mourne,
 Though fit to frame an euerlasting dittie,
 Whose gentle spright for *Daphnes* death doth tourn
 Sweet layes of loue to endlesse plaints of pittie.
 Ah pensieue boy pursue that braue conceipt,
 In thy sweet Eglantine of *Meriflure*,
 Lift vp thy notes vnto their wonted height, 390
 That may thy *Muse* and mates to mirth allure.

There eke is *Palin* worthie of great praise,
 Albe he envie at my rustick quill:
 And there is pleasing *Alcon*, could he raise
 His tunes from laies to matter of more skill.
 And there is old *Palemon* free from spight,
 Whose carefull pipe may make the hearer rew:
 Yet he himselfe may rewed be more right,
 That sung so long vntill quite hoarse he grew.
 And there is *Alabaster* throughly taught, 400
 In all this skill, though knowen yet to few,
 Yet were he knowne to *Cynthia* as he ought,
 His Eliseïs would be redde anew.
 Who liues that can match that heroick song,
 Which he hath of that mightie Princesse made?
 O dreaded Dread, do not thy selfe that wrong,
 To let thy fame lie so in hidden shade:
 But call it forth, O call him forth to thee,
 To ende thy glorie which he hath begun:
 That when he finisht hath as it should be, 410
 No brauer Poeme can be vnder Sun.
 Nor *Po* nor *Tyburs* swans so much renowned,
 Nor all the brood of *Greece* so highly praised,
 Can match that *Muse* whe[n] it with bayes is crowned,
 And to the pitch of her perfection raised.
 And there is a new shepheard late vp sprong,
 The which doth all afore him far surpasse:
 Appearing well in that well tuned song,
 Which late he sung vnto a scornefull lasse.
 Yet doth his trembling *Muse* but lowly flie, 420
 As daring not too rashly mount on hight,
 And doth her tender plumes as yet but trie,
 In loues soft lais and looser thoughts delight.
 Then rouze thy feathers quickly *Daniell*,
 And to what course thou please thy selfe aduaunce:
 But most me seemes, thy accent will excell,
 In Tragick plaints and passionate mischance.
 And there that shepheard of the Ocean is,
 That spends his wit in loues consuming smart:
 Full sweetly tempred is that *Muse* of his 430
 That can empierce a Princes mightie hart.
 There also is (ah no, he is not now)
 But since I said he is, he is quite gone,
Amyntas quite is gone, and lies full low,
 Hailing his *Amaryllis* left to mone.

Helpe, O ye shepheards helpe ye all in this,
 Helpe *Amaryllis* this her losse to mourne:
 Her losse is yours, your losse *Amyntas* is,
Amyntas floure of Shepheards pride forlorne:
 He whilest he liued was the noblest swaine, 440
 That euer piped in an oaten quill:
 Both did he other, which could pipe, maintaine,
 And eke could pipe himselfe with passing skill.
 And there though last not least is *Aetion*,
 A gentler shepherd may no where be found:
 Whose *Muse* full of high thoughts inuention,
 Doth like himselfe Heroically sound.
 All these, and many others mo remaine,
 Now after *Astrofell* is dead and gone:
 But while as *Astrofell* did liue and raine, 450
 Amongst all these was none his Paragone.
 All these do florish in their sundry kynd,
 And do their *Cynthia* immortall make:
 Yet found I lyking in her royall mynd,
 Not for my skill, but for that shepheards sake.

Then spake a louely lasse, hight *Lucida*,
 Sheheard, enough of shepheards thou hast told,
 Which fauour thee, and honour *Cynthia*:
 But of so many Nymphs which she doth hold
 In her retinew, thou hast nothing sayd; 460
 That seems with none of the[m] thou fauor foundest,
 Or art ingratefull to each gentle mayd,
 That none of all their due deserts resoundest.

Ah far be it (quoth *Colin Clout*) fro me,
 That I of gentle Mayds should ill deserue:
 For that my selfe I do professe to be
 Vassall to one, whom all my dayes I serue;
 The beame of beautie sparkled from aboue,
 The floure of vertue and pure chastitie,
 The blossome of sweet ioy and perfect loue, 470
 The pearle of peerlesse grace and modestie:
 To her my thoughts I daily dedicate,
 To her my heart I nightly martyrize:
 To her my loue I lowly do prostrate,
 To her my life I wholly sacrifice:
 My thoughts, my heart, my loue, my life is shee,
 And I hers euer onely, euer one:
 One euer I all vowed hers to bee,
 One euer I, and others neuer none.

Then thus *Melissa* said; Thrice happie Mayd, 480
 Whom thou doest so enforce to deify:
 That woods, and hills, and valleyes thou hast made
 Her name to eccho vnto heauen hie.
 But say, who else vouchsafed thee of grace?
 They all (quoth he) me graced goodly well,
 That all I praise, but in the highest place,
Vrania, sister vnto *Astrofell*,
 In whose braue mynd as in a golden cofer,
 All heauenly gifts and riches locked are,
 More rich then pearles of *Ynde*, or gold of *Opher*, 490
 And in her sex more wonderfull and rare.
 Ne lesse praise worthie I *Theana* read,
 Whose goodly beames though they be ouer dight
 With mourning stole of carefull widowhead,
 Yet through that darksome vale do glister bright;
 She is the well of bountie and braue mynd,
 Excelling most in glorie and great light:
 She is the ornament of womankynd,
 And Courts chief garlond with all vertues dight.
 Therefore great *Cynthia* her in chiefest grace 500
 Doth hold, and next vnto her selfe aduaunce,
 Well worthie of so honourable place,
 For her great worth and noble gouernance.
 Ne lesse praise worthie is her sister deare,
 Faire *Marian*, the *Muses* onely darling:
 Whose beautie shyneth as the morning cleare,
 With siluer deaw vpon the roses pearling.
 Ne lesse praise worthie is *Mansilia*,
 Best knowne by bearing vp great *Cynthiaes* traine:
 That same is she to whom *Daphnaida* 510
 Vpon her neeces death I did complaine.
 She is the paterne of true womanhead,
 And onely mirrhor of feminitie:
 Worthie next after *Cynthia* to tread,
 As she is next her in nobilitie.
 Ne lesse praise worthie *Galathea* seemes,
 Then best of all that honourable crew,
 Faire *Galathea* with bright shining beames,
 Inflaming feeble eyes that do her view.
 She there then waited vpon *Cynthia*, 520
 Yet there is not her won, but here with vs
 About the borders of our rich *Coshma*,

Now made of *Maa* the nymph delitious.
 Ne lesse praiseworthy faire *Neæra* is,
Neæra ours, not theirs, though there she be,
 For of the famous Shure, the Nymph she is,
 For high desert, aduunst to that degree.
 She is the blosome of grace and curtesie,
 Adorned with all honourable parts:
 She is the braunch of true nobilitie, 530
 Belou'd of high and low with faithfull harts.
 Ne lesse praiseworthy *Stella* do I read,
 Though nought my praises of her needed arre,
 Whom verse of noblest shepheard lately dead
 Hath prais'd and rais'd aboue each other starre.
 Ne lesse praiseworthy are the sister three,
 The honor of the noble familie:
 Of which I meanest boast my selfe to be,
 And most that vnto them I am so nie.

Phyllis, *Charyllis*, and sweet *Amaryllis*: 540
Phyllis the faire, is eldest of the three:
 The next to her, is bountifull *Charyllis*:
 But th'youngest is the highest in degree.
Phyllis the floure of rare perfection,
 Faire spreading forth her leaues with fresh delight,
 That with their beauties amorous reflexion,
 Bereaue of sence each rash beholders sight.
 But sweet *Charyllis* is the Paragone
 Of peerlesse price, and ornament of praise, 550
 Admyr'd of all, yet envied of none,
 Through the myld temperance of her goodly raies
 Thrise happie do I hold thee noble swaine,
 The which art of so rich a spoile possest,
 And it embracing deare without disdain,
 Hast sole possession in so chaste a brest:
 Of all the shepherds daughters which there bee,
 And yet there be the fairest vnder skie,
 Or that elsewhere I euer yet did see.
 A fairer Nymph yet neuer saw mine eie:
 She is the pride and primrose of the rest, 560
 Made by the maker selfe to be admired:
 And like a goodly beacon high adrest,
 That is with sparks of heauenle beautie fired.
 But *Amaryllis*, whether fortunate,
 Or else vnfortunate may I aread.
 That freed is from *Cupids* yoke by fate,

Since which she doth new bands aduventure dread.
 Shepherd what euer thou hast heard to be
 In this or that praysd diuersly apart,
 In her thou maist them all assembled see, 570
 And seald vp in the threasure of her hart.
 Ne thee lesse worthie gentle *Flauia*,
 For thy chaste life and vertue I esteeme:
 Ne thee lesse worthie curteous *Candida*,
 For thy true loue and loyaltie I deeme.
 Besides yet many mo that *Cynthia* serue,
 Right noble Nymphs, and high to be commended:
 But if I all should praise as they deserue,
 This sun would faile me ere I halfe had ended.
 Therefore in closure of a thankfull mynd, 580
 I deeme it best to hold eternally,
 Their bounteous deeds and noble faouours shrynd,
 Then by discourse them to indignifie.
 So hauing said, *Aglaura* him bespake:
Colin, well worthie were those goodly faouours
 Bestowd on thee, that so of them doest make,
 And them requitest with thy thankful labours.
 But of great *Cynthiaes* goodnesse and high grace,
 Finish the storie which thou hast begunne.

More eath (quoth he) it is in such a case 590
 How to begin, then know how to haue donne.
 For euerie gift and euerie goodly meed
 Which she on me bestowd, demaunds a day;
 And euerie day, in which she did a deed,
 Demaunds a yeare it duly to display.
 Her words were like a streame of honnyfleeting,
 The which doth softly trickle from the hiue:
 Hable to melt the hearers heart vnweeting,
 And eke to make the dead againe aliue.
 Her deeds were like great clusters of ripe grapes, 600
 Which load the b[ra]unches of the fruitfull vine:
 Offring to fall into each mouth that gapes,
 And fill the same with store of timely wine.
 Her lookes were like beames of the morning Sun,
 Forth looking through the windowes of the East:
 When first the fleecie cattell haue begun
 Vpon the perled grasse to make their feast.
 Her thoughts are like the fume of Franckincence,
 Which from a golden Censer forth doth rise:

And throwing forth sweet odours mou[n]ts fro the[n]ce
 In rolling globes vp to the vaulted skies.
 There she beholds with high aspiring thought,
 The cradle of her owne creation:
 Emongst the seats of Angels heauenly wrought,
 Much like an Angell in all forme and fashion.

610

Colin (said *Cuddy* then) thou hast forgot
 Thy selfe, me seemes, too much, to mount so hie:
 Such loftie flight, base shepheard seemeth not,
 From flocks and fields, to Angels and to skie.

True (answered he) but her great excellence,
 Lifts me aboue the measure of my might:
 That being fild with furious insolence,
 I feele my selfe like one yrapt in spright.
 For when I thinke of her, as oft I ought,
 Then want I words to speake it fitly forth:
 And when I speake of her what I haue thought,
 I cannot thinke according to her worth.
 Yet will I thinke of her, yet will I speake,
 So long as life my limbs doth hold together,
 And when as death these vitall bands shall breake,
 Her name recorded I will leaue for euer.
 Her name in euery tree I will endosse,
 That as the trees do grow, her name may grow.
 And in the ground each where will it engrosse,
 And fill with stones, that all men may it know.
 The speaking woods and murmuring waters fall,
 Her name Ile teach in knowen termes to frame:
 And eke my lambs when for their dams they call,
 Ile teach to call for *Cynthia* by name.

620

630

And long while after I am dead and rotten:
 Amōgst the shepherds daughters dancing rownd,
 My layes made of her shall not be forgotten,
 But sung by them with flowry gyrlonds crownd.
 And ye, who so ye be, that shall suruiue:
 When as ye heare her memory renewed,
 Be witsse of her bounty here aliuie,
 Which she to *Colin* her poore shepheard shewed.

640

Much was the whole assembly of those heards,
 Moou'd at his speech, so feelingly he spake:
 And stood awhile astonisht at his words,
 Till *Thestylis* at last their silence brake,
 Saying, Why *Colin*, since thou foundst such grace

650

With *Cynthia* and all her noble crew:
 Why didst thou euer leaue that happie place,
 In which such wealth might vnto thee accrew?
 And back returnedst to this barrein soyle,
 Where cold and care and penury do dwell:
 Here to keepe sheepe, with hunger and with toyle,
 Most wretched he, that is and cannot tell.

Happie indeed (said *Colin*) I him hold, 660
 That may that blessed presence still enioy,
 Of fortune and of enuy vncomptrold,
 Which still are wont most happie states t'annoy:
 But I by that which little while I prooued:
 Some part of those enormities did see,
 The which in Court continually hooued,
 And followd those which happie seemd to bee.
 Therefore I silly man, whose former dayes
 Had in rude fields bene altogether spent,
 Durst not aduenture such vnknown wayes, 670
 Nor trust the guile of fortunes blandishment,
 But rather chose back to my sheep to tourne,
 Whose vtmost hardnesse I before had tryde,
 Then hauing learnd repentance late, to mourne
 Emongst those wretches which I there descryde.

Shepherd (said *Thestylis*) it seems of spight
 Thou speakest thus gainst their felicitie,
 Which thou enuiest, rather then of right
 That ought in them blameworthy thou dost spie.

Cause haue I none (quoth he) of cancred will 680
 To quite them ill, that me demeand so well:
 But selfe-regard of priuate good or ill,
 Moues me of each, so as I found, to tell
 And eke to warne yong shepherds wandring wit,
 Which through report of that liues painted blisse,
 Abandon quiet home, to seeke for it,
 And leaue their lambes to losse misled amisse.
 For sooth to say, it is no sort of life,
 For shepherd fit to lead in that same place,
 Where each one seeks with malice and with strife, 690
 To thrust downe other into foule disgrace,
 Himselfe to raise: and he doth soonest rise
 That best can handle his deceitfull wit,
 In subtil shifts, and finest sleights devise,

Either by slaundring his well deemed name,
 Through leasings lewd, and fained forgerie:
 Or else by breeding him some blot of blame,
 By creeping close into his secrecie;
 To which him needs, a guilefull hollow hart,
 Masked with faire dissembling curtesie, 700
 A filed tounge furnisht with tearmes of art,
 No art of schoole, but Courtiers schoolery.
 For arts of schoole haue there small countenance,
 Counted but toyes to busie idle braines,
 And there professours find small maintenance,
 But to be instruments of others gaines.
 Ne is there place for any gentle wit,
 Vnlesse to please, it selfe it can applie:
 But shouldred is, or out of doore quite shit,
 As base, or blunt, vnmeet for melodie. 710
 For each mans worth is measured by his weed,
 As harts by hornes, or asses by their eares:
 Yet asses been not all whose eares exceed,
 Nor yet all harts, that hornes the highest beares.
 For highest lookes haue not the highest mynd,
 Nor haughtie words most full of highest thoughts:
 But are like bladders blowen vp with wynd,
 That being prickt do vanish into noughts.
 Euen such is all their vaunted vanitie,
 Nought else but smoke, that fumeth soone away, 720
 Such is their glorie that in simple eie
 Seeme greatest, when their garments are most gay.
 So they themselues for praise of fooles do sell,
 And all their wealth for painting on a wall;
 With price whereof, they buy a golden bell,
 And purchase highest rowmes in bowre and hall:
 Whiles single Truth and simple honestie
 Do wander vp and downe despys'd of all;
 Their plaine attire such glorious gallantry
 Disdaines so much, that none them in doth call. 730
 Ah *Colin* (then said *Hobbinol*) the blame
 Which thou imputest, is too generall,
 As if not any gentle wit of name,
 Nor honest mynd might there be found at all.
 For well I wot, sith I my selfe was there,
 To wait on *Lobbin* (*Lobbin* well thow knewest)
 Full many worrhie ones then waiting were,
 As euer elfe in Princes Court thou vewest.

Of which, among you many yet remaine,
 Whose names I cannot readily now ghesse: 740
 Those that poore Sutors papers do retaine,
 And those that skill of medicine professe.
 And those that do to *Cynthia* expound,
 The ledden of straunge languages in charge:
 For *Cynthia* doth in sciences abound,
 And giues to their professors stipend large.
 Therefore vniustly thou doest wyte them all,
 For that which thou mislikedst in a few.

Blame is (quoth he) more blamelesse generall,
 Then that which priuate errorrs doth pursew: 750
 For well I wot, that there amongst them bee
 Full many persons of right worthie parts,
 Both for report of spotlesse honestie,
 And for profession of all learned arts,
 Whose praise hereby no whit impaired is,
 Though blame do light on those that faultie bee,
 For all the rest do most-what far[e] amis,
 And yet their owne misfaring will not see:
 For either they be puffed vp with pride,
 Or fraught with enuie that their galls do swell, 760
 Or they their dayes to ydlenesse diuide,
 Or drowned lie in pleasures wastefull well,
 In which like Moldwarps noursling still they lurke,
 Vnmyndfull of chiefe parts of manlinesse,
 And do themselues for want of other worke,
 Vaine votaries of laesie loue professe,
 Whose seruice high so basely they ensew,
 That *Cupid* selfe of them ashamed is,
 And mustring all his men in *Venus* vew,
 Denies them quite for seruitors of his. 770

And is loue then (said *Corylas* once knowne
 In Court, and his sweet lore professed there?
 I weened sure he was our God alone,
 And only woond in feilds and forests here.
 Not so (quoth he) loue most aboundeth there.

For all the walls and windows there are writ,
 All full of loue, and loue, and loue my deare,
 And all their talke and studie is of it.
 Ne any there doth braue or valiant seeme,
 Vnlesse that some gay Mistresse badge he beares: 780
 Ne any one himselfe doth ought esteeme,
 Vnlesse he swim in loue up to the eares.

But they of loue and of his sacred lere,
 (As it should be) all otherwise deuise,
 Then we poore shepherds are accustomed here,
 And him do sue and serue all otherwise.
 For with lewd speeches and licentious deeds,
 His mightie mysteries they do prophane,
 And vse his ydle name to other needs,
 But as a complement for courting vaine.

So him they do not serue as they professe,
 But make him serue to them for sordid vses.
 Ah my dread Lord, that doest liege hearts possese;
 Auenge thy selfe on them for their abuses.
 But we poore shepherds whether rightly so,
 Or through our rudenesse into errour led:
 Do make religion how we rashly go,
 To serue that God, that is so greatly dred;
 For him the greatest of the Gods we deeme,
 Borne without Syre or couples of one kynd,
 For *Venus* selfe doth soly couples seeme,
 Both male and female though commixture ioynd.
 So pure and spotlesse *Cupid* forth she brought,
 And in the gardens of *Adonis* nurst:
 Where growing he, his owne perfection wrought,
 And shortly was of all the Gods the first.
 Then got he bow and shafts of gold and lead,
 In which so fell and puissant he grew,
 That *Ioue* himselfe his powre began to dread,
 And taking him vp to heauen, him godded new.

From thence he shootes his arrowes euey where
 Into the world, at randon as he will,
 On vs fraile men, his wretched vassals here,
 Like as himselfe vs pleaseth, saue or spill.
 So we him worship, so we him adore
 With humble hearts to heauen vplifted hie,
 That to true loues he may vs euermore
 Preferre, and of their grace vs dignifie:
 Ne is there shepherd, ne yet shepherds swaine,
 What euer feeds in forest or in field,
 That dare with euil deed or leasing vaine
 Blaspheme his powre, or termes vnworthie yield.
 Shepherd it seemes that some celestiall rage
 Of loue (quoth *Cuddy*) is breath'd into thy brest,
 That powreth forth these oracles so sage,
 Of that high powre, wherewith thou art possest.

790

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But neuer wist I till this present day
 Albe of loue I alwayes humbly deemed,
 That he was such an one, as thou doest say,
 And so religiously to be esteemed. 830
 Well may it seeme by this thy deep insight,
 That of that God the Priest thou shouldest bee:
 So well thou wot'st the mysterie of his might,
 As if his godhead thou didst present see.
 Of loues perfection perfectly to speake,
 Or of his nature rightly to define,
 Indeed (said *Colin*) passeth reasons reach,
 And needs his priest t'expresse his powre diuine.
 For long before the world he was y'bore
 And bred about in *Venus* bosome deare: 840
 For by his powre the world was made of yore,
 And all that therein wondrous doth appeare.
 For how should else things so far from attone
 And so great enemies as of them bee,
 Be euer drawne together into one,
 And taught in such accordance to agree.
 Through him the cold began to couet heat,
 And water fire; the light to mount on hie,
 And th'heauie down to peize; the hungry t'eat,
 And voydnesse to seeke full satietie, 850
 So being former foes, they wexed friends,
 And gan by litle learne to loue each other:
 So being knit, they brought forth other kynds
 Out of the fruitfull wombe of their great mother.
 Then first gan heauen out of darknesse dread
 For to appeare, and brought forth chearfull day:
 Next gan the earth to shew her naked head,
 Out of deep waters which her drownd alway.
 And shortly after euerie liuing wight,
 Crept forth like wormes out of her slimy nature. 860
 Soone as on them the Suns life-giuing light,
 had powred kindly heat and formall feature,
 Thenceforth they gan each one his like to loue,
 And like himselfe desire for to beget:
 The Lyon chose his mate the Turtle doue
 Her deare, the Dolphin his owne Dolphinet,
 But man that had the sparke of reasons might,
 More then the rest to rule his passion:
 Chose for his loue the fairest in his sight,
 Like as himselfe was fairest by creation.

For beautie is the bayt which with delight 870
 Doth man allure, for to enlarge his kynd,
 Beautie the burning lamp of heauens light,
 Darting her beames into each feeble mynd:
 Against whose powre, nor God nor man can fynd,
 Defence, ne ward the daunger of the wound,
 But being hurt, seeke to be medicynd
 Of her that first did stir that mortall stownd.
 Then do they cry and call to loue apace,
 With praiers lowd importuning the skie, 880
 Whence he them heares, & whe[n] he list shew grace,
 Does graunt them grace that otherwise would die.
 So loue is Lord of all the world by right,
 And rules their creatures by his powrfull saw:
 All being made the vassalls of his might,
 Through secret sence which therto doth the[m] draw.
 Thus ought all louers of their lord to deeme:
 And with chaste heart to honor him alway:
 But who so else doth otherwise esteeme,
 Are outlawes, and his lore do disobay. 890
 For their desire is base, and doth not merit,
 The name of loue, but of disloyall lust:
 Ne mongst true louers they shall place inherit,
 But as Exuls out of his court be thrust.
 So hauing said, *Melissa* spake at will,
Colin, thou now full deeply hast diuynd:
 Of loue and beautie and with wondrous skill,
 Hast *Cupid* selfe depainted in his kynd.
 To thee are all true louers greatly bound,
 That doest their cause so mightily defend:
 But most, all wemen are thy debtors found,
 That doest their bountie still so much commend. 890
 That ill (said *Hobbinol*) they him requite,
 For hauing loued euer one most deare:
 He is repayd with scorne and foule despite,
 That yrkes each gentle heart which it doth heare.
 Indeed (said *Lucid*) I haue often heard
 Faire *Rosalind* of diuers fowly blamed:
 For being to that swaine too cruell hard,
 That her bright glorie else hath much defamed. 910
 But who can tell what cause had that faire Mayd
 To vse him so that vsed her so well:
 Or who with blame can iustly her vpbrayd,
 For louing not? for who can loue compell.

And sooth to say, it is foolhardie thing,
 Rashly to wyten creatures so diuine,
 For demigods they be, and first did spring
 From heauen, though graft in frailnesse feminine.
 And well I wote, that oft I heard it spoken,
 How one that fairest *Helene* did reuile: 920
 Through iudgement of the Gods to been ywroken
 Lost both his eyes and so remaynd long while,
 Till he recanted had his wicked rimes,
 And made amends to her with treble praise:
 Beware therefore, ye grooms, I read betimes,
 How rashly blame of *Rosalind* ye raise.

Ah shepherds (then said *Colin*) ye ne weet
 How great a guilt vpon your heads ye draw:
 To make so bold a doome with words vnmeet,
 Of thing celestiall which ye neuer saw. 930
 For she is not like as the other crew
 Of shepherds daughters which emongst you bee,
 But of diuine regard and heauenly hew,
 Excelling all that euer ye did see.
 Not then to her that scorned thing so base,
 But to my selfe the blame that lookt so hie:
 So hie her thoughts as she her selfe haue place,
 And loath each lowly thing with loftie eie.

Yet so much grace let her vouchsafe to grant
 To simple swaine, sith her I may not loue: 940
 Yet that I may her honour parauant,
 And praise her worth, though far my wit aboue
 Such grace shall be some guerdon for the grieffe,
 And long affliction which I haue endured:
 Such grace sometimes shall giue me some reliefe,
 And ease of paine which cannot be recured.
 And ye my fellow shepherds which do see
 And heare the langours of my too long dying,
 Vnto the world for euer witnesse bee,
 That hers I die, nought to the world denying, 950
 This simple trophe of her great conquest.

So hauing ended, he from ground did rise,
 And after him vprose eke all the rest:
 All loth to part, but that the glooming skies,
 Warnd them to draw their bleating flocks to rest.

FINIS.

Go on to [Astrophel, etc.](#), published in the same volume with Colin.

