

## A WORLDE OF WORDES, 1598 THE EPISTLE DEDICATORIE

TO **THE** RIGHT HONORABLE PATRONS OF VERTUE, PATTERNS OF HONOR, ROGER EARLE OF RUTLAND, HENRIE EARLE OF SOUTHAMPTON, LUCIE COUNTESSE OF BEDFORD

THIS dedication (Right Honorable and that worthily) may haply make your Honors muse; wellfare that dedication, that may excite your muse. I am no auctorised Herauld to marshall your precedence. Private dutie might perhaps give one the prioritie, where publike respect should prefer another. To choose *Tullie* or *Ausonius* Consuls, is to prefer them before all but one; but to choose either the former of the twaine, is to prefer him before all. It is saide of *Atreus* in a fact most disorderly, that may be saide of any in so ordering his best dutie,

*It makes no matter together. yet he resolves of neither.*

I onely say your Honors best knowe your places: An Italian turne may serve the turne. Lame are we in *Platoes* censure, if we be not ambidexters, using both handes alike. Right-hand, or left-hand as Peeres with mutuall paritie, without disparagement may it please your Honors to joyne hand in hand, and so jointly to lende an eare (and lende it I beseech you) to a poore man, that invites your Honors to a christening, that I and my poore studies, like *Philemon* and *Baucis*, may in so lowe a cottage entertaine so high, if not deities, yet dignities; of whom the Poet testifies.

*Ma sopra ogni altro frutto piu gradito  
Fu il volto allegro, e 'l non bugiardo amore.  
E benche fosse povero il conuito,  
Non Ju la volontà povera e 'l core.*

*But oJ all other cheere most did content  
A cheerefull countenance, and a willing minde,  
Poore entertainment being richly ment,  
Pleaded excuse for that which was behinde.*

Two overhastie fruites of mine nowe some yeeres since, like two forewarde females, the one put her-selfe in service an Earle of Excellence, the other to a Gentleman of Woorth, both into the worlde to runne the race of their fortune. Now where my rawer youth brought forth those female fruites, my riper yeeres affoording me I cannot say a braine-babe *Minerva*, armed at all affaies at first houre; but rather from my Italian *Semele*, and English thigh, a bouncing boie, *Bacchus-like*, almost all names: And being as the manner of this countrie is, after some strength gathered to bring it abroade; I was to entreate three witnesses to the entrie of it into Christendome, over-presumptuous (I grant) to entreate so high a presence, but your Honors so gracious (I hope) to be over-entreated. My hope springs out of three stems: your Honors naturall benignitie; your able employment of such servitours; and the towardly likelie-hood of this Springall to do you honest service. The first, to vouchsafe all; the second, to accept this; the third, to applie it selfe to the first and second. Of the first, your birth, your place, and your custome; of the second, your studies, your conceits, and your exercise: of the thirde, my endeavours, my proceedings, and my project gives assurance. Your birth, highly noble, more than gentle: your place, above others, as in degree, so in height of bountie, and other vertues: your custome, never wearie of well dooing: your studies much in al, most in Italian excellence: your conceits, by understanding others to work above them in your owne: your exercise,

to reade, what the worlds best wits have written and to speake as they write. My endeavours, to apprehend the best, if not all: my proceedings, to impart my best, first to your Honors, then to all that emploie me: my project, in this volume to comprehend the best and all. In truth I acknowledge an entyre debt, not onely of my best knowledge, but of all, yea of more then I know or can, to your bounteous Lordship most noble, most vertuous, and most Honorable Earle of Southampton, in whose paie and patronage I have lived some yeeres; to whom I owe and vowe the yeeres I have to live. But as to me, and manie more the glorious and gracious sunne-shine of your Honor hath infused light and life: so may my lesser borrowed light, after a principall respect to your benigne aspect, and influence, affoorde some lustre to some others. In loyaltie I may averre (my needle toucht, and drawne, and held by such an adamant) what he in love assumed, that sawe the other stars, but bent his course by the Pole-starre, and two guardes, avowing, *Aspicit unam* One guideth me, though more I see. Good parts imparted are not empaired: Your springs are first to serve your selfe, yet may yeelde your neighbours sweete water; your taper is to light to you first, and yet it may light your neighbours candle. I might make doubt, least I or mine be not now of any further use to your selfe sufficiencie, being at home so instructed for Italian, as teaching or learning could supplie, that there seemed no neede of travell: and now by travell so accomplished, as what wants to perfection? Wherein no lesse must be attributed to your embellisht graces (my most noble, most gracious, and most gracefull Earle of Rutland) well entred in the toong, ere your Honor entered Italie, there therein so perfected, as what needeth a Dictionarie? Naie, if I offer service but to them that need it, with what face seeke I a place with your excellent Ladiship (my most most honored, because best best adorned Madame) who by conceited industrie, or industrious conceite, in Italian as in French, in French as in Spanish, in all as in English, understand what you reade, write as you reade, and speake as you write; yet rather charge your minde with matter, then your memorie with words? And if this present, present so small profit, I must confesse it brings much lesse delight: for, what pleasure is a plot of simples, *O non viste, o mal note, o mal gradite*, Or not seene, or ill knowne, or ill accepted? Yet here-hence may some good accrewe, not onelie to truantlie-schollers, which ever-and-anon runne to *Venuti*, and *Alunno*; or to new-entred novices, that hardly can construe their lesson; or to well-forwarde students, that have turned over *Guazzo* and *Castiglione*, yea runne through *Guarini*, *Ariosto*, *Tasso*, *Boccace* and *Petrarche*: but even to the most compleate Doctor; yea to him that best can stande *All'erta* for the best Italian, heereof sometimes may rise some use: since, have he the memorie of *Themistocles*, of *Seneca*, of *Scaliger* yet is it not infinite, in so finite a bodie. And I have seene the best, yea natural Italians, not onely stagger, but even sticke fast in the myre, and at last give it over, or give their verdict with *An ignoramus*. *Boccace* is prettie hard, yet understood: *Petrarche* harder, but explained: *Dante* hardest, but commented. Some doubt if all aright. *Alunno* for his foster-children hath framed a woride of their wordes. *Venuti* taken much paines in some verie fewe authors; and our *William Thomas* hath done prettilie; and if all faile, although we misse or mistake the worde, yet make we up the fence. Such making is marring. Naie ali as good; but not as right. And not right, is flat wrong. One saies of *Petrarche* for all: A thousand strappadas coulde nor compell him to confesse, what some interpreters will make him saie he menr. And a judicious gentleman of this lande will uphold, that none in England understands him thoroughly. How then ayme we at *Peter Aretine*, that is so wittie, hath such varietie, and frames so manie new words? At *Francesco Doni* who is so fantasticall, & so strange? At *Thomaso Garzoni* in his *Piazza universale*; or at *Allessandro Cittolini*, in his *Typocosmia*, who have more proper and peculiar words concerning everie severall trade, arte, or occupation .for everie partieular toole, or implement belonging unto them, then ever any man heeretofore either collected in any booke, or sawe collected in any one language? How shall we understand *Hanniball Caro*, who is so full of wittie jestes, sharpe quips, nipping tantes, and scoffing phrases against that grave and learned man *Lodovico Casteluerti*, in his *Apologia de' Banchi*? Howe shall the English Gentleman come to the perfeeet understanding of *Federico Grisone*, his *Arte del Cavalcare*, who is so full of strange phrases, and unusuall wordes, peculiar onely to horse-manship, and proper but to *Cavalarizzi*? How shall we understande so manie and so strange bookes, of so severall, and so fantasticall subjects as be written in the Italian toong? How shall we, naie how may we ayme at the Venetian, at the

Romane, at the Lombard, at the Neapolitane, at so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiornes, as be used and spoken in Italie, besides the Fiorentine? Sure we must saie as that most intelligent and grave Prelate said, when he carne new out of the South into the North, and was saluted with a womans sute in Northren. Now what is thar in English? If I, who many yeeres have made profession of this toong, and in this search or quest of inquirie have spent most of my studies; yet many times in many wordes have beene so stal'd, and stabled, as such sticking made me blushinglie confesse my ignorance, and such confession indeede made me studiouslie seeke helpe, but such helpe was not readilie to be had at hande. Then may your Honors without any dishonour, yea what and whosoever he be that thinkes himselfe a very good Italian, and that to trip others, doth alwaies stande *All'erta*, without disgrace to himselfe, sometimes be at a stand, and standing see no easie issue, but for issue with a direction, which in this mappe I hold, if not exactlie delineated, yet conveniently prickt out. Is all then in this little? All I knowe: and more (I know) then yet in any other. Though most of these you know already, yet have I enough, if you know anie thing more then you knew, by this, The retainer doth some service, that now and then but holds your Honors styrrop, or lendes a hande over a stile, or opens a gappe for easier passage, or holds a torch in a darke waie: enough to weare your Honors cloth. Such then since this may proove, proove it (right Honorable) and reprove not for it my rudenes, or my rashnes; rudenes in presuming so high, rashnes in assuming so much for it that yet is unaprooved. Some perhaps will except against the sexe, and not allowe it for a male-broode, sithens as our Italians saie, *Le parole sono femine, & i fatti sono maschi*], Wordes they are women, and deeds they are men. But let such know that *Detti* and *fatti*, wordes and deeds with me are all of one gender. And although they were commonly Feminine, why might not I by strong imagination (which Phisicions give so much power unto) alter their sexe? Or at least by such heaven-pearcing devotion as transformed *Iphis*, according to that description of the Poeta

*Et ogni membro suo piu forte e sciolto  
Sente, e volge alla madre il motto, e'l lume.  
Come vero fanciullo esser si vede  
Iphi va con parole alme, e devote  
Al tempio con la madre, e la nutrice,  
E paga il voto, e'l suo miracol dice.  
Feeling more vigor in each part and strength  
Then earst, and that indeede she was a boy.  
Towards hir mother eies and wordes at length  
She turns, and at the tempie with meeke joy  
He and his nurse and mother utter how  
The case fill out, and so he paide bis vow.*

And so his strength, his stature, and his masculine vigor (I would, naie I coulde saie vertue) makes me assure his sexe, and according to his sexe provide so aurenticali testimonies. Laie then your blisse-full handes on his head (right Honorable) and witnes rhat he by me devoted to your Honors, forsakes my private cell, all retired conceites, and selfe-respects to serve you in the worlde, the world in you; and beleeves in your Honors goodnes, in proportion as his service shall be of moment and efiection; and that you will not onely in due censure be his judges, but on true judgement his protectors; and in this faith desires to be numbered in your familie; so in your studies to attend, as your least becke may be his dieugarde; for he hath toong to answer, words at will, and wants not some wit, though he speake plaine what each thing is. So have I crost him, and so blest him, your god-childe, and your servant; that you may likewise give him your blessing, if it be but as when one standes you in steede, supplies you, or pleases you, you saie, Gods-blessing on him. But though in the fore-front he beares your Honorable names, it may be demanded how is it, your Honors gave not him his name? Heerein (right Honorable) beare with the fondnes of his

mother, my Mistresse *Muse*, who seeing hir female *Arescusa* turnd to a pleasing male *Arescon* (as *Plinie* tels of one) beg'd (as some mothers use) that to the fathers name she might prefixe a name befitting the childe's nature. So cald she him, A worlde of wordes: since as the Univers contains all things, digested in best equipaged order, embellisht with innumerable ornaments by the universall creator. And as *Tipocosmia* imaged by *Allessandro Cittolini*, and *Fabrica del mondo*, frarned by *Francesco Alunno*, and *Piazza universale* set out by *Thomaso Garzoni* tooke their names of the universali worlde, in words to represent things of the world: as words are types of things, and everie man by himselfe a little world in some resemblances; so thought she, she did see as great capacitie, and as meete method in this, as in those latter, and (as much as there might be in Italian and English) a modell of the former, and therefore as good cause so to entitle it. If looking into it, it looke like the *Sporades*, or scattered Ilands, rather then one well-joynted or close-joynd bodie, or one coherent orbe: your Honors knowe, an armie ranged in files is fitter for muster, then in a ring; and jewels are sooner Eound in severall boxes, then all in one bagge. If in these rankes the English outnumber the Italian, congratulate the copie and varietie of our sweete-nother- toong, which under this most Excellent well-speaking Princesse or Ladie of the worlde in all Languages is growne as farre beyond that of former times, as her most flourishing raigne for all happines is beyond the raignes of former Princes. Right Honorable, I feare me I have detained your Honors too long with so homelie entertainment, yet being the best the meanenes of my skill can affoorde; which intending as my childe's christening-banquet, heereunto I presumed to invire your Honors: but I hope what was saide at your Honors first comming (I meane in the beginning of my Epistle) shall serve for a finall excuse. And in conclusion (most Honorable) once againe at your departure give me leave to commend this sonne of mine to your favourable protections, and advowe him yours, with this licence, that as *Henricus Stephanus* dedicated his Treasure of the Greeke toong to *Maximilian* the Emperour, to *Charles* the French king, and to Elizabeth our dread Sovereigne, and by their favours to their Universities: So I may consecrate this lesser-volume of lirtle-lesse value, but of like import, first, to your triple-Honors, then under your protections to all ItalianEnglish, or English-Italian students. Vouchsafe then (highlie Honorable) as of manie made for others, yet made knowne to your Honors, so of this to take knowledge, who was borne, bred, and brought foorth for your Honors chiefe service; though more service it may do, to many others, that more neede it; since manie make as much of that, which is made for thern, as that they made thern-selves, and of adopted,as begotten children; yea *Adrian* the Emperour made more of those then mese; since the begotten are such as fates give us, the adopted such as choice culs us; they often-times *Stolti, sgarbati, & inutili*, these ever with *Corpo intiero, leggiadre membra, e mente sana*. Accepting therefore of the childe, I hope your Honors wish as well to the Father, who to y,;mr Honors all-devoted wisheth meede of your merits, renowme of your vertues, and health of your persons, humblie with gracious leave kissing your thrice-honored hands, protesteth to continue ever

*Your Honors most humble and bounden in true service,*

JOHN FLORIO.