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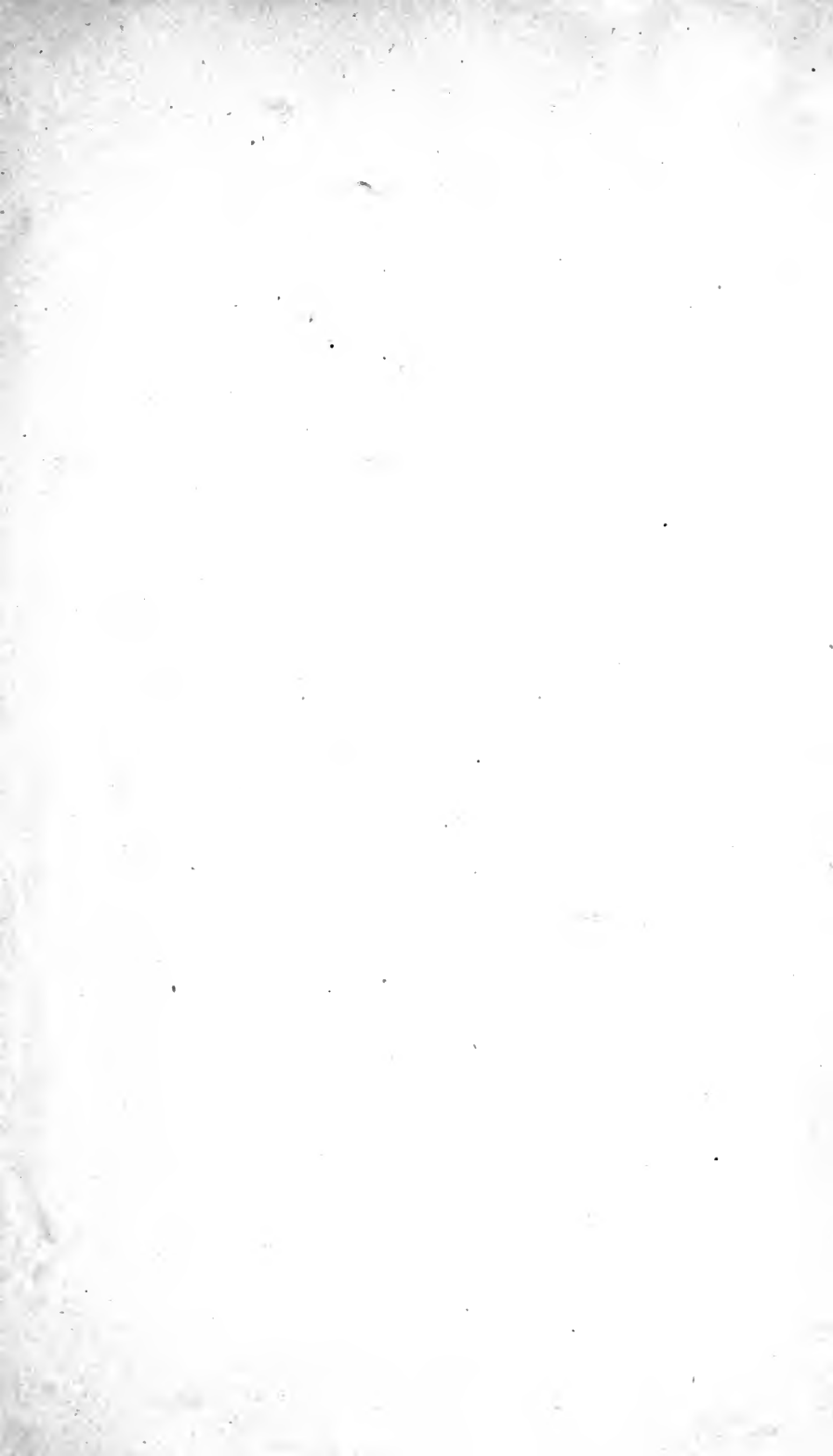
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RELATIONS OF THE
Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences

TO
Earlier English Verse

ESPECIALLY THAT OF

Chaucer

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Philosophy of
the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABBREVIATIONS.

- AM Amoretti, Spenser.
A and S Astrophel and Stella, Sidney.
AU Aurora, Alexander.
C Coelia, Percy.
CA Caelica, Greville.
CE Caelia, Browne.
CL Chloris, Smith.
CY Cynthia, Barnfield.
DE Delia, Daniel.
DI Diana, Constable.
DL Diella, Linch.
E Emaricdulfe.
EKA Ekatompathia, Watson.
F Fidessa, Griffin.
ID Idea, Drayton.
L Laura, Tofte.
LI Licia, Fletcher.
PH Phillis, Lodge.
P. P. Parthenophil and Parthenope, Barnes.
SH Shakespeare.
W. P. Wittes Pilgrimage, Davies.
Z Zepheria.



RELATIONS OF THE ELIZABETHAN SONNET-SEQUENCES
TO EARLIER ENGLISH VERSE, ESPECIALLY
THAT OF CHAUCER.

Wyatt's use of the sonnet in English is commonly regarded as an innovation. So far as form is concerned, this view is, doubtless, correct; but it should be remembered (*a*) that Wyatt's experiments do not mark the first contact of English with continental literature and (*b*) that the subject matter of the amatory sonnet was not altogether strange to English readers. For French and Italian influence we must go back at least to the time of Chaucer, who, indeed, so far anticipated Wyatt as to incorporate a translation of one of Petrarch's sonnets¹ in his *Troilus and Criseyde*, though he did not give his version the sonnet shape. In figure and allusion the Elizabethan sonnet bears a resemblance, often striking, to the amatory verse current in Middle English. *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the works of Chaucer, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, certain poems of Lydgate and the numerous Middle English "complaints" and lovers' dreams abound in, so-called, sonnet conceits. Chaucer's Emily² fairer than a lily, fresher than May, with her rose-like cheeks, yellow hair and voice like that of an angel is the prototype of the sonnet mistress. In a certain "Compleynt"³ the forlorn lover describes himself "as ashes dead, pale of hue," he suffers "an inward smart," his "fire is hot in every vein," the image of his lady is printed deep in his heart and he vows to serve her unendingly, even though "her heart is hard like stone." Every

¹ *In Vita*, 88. T. and C., I, 400-420.

² *Knights' Tale*, 1036 ff.

³ Appended to Schick's ed. *Temple of Glas*, F. E. T. S.

one of these figures and comparisons may be duplicated in the sonnet sequences.

The general character of the resemblances between the sonnets and Middle English verse may be gathered from the following list of representative parallelisms and analogues.¹ (I) Descriptions of beauty, in the sonnets, bear a general resemblance to those found in the earlier poetry. (a) Thus Gower writes:

He seth hire face of such colour,
That freisshe is than eny flour.
He seth hire front is large and plein
Withoute fronce of eny grein.
He seth hire yhen lich an hevene,
He seth hire nase straught and evene,
He seth hire rode upon the cheke,
He seth hire rede lippes eke.²

In much the same vein Thomas Watson describes his mistress in the *Ekatompathia* :

Harke you that list to hear what saint I serve :
Her yellow locks exceed the beaten gold ;
Her sparkling eyes in heav'n a place deserve ;
* * * * *
Her Eagle's nose is straight of stately frame ;
On either cheeke a rose and lily lies,
* * * * *
Her lips more red than any coral stone.³

(b) By Lydgate and others, the hair of the mistress is frequently compared to gold wire. Line 271 of the *Temple of Glas* reads:

Whos sonnyssh here, brighter than gold were.

¹ The list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

² Conf. *Amantis* VI. 767 ff.

³ *Eka* 7. Probably not a direct borrowing, though it looks like one See Watson's annotation to this sonnet.

The same figure occurs in *Reson and Sensuallyte* l. 1576:

✓ Whos here as eny gold wyre shon.¹

The comparison is not uncommon in Elizabethan poetry; thus, *Diella*, 3:

Her Hair exceeds gold forced in finest wire,

and *Zepheria*, 17:

Whose siluerie canopie gold wier fringes.

It is one of the figures satirized by Shakespeare in his *Sonnet*, 130:

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.²

(c) Similar figures are used in describing the cheeks of the mistress.

Temple of Glas, 276:

✓ That Rose and lilcis togedir were so meint.³

Licia, 34:

From those sweet lips, where rose and lilies strive.⁴

Phillis, 37:

Of rose and lilies too, the colors of thy face.

II. (a) The decay of beauty is not so hackneyed a theme with the Chaucerian school as with the sonneteers; but it comes in for occasional treatment.

Troilus and Criseyde, II. 393 ff.

✓ ¹ So, also, Troy-Book in many places (see Schick's note to T. of G. l. 271), Chorl and Bird 59, Roxburghe Ballads 62 st. 5. Used by Henryson, Lyudsay, Hawes.

² See, also, F 39, P.P. 48, De 35.

✓ ³ Compare Doctor's Tale 32 ff, Knight's Tale 1035 ff.

⁴ Compare Di I. 10, A and S 100, E 30.

'Think ek how elde wasteth every houre
 In ech of you a party of beaute ;
 And therfor, or that age thee devoure,
 Go love, for, old, ther wil no wight of thee !
 Lat this proverbe a lore unto you be :
 Too late y-war ! quod Beaute, whan it paste;
 And Elde daunteth Daunger at the laste !

'The kinges fool is wont to cryen loude,
 Whan that him think'th a womman ber'th her hye,
 " So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
 Til crows feet be growe under your ye,
 And sende you thanne a mirour in to pryde,
 In which that ye may see your face amorwe !"
 I bidde wisse you no more sorwe !'

The tone of ill-natured protest which marks this speech is characteristic of a small class of Elizabethan sonnets of which Drayton's 8th sonnet to *Idea* may be taken as typical:

There's nothing grieve me, but that Age should haste,
 That in my days, I may not see thee old !
 That where those two clear sparkling Eyes are placed,
 Only two loopholes, then I might behold !
 That lovely arched ivory-polished Brow
 Defaced with wrinkles, that I might but see !
 Thy dainty Hair, so curled and crisped now,
 Like grizzled moss upon some aged tree !
 Thy Cheek, now flush with roses, sunk and lean !
 Thy Lips, with age as any wafer thin !
 Thy pearly Teeth, out of thy head so clean,
 That when thou feed'st, thy Nose shall touch thy Chin !
 These lines that now scornest, which should delight thee ;
 Then would I make thee read, but to desp'te thee !

Similarly in *Aurora*, 102, the poet declares that he will think himself avenged for neglect,

When as that louely tent of beautie dies.¹

(b) The comparison of beauty to the flower that soon fades is common to both bodies of verse under discussion.

¹ Compare, Reason and Sensuallyte, 6207 ff.

Reson and Sensuallyte, 6210 ff:

That beaute, who than kan espye,
 By naturel Inclinacion,
 Lasteth fresh but a seson,
 No mor' than doth a Rose newe
 Which with a storme chaungeth his hewe,
 For al his soote levys glade
 Ful unwarly yt wil fade.

Delia, 36 :

Look, Delia, how w'esteem the half-blown rose,
 The image of thy blush. and summer's honour,
 Whilst yet her tender bud doth undisclose
 That full of beauty time bestows upon her.
 No sooner spreads her glory in the air,
 But straight her wide-blown pomp comes to decline;
 She then is scorned that late adorned the fair;
 So fade the roses of those cheeks of thine.¹

III. The conflict of heat with cold by which the sonnet lover is so often afflicted was experienced by Lydgate's Black Knight :²

With hote and colde my acces ys so meynt,
 That now I shyuer for defaute of hete,
 And hote so glede now sodenly I suete,
 Now hote as fire, now colde as asshes dede,
 Now hote for colde, now colde for hote ageyn,
 Now colde as ise, now as coles rede.

So, *Phillis*, 18:

I burne in ice and quake amidst the fire.

IV. The laws of nature shall change and the established order be overturned before the lover will waver in his devotion.

¹ Compare De 47, Au 102, Id 10, Cl 26, E 16, P.P. 58, 59, Ph Egloga Prima and Ode following sonnet 39, Sh 2, 12.

² Complaint of the Black Knight 229 ff. See, also, Temple of Glas, 356 ff, Falls of Princes, 124 a, Launcelot, 30, Cuckow and Nightingale, 38 ff, Confessio Amantis, III., s. 9, Troilus and Criseyde, I., 420. Compare sonnets : Au 4, Cl 5, Di VI., 2, Dl 1, F 8, 11, Ph 35, P.P. 31.

Troilus and Criseyde, III., 1495 ff:

That erst shall Phebus fallen fro his spere,
And everich egle ben the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Or Troilus out of Criseydes herte !

So, *Aurora*, 58:

First shall each riuere turn vnto the spring,
The tallest oke stand trembling like a reed,
Harts in the aire, whales on the mountains feed,
And foule confusions seaze on euery thing ;
Before that I begin to change in ought,
Or on another but bestow one thought.¹

V. The darts of love are shot from the mistress' eyes.

La Belle Dame Sanz Mercy.²

Your yeen hathe sette the prynt which that I feele withynne myne
herte.

Temple of Glas, 582:

For with the stremes of her eyen clere
I am Iwoundid to the hert.

Knight's Tale, 1567:

Ye sleen me with youre eyen, Emelye !

This figure is so common in the sonnets that quotation or reference are scarcely necessary. It is, of course, variously manipulated; but the underlying idea is always the same.³

¹ Compare D1 14, 35, Eka 38, F 42, 44, P.P. 29, E 26.

² Political, Religious and Love Poems from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth Ms. No. 306. Ed. Furnivall, E. E. T. S. London, 1866, p. 52, l. 525.

³ See, also: *Knight's Tale*, 1096, *Troilus and Criseyde*, II., 533 ff, III., 1352 ff. *Troy-Book*, Aa 2b, *Temple of Glas*, 104 ff, 230, 815. Compare sonnets: Am 7, C 2, Di VI., 9, D1 1, 36, F 2, 48, Id 2, 46, L I., 11, 36, etc.

VI. The lady scorns the lover's advances; she is disdainful, obdurate and merciless; her heart is hard. This is the conventional attitude of the mistress in amatory verse, generally, and calls for no special remark. In describing the disposition of the mistress and in commenting upon it, the Elizabethan sonneteers use the same figures as the Middle English writers:

Allegory
metaphor

La Belle Dame Sanz Mercy:

O marbil herte, and yet more harde, parde.¹

Complaint:

Wherefore doth away the stel,
I mene the hardnesse of youre herte.²

Troilus and Criseyde, I., 524:

Thy lady is as frost in winter moone.³

All three of these comparisons occur in *Licia* 8:

Hard are the rocks, the marble, and the steel,
The ancient oak with wind and weather tossed;
But you, my Love, far harder do I feel
Than flint, or these, or is the winter's frost.⁴

VII. The lover was born under an unlucky star.

Knight's Tale, 1087:

Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn;
So stood the hevene whan that we were born.⁵

¹ Furnivall op. cit. p. 52, l. 717.

² Appended to Temple of Glas, E. E. T. S. 146 ff,

³ See, also: Black Knight, 442 ff, Confessio Amantis, III., 1514, Troilus and Criseyde, III., 110, etc., etc.

⁴ Compare sonnets: Am 18, C 17, Cl 11, 18, De 11, 13, Dl 8, 9, 11, F 7, Id 45, Li 44, W.P. 24, Z 7, L III. 5.

⁵ Compare Petrarch, in Vita. 122, (141).

Fate



Chloris, 28:

What cruel star, or fate, had dominion
When I was born?

Diana, VII., 2 :

What influence hath bred my hateful woe?

Tears

VIII. The conventional lover is lachrymose. It would be superfluous to quote passages in proof of this assertion to which both Middle English and Elizabethan literature bear ample witness. It is interesting, however, to note the use by Chaucer, and by the sonneteers after him, of the distillation figure derived from alchemy.

Troilus and Criseyde, IV., 519

This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambic, ful faste.

In *Phyllis*, 37, Lodge presents us with this figure in more detailed and elaborate form:

My love doth serve for fire, my heart the furnace is,
The aperries of my sighs augment the burning flame,
The limbec is mine eye that doth distil the same;
And by how much my fire is violent and sly,
By so much doth it cause the waters mount on high,
That shower from out mine eyes, for to assuage my miss.

So, *Idea*, 7:

Precious Tears distilling from mine ey'n.

Diella, 19:

Salt tears distilling from my dewy eyes.

Delia, 24 :

These tears, which heat of sacred flame distils.

Fidessa, 30 :

In your own tears, so many years distilled.

IX. The lover is pale; he is incurably diseased; he wears the hue of death.

Complaint, 27:¹

Lych as ashes dede, pale of hewe.

Black Knight, 221 ff:

The petouse chere pale in compleynyng,
The dedely face like ashes in shynyng.

So, *Laura*, II., 18:

I bear of Death itself, the lively show,

* * * * *

The fire, close burning in my veins, doth make
That outward ashes in my face you view.²

X. The mistress alone is able to cure the lover's disease.

Love Poems,³ p., 41:

My paynes to Rellis may non bute yee.

Ditto, p. 52:

There may none make the peas but only ye
Which ar the cause and ground of alle this werre.

Confessio Amantis, III., 1514.

And yit is sche noght merciabie
Which mai me yive lif and hele.

So, *Chloris*, 11:

—Winged Love's impartial cruel wound,
Which in my heart is ever permanent,
Until my CHLORIS makes me whole and sound.⁴

¹ Op. cit.

² See, also: *Confessio Amantis*, VIII., 2217, *Black Knight*, 131 ff, *Temple of Glas*, 616. Compare, sonnets: Au 65, Cl 37, Di 23, Li 34, F 7, 16, 25, Ph 6, 29.

³ Furnivall, op. cit.

⁴ Compare: De 14, Di V., 3.

Amoretti, 50:

Then, my lyfes Leach ! doe your skill reveale;
And, with one salve, both hart and body heale.

XI. The lover regrets the day when first he saw his mistress.

Love Poems,¹ p. 52, l. 205:

Unhappy day
Whanne I firste hadde a sighte of your visage.

Coelia, 2 :

O happy hour, and yet unhappy hour !
When first by chance I had my Goddess viewed.

Diana, VI., 8:

Unhappy day, unhappy month and season,
When first proud love, my joys away adjourning,
Poured into mine eye to her eye turning
A deadly juice, unto my green thought's reason.

XII. Praise of the lady's voice.

Confessio Amantis, VI., 860 ff:

—the wordes of hire mouth:
For as the wyndes of the South
Ben most of alle debonaire,
So whan her list to speke faire,
The vertu of hire goodly speche
Is verrailly myn hertes leche.
And if it so befalle among,
That sche carole upon a song,
Whan I it hiere I am so fedd,
That I am fro miself so ledd,
As thogh I were in paradys;
For certes, as to myn avis,
When I here of hir vois the stevene,
Me thenkth it is a blisse of hevене.²

¹ Furnivall, op. cit.

² Compare: Knight's Tale, 1055, Troilus and Criseyde, II., 826, Dethe of Blaunche, 924 ff.

The sonnet-writers frequently write in praise of their mistresses' voices and singing. Watson, for example, in his *Ekatompathia*, has a series of seven sonnets (11-17) in which is "couertly set forth, how pleasaunt a passion the Author one day enoyed, when by chance he ouerharde his mistris, whilst she was singing priuately by her selfe." In one of these sonnets Watson follows Gower in comparing his lady to a bird.

Ekatompathia, 16:

My gentle birde, which sung so sweete of late,
Is not like those, that flie about by kind,
Her feathers are of golde, shee wantes a mate,
And knowing wel her worth, is proud of mind;

* * * * *

And who so mad, as woulde not with his will
Leese libertie and life to heare her sing,
Whose voice excels those harmonies that fill
Elisian fieldes, where growes eternal spring?¹

XIII. The mistress scorns her lover's verses.

La Belle Dame Sanz Mercy, 219 ff:

I suffre peyne, god woot, fulle hoote brennyng,
to cause my deth, al for my trewe seruyce,
and I see well ye rechche ther-of no thyng,
ner take noon hede of itt in noo kyns wise;
But whanne I speke aftir my beste avise,
ye sett it nought, but make ther-of a game;
and thow I sewe soo grete an enterprise,
It peyneth noughte your worship nor your fame.²

Coelia, 3:

She scorns my dole, and smileth at my pain.

XIV. The lover is restless at night and dreams of his mistress.

¹ Compare *Li* 25, 30, *Ph* 20, *A* and *S* 100.

² Poems from *Lambeth Ms.*, 306, ed. Furnivall, p. 52 ff.

³ Compare, *Dethe of Blaunche* 1235, *Ph* 23.

Unto my Lady, the Flower of Womanhood:¹

Whan Reste And slepe y shulde haue noxialle,
 As Requereth bothe nature and kynde,
 than trobled are my wittes alle,
 so sodeynly Renyth in my mynde
 your grete bewte ! me thynketh than y fynde
 you as gripyng in myn armes twey;
 Bute whan y wake, ye Are away.

Astrophel and Stella, 38 :

This night, while sleepe begins with heauy wings
 To hatch mine eyes, and that vnbitted thought
 Doth fall to stray, and my chiefe powres are brought
 To leaue the scepter of all subiect things;
 The first that straight my fancie's error brings
 Vnto my mind is Stella's image, wrought
 By Loues owne selfe, but with so curious drought
 That she, methinks, not onely shines but sings.
 I start, looke, hearke; but what in closde-vp sence
 Was held, in opend sence it flies away.²

Science
 XV. The sonneteers continue the use of mediæval traditions and superstitions. (a) Thus in *Chloris*, 19, occur these lines :

She like the scorpion, gave to me a wound;
 And, like the scorpion, she must make me sound.

Barnes uses the same figure in *Parthenophil and Parthenope*, 39 :

Then, like the Scorpion, did She deadly sting me;
 And with a pleasing poison pierced me !
 Which, to these utmost sobs of death, did bring me,
 And, through my soul's faint sinews, searched me.
 Yet might She cure me with the *Scorpion's Oil*.

Fletcher writes in *Licia*, 38 :

You gave the wound, and can the hurt remove.

¹ Poems from Lambeth Ms.. 306, ed. Furnivall, p. 43. Compare Chaucer's *Compleynte to his Lady*, I, 51.

² Compare, Di 24, E 8-11 incl., F 14, Au Song VI.

The superstition is a very old one and appears in *The Vision of Piers Ploughman*.¹

For of alle venymes
 Foulest is the scorpion.
 May no medicine helpe
 The place ther he styngeth,
 Til he be deed, and do thereto.
 The yvel he destruyeth,
 The firste verymouste
 Thorough venym of hymselfe.

Lodge in *Phyllis*, 18, gives us an analogue of this citation:

As when two raging venoms are united,
 Which of themselves dissevered life would sever,
 The sickly wretch of sickness is acquitted,
 Which else should die, or pine in torments ever.

Still another version of the notion that "like cures like" is given in Barnfield's *Cynthia*, 5 :

It is reported of faire *Thetis'* Sonne,
 (*Achilles* famous for his chivalry,
 His noble minde and magnanimity,)
 That when the Troian wars were new begun,
 Whos'euer was deepe-wounded with his speare,
 Could never be recured of his maime,
 Nor euer after be made whole againe;
 Except with that speares rust he holpen were.

(*b*) Daniel resorts to a legend of witchcraft and is imitated by Constable. The passages in question occur in the second 'rejected' sonnet appended to Daniel's *Delia* and in *Diana*, II., 2:

¹ Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman, Ed. Wright, p. 378, ll. 12383, ff.

So, Euphues, p, 68, "The Scorpion that stung thee shall heal thee"; and p. 356, "Those that are stunge with the Scorpion, are healed with the Scorpion."

Delia :

The sly enchanter when to work his will
 And secret wrong on some forespoken wight,
 Frames wax in form to represent aright
 The poor unwitting wretch he means to kill,
 And pricks the image framed by magic's skill,
 Whereby to vex the party day and night.

Diana :

For witches, which some murder do intend,
 Do make a picture, and do shoot at it;
 And in that part where they the picture hit,
 The party's self doth languish to his end.

This bit of folk-lore is touched upon by Chaucer in the *Hous of Fame*, III., 169 ff :

Ther saw I pleyen jogelours,
 Magiciens, and tregetours,
 And phitonesses, charmeresses,
 Olde wycches, sorceresses,
 That use exorsisaciouns,
 And eek thise fumygaciouns;
 And clerkes eek, which conne wel
 Al this magik naturel,
 That craftely don hir ententes,
 To make, in certeyn ascendentes,
 Images, lo, through swych magik,
 To make a man ben hool or syk.

(c) Greville's *Caelica*, 103, contains the interesting line :

And as hell-fires, not wanting heat, want light.

The conception of colorless flames plays a part in descriptions of hell from an indefinitely early period. Possibly of Semitic origin, the idea occurs in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English and is not uncommon in Elizabethan literature. It is found twice in the amatory sonnet sequences, once in *Caelica*, as just noted, and again in *Diana*, VIII., 5, where Constable writes:

But to my heart alone my heart shall tell
 How unseen flames do burn it day and night,
 Lest flames give light, light bring my love to sight,
 And my love prove my folly to excel.
 Wherefore my love burns like the fire of hell,
 Wherein is fire and yet there is no light.

Shakespeare's "delighted spirit" which has given the commentators a good deal of unnecessary trouble may be readily explained as a punning allusion to this tradition.

Measure for Measure, III., 1, 118 ff:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
 This sensible warm motion to become
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
 In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice.

It appears again in Milton's description of hell:

Paradise Lost, I., 61 ff:

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
 As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
 No light; but rather darkness visible
 Served only to discover sights of woe.

XVI. Figures based upon angling.

Compleynte of Mars, 236 ff:

Hit semeth he hath to lovers enmyte,
 And lyk a fisser, as men alday may se,
 Baiteth his angle-hook with some plesaunce,
 Til mon ya fish is wood, til that he be
 Sesed ther-with; and then at erst hath he
 Al his desire, and ther-with al myschaunce;
 And thogh the lyne breke, he hath penaunce,
 For with the hook he wounded is so sore
 That he his wages hath for ever-more.

Fidessa, 50:

When I the hooks of pleasure first devoured,
 Which undigested threaten now to choke me.

Caelica, 84:

I swallow down the bait, which carries down my death.¹

XVII. Miscellaneous figures and comparisons.

(a) In the curious poem, *Bewte will Shewe, thow Hornys be Away*,² women are compared to tigers.

Line 37:

But archwyfes, eger in ther violence,
Ferse as a tigre for to make affray.

The figure is used by Petrarch (*in Vita* 101 and elsewhere) and is common in the Elizabethan sonnets.

Licia, 8:

Too tiger-like, you swear you cannot love.

Cidessa, 59:

Do I unto a cruel tiger play?

Diella, 16:

But I must love her, Tigress!³

(b) *A Complaynte to his Lady*, Chaucer, 55:

My hertes lady, and hool my lyves quene!⁴

Emaricdulfe, 2:

Deare mistris of my thoughts, Queene of my ioy.

Licia, 3:

The heavens beheld the beauty of my queen.

(c) *Troilus and Criseyde*, I. 384:

Remembering him, that love too wide y blowe
Yelt bittre fruit, though swete seed be sowe.

¹ Compare, Au 14, 103, Di V., 2, L III., 6.

² Poems from Lambeth Ms., 306, ed. Furnivall, E. E. T. S. 1866, p. 45

³ Compare, A and S 65, Am 20, 56, Cl 16, D1 21.

⁴ Compare, Complaint, 136.

Delia, 26:

Yet since the sweetest root yields fruit so sour,¹
Her praise from my complaint I may not part.

(d) *A Complaynte to his Lady*, Chaucer, 37:

✓ I can but love hir best, my swete fo.

Again, line 59:

✓ My dere herte and best beloved fo.²

Amoretti, 57:

Sweet warriour ! when shall I have peace?³

(e) *La Belle Dame Sanz Mercy*, 257:

Your plesaunte loke, my verray loodsterre.⁴

Amoretti, 34:

Yet hope I well that, when this storme is past,
My Helice, the lodestar of my life,
Will shine again.

(f) *Confessio Amantis*, II. 20, ff:

✓ Ethna, which brenneth yer be yere.
Was thanne noght so hot as I,
Of thilke Sor which prively
Min hertes thoght withinne brenneth.

So, *Chloris*, 13.

Augmenting fuel to my Etna's fire.

Phillis, 2:

To quench the flames from my heart's Ætna streaming.

✓ ¹ Compare, Am 26, Au 79, Sh 35.

² So, also, T. and C. V., 228.

³ The comparison of love to warfare and figures based upon the conception are frequent in the Elizabethan sonnets; for example, Am 11, 12, 14, A and S 36, C 10, D1 7, Di IV., 2, Id 63. Compare, Lord Vaux, *Tottels Miscellany*, ed. Arber, p. 172, "When Cupide scaled first the fort." See, also, Arber's *English Garner* I., 128, 460, 651, V., 370.

✓ ⁴ So, *Troilus and Criseyde* V., 232.

(g) *Love Poems*, p. 45 l. 65 :¹

Moder of ihesu, myrrour of chastitie.

Common appellation of the Virgin in Middle English.

Coelia, 4 :

O heavenly Coelia, as fair as virtuous!

The only Mirror of true Chastity.

(h) The resemblance between Sidney's famous sonnet on sleep (*Astrophel and Stella*, 39) and Chaucer's *Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*, ll. 231 ff., is worthy of remark though Sidney's immediate source was not Chaucer.²

(i) Another interesting and suggestive comparison may be made between Donne's greeting to the sun,

Busy old fool, unruly sun,

Why dost thou thus,

Through windows and through curtains call on us?

and the language of Troilus in *Troilus and Criseyde* III, 1450 ff.,

O cruel day, accusour of the joye, etc.

To infer from resemblances in substance that the sonneteers drew chiefly, or even largely, from earlier native writers would be illogical. Passages similar to those quoted occur in Petrarch and the poets of his school. A large proportion of the parallelisms, moreover, may be explained on the theory of common sources. In the glosses to his *Ekatompathia*, Thomas Watson, the first sequence writer, has left a rather complete list of the authors upon whom he drew for ideas. In subject-matter, Watson's work is typical and it is fair to assume that his sources are representative. Comparing the authors mentioned in Watson's annotations with those known to have been used by Chaucer, we find many names in common. Chaucer's

¹ Furnivall, op. cit.

² For other sonnets on this theme see Cl 34, De 51, F 15, and A and S 32.

favorite author was Ovid : Ovid was, likewise, a main recourse of Watson. Other sources utilized by both poets are Vergil, Horace, Seneca, Lucan, Perottus and Petrarch. In addition to the ancient classics, Watson derived much from French and Italian writers and in this he was followed by the entire group of Elizabethan versifiers. The continental sonneteers, however, were, in turn, indebted to the classics, so that their imitation is, often, merely a borrowing, at second-hand, from the sources employed by Chaucer.¹

The resemblances between the Elizabethan lyric and the Middle English amatory verse are capable of easy explanation, but the reader of the literature of the two periods will hardly consent to be put off with such generalities as those just adduced. The similarities are too well marked and too numerous to be so summarily despatched. Granted that the sonneteers are chiefly indebted to the classics and to continental models, it may still be true that the mass of earlier native verse exerted an influence, obscure, even sub-conscious, but nevertheless sufficient to tinge Elizabethan composition. Sufficient evidence exists to render the theory tenable. Aside from parallelisms and analogues of the kind already quoted, there are to be found in Elizabethan literature abundant survivals from the earlier age. The Middle English "Complaint," for example, was continued quite through the Elizabethan period and received its meed of attention from Shakespeare himself. The serious tone, approaching theological tenor, characteristic of the first miscellanies may, possibly, be traced to the religious verse of the Middle Ages. Now and then, there turns up in Elizabethan poetry a piece written in observance of some long-established custom, such as the sending

¹ A certain percentage of the similarities are, doubtless, to be ascribed to identity of theme.

of New Year's verses.¹ The development of the drama affords ample evidence to the continuity which we seek to establish. Not only is the history of the English drama, as a form, the story of an evolution from mediaeval literature, but also an analysis of the sources of the dramatists from John Heywood on, reveals a direct and unmistakable influence of Chaucer. Most of the dramatists were also lyrists. Finally, there are to be found, in the sonnets themselves, motives characteristically mediaeval. Such are the device of a visit to the temple of Venus,² allegory,³ and the dream motive.⁴ Constable in *Diana*, 6, attributes to his eyes the seven deadly sins treated at length in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.

The likelihood of a native influence on the sonnets gains a further increment of plausibility when the popularity of Chaucer in the Elizabethan age is considered.⁵ It may safely be said that at no time in the history of English literature have the merits of the Chaucerian School been more genuinely appreciated than during the 16th century. Editions of Chaucer's works appeared in 1526, 1532, 1542, *circ.* 1550, 1561, 1598 and 1602, an average of one every ten years. Francis Thynne's text of the *Canterbury Tales* (1532) remained the standard for two hundred and fifty years. Speght's Chaucer (1598) called forth Thynne's *Animaduersions*,⁶ an essay of textual criticism which sur-

¹ See, *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*, ed. Haslewood, London, 1815, II., p. 266. "A New Yeeres Gift to my old friend," etc. Compare, Furnivall's *Poems from Lambeth Ms.*, 306, E. E. T. S., 1866, p. 38, and Herrick's *Hesperides*, 319 (Pollard's Ed.).

² C 13.

³ A and S 18, C 10, Eka 2, Dl 28, Z 4, 5.

⁴ Au 51, Cl 13, Dl 24, F 14, P. P., El. 10, Ode 2, Canz. 2.

⁵ Lounsbury, Chap. VII.

⁶ *Animaduersions* upon the Annotations and corrections of some imperfections of impressiones of Chaucer's workes [sett downe before tyme, and nowe] reprinted in the yere of oure lorde 1598. Sett downe by Francis Thynne. E. E. T. S.

prises by its modern tone and is full of evidences of minute and patient study. The avidity of the Elizabethan appetite is further illustrated by the fact that it demanded two editions of Gower, one in 1532 and the second in 1554.¹ Thus four editions of Chaucer and two editions of Gower appeared prior to the publication of *Tottel's Miscellany*. The works of these authors, therefore, were accessible to the sonneteers. Lydgate's *Complaint of the Black Knight*, published in Edinburgh as early as 1508, appeared with Chaucer's works in Thynne's edition of 1532. The *Story of Thebes* was printed repeatedly between 1561 and 1587, the *Troy-Book* in 1555, the *Falls of Princes* in 1554 and again in 1558.²

The esteem in which Chaucer was held by the Elizabethans is attested by the frequent mention of his name, coupled with expressions of appreciation and respect, by the critical writers of the day. Puttenham³ calls him "the father of our English Poets"; to Gascoigne⁴ he is "our father Chaucer"; by Webbe⁵ and Meres⁶ he is deified and made "the god of English poets." Sidney⁷ laments that 'the age walks so stumblingly after him.' Churchyard, in his doggerel *Praise of Poetrie*,⁸ refers to him three times. Daniel in *Musophilus* mentions Chaucer as one

Unto the sacred relics of whose rime,
We yet are bound in zeal to offer praise.

Spenser eulogizes Chaucer in the *Shepherd's Calendar*⁹

¹ Gower was not printed again until 1857.

² Lydgate's *Complaint of the Black Knight*, Inaugural-Dissertation von Emil Krausser, Halle, 1896.

³ *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Arber, p. 32.

⁴ *Certaine Notes of Instruction*, ed. Arber, p. 34.

⁵ *Discourse of English Poetrie*, ed. Arber, p. 32.

⁶ *Palladis Tamia*.

⁷ *Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. Arber, p. 62.

⁸ Reprinted in *Censura Literaria*, vols. III. and IV.

⁹ June.

under the name of Tityrus and declares that the fame of his skill in verse "doth dayly greater grow." Finally, not to prolong the list, Drayton extols Chaucer in his account of the English poets contained in an *Epistle to Henry Reynolds*.

So much praise, by men most of whom were actively engaged in the composition of poetry, at once establishes a presumption in favor of Chaucerian influence on the Elizabethan lyric. It is a law of human nature that admiration begets imitation and the Elizabethan age was nothing if not innocently plagiaristic. In the case of Chaucer, however, we must expect to find it difficult to establish an influence by the cataloguing of parallel excerpts for two reasons. (a) Even in the 16th century, Chaucer's language was archaic and, therefore, not susceptible of direct quotation. Spenser, to be sure, borrowed largely from Chaucer's vocabulary, but even his powerful example failed to make the practice popular. Ben Jonson doubtless reflected current opinion when he observed that "Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language."¹ Daniel, at least, was no friend to obsolete diction, for in sonnet 52 of *Deha* he exclaims:

Let others sing of knights and paladins,
In aged accents and untimely words,
Paint shadows in imaginary lines
Which well the reach of their high wits records.

Sidney, another sonneteer, says of the *Shepherd's Calendar*: "The Sheapheards Kalendar, hath much Poetrie in his Eglogues; indeede worthy the reading if I be not deceiued. That same framing of his stile, in an old rustick language, I dare not alowe, sith neyther Theocritus in Greek, Virgill in Latin, nor Sanazar in Italian, did affect it."²

(b) The Elizabethans doubtless were put to less trouble to understand Chaucer's style and versification than the

¹ Jonson's Discoveries, under *Praecipienda Modi*.

² Apologie for Poetrie, ed. Arber, p. 62.

readers of any subsequent period; but in the critical essays of the day may be observed a tendency to patronize Chaucer and to treat his poetry as rude and unpolished. This attitude is an additional obstacle in the path of our inquiry since it means that borrowings from Chaucer, if any, already "modernized" in diction, would be so manipulated in phraseology and construction as to become unrecognizable. Beyond question the difficulty exists, though it would be unfair to assume that all Elizabethans were ignorant of the principles on which Chaucer's poetry is to be judged. Ascham's criticism of Chaucer's "barbarous and rude Ryming"¹ is not to be regarded as typical since Ascham wrote from the point of view of the extreme classical school, the members of which, never anything more than a mere handful of misguided enthusiasts, wished to foist upon English a system of quantitative verse. Sidney says of Chaucer that "he had great wants," but he adds that "they are fitte to be forgiven in so reuerent antiquity."² Puttenham writes: "The Canterbury Tales were *Chaucers* owne invention as I suppose, and where he sheweth more the naturall of his pleasant wit, then in any other of his workes, his similtudes, comparisons and all other descriptions are such as can not be amended. His meetre Heroicall of Troilus and Cresseid is very graue and stately, keeping the staffe of seuen, and the verse of ten, his other verses of the Canterbury tales be but riding ryme, neuertheless very well becomming the matter of that pleasaunt pilgrimage in which euery mans part is playd with much decency."³ Webbe: "Though the manner of hys stile may seem blunte and course to many fine English eares at these dayes, yet in truth, if it be equally pondered, and with good iudgement aduised, and confirmed with the time wherein he wrote, a man shall per-

¹ Ascham's Scholemaster, ed. Arber, p. 145.

² Apologie for Poetrie, ed. Arber, p. 62.

³ Arte of English Poesie, ed. Arber, p. 75.

ceiue thereby euen a true picture or perfect shape of a right Poet."¹ Gascoigne: "Who so euer do peruse and well consider his workes, he shall finde that although his lines are not always of one selfe same number of Syllables, yet beyng redde by one that hath vnderstanding, the longest verse and that which hath most Syllables in it, will fall (to the eare) correspondent vnto that whiche hath fewest sillables in it."²

From these passages it appears that the merits of Chaucer's verse had to be explained in Elizabethan days much as they are now and that the difficulties experienced by a sonnet writer in utilizing Chaucerian sources would be [much the same as would be encountered by a more modern author.

We need not expect, then, to find in the sonnets many passages that may be positively identified as borrowings from Chaucer though we may often be reminded of him by the coloring of the verse; but when Lodge in sonnet 30 of *Phillis* writes as follows, we feel certain that he had in mind the opening lines of the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*:

I do compare unto thy youthly clear,
Which always bides within thy flow'ring prime,
The month of April, that bedews our clime
With pleasant flowers, when as his showers appear.

Before thy face shall fly false cruelty,
Before his face the doly season fleets;
Mild been his looks, thine eyes are full of sweets;
Firm is his course, firm is thy loyalty,

He paints the fields through liquid crystal showers,
Thou paint'st my verse with Pallas' learned flowers;
With Zephirus' sweet breath he fills the plains,
And thou my heart with weeping sighs that wring;
His brows are dewed with morning's crystal spring,
Thou mak'st my eyes with tears bemoan my pains.

¹ Discourse of English Poetrie, ed. Arber, p. 32.

² Certayne Notes of Instruction in English Verse, ed. Arber, p. 34.

Again, in *Troilus and Criseyde* V. 638 ff. we read :

O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
 With herte soor wel oughte I to bewaile
 That evere derk in torment night by night,
 Toward my deth with wind in stere I saile.

The figure is adapted by Spenser in *Amoretti*, 87 :

Since I have lackt the comfort of that light,
 The which was wont to lead my thoughts astray;
 I wander as in darkenesse of the night,
 Affrayd of every dangers least dismay.¹

Phyllis appeared in 1593 and the *Amoretti* in 1595. Both were composed when foreign influence had fully developed and when standards of style had been modified by imitation of continental forms. Naturally, Chaucerian influence is more readily to be detected in the work of the poets who wrote during the experimental period which marked the emergence of the new literature from the old. The early school of "courtly makers" were much indebted to their English predecessors from Chaucer on. The extent of the obligation in the case of Wyatt and Surrey was made known long ago by Nott, in his monumental edition of the two poets. It is needless to repeat in detail the results of that careful study, but it will not be out of place to quote a single sonnet by Wyatt as an illustration in point :

Ye that in loue finde luck and swete abundance,
 And lyue in lust of ioyfull iolitie,
 Aryse for shame, do way your sluggardy:
 Arise I say, do May some obseruance:
 Let me in bed lye, dreamyng of mischance.
 Let me remember my missehappes vnhappy,
 That me betide in May most commonly:
 As one whom loue list little to aduance.
 Stephan said true, that my natiuitie
 Mischanced was with the ruler of May.
 He gest (I proue) of that the veritie.
 In May my wealth, and eke my wittes. I say,
 Haue stand so oft in such perplexitie.
 Ioye: let me dreame of your felicitie.²

¹ Compare, Am 34, A and S 89.

² Tottel's Miscellany, ed. Arber, p. 36. See, also, Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Poems, W. E. Simonds, Boston 1889, pp. 133-134.

The parallelisms are as follows :

Troilus and Criseyde II. 111 :

Do wey your book; ris up, and let us daunce,
And let us don to May som observaunce.

Troilus and Criseyde I. 517 :

Now, thanked God, he may go in the daunce
Of hem that Love list feblely t'avaunce !

Hous of Fame II. 131 :

Although thou maist go in the daunce
With hem that him list not avaunce.

Black Knight, 353 :

And for al, that was he sete behynde
With hem that Love liste fiebly to avaunce.

Court of Love, 176 :

For ye that reigne in youth and lustynesse.

Complaint unto Pitie, 39 :

And fresshe Beautee, Lust and Jolitee.

In a preceding paragraph we have quoted a passage from Watson's *Ekatompathia* which bears a marked resemblance to certain lines in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. A like similarity exists between sonnet 29 of the *Ekatompathia* and the opening lines of the *Doctor's Tale*.

Doctor's Tale, 7 ff:

Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee
Aboven every wight that man may see;
For Nature hath with sovereyn diligence
Y-formed hire in so greet excellence,
As though she wolde seyn, 'Lo, I, Nature,
Thus kan I forme, and peynte a creature,
Whan that me list,—who kan me countrefete?
Pigmalion? Noght, though he ay forge and bete
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn
Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,
Outher to grave, or peynte, or forge, or bete,
If they presumed me to countrefete.'

Watson:

Such is the *Saint*, whom I on earth adore,
 As neuer age shall know when this is past,
 Nor euer yet hath like byn seene before :
Apelles yf he liu'd would stand agast
 With coulours to set downe her comely fare,
 Who farre excells though *Venus* were in place
Praxiteles might likewise stand in doute
 In metall to expresse her forme arighte,
 Whose praise for shape is blowne the world throughout.

In his gloss on this sonnet Watson mentions no authorities. Whether or not he is indebted to Chaucer for the idea cannot be determined; but that he knew "the English Homer" is indicated by the annotation to *Ekatompathia* 5. This sonnet is a translation of Petrarch's *in Vite* 88 already rendered into English by Chaucer and by Wyatt. Commenting on his own version Watson says: "And it may be noted, that the Author in his first halfe verse of this translation varieth from that sense, which *Chaucer* vseth in translating the selfe same; which he doth vpon no other warrant then his owne simple priuate opinion, which yet he will not greatly stand vpon." This brief note in which the authority of Chaucer is so deferentially called in question is the only evidence of contact that the sequence affords, aside from inferences based upon such analogues as those quoted.

In summary, we find that the Elizabethan amatory sonnet sequences resemble Middle English verse, especially that of Chaucer and his school, in many details of treatment and content. The similarity may be explained on various theories; but in view of the popularity of Chaucer in the Elizabethan age and the admiration for his powers expressed by the Elizabethan critical writers, we are inclined to believe that the resemblances are due, in part at least, to imitation of his work. We find unmistakable evidence of Chaucerian influence in the sonnets of Wyatt, Surrey, Lodge and Spenser, and strong indications in that of Watson,

That we do not find more is not remarkable, since Chaucer's diction was obsolete even in Elizabethan days and his style often regarded rude and unpolished. In conclusion, it is to be noted that the influence of Chaucer upon early Elizabethan verse was well recognized by contemporary critics. Ascham speaks of "some that make *Chaucer* in English and *Petrarch* in Italian, their Gods in verses."¹ In a dedicatory epistle to *The preceptes of Warre set forth by James the Erle of Purlia, and translated into English by Peter Butham*,² the author writes: "I take them best English men which follow Chaucer, and other old writers in which study the nobles and gentlemen of England are worthy to be praised." Francis Thynne,³ commenting on the spurious *Plowman's Tale*, remarks that it had been "supposed, but untrulye, to be made by olde Sir Thomas Wyat, father to hym which was executed in the firste yere of Quene Marye, and not by Chaucer." Such a confusion in authorship is significant of the relations between the two poets.



¹ Scholemaster ed. Arber p. 146.

² 1544, Reprinted in *Censura Literaria* VII, 69 ff.

³ *Animaduersions*, p. 7.

APPENDIX.

A

A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND GRIFFIN'S FIDESSA.

From Solomon to Bartholomew Griffin is a far call, yet Griffin in his sonnet 37 of *Fidessa* employs the language of the *Song of Songs*. At the beginning of Chapter VI. of the Biblical idyll, the Hebrew maiden in answer to the question, "Whither is thy beloved gone?" replies: "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies." Thus the Hebrew; now the Elizabethan:

Fair is my love that feeds among the lilies,
The lilies growing in that pleasant garden
Where Cupid's mount, that well beloved hill is,
And where the little god himself is warden.
See where my love sits in the beds of spices,
Beset all round with camphor, myrrh and roses,
And interlaced with curious devices
Which her from all the world apart incloses.

B

INFLUENCE OF EUPHUES ON THE SONNETS.

In *Euphues*¹ we read that "the Dog hauing surfetted to

¹ *Euphues*, ed. Arber, p. 61.

procure his vomitte, eateth grasse and findeth remedy: the Hart being perced with the dart, runneth out of hand to the hearb *Dictanum* and is healed." The passage appears somewhat inelegant for sonnet purposes, yet *Chloris* 19 is, in part, a paraphrase of it :

The Hound by eating grass doth find relief ;
 For, being sick it is his choicest meat,
 The wounded Hart doth ease his pain and grief ;
 If he, the herb Dictamion may eat.

Watson mentions this magic herb in *Ekatompathia* 68 :

If't were like those, wherewith in *Ida* plaine
 The *Croetan* hunter woundes the chased deere,
 I could with *Dictame* drawe it out again,
 And cure me so, that skarre should scarce appeare.

In his gloss on the sonnet, Watson states his authority for these lines to be *Stephanus Forcatulus* and quotes the Latin verses containing the above figure.









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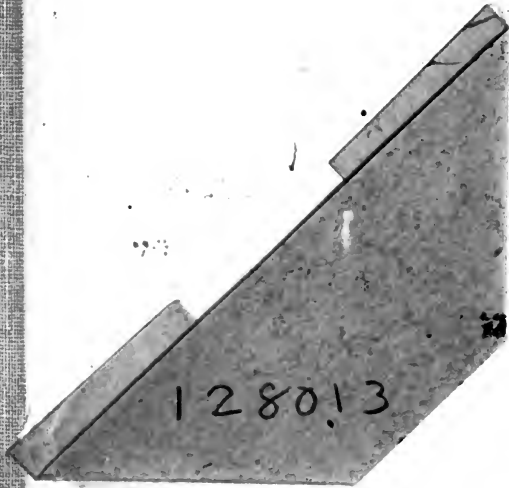
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