

THE Silkwormes, and their Flies: Lively described in verse, by T. M. a Country
Farmer, and an apprentice in Physicke. For the great benefit and enriching of England.

Printed at London by V. S. for Nicholas Ling, and are to be sold at his shop at the
West ende of Paules.

**TO THE MOST RENOWNED PATRONESSE, AND NOBLE NURSE OF LEARNING
MARIE COUNTESSE OF PENBROOKE.**

Great envy's Obiect, Worth and Wisedoms pride,
Nature's delight, Arcadia's heire most fitte,
Vouchsafe a while to lay thy taske aside,
Let Petrarke sleep, give rest to Sacred Writte,
Or bowe, or string will break, if ever tied,
Some little pawse aideth the quickest wit:
Nay, heav'ns themselves (though keeping still their way)
Retrograde, and make a kind of stay.
I neither sing Achilles baneful ire,
Nor Man, nor Armes, nor Belly-brothers warres,
Nor Britaine broiles, nor citties drownd in fire,
Nor Hectors wounds, nor Diomedes skarres,
Cease country Muse so highly to aspire:
Our Plain beholds but cannot holde such starres:
Jove-loved wits may write of what they will,
But meaner Theams beseme a Farmers quill.
I sing of little Worms and tender Flies,
Creeping along, or basking on the ground,
Grac't once with those thy heav'nly-humane eyes,
Which never yet on meanest scholler fround:
And able are this work to aeternise,
From East to West about this lower Round,
Deigne thou but breathe a sparke or little flame
Of likeing, to enlife for aye the same.
Your H. ever most bounden. T. M.

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- 1 When garments were first used. page 2
- 2 Whereof garments were first made. 3
- 3 Divers opinions how and when silk was first inuented and worne. 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20.
- 4 Whether the Silk-worm or the Silk Fly were first created. 21 22 23.
- 5 Whether the egg or the henne be first in nature. 24 25 26 27.
- 6 Why the silk flies are only of a white colour. 28.
- 7 What day of the weeke they were first created. 29 30 31.
- 8 The rare virtues and chastity of Silk Flies. 27 28 33 38
- 9 That they are not to be scornd as being little and therefore contemned
creatures. 34 35 36 37.
- 10 Their wonderful encrease and propagation. 39 and 65 66.
- 11 Their manner of dying. 40 66.
- 12 That their eggs are more worth then the eggs of any Flyer: yea then the
Philosopher's egg, if there were any such. 41 42 43 44 45 46 47.
- 13 Their eggs must be kept in a temperate place. 48.
- 14 They are not to be hatched till the Mulbery tree buds. 50.
- 15 Why the Silk-worms beeing crept out of the shell feed only upon Mulbery
leaves. 51 52 53.
- 16 How long they feede: When their meat is to be gathered: In what quantity
they are to be dieted. 55.
- 17 That variety of meates is naught for them. 56.
- 18 Their table is to be kept clean. *ibid.*
How the sicke are discerned. 59.
- 19 Of their sleepe: *ibid.*
- 20 How they must be distributed when they grow great. 57.
- 21 The causes of their sicknesse. 59.
- 22 Signs of their readiness to work, and how then they must be used. 60.
- 23 How long they work. 61.
- 24 When the worms are metamorphosed into Flies. 61.
- 25 When and how their silk is to be winded up. 61.
- 26 The sorts and use of their silken threede. 63 64.
- 27 How their eggs are to be preserved. 67.
- 28 That the silk of Silk-worms is the best of all other. 68.
- 29 What profit and pleasure ariseth in keeping of them. 71 72 73 74.
- 30 Keeping of Silk-worms hindereth neither Shepherds, Spinsters, Weavers,
nor Clothiers. 75.

FINIS.

OF THE SILK WORMS AND THEIR FLIES

PAGE 1

Sydneian Muse: if so thou yet remain,
In brother's bowels, or in daughter's breast,
Or art bequeath'd the Lady of the Plain,
Because for her thou art the fittest guest:
Whose worth to show, no mortal can attain,
Which with like worth is not himself possess'd:
Come help me sing these flocks as white as milk,
That make, and spin, and die, and windle silk.
For sure I know thy knowledge doth perceive,
What breath embreath'd these almost thingles things:
What Artist taught their feet to spin and weave:
What workman made their slime a robe for kings,
How flies breed worms, how worms do flies conceive:
From Nature's womb, how such a nature springs,
Whereof none can directly tell or read,
Whether were first, the fly, the worm, or seed.
A time there was (sweet heav'ns restore that time,)
When bodies pure to spotless souls first knit,
Devoid of guilt, and ignorant of crime,
Upright in conscience, and of harmless wit,
Disdain'd to wear a garment ne'er so fine,
As deeming coats and covers most unfit,
Where nothing eye could see, or finger touch,
Which God himself did not for good avouch.

PAGE 2

Yea, when all other creatures lookèd base,
As mindful only of their earthly food:
Or else as trembling to behold the place,
Where judge eternal sate, and Angel's stood:
Then humane eyes beheld him face to face,
And cheeks unstain'd with fumes of guilty blood,
Desir'd no mask to hide their blushing balls,
But boldly gaz'd and pried on heav'nly walls.
The breast which yet had hatch'd no bad conceit,
Nor harbor'd ought in heart that God displeas'd,
Did it for silken wastcoats then entreat?
Sought it with Tyrian silks to be appeas'd?
No, no, there was no need of such a feat,
Where all was sound, and members none diseas'd:
Nay more, the basest parts and seats of shame,
Were seemely then, and had a comely name.

But when self-will and subtile creepers guile,
Made man to lust, and taste what God forbad,
Then seem'd we to our selves so foul and vile,
That straight we wisht our bodies to be clad,
Seeing without, and in such great defile,
As reft our wits, and made us all so mad:
That we resembled melancholique hares,
Or startling stags, whom every shadow scares.

PAGE 3

Then Bedlam-like to woods we ran apace,
Praying each tree to lend us shade or leaves,
Wherewith to hide (if ought might hide) our face
From his all-seeing eyes, who all perceives,
And with full-brandish'd sword pursues the chase,
Traitors of rest, of shade, and all bereaves:
Permitting men with nothing to be clad,
But shame, despair, guilt, fear, and horror sad.
These robes our parents first were deck'd withal,
Then fig tree fans upon their shame they wore:
Next, skins of beasts (to show their beastly fall),
Then, hairy clothes, and wool from Baa-lambs tore,
Last, Eastern wits, from mane of Camel's tall,
Made water-waved stuff unseen before,
But till the flood had sinners swept away,
Nor Flax, nor Silk, did sinful man array.
For so it seemed just to Justice eyen,
Defiled men to wear polluted things:
And Rebels not to clothe in Flax or line,
Which from the sacred loins of Vesta spring,
Clean, knotless, straight, spotless, upright, and fine,
Whose flour is like five heav'nly-azurd wings,
Whose slime is salve, whose seed is wholesome food,
Whose rind is cloth, whose stubble serv's for wood.

PAGE 4

Or if Arachne erst made sister's thread,
Was it, think you, for every man to wear?
Or only for the sacrificer's weed,
Who of th' immortal priest a type did bear?
Wearing not aught that sprang from brutish seed,
But what from out it self the earth did reare:
So that till holy priesthood first began,

We never read that linen clothed man.
 Yet some conceive when Theban singer wanne,
 Wood-wandering wights to good and civill life,
 (Which erst with bears and wolues in desarts ran,
 Knowing no name of God, law, house, or wife)
 That then his brother Linus first began
 The Flaxmans craft (a secret then unrife)
 Devising beetles, hackels, wheels, and frame,
 Wherewith to bruise, touse, spin and weave the same.
 But Silk (whereon my loving Muse now stands)
 Was it the ofspring of our shallow brain?
 Spun with these fingers foul? these filthy hands,
 Tainted with blood, revenge, and wrongful gain?
 Ah no, who made and numbred all the sands,
 Will teach us soon that fancy to be vain:
 Far be it from our thoughts, that sinful sense,
 Should make a thing of so great excellence.

PAGE 5

Ne need we yet with Tuscan Prelate fly,
 To fictions strange, or wanton Venus eyes:
 Who seeing Pallas taught from Saturn pyramid high,
 To clothe her self and hers with weaved line,
 Yea all the Nymphs and Goddesses in sky,
 To wear long stoles of Lawne and Cambrick fine:
 Fretted to see her self and boy new borne,
 Left both to heav'n and earth an open scorne.
 Revenge she cri'de unto the sire of Jove,
 As she lay hidde under th'Idalian tree:
 Affoord some rayment from the house above,
 If but to hide the shame of mine and mee.
 So may thou learne from us The art of Love,
 Whereby to winne each Ladies heart to thee.
 But grumbling Chuff reiected still her prayre,
 Whereat lamented heav'ns and weeping aire.
 Then Cyprian Queen perceiving that no cries
 Could pierce the leaden eares of sullen Sire,
 Straight lodg'd her son in faire Phylliraes eyes,
 And caus'd him thence to dart up such a fire,
 As had consum'd the very starres and skies,
 Yea melted Saturnes wheeles with hot desire:
 Unless that very houre he had come down,
 And beg'd her aide, on whom he late did frowne.

PAGE 6

How often, as his love on Pelion hill
 Stoopt down to gather herbs for wounds and sores,
 Strew'd he before her Tutsan, Balme, and Dill,
 Long Plantaine, Hysope, Sage, and Comfrey moares?
 Offring besides, the art and perfect skill,
 Of healing bloody wounds and festred coares:
 How oft (I say) did he each day descend,
 And booteless all his vows and wooings spend?
 He lou'd, she loath'd, he liked, she disdain'd:
 He came, she turn'd, he prest, she ran away,
 Neither by words, nor gifts shee could be gain'd,
 (For only in her eyes the Archer lay)
 Regarding nought but (wherein she was train'd)
 Wounds how to cure, and smartings to allay:
 As for the wound of Love, she felt it none,
 And therefore litle heeded Saturns mone.
 Thus thus perplext the chief and gravest God,
 (Or rather God supposd of highest place)
 Toucht now, nay throughly scourg'd with Cupids rodde,
 Sent from the eyes but of a mortal face,
 Flewe down forthwith where Venus made abode,
 And prostrate lying at her feet for grace:
 Promis'd the richest clothing for her Art,
 That now she did, or could desire in hart.

PAGE 7

Who careless of revenge, and innely grieu'd,
 (True beauty aye is full of rueful mone)
 Was ever well till Saturne was releu'd,
 His inward griefes asswag'd, and sorrowes gone.
 And finding him, of hope, and helpe, bereeu'd,
 (For still Phillira was more hard then stone)
 Sith that, quoth she, the virgin scorns thy love,
 Try whether craft and force will make her move.
 Transforme thy self into a Courser brave,
 (What cannot love transforme it self into?)
 Feede in her walkes: and in a moment have
 What thou hast woo'd to have with much adoee:
 Whereto, consent the auncient Suter gave,
 In courser clothes, learning a maid to wooe,
 Filling each wood with neighs and wiyes shrill,
 Whilst he possess his love against her will.
 For lesson which, his Mistress to requite,

Not with vain hopes in lieu of friendly deeds,
By Maia's son (before it grew to night)
He sent a Napkin full of little seeds,
Taken from the tree where Thisbe's soul did light,
To make her self and boy far braver weeds,
Than Pallas had, or any of the sev'n,
Yea, than proud Juno ware the Queen of heav'n.

PAGE 8

Withal, by him he sent the mystery
Of weauing silk, which he himself had found,
When chac'd from heav'n by sonnes owne trechery,
He was compel'd to wander here on ground,
Where, in the depth of grief and poverty,
The height and depth of Arts he first did sound:
Yet would he this to none but her reveal,
By whose devise he did Phillyra steale.
What? shall we think, that silk was a reward.
Bestow'd on crafty dame for aide unjust?
Would men, nay, ought they have such high regard,
Of that which was the lone and hire of lust?
Not so, what ere th'Italian Bishop dar'd
To faine for true, and give it out with trust:
Yet sith silk robes the blessed High-priest wore,
They were not sure the first fruits of a whore.
Vespasians Scribe affirms in Cean Ile,
Latous daughter, quicke of eye and wit,
Hunting abroad, times trauaile to beguile,
Chaunc'd at the length under a tree to fitte,
Where many silken bottoms hangd in piles,
One by another plac't in order fit.
Shee tooke one down, and with her faulcon eye,
Found out the end that did the rest untie.

PAGE 9

Look how the hungry Lame doth frisk and play,
With restless tail, and head, and every limb,
When it hath met his mother gone astray,
Who absent blear'd and tear'd as much for him:
Or as Aurora leaps at break of day,
Seeing her lovely brother rise so trim,
No less that Princesse triumph'd (if not more)
Finding out that which was not found before.
Love's Schoolmaster records a tale most sweet,

Of lovers two that dwelt at Babylon,
Equal of age, in worth and beauty mee,
Each of their sex the flower and paragon,
Next neighbours borne on side of selfsame street
For twixt their parents' houses dwelled none,
Him Pyramus, her Thisbe men did call,
Coupled in heart, though severed by a wall.
As neighbours children, oft they talk and view,
That neighbourship was formost step to love,
Love, which (like private plants) in short time grew,
Pales, walls, and eaves, yea houses and all above,
Nay, Hymeneus feasts were like t' ensue,
And sacred hands give ring and wedding glove,
Had not unhappy parents that forbad,
Which to forbid, no cause but will, they had.

PAGE 10

If lovers spake, it was now all by looks,
None deign'd or durst be trouchman to their mind,
Paper was barr'd, and pen, and ink, and books,
Not any help these parted prisoners find,
But of a rift along the wall that crooks,
(A wall of flint, yet more then parents, kind)
Which, were it old or new, none it espies,
But lovers quick, all-corner-searching eyes,
This rift they used, nor only as a glass,
Wherein to see daily each others face,
But eke through it their voices hourly pass,
In whispring murmurs with a stealing pace:
Sometimes when they no longer durst (alas)
Send whisprings through, when keepers were in place,
Yet would they shift to blow through it a breath,
Which fed and kept their hoping harts from death.
Envious wall (said they) what wrong is this?
Why doth not love or pity make thee fall?
Or (if that be for us too great a bliss)
Why is thy rift so narrow and so small,
As to deny kind love a kindly kiss?
For which we never prove unthankful shall,
Although in truth we owe enough to thee,
Giving our eyes and voice a way so free.

PAGE 11

In vain thus having plain'd in place distinct,
 When night approacht, they each bad each adieu,
 Kissing their wall apart where it was chink'd,
 Whence lovely blasts and breathings mainly flew:
 But kisses stay'd on either's side fast link'd,
 Seal'd to the wall with lips and Lover's glue:
 For though they were both thick and many eke,
 Yet thicker was the wall that did them break.
 Rose-fingred Dame no sooner had put out
 Nights twinkling fires and candles of the sky,
 Nor Phoebus brought his trampling steeds about,
 Whose breath dries up the tears of Vesta's eye,
 But swift and soft, without all noise or shout,
 To wonted place they hasten secretly,
 Where midst a many words muttred that day,
 Next midnight's watch, each vows to steal away.
 And lest when having house and city past,
 They yet might err in fields, and never meet,
 At Ninus' tombe their Rendes-vous is plac'd,
 Under the Mulb'ry white, and honey-sweet:
 Growing hard by a spring that ran at waste,
 With streams more swift than speedy Ister's feet.
 There they agreed in spite of spite to stand,
 When Monarch's beam had pass'd Boote's hand.

PAGE 12

Consent they did, and Day consented too,
 Whose coach ran down the seas in greater haste,
 Than ever it was wont before to do,
 Love-loving Night approached eke so fast,
 That Darkness leapt, ere twilight seem'd to go,
 Wherat though some gods frown'd, some were aghast,
 Yet Lethe's brother did the lovers keep,
 Chaining their guard with long and heavy sleep.
 How featly then unsparred she the door?
 How silent turn'd it on the charmèd cheeks?
 And being scap'd, how glad was she therefore?
 How soon arriv'd where she her fellow seeks?
 Love made her bold, Love gave her swiftness more
 Than usually is found in weaker sex,
 But all in vain: nay rather to her ill,
 For haste made waste, and speed did speeding kill.
 The grisly wife of brutish monarch strong, [a lioness?]

With new slain prey, full panchèd to the chin,
 Foaming out blood, came ramping there along,
 To silver spring, her thirst to drown therein,
 Wherat the fearful maid in posting flung,
 (For Lucine's eye bewray'd the Empress grim)
 Into a secret cave: and flying, lost
 A scarf (for Pyrams' sake) beloved most.

PAGE 13

When savage Queen had well her thirst delay'd,
 In cooling streams, and quenched Nature's fire,
 Returning to the place where late she prey'd,
 To eat the rest when hunger should require,
 In pieces tore the scarf of hapless maid,
 With bloody teeth, and firey flaming ire,
 Whilst she (poor soul) in cave plaid least in sight,
 Fearing what should her love befall that night.
 Who coming later then by vow he should,
 Perceiv'd a Lion's footsteps in the sand,
 Wherat with face most pale, and heart as cold,
 With trembling fear tormented he doth stand.
 But when he saw her scarf (well known of old)
 Embru'd with blood, and cast on either hand?
 O what a sigh he fetcht? how deep he groan'd?
 And thus, if thus: yea, thus he inly moan'd.
 Shalt thou alone die mateless, Thisbe mine?
 Shall not one beast be butcher to us both?
 What? is my Thisbe reft of life and shine?
 And shall not Pyram's life and shining loath?
 Mine is the cursèd soul, the bless'd is thine,
 Thou kep'st thy vow, I falsified mine oath,
 I came too late, thou cam'st (alas) too soon,
 Too dangerous standing, by a doubtful moon.

PAGE 14

O Lions fierce (or if ought fiercer be,
 Amongst the herds of woody outlaws fell)
 Rent, rent in twain this thrice-accursed me:
 From out your paunch conuey my soul to hell:
 Whose murdring slouth, and not the sisters three,
 Did Thisbe sweet, sweet Thisbe foully quell:
 But cowards only call and wish for death,
 Whilst valiant hearts in silence banish breath.
 Then stooping, straight he took hir scarf from ground,

And bare it with him to th'appoynted place,
 Kissing it oft, watring each rent and wound,
 With thousand tears, that trailing ran apace.
 Salt tears they were, sent from his eyes unsound,
 Yea salter then the sweate of Oceans face:
 At last (having unsheath'd his fatal blade)
 Thus gan he cry, as life began to fade.
 Hold earth, receive a draught eke of my blood,
 (And therewith lean'd upon his sword amaine)
 Then falling backward from the crimson flood,
 Which spowted forth with such a noise and straine,
 As water doth, when pipes of lead or wood,
 Are goog'd with punch, or cheesill slit in twaine,
 Whistling in th'ayre, and breaking it with blowes,
 Whilst heavy moysture upward forced flowes.

PAGE 15

The Mulb'ry strait (whose fruit was erst as white
 As whitest Lilly in the fruitfullst field)
 Was then and ever since in purple dight,
 Yea even the roote no other staine doth yeeld,
 With blackish gore being watred all that night,
 In morneful sort, which round about it wheel'd,
 Only her leaves retained their former hue,
 As nothing toucht with death of lover true.
 No sooner was he falne, and falling, freed
 Of perfect sense: but she scarce rid of fear,
 Returnes againe to standing fore agreed,
 Not dreaming that her love in kenning were,
 Her feet, her eyes, her heart and tongue made speed,
 To vtter all things lately hapned there,
 And how she scap't the Lionesses clawes,
 By letting fall a scarf to make her pawse.
 But when she vewd the newly-purpled face
 Of Berries white: that changing chang'd her mind,
 New signs perswade her, that is not the place,
 By either part to meet in fore assign'd.
 Thus doubting whilst she stood a little space,
 She heard a fluttering carried with the wind,
 And viewed somewhat shake in quiu'ring wise,
 Which straite revok't hir feet, but more her eyes.

PAGE 16

Her lips grew then more pale then palest Box,
 Her cheeks resembled Ashwood newly fell'd,
 Grayness surpris'd her yellow amber locks,
 Not any part their lively luster held:
 Yea even her vent'rous heart but faintly knocks,
 Now up, now down, now falne, now vainly sweld,
 Tost like a shippe when Corus rageth most,
 That anchors hath, and masts and master lost.
 But when she knew her faithful fellow slaine,
 O how she shrikt and bruz'd her guiltless arme,
 Tearing her haire, renting her cheeks in vain,
 On outward parts, revenging inward harmes,
 Making of tears and blood a mingled rain,
 Wherwith she Pyram drencht, and then thus charmes:
 Speake love, O speake, how hapned this to thee?
 Part, halfe, yea all of this my soul and mee.
 Sweet love, reply, it is thy Thisbe deare,
 She cries, O heare, she speakes, O answer make:
 Rowse up thy sprights: those heavy lookers cheere,
 At which sweet name he seemed halfe awake,
 And eyes with death opprest, againe to clear.
 He eyes her once, and eying leave doth take,
 Even as fair Bellis winkes but once for all,
 When winters usher hastneth summers fall.

PAGE 17

When afterwards she found her scarf all rent,
 His ivory sheath voide eke of rapier gilt:
 And hath his hand (quoth she) thy soul hence sent?
 And was this blood by this thy rapier spilt?
 Unhappy I: but I no more lament,
 But follow thee even to the vtmost hilt.
 I was the cause of all thy hurt and crosse,
 Hold, take me eke a partner of thy loss.
 Whom only death could from me take away,
 Shall death him take from me against my will?
 Not so, his power cannot Thisbe staye:
 Who even in death will follow Pyram still,
 His blade (yet warme) then to her brest she lays,
 And falne thereon thus cri'de with crying shrill:
 Parents unjust which us deny'd one bed,
 Enuy us not one toomb when we be dead.
 And all you heav'nly hostes allot the same:

And thou O tree, which coverest now but one
(One too too hot, for so imports his name)
But cover shalt two carcasses anon:
Wear signs of blood from both our harts that came
In mourning weed our mischiefs ever mone.
She dead: Tree, Sires, and Gods gave what she pray'd,
Black grows the fruit, and they together laide.

PAGE 18

Since which time eke some other Author's fain,
Their humming souls about these hapless trees,
To be transported from th' Elysian plain,
Into the snowy milk-white Butterflies:
Whose seeds when life and moving they obtain,
How e'er they spare the fruit of Mulberies,
Leave yet no leaves untorn that may be seen,
Because they only still continude green.
Yet that there might remain some Pyramis,
And everlasting shrine of Pyramis' love,
When leaves are gone, and summer waning is,
The little creepers never cease to move,
But day and night (placing in toil their blisse)
Spin silk this tree beneath and eke above:
Leauing their oval bottoms there behind,
To show the state of ev'ry Lovers mind.
For as in forme they are not wholly round,
As is the perfect figure of the sky,
So perfect love in mortals is not found,
Some little warts or wants in all we spy,
Nay ev'n as fine and course silk there abound,
The best beneath, the worst rold up more high,
So sometimes lust o're-lieth honest love,
Happy the hand that keeps it from above.

PAGE 19

Againe, as these fine troupes themselves devour,
Spinning but silken harses for their death:
Which done, they dye therein, (by Nature's power
Transform'd to flies that scarce draw one months breath)
So lovers sweet is mingled still with sower,
Such happe above proceeds or underneath,
That still we make our love our winding sheete,
Whilst more we love, or hotter then is meet.
Others report, there was and doth remain

A neighbour people to the Scythian tall,
Twixt Taurus mount and Tabis fruitful plain,
Most just of life, of fare and diet, small,
Lovers of peace, haters of strife and gain,
Graye eyed, red cheek'd, and amber-headed all,
Resembling rather Gods than humane race,
Such grace appeard in words, in deeds, and face.
Whose righteous life and justice to requite,
(Whether with wind or rain, no man doth know)
God sent unto them silk-worms infinite,
In Aprils wane when buds the mulb'ry slow,
Which here and there in every corner light,
With six white feet and body like to snow:
Eating each leaf of that renownèd tree,
The matter of these silken webs we see.

PAGE 20

These webs for wares they on their coast exchange:
For alien none must come into the Land,
T' infect their people with religions strange,
And file their temples with polluted hand:
Neither do they to other nations range,
New fashions, rites or manners t' understand:
Better they have at home, where every slave
Wears silks as rich as here our Princes brave.
These be the tales that Poetizers sing,
Of Silken-worm, and of their seed and meat:
Sweet, I confess, and drawn from Helique spring,
Full of delighting change, and learning great.
Yet, yet, my Muse dreams of another thing,
And listeth not of fictions to entreat.
Say then (my Joy) say then, and shortly read,
When silk was made, and how these silkworms breed.
Was it, thinkst thou, found out by industry?
Inspir'd by vision or some Angel's word,
When first the name of sacred Majesty,
Was given from heav'n to Salem's priest and Lord?
Did not before ten thousand Silk-worms lie,
And hang on every tree their little cord?
Yes, but (like Hebrew's harps on Babel's plain)
Untouch'd and use-less there it hang'd in vain.

PAGE 21

Before, most men liv'd, either naked quite,
 Or coarsely clad in some beast's skin or hide:
 The best were but in linen garments dight,
 Wherein themselves the greatest men did pride:
 Yea afterward in time of greatest light,
 When chief Baptizer preach't in desert wide,
 Where said he, silken robes were to be sought,
 But in kings' courts? for whom they first were wrought.
 Though whether worm or fly were formèd first,
 No man so right can tell as wrong presume:
 Yet this I hold. Till all things were accurst,
 Nothing was born it self for to consume.
 No Caterpillars then which venture durst,
 To ravish leaves, or tender buds to plume:
 For only life and beauty liv'd in trees,
 Till falling man caus'd them their leaves to leese.
 The earthly herds and winged posts of sky,
 And ev'ry thing that mov'd on Eden ground,
 Fed first on herbs (as Duke of Horeb hie,
 Author of Nature's story most profound,
 Sets down to us for perfect verity,
 (Gains aide of none but fools and wits unsound)
 When for mans food trees eke allotted were,
 Which from themselves did fruit or berries bear.

PAGE 22

Durst then the finest worm but touch the meat,
 Or dish which for his sovereign was ordain'd?
 Durst they figs, nuts, pears, plums, or mulb'ries eat
 Before their lord with treason foul was stain'd?
 No certes no, but when ambitious heat,
 Revok't the bliss which sinless Sire had gain'd:
 Then worms in common fed with us, and tore
 Our trees, our fruits, yea ev'n our selves therefore.
 Say Roman's heav'nly-humane Orator,
 Whose words dropt sweeter than Hymettus' dew:
 Say Salem's scourge and Judas' tormentor,
 Whose very name doth pomp and glory show:
 Say thou whose writs men as divine adore,
 Inspir'd from heav'n with knowledge given to few:
 What are you now? What living were you then
 But worms' repast, though wise and mighty men?
 Foul-footed bird, that never sleepest well

Nor fully, but on highest perch do'st breathe:
 Whose outward shrieks bewray an inward hell,
 Whose glistening plumes are but a painted sheath:
 Whose tail, though it with pride so lofty swell,
 Yet hides it not thy blackness underneath.
 Tell me: what hast thou got by climbing thus,
 But to thy self a shame, and loss to us?

PAGE 23

To us alone? nay stowtest Oaks likewise,
 Hard-harted willows by the water side,
 Sweet Cedar wood which some think never dies,
 And Daphne's tree though green in winter's tide,
 Yea stone, and steel, and things of highest prize,
 From Nature's womb that flow in greatest pride:
 What are they all but meat for worms and rust?
 Two due revengers of ambitious lust.
 Before thou wast, were Timber-worms in price,
 And sold for equal weight of purest gold?
 Fed creeping birds one barke-devouring lice?
 Were silk-worms from S•rinda brought and sold?
 Devoured they the leaves of tree most wise,
 With fury such as now we do behold?
 Rather believe as yet they were not born,
 Or only fed on grass, on herbs, or corn.
 For sith their chiefest use is to array
 This little breathing dust when time requires,
 With gallant guards and 'broidred garments gay,
 With scarfs, vales, hoods, and other soft attires:
 Whose sense from sense is fled so far away?
 Whose mind to bear so wrong a thought conspires,
 As once to deemethese Silken-merciers sent,
 When nakedness was man's chief ornament?

PAGE 24

But sith they are, and therefore framed were,
 Which first was fram'd? the egg? the worm? or fly?
 No doubt the fly, as plainly shall appear,
 To all that have but an indiff'rent eye,
 Though two great Clarks contrary thoughts did bear,
 And sentence gave, without just reason why,
 That eggs were made before the hardy Cocke
 Began to tread, or brooding henne to clocke.
 Pretend they did, that least and simplest things,

(Which none train'd up in reasons school gainsay)
 Of things compounded are the formost springs,
 Ev'n as a lumpe of rude and shapeless clay,
 Into the mold a Molder cunning brings,
 And by degrees compels it to obey.
 Forming by art what he in mind fore-thought,
 Out of a mass that just resembled nought.
 So eke though eggs seeme things confused quite,
 And far unlike what afterwards they prove:
 Yet formost place they challenge by their right,
 For who e'er saw a cock or hen to move,
 Till first they came from out the yolk and white,
 And time, and heat, and place, and sitters love,
 Had formed out a nature from the same,
 Deserving well anothers nature's name?

PAGE 25

Springs not from eggs that huge Leviathan,
 The Tortesse eke, and bloody Crocodile?
 Fish, Lyzards, Snakes, and Skippers African,
 Whose hurtful armies waste the coasts of Nile?
 Nay if with one fit word the world we scan,
 May it obtain a fitter name or stile,
 Then that we should a common egg it call,
 Which giveth life and form and stuffe to all?
 Nay, did not once that cheereful brooding sp'rite,
 Before the earth received forme or place,
 Sitte closely like a henne both warme and light,
 Upon the wauing nest of mingled mass,
 Whilst yet nights torches had obtain'd no light
 Nor Sun as yet in circled rounds did passe?
 Yes, yes: the words are so apparant plain,
 That to deny them, were but labour vain.
 These some do use with other arguments,
 To prove that seed and eggs were first in time.
 Wrested from quires of sacred Testaments,
 And those of heathen wits the chief and prime:
 Which for authentique held by long descents,
 If I gainsay, perhaps may seeme a crime:
 Yet rather would I carry crime and scorne,
 Then falsely think, imperfect things first borne.

PAGE 26

For reason saith, and sense doth almost sweare,
 Nature's entire to be created furst:
 Bodies t' have beene before the members were,
 The sound before the sicke, the whole, the burst,
 That confidence had time when lacked fear,
 That blessed state fore-went the state accurst:
 Briefely, all bodyes that begotten beene,
 Were not before created bodies seen.
 Now what are seeds and eggs of worms or foul,
 But recrements of preexisting things,
 The bodies burden voyd of life and soul?
 Yea, from themselves corruption only springs,
 Unless by brooders heate (as from the whole)
 They changed be to belly, feet, or wings:
 Resembling them now metamorphosed,
 In, by, and from whose essence they were bred.
 Yea, usual phrase such dreams confuteth quite,
 For never man, this is an eggs henne said,
 But this a hennes egg is, showing aright,
 That eggs are things by former nature's layde,
 Begotte of mingled seed by day or night,
 Neither with skin, nor shell, nor forme arrayd,
 Till long they have abode in nature's nest,
 And wearied womb be with their weight opprest

PAGE 27

Againe, to think that seed was made before,
 The substance whence it is ingendered,
 (Namely from out much nutrimental store,
 Through excesse of humours perfited)
 Or else to ghesse it formed was of yore,
 Ere pipes were laid through which it should be shed,
 What is it but to dream of day or night,
 E'er darkness were, or any show of light?
 Sith eke all winged creatures by one day,
 Are elder then the heards that crawl and creepe,
 Conclude with truth and confidence we may,
 All flies were made ere worms began to peepe,
 Both they which all day long at base do play,
 And night once come, do nothing else but sleepe,
 And these which only live to leave a seed,
 From whence the never-idle spinsters breede.
 Silk-flies I meane, which not one breast alone,

But all throughout, on head, wings, sides, and feet,
Besides pure white, else color carry none,
For creatures pure, a color thought most meet,
Martial'd the first of all in glorious throne,
Whereon shall sit the Lord and Saviour sweet,
Who with ten thousand Angels all in white,
Shall one day judge the world with doom upright

PAGE 28

No spotte on them, as els on ev'ry fly,
Bycause in them no follies ever grew,
No crimson red doth for revengement crye,
No wavering watchet, where all harts be true:
No yellow, where there is no Jealousie:
No labour lost, and therefore voide of blue:
No peachy marke to signify disdain,
No green to show a wanton mind and vain.
No orange color, where there wants despight,
No tawny sadde, where none forsaken be:
No murry, where they covet nought but light,
No mourning black, where all reioyce with glee:
In briefe, within, without, they are all white,
Wearing alone the badge of chastity:
Bycause they only keepe themselves to one,
Who being dead, another chuse they none.
True Turtles mine, begotten with the breath,
Not of a lewd lascivious mortal Jove:
Whose lawe was lust, whose life was worse then death,
Whose incests did defile both wood and groue,
But with the breath of him who underneath
Rules Stigian king, and heav'nly hosts above,
Assist me if I erre in setting forth
Your birth dayes story; and surpassing worth.

PAGE 29

As soone as light obtain'd a fixèd seat,
(which equally was first spread over all,
Giving alike, both glistring, shine, and heat,
To every place of this inferior ball)
Two master-lamps appear'd in welkin great,
Th' one king of day, whom Poets Phoebus call,
And th' other Phoebe, sovereign of the night,
Twins at one instant bred and borne of light.
Him heav'nly Martial high, in Palace plac't,

Built all of clear and through-shining gold,
With columns chrysolite most bravely grac'd,
And flaming rubies, glorious to behold,
Wearing about his yellow-amber waist,
A sloping belt, with studs twice six times told,
Wherein were grav'n most artificially,
Twelve stately Peers of curious imagery.
About him, as in royal Coach he sate,
Attended Hour, Day, Minute, Month, and year,
Spring, Summer, Harvest, Winter, Morning, Fate,
With Instancy, who then was driver there,
Whipping his fiery steeds from Libra's gate,
Not suff'ring them to stand still any where,
Save once in Gibeon when five kings were slain,
By first-made Champion with their faithless train.

PAGE 30

His sisters court built all of silver tri'de,
And Iv'ory charret set with Diamonds,
Emboss'd with Orient pearls on either side,
Wheel'd all with Sapphires, shod with Onyx stones,
Declar'd in what great pomp she first did ride
Amongst the other twinkling Paragons,
Before her honor suffer'd an eclipse,
Through serpent's guile, and woman's greedy lips.
Her handmaids then were perpetuity,
Constant proceeding, and continuance:
No show of change or mutability
Could justly then themselves in her advance:
Her face was full and fair continually
Not altering once her shape or countenance,
Till those lights chang'd for whom all lights were made,
And with whose fall the heav'ns began to fade.
Yet still on her wait Ocean and his wife,
Nais the fair, and all the wat'ry crew,
Nights, Rivers, Floods, Springs, having else no strife,
Then who may formost proffer service due:
Blood, choler, phlegm, (the roots and sap of life)
Are at her beck, waning or springing new,
According as from throne celestial,
She deigns to shine in measure great or small.

PAGE 31

When they were crowned now in royall thrones,
 And entred in their first and happiest race,
 Amongst those glistring pointed Diamons,
 Which cut out times proportion, lotte, and space:
 Behold the earth with heavy burden grones,
 And praies them both to eye and rue her case:
 And with their friendly hands and meeding art,
 To hasten that which ready was to part.
 For ev'n next morne the All-creating Sire
 Had sent abroad, I know not I, what word:
 Much like to this, Let Sea and earth conspire
 All winged troupes the world for to afford:
 Wherewith the aire: even to the desart fire,
 Was so with great and little flyers stor'd.
 That none but winged people saw the eyes,
 Of any star or planet in the skies.
 O how it joys my hart and soul to think
 Upon the blessed state of that same daye?
 When at a word, a nodde, yea at a winke,
 At once flew out these winged gallants gay,
 Tide each to each in such a friendly linke,
 That ev'n the least did with the greatest playe:
 The doue with hawks, the chickens with the kite.
 Feareless of wrong, rage, cruelty, or spite.

PAGE 32

Pert marlins then no grudge to larkes did bear,
 Fierce goshawkes with the Phesants had no warre,
 Rau'ns did not then the Eagles talens fear,
 Twixt Cuckoes and the Titlings was no iarre,
 But coasted one another ev'ry where
 In friendly sort, as lovers woonted were:
 For love alone rul'd all in ev'ry kind,
 As though all were of one and self same mind.
 How safely then did these my Turtle-souls
 Disport themselves in Phoebus cheereful shine?
 How boldly flew they by the iayes and owles,
 Dreadless of crooked beakes or fiery eyen?
 Nay, who in all the flocks of winged foules
 Said once in heart, This pris'oner shall be mine?
 When none as yet made other warre or strife,
 Then such as Hymen makes twixt man and wife.
 But since the fall of parents pufft with pride,

Not only men were staine in viciousnesse,
 But birdes, and beasts, and worms, and flies beside,
 Declining from their former perfittnesse,
 Did by degrees to imperfections slide,
 Tainted with pride, wrath, envy, and excesse:
 Yea, then the husband of one only henne,
 Was afterwards contented scarce with ten.

PAGE 33

Hence, gowts in cocks, and swelling paines appeare,
 Hence, Partridge loynes so feeble we do view,
 Hence, sparrow treaders live out scarce a yeare,
 Hence, leprosy the Cuckoes overgrew:
 Breefely, none did in true love persevere:
 But these white Butterflies and Turtles true,
 Who both in life and death do ne're forsake
 Her, whom they once espoused for their make.
 They choose not (like to other birds and beasts)
 This yeare one wife, another wife the next,
 Their choise is certaine, and still certaine rests,
 With former loves their mindes are not perplext,
 He yeeldes to her, she yeeldes to his requests,
 Neither with fear nor ielosity is vext:
 She clippeth him, he clippeth her againe,
 Equall their joy, and equall is their paine.
 Remember this you fickle hearted Sires,
 Whom lust transporteth from your peereles Dames,
 To scorch your selves at foul and forraine fires,
 Wasting your health and wealth in filthy games,
 Learne hence (I say) to bridle bad desires,
 Quenching in time your hot and furious flames,
 Let little flies teach great men to be just,
 And not to yeeld brave mindes a prey to lust.

PAGE 34

When thus they were created the first day,
 Alike in bignesse, feature, forme and age,
 Cladde both alike in soft and white array,
 And set upon this universall stage,
 Their severall parts and feats thereon to play,
 Amidst the rest of nature's equipage:
 Who then suppos'd (as since some fools have thought)
 That little things were made and serv'd for nought.
 Diswitted dolts that huge things wonder at,

And to your cost coast daily ile from ile,
 To see a Norway whale, or Libian cat,
 A Carry-castle or a Crocodile,
 If leane Ephesian or th'Abderian fat
 Liv'd now, and saw your madness but a while,
 What streaming flouds would gush out of theyr eyes,
 To see great wittols little things despise?
 When look, as costliest spice is in small bagges,
 And little springs do send forth clearst flouds,
 And sweetest Iris beareth shortest flagges,
 And weakest Ofiers bind up mighty woods,
 And greatest hearts make ever smallest bragges,
 And little caskets hold our richest goods:
 So both in Art and Nature tis most clear,
 That greatest worths in smallest things appeare.

PAGE 35

What wise man ever did so much admire
 Neroes Colossus five score cubits high,
 As Theodorus Image cast with fire,
 Holding his file in right hand hansomly,
 In left his paire of compasses and squire,
 With horses, Coach, and footmen running by
 So lively made, that one might see them all?
 Yet was the whole work than a fly more small.
 Nay, for to speake of things more late and rife,
 Who will not more admire those famous Fleas,
 Made so by art, that art imparted life,
 Making them skippe, and on mens hands to seaze,
 And let out blood with taper-poynted knife,
 Which from a secret sheat he ran out with ease:
 Then those great coches which thenselves did drive,
 With bended scrues, like things that were alive?
 Ingenious Germane, how didst thou conuey
 Thy Springs, thy Scrues, thy rowells, and thy fly?
 Thy cogs, thy wardes, thy laths, how didst thou lay?
 How did thy hand each peece to other tie?
 O that this age enioy'd thee but one day,
 To show thy Fleas to faithless gazers eye
 That great admirers might both say and see,
 In smallest things that greatest wonders bee.

PAGE 36

Great was that proud and feared Philistine,
 Whose launces shaft was like a weavers beame,
 Whose helmet, target, bootes, and brigandine,
 Wear weight sufficient for a sturdy teame,
 Whose frowning looks and hart-dismaying eyne,
 Daunted the tallest king of Israels realme:
 Yet little shepheard with a pibble stone,
 Confounded soon that huge and mighty one.
 Huge fiery Dragons, Lions fierce and strong
 Did they such fear on cruel Tyrant bring,
 With bloody teeth or tailes and talens long,
 With gaping lawes or double forked sting,
 As when the smallest creepers ganne to throng,
 And seize on every quicke and living thing?
 No, no. The Egyptians never feared mice,
 As then they feared little crawling lice.
 Did ever Piseus sound his trumpet shrill
 So long and clear, as doth the summer Gnat,
 Her little cornet which our eares doth fill,
 Awaking ev'n the drowziest drone thereat?
 Did ever thing do Cupid so much ill,
 As once a Bee which on his hand did squat?
 Confesse we then in small things virtue most,
 Gayning in worth what they in greatness lost.

PAGE 37

But holla, Muse, extol not so the vale,
 That it contemne great hilles, and greater sky,
 Think that in goodness nothing can be small,
 For smalness is but an infirmity,
 Nature's defect, and ofspring of some fall,
 The scorne of men, and badge of infamy?
 For still had men continued tall and great,
 If they in goodness still had kept their seat.
 A little dismall fire whole townes hath burnd,
 A little wind doth spread that dismall fire,
 A little stone a carte hath overturnde,
 A little weed hath learn'ed to aspire,
 The little Ants (in scorne so often spurnd)
 Have galles: and flies have seats of fixed ire.
 Small Indian gnattes have sharpe and cruel stings,
 Which good to none, but hurt to many brings,
 And truely for my part I list not prayse

These silk-worm-parents for their little sise,
 But for those lovely great resplendant rayes,
 Which from their woorks and worthy actions rise,
 Each deede deserving well a Crowne of bayes,
 Yea, to be graven in wood that never dies:
 For let us now recount their actions all,
 And truth will prove their virtues are not small.

PAGE 38

First, though five Males be brought to Females ten,
 Yet of them all they never chuse but five,
 Each takes and treads his first embraced henne,
 With her he keeps, and never parts alive:
 And when he is enclos'd in Stygian penne,
 Desireth she one moment to survive?
 No, no, but strait (like a most loving bride)
 Flies, lies, and dies, hard by her husbands side.
 In Tuscan towres what armies did I view
 One haruest, of these faithful husbands dead?
 Bleede, O my heart, whilst I record anew,
 How wives lay by them, beating, now their head,
 Sometimes their feet, and wings, and breast most true,
 Striving no less to be delivered,
 Then Thisbe did from undesired life,
 When she beheld her Pyram slaine with knife.
 But whilst they live, what is their chiefest work?
 To spin as spiders do a fruitless threed?
 Or Adder-like in hollow caves to lurke,
 Till they have got a crust and cankred seed?
 (Whose yong ones therfore, with dame Nature's fork,
 Justly gnaw out the wombs that did them breed:)
 Or strive they Lion-like to seize and pray,
 On neighbours herds or herds-men by the way?

PAGE 39

Delight they with strange Ants and Griphins strong,
 To hoord up gold and ev'ry gaineful thing?
 Live they not beasts, and birds, and men among,
 Committing nought that may them damage bring?
 O had I that five-thousand-versed song,
 Which Poet proud did once with glory sing,
 That whilst I write of these same creatures blest,
 In proper words their worth might be exprest.
 What will you more? they feede on nought but aire,

As doth that famous bird of Paradiice,
 They live not long, lest goodness should empaire,
 Or rather through that Haggess envious eyes,
 That sits, and sitting, cuts in fatall chaire
 That threed first off, which fairest doth arise:
 Affording crows and kites a longer line,
 Then fliers full of gifts and grace divine.
 When maker said to ev'ry bodied soul,
 Encrease, encrease, and multiply your kinde:
 What he or she of all the winged foul
 So much fulfill'd their sovereign-Makers minde,
 As these two flies? who coupled three dayes whole,
 Left on the fourth more seeds or eggs behind
 Then any bird: yea then the fruiteful wrenne,
 Numbred by tale a hundred more then ten.

PAGE 40

Which donne, both die, and die with cheereful hart
 Bycause they had done all they bidden were,
 Might we from hence with conscience like depart,
 How deare were death? how sweet and voyd of fear?
 How little should we at his arrowes start?
 If we in hands a quittance such could bear
 Before that judge, who looks for better deedes,
 From men then flies, that spring of baser seeds.
 Go worthy souls (so witty Greeks you name)
 Possesse for aye the fair Elisian green:
 Sport there your selves each Lording with his Dame,
 Enjoy the blisse by sinners never seen:
 You liv'd in honor, and still live in fame,
 More happy there, then here is many a Queen:
 As for your seeds committed to my charge,
 Take you no care: I'le sing their worth at large.
 Weepe not faireMira for this funeral.
 Weepe notPanclea, Miraes chief delight,
 Weepe notPhileta, norErato tall:
 Weepe notEuphemia, norFelicia white:
 Weepe not sweeteFausta. I assure you all,
 Your cattels parents are not dead outright:
 Keepe warme their eggs, and you shall see anon,
 From eithers loynes a hundred rise for one.

FINIS (of the first book).

THE SECOND BOOKE OF THE SILK-WORMS AND THEIR FLIES

O Thou whose sweet and heav'nly-tuned Psalmes
 The heav'ns themselves are scarce inough to praise!
 Whose penne divine and consecrated palmes,
 From wronging verse did Royall Singer raise,
 Vouchsafe from brothers ghost no niggards almes,
 Now to enrich my high aspiring layes,
 Striving to ghesse, or rather truely reede,
 What shall become of all this little breede.
 This little breede? nay even the least of all,
 The least? nay greater then the greatest are:
 For though in show their substance be but small,
 Yet with their worth what great ones may compare
 What eggs as these, are so much sphericall
 Of all that ever winged Nature's bare?
 As though they only had deserv'd to have,
 The self same forme which God to heavens gave.
 From Lybian eggs a mightie bird doth rise,
 Scorning both horse and horsemen in the chace,
 With Roe-bucks feet, throwing in furious wise,
 Dust, gravell, sand and stones at hunters face,
 Yet dwels there not beneath the vaulted skies,
 A greater fool of all the feathred race:
 For if a little bush his head doth hide,
 He thinks his body cannot be espide.

PAGE 42

From eggs of her whose mate supporteth Jove,
 And dares give combate unto draggons great,
 With whom in vain huge stagges and Lions stroue,
 Whose only sight makes every bird to sweate,
 Whom Romans fed in Capitole above,
 And plac't her Ensigne in the highest seat,
 What else springs out but bloody birds of praye,
 Sleeping all night, and murdering all the daye?
 From eggs of famous Palamedian foules,
 And them that hallow Diomedes toomb,
 In bodies strange retaining former souls,
 Wise, wary, warlike, saging things to come,
 Whose inborne skil our want of wit controules,
 Whose timely fore-sight mates our heedless doom,
 Comes ought but cranes of most unseemly shape,

And diving Cootes which muddy chanel's scrape?
 Yea you whose eggs Hortentius sometimes sold,
 At higher rate then now we prize your sire.
 Proud though he be, and spotted all with gold,
 Stretching abroad his spangled brave attire,
 Wherby, as in a glasse, you do behold,
 His courting love, and longing to aspire:
 What bring ye forth but spectacles of pride,
 Whose pitchy feet marres all the rest beside?

PAGE 43

Thrise blessed eggs of that renowned dame,
 Who bleeds to death, her dead ones to revive,
 Whom envious creepers poyson overcame,
 Whilst she fetcht meat to keepe them still alive,
 How well befits her love that sacred Lamb,
 That heal'd us all with bleeding issues five?
 Yet hath your fruit this blotte, to over-eate,
 And glutton-like to vomit up their meat.
 WintersOrpheus bloody breasted Queen,
 Sommers sweet solace, nightsAmphion brave,
 Linus delight, Canaries clad in green,
 All linguists eke that beg what hart would crave,
 Selling your tongues for every trifle seen,
 As almonds, nuttes, or what you else would have:
 Ofsprings of eggs, what are you but a voice?
 Angring sometimes your friends with too much noise.
 VictoriousMonarch, scorning partners all,
 Stowt lions terrour, love of martial Sire,
 True farmers clocke, nights watchman, servants call,
 Pressing still forward, hating to retire,
 Constant in fight, impatient of thral,
 Bearing in a little breast a mighty fire:
 Oh that thou wert as faithful to thy wife,
 As thou art free of courage voice and life!

PAGE 44

Chaste is the Turtle, but yet given to hate,
 Storkes are officious, yet not voide of guiles,
 Hardy are Haggesses, but yet given to prate,
 Faithful are Doues, yet angry otherwhiles,
 The whitest swimmer nature e'er begate,
 Suspition blacke and jealousy defiles:
 Briefely, from eggs of every creature good,

Sprang nought distainted but this little broode.
 As for that egg conceiv'd in idle braine,
 Whence flowes (forsooth) that endless seed of gold,
 The wombe of wealth, theNepenthes of paine,
 The horn of health, and what we dearest hold:
 I count it but a tale and fable vain,
 By some old wife, or cousning friar told:
 Supposed true, though time and truth descries,
 That all such works are but the works of lies.
 For when the Sire of truth hath truly said,
 That none can make the covering of his head,
 These slender hairs, so vile, so soon decaide,
 Of so small worth though ne'er so finely spread
 Shall any wit by humane art and aid,
 Transform base metals to that essence red,
 Which buies, not only pearles and precious stones,
 But kingdoms, states, and Monarchs from their thrones.

PAGE 45

Ah! heav'ns forbid (nay heav'ns forbid it sure,)
 That ever Art should more then Nature breede,
 Curse we his work whose fingers most impure,
 Durst but to dare the drawing of that seed,
 Yet when they have done all they can procure,
 And given their leaden God a golden weed:
 Zeuxis his painted dog shall barke and whine,
 When Jove they turn to Sol or Luna fine.
 Sisyphean souls, bewitched multipliers,
 Surcease to pitch this never pitched stone,
 Vaunt not of Nature's nest, nor Orcus fires,
 Hoping to hatch your addle egg thereon:
 Restrain in time such over-proud desires,
 Let creatures leave Creator's works alone:
 Melt not the golden Sulphur of your heart,
 In following still this fond and fruitless art.
 Record what once befell great Aeol's son,
 For counterfeiting only but the sound,
 Of heav'nly Canoniers dreadful gun,
 That shakes the beams and pillers of this round:
 A fiery boult from wrathful hand did run,
 Driving false forger under lowest ground:
 Where still he lives still wishing to be dead,
 Spotted without, within all stained with red.

PAGE 46

Remember eke the Vulture gnawing still,
 That ever-dying ever-living wretch,
 Who stealingly with an ambitious will,
 From Phoebus' wheels would vital fire reach,
 Thinking to make by humane art and skill,
 His man of clay a living breath to fetch:
 Beware in time of like celestial rods,
 And fear to touch the only work of gods.
 But if you still with proud presumptuous legs,
 Will needs climb up the fiery-spotted hill,
 Pilfring from Jove his Nectar void of dregs,
 And that immortal meat which none doth fill,
 If ye will needs imbesill those fair eggs,
 Which in her child-bed did their mother kill,
 Yet say not, that for gifts and virtues rare,
 They do, or may, with these my eggs compare.
 These, these, are they, in dream which Roman spied
 Clos'd in a slender shell of brittle mold,
 Holding within, a white like silver tried,
 Whose inward yolk resembleth Ophir's gold,
 From out whose center sprang the chiefest pride,
 That e'er Latinus, or his race did hold,
 Exchanging in all countries for the same,
 Meat, drink, cloth, coin, or what you else can name.

PAGE 47

Here lies the Calyx of that renowned shell,
 Here floats that water permanent and clear,
 Here doth the oil of Philosophers dwell,
 Still'd from the golden Fleece that hath no peer:
 In midst of whose unseen and secret cell
 Dame Nature sits, and every part doth steer,
 Though neither opening shop to every eye,
 Nor telling Caesar she can multiply.
 All-working mother, Foundress of this All,
 Ten-hundred thousand-thousand-breasted nurse,
 Dedalian moldress both of great and small,
 As large in wealth, as liberall of purse,
 Still great with child, still letting children fall,
 Good to the good, nor ill unto the worse,
 What made thee show thy multiplying pride,
 More in these eggs, then all the eggs beside?
 Was it, because thou takest most delight,

To print the greatest worth in smallest things?
That they, the least of any seed in sight,
Might clothiers breed to clothe our mightiest kings?
O wit divine, O admirable spright!
Worthy the songs of him that sweetest sings:
Let it suffice that I adore thy name,
Whose works I see, and know not yet the same.

PAGE 48

But damsels, ah: who rustleth in the sky?
Methinks I heare Enitheat Ladies foe,
Blustering in fury from the mountains high,
Look how he raiseth cloues from dust below,
Hark how for fear the trees do cracke and cry,
Each bud recoiles, the seas turn to and fro:
O suffer not his breath-bereaving breath,
To slay your hopes with over-timely death.
Therefore as soon as them you gathered have,
Upon the whitest papers you can find,
In Boxes clean your eggs full closely save,
From chilling blast, of deadly nipping wind,
Let not that hoary iry-mantl'd slave
So much prevaile, to kill both stock and kind:
Far be it from a tender Damse's heart,
On tendrest seeds to show so hard a part.
Yet keep them not in rooms too hot and close,
Lest heat by stealth encroach it self too soon,
And inward matter ripening so dispose,
That spinsters creep ere winter's course be done,
Whilst woods stand bare, and naked each thing grows,
And Thisbe's sap for aid be inward run:
For as with cold their brooding power is spill'd,
So are they then for want of herbage kill'd.

PAGE 49

Th' Arch-mason of this round and glorious ball,
Of creatures created Man the last,
Not that he thought him therefore worst of all,
(For in his soul part of himself he cast)
But lest his wisdom might in question fall,
For having in his house a stranger plac'd,
Ere ev'ry thing was made to please and feast,
So great a Monarch and so brave a guest.
Under whose feet where e'er he went abroad

Vesta spread forth a carpet void of art,
Softer then silk, greener than th' Emerald,
Wrought all with flowers, and ev'ry herb apart,
Over him hang'd where e'er he made abode,
An azur'd cloth of state, which overthwart
Was bias'd (as it were) and richly purld,
With twelve brave signs and glistening stars inurld
Upon him then as vassals ev'ry day
Stout Lions waited, tameless Panthers eke,
Fierce Eagles, and the wildest birds of pray,
Huge whales in Seas that mighty carracks wreak,
Serpents and toads: Yea each thing did obey,
Fearing his laws and statutes once to break:
Yet wherto serv'd this pomp and honor great,
If man had wanted due and daily meat?

PAGE 50

Trace you Gods steps, and till you can attain
Wherwith to feed your guests when first they show,
Haste not their hatching, for t'will prove a pain,
Filling your hearts with ruth, your eyes with dew,
As when th' untimely lamb on Sarum's plain,
Fallen too too soon from winter-starved ewe.
To pine you see for want of liquid food,
Which should restore his wants of vital blood.
Attend therefore, when farmers joy renews
Her lively face, and buddeth all in green,
For Hyem's then, with all his frozen cruets,
Is fully dead, or fled to earths unseen,
Corn, cattle, flowers, fear then no heavy news,
From Northern coasts, or Boreas region keene:
Birds sing, flies buzze, bees hum, yea all things skip
To see the very blush of Morus' lip.
Let swallowes come, let storkes be seen in sky,
Let Philomela sing, let Progne chide,
Let Teery-tiry-leerers upward fly,
Let constant Cuckoes cook on every side,
Let mountain mice abroad in overt lie,
Let every tree thrust forth her budding pride,
Yet none can truely warrant winters flight,
Till she be seen with gems and jewels dight.

PAGE 51

O peerless tree, whose wisdom is far more
 Than any else that springs from nature's womb:
 For though Pomonaes daughters bud before,
 And forward Phillis formost ever come,
 And Persian fruit yeeldes of her blossoms store,
 And Taurus hotte succeedeth Aries roome:
 Yet all confesse the Mulbery most wise,
 That never breedes till winter wholly dies.
 Such is her wit: but more her inward might,
 For budded newe when Phoebus first appeares,
 She is full leaved e'er it grow to night:
 With wondrous crackling filling both our eares,
 As though one leaf did with another fight,
 Striving who first shall see the heav'nly spheares,
 Even as a lively chickin breakes the shell,
 Or blessed Souls do scudde and fly from hell.
 Yet wit and strength her pittie doth excede,
 For none she hurts that neere or under grow,
 No not the brire, or any little weed,
 That upward shootes, or groueling creepes below,
 Nay more, from heavenly flames each tree is freed
 That nigh her dwels, when fearful lightnings glow:
 For virtue which, the Romans made a law,
 To punish them that should her cut or saw.

PAGE 52

I leave to tell how she doth poison cure,
 From adders goare or gall of Lisards got,
 What burning blaines she heales and sores impure,
 In palat, iawes, and all enflamed throte,
 What canckars hard, and wolfes be at her lure,
 What Gangrenes stoop that make our toes to rotte:
 Briefly, few griefes from Panders boxe out-flew,
 But here they finde a medicine, old or new.
 Her blood retourn'd to sweet Thisbean wine,
 Strengthneth the lungs and stomacke over-weake,
 Her clustred grapes do prove a dish most fine,
 Whose kernels soft do stones in sunder break:
 Her leaves too that conuerted are in time,
 Which kings themselves in highest prize do reake:
 Thus gives she meat, and drink, medcine, and cloth,
 To ev'ry one that is not drownd in sloth.
 Bragge now no more perle-breeding Taprobane,

Of Cocos thine, that all-supplying food,
 Vaunt not of Dates thou famous Africane,
 Though sweet in taste, and swift in making blood,
 Blush Syrian grapes, and plums Armenian,
 Ebusian figges, and fruit of Phillis good:
 Bad is your best compared with this tree,
 That most delights my little flocke and mee.

PAGE 53

But will you know, why this they only eate?
 Why leaves they only chuse, the fruite forsake?
 Why they refuse all choise and sortes of meat,
 And hungers heate with only one dish slake?
 Then list a while, you wonder-seekers great,
 Whilst I an answer plain and easy make:
 Disdaine you not to see the mighty ods,
 Twixt vertuous worms and sinful humane gods.
 I think that God and nature thought it meet,
 The noblest worms on noblest tree to feede:
 And therefore they else never set their feet
 On any tree that beareth fruit or seed:
 Others divine, that they themselves did weere
 No other tree could yeelde their silken threede.
 Judge learned wits: But sure a cause there is,
 Why they else feede upon no tree but this.
 Ne eate they all, as greedy Kafers do,
 But leave the berries to their Sovereign:
 Religiously forbearing once to bloe
 Upon the fruit, that may their Lord maintaine.
 Nay, if these leaves (though nothing else doth growe
 In Eden rich their nature to sustaine)
 Had erst bin given for other creatures meat,
 They would have chusde rather to starve then eat.

PAGE 54

In that they only feede upon one tree,
 How justly do they keepe dame Nature's lore?
 Who teacheth ev'n the bleare-eyde man to see,
 That change of meates causeth diseases store:
 The gods themselves (if any such there be)
 Have but one meat, one drink, and never more,
 Whereby they live in health and never die,
 For how can one against it self replie.
 Duality of meates was sickness spring,

With whom addition meeting by the way,
 Begate variety of every thing,
 Who like a whore in changeable array,
 With painted cheeks (as did Philinus sing)
 And corall lips, and breasts that naked lay,
 Made us with unity to be at warres,
 And to delight in discords, change, and iarres.
 Wherefore assoone as they beginne to creepe,
 Like sable-robed Ants, far smaller tho,
 Blacke at the first, like pitch of Syrian deepe,
 Yet made in time as white as Atlas snow,
 Send servants up to woods and mountains steepe,
 When Mulb'ry leaves their maiden lips do show:
 Feede them therewith (no other soul they crave,
 If morne and ev'n fresh lefage they may have.)

PAGE 55

The first three weekes the tend'rest leaves are best,
 The next, they crave them of a greater size,
 The last, the hardest ones they can disgest,
 As strength with age increasing doth arise:
 After which time all meat they do detest,
 Lifting up heads, and feet, and breast to skies,
 Begging as t'were of God and man some shrowde,
 Wherein to work and hang their golden clowde.
 But whilst they feede, leral their food be drie
 And pull'd when Phoebus face doth brightly shine,
 For rain, mist, dewe, and spittings of the sky,
 Have beene full of the baine of cattle mine:
 Stay therfore, stay, till dayes-upholder fly,
 Five stages full from Easterne Thetis line:
 Then leaves are free from any poysned seed,
 Which may infect this white and tender breede.
 Keepe measure too, for though the best you get,
 Give not too much nor little of the same,
 Satiety their stomachs will unwhet,
 Famine againe will make them leane and lame:
 Lend Wit the knife to quarter out their meat,
 As need requires and reason maketh clame:
 Lest belly break, or meagerness ensewe,
 By giving more or less then was their due.

PAGE 56

Ne change their food (us some have thought it meet)
 For Mulb'ries though they are of double kind,
 The blacker ones are yet to them most sweet,
 From out their leaves most pleasing sappe they find,
 But when they faile whilst Scythiā krime doth fleete,
 (Turn heav'nly hosts, O turn that cruell wind)
 White Mulb'ry leaves, yea tender Elming bud,
 May for a shift be given in steede of food.
 Sweepe ev'ry morn ere they fresh vittailles see,
 Their papred boord, whereon they take repast,
 With bundled Time, or slippes of Rosemary,
 Leave nought thereon that from their bellies past,
 No not th'alf-eaten leaves of Thisbe's tree,
 And when their seats perfumed thus thou hast,
 Remove them back againe with care and heede,
 To former place wherein they erst did feede.
 Oft shalt thou see them careless of their meat,
 Yea over-taken with deepe and heavy sleepe,
 Like to that strange and Epidemian sweate,
 When deadly slumbers did on Britons creepe:
 Yet fear thou not, it is but nature's feat,
 Who nethless hath of peereless spinsters keepe,
 And makes them thus as dead to lie apart,
 That they may wake and feede with better heart.

PAGE 57

Thrise thus they sleep, and thrise they cast their skin,
 The latter still far whiter then the rest,
 For never are they quiet of mind within,
 Till they be clean of blackness dispossesst,
 Whether because they deeme it shame and sinne
 To wear the marke of blackish fiend unblest:
 Or that their parents wearing only white,
 They therefore in that only would be dight.
 As they in body and in greatness grow,
 Divide them into tribes and colonies,
 For though at first one table and no mo
 (Small though it be) a thousand worms suffice,
 Yet afterwards (as prooffe will truly show)
 When they proceede unto a greater size,
 One takes the roome of ten, and seemes to crave
 A greater scope and portion for to have.
 The loft wherein their tables placed be,

Must neither be too full, nor void of light,
Two windowes are enough, superfluous three,
Plac't in such sort that one regard the light
Of Phoebus steeds uprising as we see:
And from the other when it drawes to night,
We may behold them tired as it were,
And limping down the westerne Hemisphere.

PAGE 58

Glasde let them be, or linen-coverd both,
To keepe out fell and blacke Monopolites,
The Myrmedonian crue, who void of sloth
Do wholly bend their forces, toile, and wits
To private gain, and therefore are full wroth
To see this nation any good besits:
Working themselves to death both night and day,
Not for themselves, but others to array.
The greedy imps of her that slue her son,
Pandions daughter, bloody harted Queen:
The winged steedes in Venus coach that run,
Inflam'd with filthy lust and fires unseene,
Pnrsue this focke, and wish them all undone,
Bycause they come from parents chaste and clean:
O therefore keepe the casements close and fast,
Lest quellers rage your harmless cattle wast.
If also carelesness have lest a rift,
Or chincke unstopped in thine aged wall:
Where-through a noysome mist, or rayny drift,
Or poysned wind may trouble spinsters small,
Mixe lime and sand, devise some present shift
How to repel such cruel foe-men all:
Small is the charge compared with the gain,
That shall surmount thy greatest cost and paine.

PAGE 59

I any seeme to have an amber coate,
And swell therewith as much as skin can hold,
Wholy to sloth and idleness devote,
Tainting with lothsome gore the common fold,
Of deadly sickeness t'is a certaine note,
Whose cure, sith none have either writte or tolde,
Wisdom commands to part the dead and sicke,
Lest they infect the faultless and the quicke.
Colde sometimes kills them, sometimes over-heate,

Rain, oyle, salt, old and wet, and musty food,
The smel of onyons, leekes, garlick, and new wheat,
Shrill sounds of trumpets, drums, or cleauing woode:
Yea some of them are of such weakeness great,
That whisprings soft of men or falling fload,
Doth so their harts and senses over-wheele,
That often headlong from the boord they reele.
Forbeare likewise to touch them more then needs,
Skarre children from them given to wantonnesse,
Let not the fruit of these your precious seeds,
Die in their hands through too much carelesnesse:
Who tosse and roule and tumble them like weeds
From leaf to leaf in busy idlenesse,
Now squatting them upon the floore or ground,
Now squashing out their bellies soft and round.

PAGE 60

Thus being kept and fed nine weekes entire,
Surpriz'd with age ere one would think them yong,
With what an ardent zeale and hot desire
To recompence thy travels do they long?
They neither sleepe, nor meat, nor drink require,
But press and strive, yea fiercely strive and throng,
Who first may find some happy bough or broom,
Whereon to spin and leave their amber loome.
Then virgins then, with undefiled hand
Sever the greatest from the smaller crue,
For all alike in age like ready stand,
Now to begin their rich and oual clue,
(Having first paid as Nature doth command,
To bellies-farmer that which was his due)
For nothing must remain in body pent,
Which may defile their sacred monument.
So being clensde from all that is impure,
Put each within a paper-coffin fine,
Then shall you see what labour they endure,
How far they passe the weavers craft of line,
What cordage first they make and tackling sure,
To ty thereto their bottom most divine,
Rounding themselves ten thousand times and more,
Yet spinning still behind and eke before.

PAGE 61

None cease to work: yea rather all contend
 Both night and day who shall obtaine the prize
 Of working much, and with most speede to end,
 Whilst rosie Titan nine times doth arise
 From purple bedde of his most loving friend,
 And eke as oft in Atlas vally dies)
 Striving (a strife not easy here to find)
 In working well, who may exceed their kind.
 Yea some (O woeful sight) are often found
 Striving, in work their fellowes to excel,
 Lifeless in midway of their traverst round,
 Nay those that longest here do work and dwell,
 Live but a while, to end their threed renown'd,
 For I have seen, and you may see it well,
 After that once their bottoms are begun,
 Not one survives to see the tenth day's sun.
 Go gallant youths, and die with gallant cheer,
 For other bodies shortly must you have,
 Of higher sort than you enjoyed here,
 Of worthier state, and of a shape more brave,
 Lie but three weekes within your silken beere,
 Till Syrian dog be drown'd in western wave,
 And in a moment then mongst flying things,
 Receive not feet alone, but also wings.

PAGE 62

Wings whiter then the snow of Taurus high,
 Feet fairer then Adonis ever had,
 Heads, bodies, breasts, and necks of Iuory,
 With perfect favour, and like beauty clad,
 Which to commend with some variety,
 And shadow as it were with color sad,
 Two little dusky feathers shall arise
 From forehead white, to grace your Eben eyes.
 Then neither shall you see the bottome move,
 Nor any noise perceive with quickest eare,
 Death rules in all, beneath, in midst, above,
 Wherefore make haste you damsels voyd of fear,
 Shake off delay, as ere you profit love,
 In boxes strait away your bottoms bear,
 Freed from the coffin wherin late they wrought,
 To gain the golden fleece you so much sought.
 First pull away the loose and outmost doune,

As huswives do their ends of knotty towe,
 That which lies upmost is of least renowne,
 The finest threed is placed most below:
 Threed fitte for kings, unmeete for every clowne,
 On Nature's quill so wound up rowe by rowe,
 That if thine eye and hand the end can find,
 In water warme thou maist it all unwind.

PAGE 63

Three sorts there are, distinct by colors three,
 The purest like to their resplendant hair,
 Who weeping brothers fall from coursers free,
 Their tears were turn'd to yellow amber fair.
 The second like her whom impatiency
 Made of a spouse a tree most solitary:
 The last more white, made by the weaker sort,
 Not of so great a price, nor like report.
 From out all three, but chiefly from the best,
 Are made, not only robes for priests and kings,
 But also many cordial medicus blest,
 Curing the wounds that sullen Saturne brings,
 Which being drunk, how quiet is our rest?
 How leaps our heart? how inwardly it springs?
 Speak you sad spirits that did lately feel,
 The heart-break crush of melancholy's wheel.
 Nay even the down which lies aloft confused,
 Makes Levant stuff for country yonkers meet,
 Though it of court and city be refused,
 And is not worn in any civil street,
 But tell me yer, how can he be excused,
 Who trampled ev'n the best with mired feet,
 And in a moment marr'd all that with pride,
 For making which, ten thousand spinsters died?

PAGE 64

Now if of these your bottoms you require,
 Some to reserve for future race and seed,
 Chuse out the eldest, for their forward fire
 Makes inward fly the sooner spring and breede:
 Whereas the latter ones have least desire,
 And lesser might to perfect Venus deede:
 For why, their pride is dul, and spirits colde,
 Borne in the quarter last of Iune old.
 Wind none of them, which you for breede allot,

In watry bath, nor else in wine, or lye,
 Lest outward moisture innly being got,
 Surrounding, drownes the little infant-fly,
 And cause both strings and secundine to rotte,
 So that before it lives it learnes to dye:
 Or if you have them drenched so for gain,
 At sun or fire to dry them take some paine.
 Singled, then laye them on a table neate,
 Covered all o're with whitePhillirae's skin,
 Stay then againe till Phoebus chariot great
 In Oceans bath hath twelve times washed bin,
 And you shall see an admirable feat,
 This form'd and yet transformed broode within:
 From which new shapes new bodies do arise,
 And tailles to heads, and worms are turn'd to flies.

PAGE 65

Whereat to wonder each man may be bold,
 When seely worms themselves new fliers made,
 Whilst one anothers face they do behold:
 Muse how, and when, and where, this forme they had,
 How new hornes sprang from out their foreheads old,
 Whence issued wings, which do them over-lade:
 For they recording what they were of late,
 Dare not yet mount above their former state.
 As studying thus they stand a day or more,
 Offring to feede on nought but only aire,
 Lothing the meat so much desir'd before,
 I meane the leaves of Thisbe's tree most fair:
 Disdaining eke to taste of Nais store,
 To quench the heate that might their harts impair:
 At length they know themselves to be alive,
 And fall to that for which our wantons strive.
 Both long, and longing skud to Venus forts,
 To stirre up seed that ever may remain,
 He runs to her, and she to him resorts,
 Each mutually the other entertaine,
 Ioynd with fuch lincks and glue of nature's sports.
 That coupled still they rest a day or twaine.
 Yea oftentimes thrise turnes the welkin round,
 Ere they are seen unlocked and unbound.

PAGE 66

So having left what e'er he could impart,
 Of spirits, humors, seed, and recrement,
 Willing yet further to have throwne his hart
 Into her breast, to whom he all things ment,
 He formost dies and yeelds to fatal dart:
 Ne lives she long, but strait with sorrow spent,
 (Having first laide the eggs she did conceive)
 Of love and life she shortly takes her leave.
 Small eggs they be, in bignesse, color, shape,
 Like to the meat of Indian Parrachite,
 Less far in view then seed of garden rape,
 In number many, yet indefinite:
 For when the females womb begins to gape,
 And render what the male got over night,
 Now more, now fewer seeds dropt from the same,
 As they were short, or longer at their game.
 Yet seldome are they than a hundred less,
 Sometimes two hundred from their loynes do fall,
 Round, smooth, hard-shelld, and voide of brittlenes,
 Whited alike, and yellow yolked all,
 Whose virtues great no man did yet expresse,
 Much less can I whose knowledge is so small,
 Though sure I am hence may we find a theame,
 Able to drink up Aganippes streame.

PAGE 67

O keepe them then with most attentive heede,
 From Boreas blast and Aeols insolence,
 From menstruous blasts and breathing keep then freed,
 Auoide likewise the mil-dewes influence,
 Pray heav'nly Monarch fot to bless your seed,
 Helping their weakness with his prouidence.
 So may your milk-white spinsters work amaine,
 When Morus lips shall bud and blush againe.
 And thou whose trade is best and oldest too,
 Steward of all that ever Nature gave,
 Without whose help what can our rulers do,
 Though gods on earth appareld wondrous brave?
 Behold thy helping hand fair virgins woove,
 Yea nature bids, and reason eake doth crave
 Thy cunning, now these little worms to nurse,
 Which shall in time with gold fill full thy purse.
 In steed of fruitles elms and sallowes gray,

Of brittle Ash, and poyson-breathing vgh,
Plant Mulb'ry trees nigh every path and way,
Shortly from whence more profit shall ensue,
Then from th'Hesperian wood, or orchards gay,
On every tree where golden apples grew:
For what is silk but ev'n a Quintessense,
Made without hands beyond all humane sense?

PAGE 68

A quintessense? nay well it may be call'd,
A deathless tincture, sent us from the skies,
Whose color stands, whose gloss is ne're appall'd,
Whose Mulbr'y-sent and savour never dies,
Yea when to time all nature's else be thrall'd,
And every thing Fate to corruption ties:
This only scornes within her lists to dwell,
Bettring with age, in color, gloss, and smel.
So doth not yours (you Lordings of the woode)
Growing like webs upon the long-haird grasse,
Along the Osserian bancks of Scithyan flood,
Which into Caspian wombe doth headlong passe.
No, no: Although that silk be strong and good
In outward show, and highly prized was,
When bounteous Caesar ruled citties prime,
Yet soon it fades, and yeelds to rotte in time.
If bookes be true, there is an Indian worm,
As bigge as he that robbes the Eagles nest,
Shap't like Arachne that doth tinsels forme,
And nets, and lawnes, and shadowes of the best,
Fed with her locks, who yeelding stands in storm,
When woods-surueyours lye on earth opprest)
From out whose belly, broke with surfetting,
Whole clews of silk scarce half concocted, spring.

PAGE 69

Yet that compar'd with this is nought so fine,
Ne ought so sweetely fum'd with dainty sent,
Nor of like durance, nor like power divine:
Mirth to restore, when spirits all are spent,
If it be steept in sweet Pomanaes wine,
Till color fade, and substance do relent:
Nay, nay, no silk must make that Antidote,
Save only which from spinsters mine is got.
Whereof, if thou a pound in weight shalt take

Unstaind at all (as Amiens flour doth write)
And with the iuce of Rose and pippins make
A strong infusion of some day and night,
Adding some graines of muske and Ambres flake,
And seething all to hony-substance right:
O what a Balme is made to cheere the heart,
If pearle, and gold, and spices bear a part?
What need I count how many winders live,
How many twisters eke, and weavers thrive
Upon this trade? which food doth daily give
To such as else with famine needs must strive:
What multitudes of poor doth it relieue,
That otherwise could scarce be kept alive?
Say Spaniard proud and tell Italian youth,
Whether I faine, or write the words of truth.

PAGE 70

Not ever were your princes clad so brave,
Not ever were your wives deckt as they be,
Much less was silk then worne of every slave,
And artists, sprung from base and low degree,
That rioter whose belly diggd his grave,
Clothd all in silk, the Romans first did see:
Before whose time silk wou'n on linen threed,
Was thought brave stufte for any Princes weed.
But afterwarde, when holy Palmers twaine
From out Serinda brought these worms of fame,
And plauted Mulb'ry plants on hill and plain,
Wherewith to fatte and foster up the same:
How rich waxt Italy? how brave was Spaine?
In Sattin fine, how braggd each man of name?
Yea, every clowne, that even as now, so then,
Habites did scarce discern the states of men.
Up Britaine bloods, rise hearts of English race,
Why should your clothes be courser then the rest?
Whose feature tall, and high aspiring face,
Aime at great things, and challenge ev'n the best.
Begge country men no more in sackcloth base,
Being by me of such a trade possest:
That shall enrich your selves and children more,
Then ere it did Naples or Spaine before.

PAGE 71

No man so poor but he may Mulb'ries plant,
 No plant so small but will a silk-worm feede,
 No worm so little (unless care do want)
 But from it self will make a clew of threede,
 Each clew weighs down, rather with more then scant,
 A penny weight, from out whose hidden seed,
 (After the winged worms conception)
 A hundred spinsters issue forth of one.
 Divine we hence, or rather reckon right,
 What usury and proffit doth arise,
 By keeping well these little creatures white,
 Worthy the care of every nation wise,
 That in their owne or publique wealth delight.
 And rashly will not things so rare despise:
 Yea sure, in time they will such profit bring,
 As shall enrich both people, priest, and king.
 Concerning pleasure: who doth not admire,
 And in admiring, smiles not in his hart.
 To see an egg a worm, a worm a flier,
 Having first showd her rare and peereless art,
 In making that which princes doth attire,
 And is the base of every famous Mart?
 And then to see the fly cast so much seed,
 As doth, or may, an hundred spinsters breede.

PAGE 72

Againe to view upon one birchen shredde,
 Some hundred Clewes to hang like clustred peares,
 Those green, these pale, and others somewhat red,
 Some like the locks hanging down Phoebus eares:
 And then, how Nature when each worm is dead,
 To better state in ten dayes space it reares:
 Who sees all this, and tickleth not in minde?
 To marke the choyse and pleasures in each kinde.
 Eye but their eggs, (as Grecians terme them well)
 And with a penne-knife keene divide them quite,
 Behold their white, their yolke, their skin, and shel,
 Distinct in color, substance, forme, and sight:
 And if thy bodies watchmen do not swell,
 And cause thee both to leape and laugh outright,
 Think God and nature hath that eye denied,
 By which thou shouldst from brutish beasts be tried.
 When they are worms, mark how they color chāge,

From blacke to browne, from browne to sorrel bay,
 From bay to dunne, from dunne to dusky strange,
 Then to an yron, then to a dapple gray,
 And how each morne in habites new they range,
 Till at the length they see that happy day,
 When (like their Sires and heav'nly angels blest)
 Of pure and milk-white stoles they are possesst.

PAGE 73

Lay then thine eare and listen but a while,
 Whilst each their food from leafage fresh receaves,
 Try if thou canst hold in an outward smile,
 When both thine eare and phantasy conceaves,
 Not worms to feed, but showrings to distil.
 In whispring sort upon the tatling leaves:
 For such a kind of muttring have I heard,
 Whilst herbage green with unseene teeth they teard.
 When afterward with needle pointed tongue,
 The Flies have bor'd a passage through their clewes,
 Observe their gate and steerage all along,
 Their salutations, couplings, and Adieus:
 Heare eke their hurring aud their churring song,
 When hot Priapus love and lust renewes,
 And tell me if thou heardst, or e'er didst eye,
 Like sport amongst all winged troupes that fly.
 Tis likewise sport to heare how man and maid,
 Whilst winding, twisting, and in weaving, thay
 Now laugh, now chide, now scan what others said,
 Now fing a Carrol, now a lovers lay,
 Now make the trembling beames to cry for aide,
 On clattring treddles whilst they roughly play:
 Resembling in their rising and their falls,
 A musicke strange of new found Claricalls.

PAGE 74

The smel likewise of silken wool that's new,
 To heart and head what comfort doth it bring,
 Whilst we it wind and tooze from oual clew?
 Resembling much in prime of fragrant spring,
 When wild-rose buds in green and pleasant hue,
 Perfume the ayre, and upward sents do fling,
 Well pleasing sents, neither too sowre nor sweet,
 But rightly mixt, and of a temper meet.
 As for the hand, look how a lover wise

Delighteth more to touch Astarte slick
Then Hecuba, whose eye-browes hide her eyes,
Whose wrinkled lips in kissing seeme to prick,
Upon whose palmes such warts and hurtells rise,
As may in poulder grate a nutmegge thick:
So joy our hands in silk, and seeme full loth
To handle ought but silk and silken cloth.
Such are the pleasures, and far more then these,
Which head, and hart, eyes, eares, and nose, and hands,
Take, or may take, in learning at their ease,
The dieting of these my spinning bands,
Whose silken threede shall more then counterpeise,
Paine, cost, and charge, what ever it us stands,
So that if gain or pleasure can perswade,
Go we, let us learne the silken-staplers trade.

PAGE 75

But list, me thinks I heare Amyntas sayne,
That shepheards skill will soon be quite undone,
Behold fair Phillis scuddeth from the plain,
Leauing her flocks at randon for to run,
Lo Lidian clothier breaks his loomes in twaine,
And thousand spinsters burne their woollen spun:
Ah! cease your rage, these spinsters hurt you nought
But will encrease you more then ere you thought.
For carde an ounce of silk with ten of wool,
How fine, how strōg, how strange a yarne doth rise?
Make trial once, and having seen at full,
Your new found stufte, chaffred at highest prize,
Then blame your idle heads and senses dull,
Trust not conceit, but credite most your eyes:
Laughing as much, or more, then ere you mourn'd,
When fear you see to joy and vantage turnd.
Laugh now (fair Mira) with thy Virginswhite,
For why your eggs committed to my care,
Are growne so much in bignesse, worth, and sight,
That Kings and Queens to keep them will not spare,
Yea Queen of Queenes, for virtue, wit, and might,
Perhaps will hatch them twixt those hillocks rare,
Where all the Graces feede and Sisters nine,
Who ever love, and grace both thee and thine.

FINIS.