

The Phœnix Nest

1593

**Shearsman Classics Series Vol. 8
(Tudor Miscellanies Vol. 2)**

The Shearsman Classics series:

1. *Poets of Devon and Cornwall, from Barclay to Coleridge* (ed. Tony Frazer)
2. Robert Herrick *Selected Poems* (ed. Tony Frazer)
3. *Spanish Poetry of the Golden Age in contemporary English translations*
(ed. Tony Frazer)
4. Mary, Lady Chudleigh *Selected Poems* (ed. Julie Sampson)
5. William Strode *Selected Poems* (ed. Tony Frazer)
6. Sir Thomas Wyatt *Selected Poems* (ed. Michael Smith)
7. *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557)
8. *The Phoenix Nest* (1593)

Forthcoming in the same series:

9. *England's Helicon* (1600)

The Phoenix Nest

1593

**edited by
'R.S. of the Inner Temple'**

Shearsman Books
Exeter

This edition published in the United Kingdom in 2010

by

Shearsman Books Ltd

58 Velwell Road

Exeter

EX4 4LD

<http://www.shearsman.com/>

ISBN 978-1-84861-104-7

The Phoenix Nest was first published in 1593, printed by John Jackson,
and compiled by “R.S. of the Inner Temple, Gentleman”;
a second edition followed in 1614.

T H E
P H O E N I X
N E S T.

Built vp with the most rare
and refined workes of Noble
*men, woorthy Knights, gallant
Gentlemen, Masters of
Arts, and braue
Schollers.*

Full of varietie, excellent inuen-
tion, and singular
delight.

Neuer before this time published.

Set foorth by R.S. of
the Inner Temple
Gentleman.

Imprinted at London, by
John Iackson.

1 5 9 3

This Booke containeth these 14. most
speciall and woorthie
workes.

1	The dead mans Right.	
2	An excellent Elegie, with two speciall Epitaphes vpon the death of sir Philip Sydney,	pag.1.
3	The praise of Chastitie,	12
4	A Dialogue betweene Constancie and Inconstancie,	16
5	A Garden plot,	21
6	A Dream of Ladies & their Riddles,	23
7	The Chesse play,	28
8	Another rare Dreame,	31
9	An excellent Passion,	63
10	A notable description of the World,	77
11	A Counterloue,	80
12	A description of Loue,	90
13	A description of Iealousie,	91
14	The praise of Virginitie,	93

With other excellent and rare
Ditties.

*[Original contents page, which featured only those poems with titles.
The page numbers do not apply to this edition.]*

A Preface to the Reader vpon
the dead mans
Right.

I Write not (gentle Reader) to flatter, for
the dead are not vainglorious: nor to
gain, they reward not trauels: for pride
lesse, they are other mens vertues not
mine owne that I publish: for malice least
of all, bicause I see how ill it becomes them to
whom I write. But I write to admonish, and (if
it might be) to amend vile and enuious toongs:
if not, I seekeno other hire nor glorie than the
satisfaction of mine owne conscience,
by discharging the dutie of
a Christian. So fare
you well.

The dead mans Right.

*Written vpon the death of the Right Honorable the
Earle of Leicester.*

IT is not vnknowne how wicked Libellors haue most odiouslye sought the slander of our wise, graue, and Honorable superiours: diuulging defamatorie Libels, so full of immodest railings and audacious lies, as no indifferent Reader but may easily discover their enuie, and iudge of the veritie: The Authors whereof, though in the qualitie of their offence (tending wholie to sedition) they haue woorthily deserued death, yet the substance of their Pamphlets haue not merited answeare.

For want whereof some as euill affected as themselues, to whose hands mostly such bookes haue come, are flattered with a poore aduantage, imputing the wise and silent disgesting of such inhonest and scurilous cartels to their guiltinesse: when (simple as they are) who is else so foolish as knoweth not if all diuulged were true, how easily Authoritie might excuse them, hauing pens and Presses at commandement, and power to patronize: Much more when so vntrue as themselues ashamed of their falshoodes, dare not auouch them vnder their owne names being without reach and feare of Authoritie.

Amongst others, whose Honors these intemperate railors haue sought to scandalize, none haue more vildly bin slandered than the late deceased Earle, the godly, loiall, wise, and graue Earle of Leicester: Against whom (void of all iust touch of dishonor) they forged millions of impieties, abusing the people by their diuelish fictions, and wicked wresting of his actions, all to bring his vertues & person in popular hatred.

Which though he during his life meekely bare as a man vntouched, without publishing defence of his innocencie. Yet because the toongs of men irritated to enuie by the instruments of those libellors, being without feare of controlment, sith his death are become ouer scandalous and at too much libertie. It shall not be amisse to perswade more modestie and pietie of speech.

And for as much as I perceiue the greatest and most generall obiection they haue to blemish his honor, is but an opinion of his ambition and aspiring minde, wherewith the capitall and cardinall Libellor of them all hath cunninglie infected the ignorant that knew not the state of his honors: Let vs see how he may iustly be touched.

Did he euer assume vnto himselfe anie vaine or vnlawfull tytle, or was vnsatiat of rule? Did he purchase his honors otherwise than by his vertues, or were they so extraordinarie, as nowe or in times past they haue not beene equaled in others inferior vnto him in condition of birth, and more in desart? If not? I maruell the father of this pestilent inuention blush not as red as his cap, and his children be not ashamed of his falsehood.

Admit this woorthie Earles and our most gracious Souereigne who wisely iudged of his vertues, and worthily rewarded his loialtie and paines, did honor him with titles aboue others of his time: (in humble and seemely sort, I speake it without comparison) who euery way was more fit for the dignitie he bare, and more complet to accomplish them: whereof the Libellor could not be ignoraunt, but that too much yeelding to his malice, he sought to slaunder this notable testimonie of his Excellencie.

Such rather woulde I iudge ambitious, as for promotions whether Ecclesiasticall or Temporall, hauing once conceiued a hope of greatnesse, without regard of conscience or Countrie, with voluntarie hazarde of all things pursue the same, by shamefull, traiterous, and vngodlie meanes, exasperating their naturall Prince and superiour Magistrates by rebellious and seditious Libels. These be the true tokens of an aspiring minde, whose nature is to hinder by malice, where it can not hurt by power.

But leauing further pursute of their malice, I will remember this Earles woorthinesse. For the first and principall vertue of his vertues, his Religion, it shall be needlesse to speake much, sith all Christendome knows he professed one Faith, and worshipped one onely God, whom he serued in vprightnes of life, and defended with hazard thereof in armes and action against his enimies. How he succoured and relieued distressed members of the Church, I leaue to those that haue made prooffe, who ought in dutie to make relation thereof.

Next I thinke there is none that will, dare, or can impeach his loialtie, either in fact or faith, sufficiently testified by hir Maiesties gracious loue to whom that belonged, as also by his dutifull and carefull seruice vnto hir. So as further narration thereof shall not neede.

His wisdomes by the grauitie of his place, the causes he managed, and the cariage of his person, is approoued not onely vnto vs, but to most nations of the world.

Lastlie of his valour and affection to his Countries peace, no honest minde but is satisfied: whereof what greater testimonie can we require

than the trauels his aged bodie vnderooke, and dangers the same was subiect vnto in the warres of the Low Countries, where he voluntarily offered his person in combate against the deuoted enimies of this state and hir Maiestie. Leauing his Wife, possessions, and home, not regarding his safetie, riches, and ease, in respect of the godly, honourable, and louing care he bare the common quiet.

All which the vngratefull Malecontents of this time, on whome any thing is ill bestowed (much more the trauels of so memorable a Noble) spared not to reproch: Hyring the toongs of runawaies and roges, such as neither feare God nor the diuell, or are woorth a home, to proclaime hatefull and enuious lies against him, in alehouses, faires, markets, and such assemblies.

At whose returne when his dealings were truely discussed, and truth ouercame their slanders, this was the refuge of their whispering malice: His greatnesse and smooth toong (saie they) beares it awaie: as if Honor once lost in act, could be hidden by greatnes, or recouered by grace and eloquence of speech. Both which taken away by his happie death, and our vnhappy losse, he is sithence more cleared than before.

Maruell not then at their enuie, sith, *Virtutis comes inuidia*, but detest the enuious, that thus blaspheme vertues, whom (for mine owne part) as I see measure their rage, so will I iudge of their affection to the state: for vndoubtedly none but the discontented with the time, or such as he hath iustlie punished for their lewdnesse, will thus calumniously interpret his proceedings.

If I meant to write a discourse of this Earles life, or an Apologie in his defence, I would proceede more orderly in repetition of his vertues, and more effectually in answeere of their poisoned Libels: But as mine intent at first was onelie to admonish loose toongs (such as mine eares haue glowed to heare of) and forewarne the ouer credulous that are easily abused, hauing finished my purpose, if it effects amendment, I shall be glad, if not, their shames be on their owne heads.

Beseeching God this Realme feele not the want of him alreadie dead, and greater iudgements insue for our vnthankfulnesse.

LEICESTER he liu'd, of all the world admir'd,
Not as a man, though he in shape exceld:
But as a God, whose heauenlie wit inspir'd,
Wrought hie effects, yet vertues courses held,
His wisdome honored his Countries name,
His valure was the vangard of the same.

An Elegie, or friends passion, for

his Astrophill.

*Written vpon the death of the right Honorable sir Philip
Sidney knight, Lord gouernor of
Flushing.*

AS then, no winde at all there blew,
No swelling cloude, accloid the aire,
The skie, like glasse of watchet hew,
Reflected Phœbus golden haire,
The garnisht tree, no pendant stird,
No voice was heard of any bird.

There might you see the burly Beare,
The Lion king, the Elephant,
The maiden Vnicorne was there,
So was Acteons horned plant,
And what of wilde or tame are found,
Were coucht in order on the ground.

Alcides speckled poplar tree,
The palme that Monarchs doe obtaine,
With Loue iuice staine the mulberie,
The fruit that dewes the Poets braine,
And Phillis philbert there away,
Comparede with mirtle and the bay.

The tree that coffins doth adorne,
With stately height threatning the skie,
And for the bed of Loue forlorne,
The blacke and dolefull Ebonie,
All in a circle compast were,
Like to an Amphitheater.

Vpon the branches of those trees,
The airie winged people sat,
Distinguished in od degrees,
One sort in this, another that,
Here Philomell, that knowes full well,
What force and wit in loue doth dwell.

The skie bred Egle roiall bird,
Percht there vpon an oke aboue,
The Turtle by him neuer stird,
Example of immortall loue.

The swan that sings about to dy,
Leauing Meander stood thereby.

And that which was of woonder most,
The Phoenix left sweete Arabie:
And on a Caedar in this coast,
Built vp hir tombe of spicerie,
As I coniecture by the same,
Preparde to take hir dying flame.

In midst and center of this plot,
I saw one groueling on the grasse:
A man or stone, I knew not that,
No stone, of man the figure was,
And yet I could not count him one,
More than the image made of stone.

At length I might perceiue him reare
His bodie on his elbow end:
Earthly and pale with gastly cheare,
Vpon his knees he vpward tend,
Seeming like one in vncouth stound,
To be ascending out the ground.

A greeuous sigh foorthwith he throwes,
As might haue torne the vitall strings,
Then downe his cheekes the teares so flowes,
As doth the streame of many springs.
So thunder rends the cloud in twaine,
And makes a passage for the raine.

Incontinent with trembling sound,
He wofully gan to complaine,
Such were the accents as might wound,
And teare a diamond rocke in twaine,

After his throbs did somewhat stay,
Thus heauily he gan to say.

O sunne (said he) seeing the sunne,
On wretched me why dost thou shine,
My star is falne, my comfort done,
Out is the apple of my eine,
 Shine vpon those possesse delight,
 And let me liue in endlesse night.

O grieffe that liest vpon my soule,
As heaueie as a mount of lead,
The remnant of my life controll,
Consort me quickly with the dead,
 Halfe of this hart, this sprite and will,
 Di'de in the brest of Astrophill.

And you compassionate of my wo,
Gentle birds, beasts and shadie trees,
I am assurde ye long to kno,
What be the sorrowes me agreeu's,
 Listen ye then to that insu'th,
 And heare a tale of teares and ruthe.

You knew, who knew not Astrophill,
(That I should liue to say I knew,
And haue not in possession still)
Things knowne permit me to renew,
 Of him you know his merit such,
 I cannot say, you heare too much.

Within these woods of Arcadie,
He cheefe delight and pleasure tooke,
And on the mountaine Parthenie,
Vpon the chrystall liquid brooke,
 The Muses met him eu'ry day,
 That taught him sing, to write, and say.

When he descended downe the mount,
His personage seemed most diuine,
A thousand graces one might count,
Vpon his louely cheerefull eie,
 To heare him speake and sweetely smile,
 You were in Paradise the while.

A sweete attractiue kinde of grace,
A full assurance giuen by lookes,
Continuall comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospell books,
 I trowe that countenance cannot lie,
 Whose thoughts are legible in the eie.

Was neuer eie, did see that face,
Was neuer eare, did heare that tong,
Was neuer minde, did minde his grace,
That euer thought the trauell long,
 But eies, and eares, and eu'ry thought,
 Were with his sweete perfections caught.

O God, that such a woorthy man,
In whom so rare desarts did raigne,
Desired thus, must leaue vs than,
And we to wish for him in vaine,
 O could the stars that bred that wit,
 In force no longer fixed sit.

Then being fild with learned dew,
The Muses willed him to loue,
That instrument can aptly shew,
How finely our conceits will moue,
 As Bacchus opes dissembled harts,
 So loue sets out our better parts.

Stella, a Nymph within this wood,
Most rare and rich of heauenly blis,
The highest in his fancie stood,
And she could well demerite this,

Tis likely they acquainted soone,
He was a Sun, and she a Moone.

Our Astrophill did Stella loue,
O Stella vaunt of Astrophill,
Albeit thy graces gods may moue,
Where wilt thou finde an Astrophill,
 The rose and lillie haue their prime,
 And so hath beautie but a time.

Although thy beautie doe exceede,
In common sight of eu'ry eie,
Yet in his Poesies when we reede,
It is apparant more thereby,
 He that hath loue and iudgement too,
 Sees more than any other doe.

Then Astrophill hath honord thee,
For when thy bodie is extinct,
Thy graces shall eternall be,
And liue by vertue of his inke,
 For by his verses he doth giue,
 To short liude beautie aye to liue.

About all others this is hee,
Which erst approoued in his song,
That loue and honor might agree,
And that pure loue will doe no wrong,
 Sweete saints it is no sinne nor blame,
 To loue a man of vertuous name.

Did neuer loue so sweetly breath
In any mortall brest before,
Did neuer muse inspire beneath,
A Poets braine with finer store:
 He wrote of loue with high conceit,
 And beautie reard about hir height.

Then Pallas afterward attyrde,
Our Astrophill with hir deuce,
Whom in his armor heauen admyrde,
As of the nation of the skies,
 He sparkled in his armes afarrs,
 As he were dight with fierie starrs.

The blaze whereof when Mars beheld,
(An enuious eie doth see afar)
Such maiestie (quoth he) is seeld,
Such maiestie my mart may mar,
 Perhaps this may a suter be,
 To set Mars by his deitie.

In this surmize he made with speede,
An iron cane wherein he put,
The thunder that in cloudes do breede,
The flame and bolt together shut.
 With priuie force burst out againe,
 And so our Astrophill was slaine.

This word (was slaine) straightway did moue,
And natures inward life strings twitch,
The skie immediately aboue,
Was dimd with hideous clouds of pitch,
 The wrastling winds from out the ground,
 Fild all the aire with ratling sound.

The bending trees exprest a grone,
And sigh'd the sorow of his fall,
The forrest beasts made ruthfull mone,
The birds did tune their mourning call,
 And Philomell for Astrophill,
 Vnto hir notes annex a phill.

The turtle doue with tunes of ruthe,
Shewd feeling passion of his death,
Me thought she said I tell thee truthe,
Was neuer he that drew in breath,

Vnto his loue more trustie found,
Than he for whom our griefs abound.

The swan that was in presence heere,
Began his funerall dirge to sing,
Good things (quoth he) may scarce appeere,
But passe away with speedie wing.
 This mortall life as death is tride,
 And death giues life, and so he di'de.

The generall sorrow that was made,
Among the creatures of kinde,
Fired the Phœnix where she laide,
Hir ashes flying with the winde,
 So as I might with reason see,
 That such a Phœnix nere should bee.

Haply the cinders driuen about,
May breede an ofspring neere that kinde,
But hardly a peere to that I doubt,
It cannot sinke into my minde,
 That vnder branches ere can bee,
 Of worth and value as the tree.

The Egle markt with pearcing sight,
The mournfull habite of the place,
And parted thence with mounting flight,
To signifie to Ioue the case,
 What sorow nature doth sustaine,
 For Astrophill by enuie slaine.

And while I followed with mine eie,
The flight the Egle vpward tooke,
All things did vanish by and by,
And disappeered from my looke,
 The trees, beasts, birds, and groue was gone,
 So was the friend that made this mone.

This spectacle had firmly wrought,
A deepe compassion in my spright,
My molting hart issue me thought,
In streames foorth at mine eies aright,
 And heere my pen is forst to shrinke,
 My teares discollors so mine inke.

An Epitaph vpon the right Honorable

sir Philip Sidney knight: Lord
gouernor of Flushing.

TO praise thy life, or waile thy woorthie death,
And want thy wit, thy wit high, pure, diuine,
Is far beyond the powre of mortall line,
Nor any one hath worth that draweth breath.

Yet rich in zeale, though poore in learnings lore,
And friendly care obscurde in secret brest,
And loue that enuie in thy life supprest,
Thy deere life done, and death hath doubled more.

And I, that in thy time and liuing state,
Did onely praise thy vertues in my thought,
As one that seeld the rising sunne hath sought,
With words and teares now waile thy timelesse fate.

Drawne was thy race, aright from princely line,
Nor lesse than such, (by gifts that nature gaue,
The common mother that all creatures haue.)
Doth vertue shew, and princely linage shine.

A king gaue thee thy name, a kingly minde,
That God thee gaue, who found it now too deere
For this base world, and hath resumde it neere,
To sit in skies, and sort with powres diuine.

Kent thy birth daies, and Oxford held thy youth,
The heauens made haste, & staide nor yeeres, nor time,