

SUMMARY: In 1580, private correspondence between the Cambridge scholar Gabriel Harvey and the poet Edmund Spenser was published as *Three Proper and Witty Familiar Letters*. The book was prefaced by an epistle purportedly written by an anonymous 'well-willer of the two authors', who claimed to have published the correspondence without either Harvey or Spenser's knowledge. Harvey always maintained that he had nothing to do with the publication of *Three Letters*. However, more than a decade later, in *Strange News*, Nashe stated flatly that he recognized Harvey as the anonymous 'well-willer' by his writing style, and it seems clear that in fact Harvey did publish this private correspondence between himself and Spenser in 1580 in an attempt at self-promotion. The result was not what Harvey had intended. In one of his letters to Spenser published in *Three Letters*, Harvey had alluded in vitriolic terms to someone he referred to merely as Spenser's 'old controller'. The Controller of the Household, Sir James Croft, took this as a reference to himself, and the matter was discussed by the Privy Council, of which Croft was a member. According to Nashe in *Have With You to Saffron Walden*, in order to escape Sir James Croft's indignation, Harvey was forced to take sanctuary for eight weeks in Leicester's household, but eventually Croft dislodged Harvey from this haven, and had him confined to the Fleet prison for a time, where (again according to Nashe in *Have With You to Saffron Walden*), Harvey behaved himself in an almost deranged manner. Harvey finally managed to convince the Privy Council that by Spenser's 'old controller', he (Harvey) had meant to refer to his own personal long-time foe at Cambridge University, the 'old fox' Dr. Andrew Perne. After this explanation, and after mediation by Leicester, Harvey was allowed to return to Cambridge, where (according to Nashe) he again behaved himself bizarrely, acting as though in this disgrace he had accomplished something noteworthy. This was not the end of the unfortunate consequences for Harvey of the publication of *Three Letters*. Included in *Three Letters* were English hexameter verses entitled 'Speculum Tuscanismi' in which Harvey mocked the 17th Earl of Oxford as an Italianate Englishman. Although Harvey did not expressly name Oxford in the verses, in *Three Letters* itself Harvey terms the verses 'a bold satirical libel', and in his private letter-book, which is still extant, Harvey confirmed that the verses were aimed at Oxford, and directly linked them to his *Gratulationes Valdinenses* speech to Oxford in 1578. Although Oxford had publicly ignored Harvey's verses in 1580, the matter erupted again in 1589 via an allusion in *Pap with a Hatchet*. Harvey attempted to defend himself in *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, published in 1592, claiming that he had never written anything against Oxford, and that Oxford's secretary, John Lyly, had wrongly 'incensed' Oxford against Harvey over the 'Speculum Tuscanismi' verses at the time of their publication in 1580. Strangely, the dead Robert Greene then played a part in the fray. The second part of *Mamillia*, published in 1593, contains English hexameter verses described as 'certain vain verses compiled by an injurious gentleman' which appear to be a direct parody of Gabriel Harvey's 'Speculum Tuscanismi' verses against Oxford in *Three Letters*. Thomas Nashe then took the matter up in both *Strange News* and *Have With You to Saffron Walden*, publicly castigating Harvey for the 'Speculum Tuscanismi' verses more than a decade after their first publication. The modern spelling version of *Three Letters* below was prepared from the edition of 1884 by Alexander B. Grosart.

THREE PROPER AND WITTY FAMILIAR LETTERS
lately passed between two university men touching the earthquake in April last and our
English reformed versifying

With the preface of a well-willer to them both

Imprinted at London by H. Bynneman,
dwelling in Thames Street near unto Baynard's Castle
Anno Domini 1580

Cum gratia & priuilegio Regiae Maiestatis

To the courteous buyer, by a well-willer of the two authors

Courteous buyer (for I write not to the envious carper), it was my good hap, as I interpret it, now lately, at the fourth or fifth hand, to be made acquainted with the three letters following by means of a faithful friend who with much entreaty had procured the copying of them out at Immerito's hands. And I pray you, interpret it for your good hap so soon after to come so easily by them through my means, who am only to crave these two things at your hands, to think friendly of my friendly meaning, and to take them of me with this presumption, *In exigu quandoque cespite latet lepus*, and many precious stones, though in quantity small, yet in quality and value are esteemed for great.

The first, for a good familiar and sensible letter, sure liketh me very well, and giveth some hope of good metal in the author, in whom I know myself to be very good parts otherwise. But show me, or Immerito, two English letters in print in all points equal to the other two, both for the matter itself, and also for the manner of handling, and say we never saw good English letter in our lives. And yet I am credibly certified by the foresaid faithful and honest friend that himself hath written many of the same stamp both to courtiers and others, and some of them discoursing upon matter of great weight and importance wherein he is said to be fully as sufficient and able as in these scholarly points of learning, the which letters and discourses I would very gladly see in writing, but more gladly in print, if it might be obtained. And at this time, to speak my conscience in a word of these two following, I esteem them for two of the rarest and finest treatises, as well for ingenious devising as also for significant uttering & cleanly conveying of his matter that ever I read in this tongue, and I heartily thank God for bestowing upon us some such proper and able men with their pen, as I heartily thank the author himself for using his pleasant and witty talent with so much discretion and with so little harm, contrary to the vein of most which have this singular conceited grace in writing.

If they had been of their own setting forth, I grant you they might have been more curious, but being so well and so sufficiently done as they are, in my simple judgment, and having so many notable things in them, together with so great variety of learning worth the reading to pleasure you and to help to garnish our tongue, I fear their displeasure the less. And yet, if they think I have made them a fault in not making them privy to the publication, I shall be always ready to make them the best amends I can, any other friendly way. Surely I wish them both heartily well in the Lord, and betake you and them to his merciful government, hoping that he will, at his pleasure, convert such good and divine gifts as these to the setting out of his own glory, and the benefit of his church. This 19 of June, 1580.

Your, and their, unfeigned friend in the Lord.

Three proper and witty familiar letters lately passed between two university men touching the earthquake in April last and our English reformed versifying

To my long approved and singular good friend, Master G. H.

Good Master H., I doubt not but you have some great important matter in hand which all this while restraineth your pen and wonted readiness in provoking me unto that wherein yourself now fault. If there be any such thing in hatching, I pray you heartily let us know before all the world see it. But if haply you dwell altogether in Justinian's court, and give yourself to be devoured of secret studies, as of all likelihood you do, yet at least impart some your old or new Latin or English eloquent and gallant poesies to us from whose eyes, you say, you keep in a manner nothing hidden. Little news is here stirred but that old great matter still depending. His Honour never better.

I think the earthquake was also there with you (which I would gladly learn) as it was here with us, overthrowing divers old buildings and pieces of churches. Sure very strange to be heard of in these countries, and yet I hear some say (I know not how truly) that they have known the like before in their days. *Sed quid vobis videtur magnis Philosophis?*

I like your late English hexameters so exceedingly well that I also enure my pen sometime in that kind, which I find indeed, as I have heard you often defend in word, neither so hard nor so harsh that it will easily and fairly yield itself to our mother tongue, for the only or chiefest hardness which seemeth is in the accent, which sometime gapeth and as it were yawneeth ill-favouredly, coming short of that it should, and sometime exceeding the measure of the number, as in 'carpenter', the middle syllable being used short speech, when it shall be read long in verse, seemeth like a lame gosling that draweth one leg after her, and 'heaven', being used short as one syllable when it is in verse stretched out with a diastole, is like a lame dog that holds up one leg. But it is to be won with custom, and rough words must be subdued with use. For what a God's name may not we, as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language, and measure our accents by the sound, reserving that quantity to the verse? Lo, here I let you see my old use of toying in rimes turned into your artificial straitness of verse by this tetrasticon. I beseech you, tell me your fancy without partiality.

*See ye the blindfolded pretty god, that feathered archer,
Of lovers' miseries which maketh his bloody game?
Wot ye why his mother with a veil hath covered his face?
Trust me, lest he my love haply chance to behold.*

Seem they comparable to those two which I translated you extempore in bed the last time we lay together in Westminster?

*That which I eat did I joy, and that which I greedily gorged,
As for those many goodly matters left I for others.*

I would heartily wish you would either send me the rules and precepts of art which you observe in quantities, or else follow mine that Master Philip Sidney gave me, being the very same which Master Drant devised, but enlarged with Master Sidney's own judgment and augmented with my observations, that we might both accord and agree in one, lest we overthrow one another and be overthrown of the rest.

Trust me, you will hardly believe what great good-liking and estimation Master Dyer had of your satirical verses, and I, since the view thereof, having before of myself had special liking of English versifying, am even now about to give you some token what and how well therein I am able to do, for to tell you truth, I mind shortly at convenient leisure to set forth a book in this kind which I entitle *Epithalamion Thamesis*, which book I dare undertake will be very profitable for the knowledge, and rare for the invention and manner of handling. For in setting forth the marriage of the Thames, I show his first beginning and offspring, and all the country that he passeth through, and also describe all the rivers throughout England which came to this wedding, and their right names and right passage etc., a work, believe me, of much labour, wherein notwithstanding Master Holinshed hath much furthered and advantaged me, who therein hath bestowed singular pains in searching out their first heads and courses, and also in tracing and dogging out all their course till they fall into the sea.

*O Tite, siquid, ego
Ecquid erit pretii?*

But of that more hereafter. Now my *Dreams* and *Dying Pelican* being fully finished (as I partly signified in my last letters) and presently to be imprinted, I will in hand forthwith with my *Faerie Queen*, which I pray you heartily send me with all expedition, and your friendly letters and long-expected judgment withal, which let not be short, but in all points such as you ordinarily use and I extraordinarily desire. *Multum vale. Westminster, Quarto Nonas Aprilis 1580. Sed, amabo te, Meum Corculum tibi se ex animo commendat plurimum: iamdiu mirata, te nihil ad literas suas responsi dedisse. Vide quaeso, ne id tibi Capitale sit: Mihi certe quidem erit, neque tibi hercle impune, vt opinor, Iterum vale, & quam voles saepe.*

Yours always to command,
Immerito

Postscript

I take best my *Dreams* should come forth alone, being grown by means of the gloss (running continually in manner of a paraphrase) full as great as my *Calendar*. Therein be some things excellently and many things wittily discoursed of E.K., and the pictures so singularly set forth and portrayed as if Michelangelo were there he could (I think) nor amend the best nor reprehend the worst. I know you would like them passing well. Of my *Stemmata Dudleiana*, and especially of the sundry apostrophes therein addressed, you know to whom, must more advisement be had than so lightly to send them abroad.

Howbeit trust me, though I do never very well, yet in my own fancy I never did better:
Veruntamen te sequor solum: nunquam vero assequar.

A pleasant and pithy familiar discourse of the earthquake in April last

To my loving friend, Master Immerito

Signor Immerito, after as many gentle good morrows as yourself and your sweet heart listeth, may it please your Mastership to dispense with a poor orator of yours for breaking one principal grand rule of our old inviolable rules of rhetoric in showing himself somewhat too pleurably disposed in a sad matter. Of purpose to meet with a couple of shrewd witty new-married gentlewomen which were more inquisitive than capable of nature's works, I will report you a pretty conceited discourse that I had with them no longer ago than yesternight in a gentleman's house here in Essex, where being in the company of certain courteous gentlemen and those two gentlewomen, it was my chance to be well occupied, I warrant you, at cards (which I dare say I scarcely handled a whole twlevemonth before) at that very instant that the earth under us quaked and the house shook above, besides the moving and rattling of the table and forms where we sat. Whereupon the two gentlewomen, having continually been wrangling with all the rest, and especially with myself, and even at that same very moment making a great loud noise and much ado, Good Lord, quoth I, is it not wonderful strange that the delicate voices of two so proper fine gentlewomen should make such a sudden terrible earthquake? Imagining in good faith nothing in the world less than that it should be an earthquake indeed, and imputing that shaking to the sudden stirring and removing of some cumbrous thing or other in the upper chamber over our heads, which only in effect most of us noted, scarcely perceiving the rest, being so closely and eagerly set at our game, and some of us taking on as they did. But behold, all on the sudden there cometh stumbling into the parlour the gentleman of the house somewhat strangely affrighted and in a manner all aghast, and telleth us, as well as his head and tongue would give him leave, what a wondrous violent motion and shaking there was of all things in his hall, sensibly and visibly seen as well of his own self as of many of his servants and neighbours there. I straightways beginning to think somewhat more seriously of the matter: Then I pray you, good sir, quoth I, send presently one of your servants farther into the town to enquire if the like hath happened there, as most likely is, and then must it needs be some earthquake. Whereat the good fearful gentleman, being a little recomforted (as misdoubting and dreading before I know not what in his own house, as many others did), and immediately dispatching his man into the town, we had by and by certain word that it was general over all the town, and within less than a quarter of an hour after, that the very like behappened the next town too, being a far greater and goodlier town.

The gentlewomen's hearts, nothing acquainted with any such accidents, were marvelously daunted, and they, that immediately before were so eagerly and greedily preying on us, began now forsooth very demurely and devoutly to pray unto God, and the one especially that was even now in the housetop. I beseech you heartily, quoth she, let us leave off playing and fall a praying. By my truly, I was never so scared in my life. Methinks it marvellous strange. What, good partner? Cannot you pray to yourself, quoth one of the gentlemen, but all the house must hear you and ring Allin [sic for 'Amen'?] to Our Lady's matins? I see women are every way vehement and affectionate.

Yourself was liker even now to make a fray than to pray, and will you now needs in all haste be on both your knees? Let us, and you say it, first dispute the matter, what danger and terror it carrieth with it. God be praised it is already ceased, and here be some present that are able cunningly and clerkly to argue the case. I beseech you master or mistress, moderate your zealous and devout passion awhile, and with that turning to me, and smiling a little at the first: Now I pray you, Master H., what say you philosophers, quoth he, to this sudden earthquake? May there not be some sensible natural cause thereof in the concavities of the earth itself, as some forcible and violent eruption of wind or the like?

Yes, no doubt, sir, may there, quoth I, as well as an intelligible supernatural, and peradventure the great abundance and superfluity of waters that fell shortly after Michaelmas last, being not as yet dried or drawn up with the heat of the sun, which hath not recovered his full attractive strength and power, might minister some occasion thereof as might easily be discoursed by natural philosophy in what sort the pores and vents and crannies of the earth, being so stopped and filled up everywhere with moisture that the windy exhalations and vapours, pent up as it were in the bowels thereof, could not otherwise get out and ascend to their natural original place, but the terms of art and very natures of things themselves so utterly unknown as they are to most here, it were a piece of work to lay open the reason to everyone's capacity.

I know well it is we that you mean, quoth one of the gentlewomen (whom for distinction's sake, and because I imagine they would be loath to be named, I will hereafter call Mistress Inquisitiva, and the other, Madam Incredula. Now I beseech you, learned sir, try our wits a little and let us hear a piece of your deep university cunning. Seeing you gentlewomen will algates have it so, with a good will, quoth I, and then forsooth, very solemnly pausing awhile, most gravely and doctorally proceeded as followeth.

The earth, you know, is a mighty great huge body, and consisteth of many divers and contrary members & veins and arteries and concavities, wherein, to avoid the absurdity of vacuum, must necessarily be very great store of substantial matter and sundry accidental humours & fumes and spirits, either good or bad or mixed. Good they cannot possibly all be whereout is engendered so much bad, as namely so many poisonous and venomous herbs and beasts, besides a thousand infective and contagious things else. If they be bad, bad you must needs grant is subject to bad, and then can there not, I warrant you, want an object for bad to work upon. If mixed, which seemeth most probable, yet is it impossible that there should be such an equal and proportionable temperature in all and singular respects but sometime the evil (in the devil's name) will as it were interchangeably have his natural predominant course, and issue one way or other. Which evil working vehemently in the parts, and maliciously encountering the good, forcibly tosseth and cruelly disturbeth the whole, which conflict endureth so long, and is fostered with abundance of corrupt putrified humours and ill-favoured gross infected matter, that it must needs (as well, or rather as ill, as in men's and women's bodies) burst out in the end into one perilous disease or other, and sometime, for want of natural voiding such feverous and flatuous spirits as lurk within, into such a violent chill-shivering shaking ague as even now you see the earth have. Which ague, or rather every fit thereof, we

scholars call grossly and homely *terrae motus*, a moving or stirring of the earth, you gentlewomen that be learned, somewhat more finely and daintily *terrae metus*, a fear and agony of the earth, we being only moved and not terrified, you being only in a manner terrified & scarcely moved therewith. Now here (and it please you) lieth the point and quiddity of the controversy, whether our *motus* or your *metus* be the better & more consonant to the principles and maxims of philosophy, the one being manly and devoid of dread, the other womanish and most woefully quivering and shivering for very fear. In sooth, I use not to dissemble with gentlewomen. I am flatly of opinion the earth whereof man was immediately made, and not woman, is in all proportions and similitudes liker us than you, and when it fortuneth to be distempered and diseased, either in part or in whole, I am persuaded, and I believe reason and philosophy will bear me out in it, it only moveth with the very impulsive force of the malady, and not trembleth or quaketh for dastardly fear. Now, I beseech you, what think ye, gentlewomen, by this reason?

Reason? quoth Madam Incredula. By my truly, I can neither pick out rime nor reason out of anything I have heard yet. And yet methinks all should be gospel that cometh from you doctors of Cambridge. But I see well all is not gold that glistereth. Indeed, quoth Mistress Inquisitiva, here is much ado, I trow, and little help. But it pleaseth Master H. (to delight himself and these gentlemen) to tell us a trim goodly tale of Robin Hood, I know not what. Or sure if this be gospel, I doubt I am not in a good belief. Trust me truly, sir, your eloquence far passeth my intelligence. Did I not tell you aforehand, quoth I, as much? And yet would you needs presume of your capacities in such profound mysteries of philosophy and privities of nature as these be, the very thinking whereof (unless it be *per fidem implicitam*, in believing as the learned believe, and saying, It is so because it is so) is nigh enough to cast you both into a fit or two of a dangerous shaking fever unless you presently seek some remedy to prevent it. And in earnest, if ye will give me leave upon that small skill I have in extrinsical and intrinsical physiognomy & so forth, I will wager all the money in my poor purse to a pottle of hippocras you shall both this night, within somewhat less than two hours and a half, after ye be laid, dream of terrible strange agues and agonies, as well in your own pretty bodies as in the mighty great body of the earth.

You are very merrily disposed, God be praised, quoth Mistress Inquisitiva. I am glad to see you so pleasurable. No doubt but you are marvellous privy to our dreams. But I pray you now in a little good earnest, do you scholars think that it is the very reason indeed which you spake of even now? There be many of us, good mistress, quoth I, of that opinion, wherein I am content to appeal to the knowledge of these learned gentlemen here. And some again of our finest conceited heads defend this position (a very strange paradox in my fancy), that the earth having taken in too much drink, & as it were overlavish cups (as it hath sensibly done in a manner all this winter past), now staggereth & reeleth & tottereth this way and that way up & down like a drunken man or woman (when their ale-bench rhetoric comes upon them, & specially the moving pathological figure Pottyposis), & therefore in this forcible sort you lately saw, paineth itself to vomit up again that so disordereth and disquieteth the whole body within. And forsooth, a few new contradictory fellows make no more of it but a certain vehement and passionate neezing or sobbing or coughing wherewithal they say, and as they say, say with great

physical and natural reason, the earth in some place or other ever lightly after any great and sudden alteration of weather or diet is exceedingly troubled and pained, as namely this very time of the year, after the extreme pinching cold of winter, and again in autumn, after the extreme parching heat of summer.

But shall I tell you, Mistress Inquisitiva? The soundest philosophers indeed, and very deepest secretaries of nature, hold, if it please you, another assertion, and maintain this for truth (which at the leastwise of all other seemeth marvellous reasonable, and is questionless farthest off from heresy), that as the earth upon it hath many stately and boisterous & fierce creatures, as namely men and women and divers beasts, whereof some one is in manner continually at variance and feud with another, evermore seeking to be revenged upon his enemy, which eftsoons breaketh forth into professed and open hostility, and then consequently follow set battles & mortal wars wherein the one party bendeth all the force of his ordinance and other martial furniture against the other, so likewise within it too it hath also some as vengeably and frowardly bent, as for example worms and moles and conies and such other valiantly high-minded creatures, the sons and daughters of Mars & Bellona, that nourish civil debates and contrary factions amongst themselves, which are seldom or never ended too without miserable bloodshed and deadly war, and then go me their guns lustily off, and the one dischargeth his piece courageously at the other, and there is such a general dub-a-dub amongst them, and such horrible thundering on every side, and such a monstrous cruel shaking of one another's forts and castles that the whole earth again, or at the least, so much of the earth as is over or near them, is terribly hoised and ---

No more ands or ifs, for God's sake, quoth the Madam. And this be your great doctorly learning, we have even enough already for our money, and if you should go a little farther, I fear me you would make us nigh as cunning as yourself, and that would be a great disgrace to the university. Not a whit, gentle Madam, quoth I. There be of us that have greater store in our budgets than we can well occupy ourselves, and therefore we are glad, as you see, when by the favourable & gracious aspect of some blessed planet, and specially our Mercury or your Venus, it is our good fortune to light on such good friends as you and some other good gentlewomen be, that take pleasure & comfort in such good things. Whereat Mistress Inquisitiva, laughing right out, and beginning to demand I know not what (methought she made as if it should have be some good plausible jest, whereat she is, and takes herself, prettily good), Well, well, Master H., quoth the gentleman of the house, now you have played your part so cunningly with the gentlewomen, as I warrant you shall be remembered of Inquisitiva when you are gone and may haply forget her, which I hope Mistress Incredula will do sometime too, by her leave, I pray you in earnest, let us men learn something of you too, and especially I would gladly hear your judgment and resolution whether you account of earthquakes as natural or supernatural motions. But the shorter, all the better. To whom I made answer, in effect, as followeth.

Master H.'s short but sharp and learned judgment of earthquakes

Truly, sir, under correction, and in my fancy, the earthquakes themselves I would say are natural, as I verily believe the internal causes thereof are, I mean those two causes which the logicians call the material and the formal. Marry, the external causes, which are the efficient and final, I take rather of the two to be supernatural. I must crave a little leave to lay open the matter.

The material cause of earthquakes (as is superficially touched in the beginning of our speech and is sufficiently proved by Aristotle in the second book of his meteors) is no doubt great abundance of wind or store of gross and dry vapours and spirits fast shut up, & as a man would say, imprisoned in the caves and dungeons of the earth, which wind or vapours, seeking to be set at liberty and to get them home to their natural lodgings, in a great fume violently rush out, and as it were break prison, which forcible eruption and strong breath causeth an earthquake, as is excellently and very lively expressed of Ovid, as I remember, thus:

*Vis fera ventorum caecis inclusa cauernis,
Expirare aliquo cupiens luctataq{ue} frustra
Liberiore frui caelo, cum carcere Rima
Nulla foret, toto nec peruia flatibus esset,
Extentam tumefecit humum, ceu spiritus oris,
Tendere vesicam solet, and so forth.*

The formal cause is nothing but the very manner of this same motion and shaking of the earth without, and the violent kind of striving and wrestling of the winds and exhalations within, which is and must needs be done in this or that sort, after one fashion or other.

Now, sir, touching the other two causes which I named external, the first immediate efficient, out of all question, is God himself, the creator and continuer and corrector of nature, and therefore supernatural, whose only voice carrieth such a reverend and terrible majesty with it that the very earth again and highest mountains quake & tremble at the sound and noise hereof. The text is rife in every man's mouth: *Locutus est Dominus & contremuit Terra*. Howbeit it is not to be gainsaid that is holden of all the ancient natural philosophers and astronomers for the principal or rather sole efficient, that the influence and heat of the sun and stars, and specially of the three superior planets Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, is a secondary instrumental efficient of such motions.

The final, not only that the wind should recover his natural place, than which a natural reasonable man goeth no farther, no, not our excellentest profoundest philosophers themselves, but sometime also, I grant, to testify and denounce the secret wrath and indignation of God, or his sensible punishment upon notorious malefactors, or a threatening caveat and forewarning for the inhabitants or the like, depending upon a supernatural efficient cause, and tending to a supernatural moral end.

Which end (for that I know is the very point whereon you stand), albeit it be acknowledged supernatural and purposed, as I said, of a supernatural cause to whom nothing at all is impossible, and that can work supernaturally and miraculously without

ordinary means and inferior causes, yet nevertheless is, we see, commonly performed by the qualifying and conforming of nature and natural things to the accomplishment of his divine and incomprehensible determination. For being, as the old philosophers call him, very nature[‘s] self, or as it hath pleased our later schoolmen to term him by way of distinction, *Natura Naturans*, he hath all these secondary inferior things, the four elements, all sensible and unsensible, reasonable and unreasonable creatures, the whole world and whatsoever is contained in the compass of the world, being the workmanship of his own hands, and as they call them, *Natura naturata*, ever pliable and flexible instruments at his commandment to put in execution such effects, either ordinary or extraordinary, as shall seem most requisite to his eternal providence, and now in these latter days very seldom, or in manner never, worketh anything so miraculously and extraordinarily but it may sensibly appear he useth the service and ministry of his creatures in the achieving thereof.

I deny not but earthquakes (as well as many other fearful accidents in the same number) are terrible signs, and as it were certain menacing forerunners and forewarners of the great latter day, and therefore out of controversy the more reverently to be considered upon, and I acknowledge, considering the events and sequels, according to the collection and discourse of man’s reason they have seemed to prognosticate and threaten to this and that city utter ruin and destruction, to such a country a general plague and pestilence, to another place the death of some mighty potentate or great prince, to some other realm or kingdom some cruel imminent wars and sundry the like dreadful and particular incidents, as is notoriously evident by many old and new very famous and notable histories to that effect, which of all other, the ancient Romans, long before the Nativity of Christ, did most religiously, or rather superstitiously, observe, not without a number of solemn ceremonies and holy-days for the nonce, ever after any earthquake making full account of some such great rueful casualty or other as otherwhiles fell out in very deed, and namely, as I remember, the year *ante bellum Sociale*, which was one of the lamentablest and miserable wars that Italy ever saw, and Pliny, or I know not well who, hath such a saying: *Roma nunquam tremuit, vt non futurus aliquis portenderetur insignis Euentus.*

But yet notwithstanding dare not I aforehand presume thus far or arrogate so much unto myself as to determine precisely and peremptorily of this or every the like singular earthquake to be necessarily and undoubtedly a supernatural and immediate fatal action of God for this or that singular intent, whenas I am sure there may be a sufficient natural either necessary or contingent cause in the very earth itself, and there is no question but the selfsame operation in *genere* or in *specie* may at one time, proceeding of one cause and referred to one end, be preternatural or supernatural, at another time, proceeding of another or the same cause and referred to another end, but ordinary and natural. To make short, I cannot see, and would gladly learn, how a man on earth should be of so great authority and so familiar acquaintance with God in heaven (unless haply for the nonce he hath lately entertained some few choice singular ones of his privy council) as to be able in such specialties, without any justifiable certificate or warrant, to reveal his incomprehensible mysteries, and definitively to give sentence of his majesty’s secret and inscrutable purposes, as if they had a key for all the locks in heaven, or as if it were as clear and resolute a case as the eclipse of the sun that darkened all the earth, or at the least

all the earth in those countries, at Christ's Passion, happening altogether prodigiously and metaphysically in *plenilunio*, not according to the perpetual course of nature, in *nouilunio*, insomuch that Dionysius Areopagita, or some other grand philosopher, upon the sudden contemplation thereof is reported in a certain pathological ecstasy to have cried out: *Aut rerum Natura patitur, aut Mundi machina destruetur*, as my mind giveth me some of the simpler and unskilfuller sort will go nigh to do upon the present sight and agony of this earthquake.

Marry, the error, I grant is the more tolerable, though perhaps it be otherwhiles (and why not even now) a very presumptuous error indeed, standing only upon these two weak and deceitful grounds, credulity and ignorance, if so be inwardly (not only in external show, after an hypocritical and Pharisical manner) it certainly do us good for our reformation and amendment, and seem to preach unto us *poenitentia agite*, as in some respect every such strange and rare accident may seem, how ordinary and natural soever the cause shall appear otherwise to the best leaned, especially as the earthquake shall be known to endure a longer or a shorter time, or to be more or less general in more or fewer places.

Which two differences touching the quantity of time and place, after I had a little more fully prosecuted, alleging certain particular examples thereof, how in some places huge castles, in some towns, in some great and mighty cities, in some shires and seignories and provinces, in some whole countries and regions have been perilously moved and shaken therewith, in one place a long time together; in another place not so long, or at several and parted times; in another, very short, as God be thanked here even now; and finally, by the way showing a third and most notable difference of all (as well for the present or imminent terror and danger as otherwise) by the sundry species and forms which Aristotle, Pliny and other meteorologists have set down of experience as they have heard or read or seen the earth to quake, to stir and hoise up houses, walls, towns, castles, churches, minsters, whole towns, whole cities, whole provinces without farther harm; to rinate and overthrow and destroy some; to yawn and gape and open like a grave and consequently to swallow up and devour other; and sometime also to drink up whole rivers and mighty big running waters withal, or to change and alter their common wonted course some other way; to sink and fall downwards; to cast out and vomit up either huge vast heaps, as it were mountains of earth, or large islands in the main sea never remembered or seen before, or great overflowing waters and fountains, or hot scalding sulphurous lakes, or burning sparkles and flames of fire; to make a horrible hissing, gnashing, rattling or some like wonderful strange noise (which all effects are credibly reported and constantly avouched of our most famous & best allowed philosophers). A few such particularities and distinctions compendiously and familiarly coursed over, the good gentleman gave me heartily, as appeared, very great thanks, and told me plainly he never either read or heard half so much of earthquakes before, confessing withal that he yielded resolutely to my opinion that an earthquake might as well be supposed a natural motion of the earth as a preternatural or supernatural ominous work of God, and that he thought it hard, and almost impossible, for any man, either by philosophy or divinity, evermore to determine flatly the very certainty either way.

Which also, in conclusion, was the verdict and final resolution of the greater and sager part of the gentlemen present, & namely of an ancient learned common lawyer that had been graduate and fellow of a college in Cambridge in Queen Mary's days, who took upon him to knit up the matter, & as he said determine the controversy, with the authority of all the natural philosophers, old or new, heathen or Christian, Catholic or Protestant, that ever he read or heard tell of. Their physics, quoth he, are in every man's hands. They are old enough to speak for themselves, and we are young enough to turn our books. They that have eyes and tongues, let them see and read.

But what say you now, quoth I, to the staying and quieting of the earth, being once a moving? May it not seem a more miraculous work and greater wonderment that it should so suddenly stay again, being moved, than that it should so suddenly move, being quiet and still? Move or turn or shake me a thing in like order, be it never so small, and less than a pin's head in comparison of the great mighty circuit of the earth, and see if you shall not have much more ado to stay it presently, being once stirred, than to stir it at the very first. Whereat the gentleman, smiling and looking merrily on the gentlewomen: Here is a school-point, quoth he, by your leaves, I believe will pose the better scholar of you both. But is it not more than time, think ye, we were at supper? And if you be a-hungred Master H., you shall thank nobody but yourself, that have holden us so long with your profound and clerkly discourses, whereas our manner is to sup at the least a long hour before this time,

Being set, and new occasion of speech ministered, our supper put the earthquake in manner out of our minds, or at the leastwise, out of our tongues, saving that the gentlewomen now and then pleasantly teeheeing between themselves, especially Mistress Inquisitiva (whose mind did still run of the drinking and neezing of the earth), repeated here and there a broken piece of that which had been already said before supper, with deep judgment, no doubt, and to marvellous great purpose, I warrant you, after the manner of women philosophers and divines.

And this summarily in effect was our yesternight's grave meteorological conference touching our earthquake here in the country, which being in so many neighbour towns and villages about us as I hear say of this morning, maketh me presuppose the like was with you also at London, and elsewhere farther off. And then, forsooth, must I desire Master Immerito to send me within a week or two some odd fresh palting three-halfpenny pamphlet for news, or some balductum tragical ballad in rime and without reason, setting out the right miserable and most woeful estate of the wicked and damnable world at these perilous days after the deviser's best manner, or whatsoever else shall first take some of your brave London Eldertons in the head.

In earnest, I could wish some learned and well advised university man would undertake the matter, and bestow some pains indeed upon so famous and material an argument. The general nature of earthquakes by definition and the special diversity of them by division being perfectly known (a thing soon done), and a complete induction of many credible and authentical both old and new, divine and profane, Greek, Latin and other examples (with discretion and judgment compiled and compared together) being considerably and exactly

made (a thing not so easily done), much no doubt might be alleged to and fro to terrify or pacify us more or less. If it appear by general experience and the foresaid historical induction of particulars that earthquakes, *sine omni exceptione* are ominous and significative effects, as they say of comets, and carry ever some tragical and horrible matter with or after them, as either destruction of towns and cities, or decay of some mighty prince, or some particular or general plague, war, or the like (*vt supra*), whatsoever the material or formal cause be, natural or supernatural (howbeit for mine own part I am resolved, as well for the one as for the other, that these two I speak of, both matter and form, are rather natural in both than otherwise), it concerneth us upon the view of so effectual and substantial evidence to conceive seriously and reverently of the other two causes: the first supreme efficient, whose omnipotent majesty hath nature[‘s] self and all natural creatures at commandment, and the last final, which we are to judge of as advisedly and providently as possibly we can by the consideration & comparison of circumstances, the time when, the place where, the qualities and dispositions of the persons amongst whom such and such an ominous token is given, lest happily through over-great credulity and rashness we mistake *Non causam pro causa*, and sophistically be entrapped *Elencho finiu{m}*. Truly, I suppose he had need be an excellent philosopher, a reasonable good historian, a learned divine, a wise discreet man, and generally such a one as our Doctor Still & Doctor Byng are in Cambridge, that should show himself accordingly in this argument, and to the judgment and contentation of the wisest perform it exactly.

Myself remember nothing to the contrary either in philosophy or in histories, or in divinity either, why I may not safely & lawfully subscribe to the judgment of the noble Italian philosopher and most famous learned gentleman whilst he lived, Lord of Mirandola and Earl of Concordia, Count Iohannes Franciscus Picus, in my opinion very considerately, and partly philosophically, partly theologically set down in in [sic] the sixth chapter of his sixth book against cogging, deceitful astrologers and soothsayers, *De rerum Praenotione, pro veritate Relligionis, contra Superstitiosas vanitates*. In which chapter (if happily you have not read it already), you shall find many, but specially these three notable places, most effectual and directly pertinent to the very purpose. The first more universal:

Naturae opere fieri non potest, vt Ostentis, vt Monstris magni isti, seu dextri, seu sinistri euentus portendantur, & ab aliqua pendeant proxima causa, quae & futura etiam proferat. Impostura Daemonum, vt id fiat, videri potest. Sed & plaeraq{ue} non monstrosa, non prodigiosa per sese, pro monstris tamen, & portentis, haberi possunt, & solent a quibusdam, quibus Rerum Natura non satis comperta est, causarum enim ignoratio, noua in re Admirationem parit. Propter quam, philosophari homines caepisse, in exordijs primae philosophiae scribit Aristoteles.

Wherein those two several points, *Impostura Daemonum*, and *Ignoratio causarum*, are no doubt marvellous probable and most worthy both presently to be noted now, and more fully to be discussed hereafter, appearing unto me the very right principal causes of so many erroneous opinions and fantastical superstitious dreams in this and the like behalf.

The second more special, as it were hitting the white indeed, and cleaving the pin in sunder:

Idem in Terraemotibus etiam, quod in fulguribus, fulminibusque interpretandis, obseruauit Antiquitas. Cuius Rei liber, Graeco eloquio, nuper ad manus peruenit, in Orpheum relatus Autorem: sed per absurdum nimis, vt quod frequentissime fit, pro vario terrae anhelitu, pro ventorum violentia, vaporumque conductione (mark you that?) ex eo rerum futurarum significationem petere, quorum nec effectus esse possunt, nec causa, preterque forte mortis inferendae illis, qui fulmen exceperit, aut qui terrarum hiatus perierit. Sed nec ab eadem proxima deduci causa possunt, a qua & futurae pendeant res, vt supra deductum est.

And then shortly after, the third, most agreeable to the second, as flatly determining on my side and as directly concluding the same position as may be:

Nec sane Orpheus ille, si tamen Orpheus fuit, vllam assert omnino causam, cur quispiam ex terrae motibus, vrbium, hominum, religionum euenta praesagire possit. Solum vano narrat arbitrio: si terrae contigerit motus, nocti, si aestate, si hyeme, si aurora, si interdiu, quid portendatur: Quae certe, & saniore possunt arbitrio refelli, & Experientiae testimonio, vt arbitrator, non secus irrideri, ac supra Tagis portenta irrisimus, haruspicinae Autoris.

A most excellent sound judgment, in my conceit, and full well beseeeming so honourable and admirable a wit as out of question Picus Mirandola had, who being yet scarcely thirty years of age, for his singularity in all kind of knowledge, as well divine as profane, was in Italy and France, as Paulus Jovius reporteth, surnamed Phoenix, as the odd, and in effect the only singular learned man of Europe, and to make short, such a one, in most respects, as I would wish now to be tempering with this new notorious incident, staying myself in the meanwhile upon this probable and reasonable interim of his, and preferring it before all the frivolous conjectural allegations and surmises that our counterfeit and reasonless Orphei oppose to the contrary.

But, Jesu, what is all this to Master Immerito? Forsooth, I know not by what mischance these miserable bald odious three-halfpenny fellows, alas, a company of silly beetle-headed asses, came into my mind, that will needs be stirring and taking on in every such rare and unaccustomed event as if they saw farther in a millstone than all the world besides, whereas every man that hath but half an eye in his head seeth them to be more blind than any buzzard or Bayard, *Scribimus indocti doctique Poemata passim*, and surely, as the world goeth now in England, rather the first, for aught I see, than the last.

O interim miseras Musas, & miserabiles. Where the fault should rest, *viderint Oculi, atque capita Reip.* *Mihi quidem isthic, neque seritur admodum, neque metitur.* *Non valde mea nouos Bibliotheca libros desiderat, seipsa, id est, quos habet, veteribus contenta est. Quid plura? Tu vale, mi Immerito, atque ita tibi persuade, Aliquid esse eum, qui istorum longe est dissimilimus, quos Typographi nostri habent venales maxime.*

Commend me to thine own good self, and tell thy *Dying Pelican* and thy *Dreams* from me, I will now leave dreaming any longer of them till with these eyes I see them forth indeed, and then again, I imagine your Magnificenza will hold us in suspense as long for your *Nine English Comedies* as your Latin *Stemmata Dudleiana*, which two shall go for my money when all is done, especially if you would but bestow one sennight's polishing and trimming upon either, which I pray thee heartily do for my pleasure, if not for their sake nor thine own profit.

My *Scholar's Love, or Reconcilement of Contraries*, is shrunk in the wetting. I had purpose to have dispatched you a copy thereof long ere this, but no remedy, hitherto it hath always gone thus with me. Some new occasion or other ever carrieth me from one matter to another, & will never suffer me to finish either one or other. And truly, *Experto crede*, it is as true a verse as ever was made since the first verse that ever was made: *Pluribus intentus minor est ad singula sensus*, which my *Anticosmopolita*, though it grieve him, can best testify, remaining still as we say, *in statu quo*, and neither an inch more forward nor backward than he was fully a twelvemonth since in the court, at his last attendance upon my Lord there. But the bird that will not sing in April nor in May may peradventure sing in September, and yet methinks, *Sat cito, si sat bene*, if I could steal but one poor fortnight to peruse him over afresh and copy him out anew, which I hope in God to compass shortly.

But I beseech you, what news all this while at Cambridge? That was wont to be ever one great question. What? *Det mihi Mater ipsa bonam veniam, eius vt aliqua mihi liceat Secreta, vni cuidam de eodem gremio obsequentissimo filio, reuelare: & sic paucis habeto. Nam alias fortasse pluribus: nunc non placet, non vacat, molestum esset.* Tully and Demosthenes nothing so much studied as they were wont; Livy and Sallust possibly rather more than less; Lucian never so much; Aristotle much named, but little read; Xenophon and Plato reckoned amongst discoursers and conceited superficial fellows. Much verbal and sophistical jangling; little subtile and effectual disputing. Noble and royal eloquence, the best and persuasiblest eloquence; no such orators again as red-headed angels. An exceeding great difference between the countenances and ports of those that are brave and gallant and of those that are basely or meanly appareled; between the learned and unlearned, Tully and Tom Tooly, in effect, none at all. Machiavel a great man; Castilio of no small reputation; Petrarch and Boccace in every man's mouth; Galateo and Guazzo never so happy; overmany acquainted with Unico Aretino. The French and Italian, when so highly regarded of scholars; the Latin and Greek, when so lightly? The Queen Mother at the beginning or end of every conference; many bargains of Monsieur; Shymeirs [=Simier?] a noble, gallant fellow. All inquisitive after news, new books, new fashions, new laws, new officers, and some after new elements, and some after new heavens and hells, too. Turkish affairs familiarly known; castles buried [sic?] in the air; much ado and little help. Jack would fain be a gentleman; in no age so little so much made of, everyone highly in his own favour, thinking no man's penny so good silver as his own. Something made of nothing, in spite of nature; numbers made of ciphers, in spite of art; geometrical proportion seldom or never used, arithmetical overmuch abused. Oxen and asses (notwithstanding the absurdity it seemed to Plautus) draw both together in one and

the same yoke; *Conclusio fere sequitur deteriorem partem*. The gospel taught, not learned; charity key-cold. Nothing good but by imputation. The ceremonial law in word abrogated, the judicial in effect disannulled; the moral indeed abandoned. The light, the light in every man's lips, but mark me their eyes, and tell me if they look not liker howlets or bats than eagles. As of old books, so of ancient virtue, honesty, fidelity, equity, new abridgments; every day fresh-span new opinions. Heresy in divinity, in philosophy, in humanity; in manners, grounded much upon heresy(?). Doctors condemned; the text known of most, understood of few, magnified of all, practised of none. The devil not so hated as the Pope. Many invectives, small amendment. Skill they say controlled of will, and goodness mastered of goods, but agent and patient much alike, neither barrel greatly better herring. No more ado about caps and surplices; Master Cartwright nigh forgotten. The man you wot of conformable with his square cap on his round head, and non-resident at pleasure, and yet non-residents never better bated(?), but not one the fewer, either I believe in act or I believe in purpose. A number of our preachers sib to French soldiers: at the first more than men, in the end less than women. Some of our pregnantest and soonest ripe wits of Hermogenes' metal for all the world. Old men and counsellors amongst children; children amongst counsellors and old men. Not a few double-sacred Tani [sick for 'double-faced Jani'?] and changeable chameleons; overmany claw-backs and pickthanks, reeds shaken of every wind, Jacks of both sides, aspen leaves, painted sheaths and sepulchres, asses in lions' skins, dunglecocks [=dunghill-cocks], slippery eels, dormice. I blush to think of some that ween themselves as fledge as the rest, being, God wot, as callow as the rest. Every younker to speak of as politic and as great a commonwealth's man as Bishop Gardiner or Doctor Wutton [=Wotton?] at the least, as if every man now-a-days, having the framing of his own horoscope, were born in *decimo caeli domicilio*, and had all the wit, wisdom and worship in the world at commandment. *Sed hues in aurem: Meministi quod ait Varro? Omnes videmur nobis esse belli, festiui, saperdae, cum sumus Canopi*. David, Ulysses and Solon feigned themselves fools and madmen; our fools and madmen feign themselves Davids, Ulysses and Solons, and would go nigh to deceive the cunningest and best experienced Metaposcopus in a country. It is pity fair weather should ever do hurt, but I know what peace and quietness hath done with some melancholy pickstraws in the world, as good unspoken as unnamed.

And will you needs have my testimonial of your old controller's new behaviour? A busy and dizzy head, a brazen forehead, a leaden brain, a wooden wit, a copper face, a stony breast, a factious and elvish heart, a founder of novelties, a confounder of his own and his friends' good gifts, a morning book-worm, an afternoon malt-worm, a right juggler, as full of his sleights, wiles, fetches, casts of legerdemain, toys to mock apes withal, odd shifts and knavish practices as his skin can hold. He often telleth me he loveth me as himself, but out, liar, out; thou lieth abominably in thy throat.

Jesu, I had nigh hand forgotten one thing that iwis sometime I think often enough upon: many pupils, Jack mates and hail-fellows well met with their tutors, and by your leave, some too, because forsooth, they be gentlemen or great heirs, or a little neater or gayer than their fellows (shall I say it for shame? Believe me, 'tis too true), their very own tutors. *Ah mala Licentia, ab initio non fuit sic. Stulta est omnis iuuenilis Doctrina, sine*

virili quadam Disciplina. Quasi vero pauperioribus duntaxat pueris, ac non multo magis generosae, atque nobili Iuuentuti conueniat, pristinae illius Institutionis, atque Educationis seueritas, & ingenuae, & prudentis, & eruditae, & cum Tutoris personae, tum pupillo, etiam ipsi perquam accomodatae. Vsque quaeque sapere oportet: id erit telum accerrimum. Caetera faere vt olim: Bellum inter Capita, & membra continuatum: [Greek word] publicis defensa scholis, priuatis confirmata parietibus, omnibus locis ostentata, Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire, hoc sciat alter. Plurimi passim sit Pecunia, Pudor parui penditur: Nihili habentur Literae: Mihi crede, credendum nulli: O amice, amicus nemo. Quid tu interim Quomodo te inquires, geris? Quomodo? Optimum est aliena frui insania. Video: taceo, rideo: Dixi. Et tamen addam, quod ait Satyricus ille:

Viuendum est recte, tum propter plurima, tum his Praecipue causis, vt linguas Mancipiorum Contemnas.

E meo municipio, Postridie quam superiores de Terraemotu sermones haberentur, id est, ni fallor, Aprilis septimo, Vesperi.

With as many goodnights as be letters in this tedious letter,
Nosti manum tanquam tuam.

Postscript.

This letter may only be showed to the two odd gentlemen you wot of. Marry, I would have those two to see it as soon as you may conveniently.

*Non multis dormio: non multis scribo: non cupio placere multis.
Alij alios numeros laudant, praeferunt, venerantur:
Ego fere apud nos, fere apud vos Trinitatem.
Verbum sapienti sat: nosti caetera: & tres Charities habes ad vnguem.*

A gallant familiar letter containing an answer to that of Master Immerito, with sundry proper examples and some precepts of our English reformed versifying

To my very good friend, Master Immerito:

Signor Immerito, to pass over your needless complaint with the residue of your preamble (for of the earthquake I presuppose you have ere this received my goodly discourse), and withal to let my late English hexameters go as lightly as they came, I cannot choose but thank and honour the good angel, whether it were Gabriel or some other, that put so good a notion into the heads of those two excellent gentlemen, Master Sidney and Master Dyer, the two very diamonds of her Majesty's court for many special and rare qualities, as to help forward our new famous enterprise for the exchanging of barbarous and balductum rimes with artificial verses, the one being in manner of pure and fine gold, the other but counterfeit and base ill-favoured copper. I doubt not but their lively example and practice will prevail a thousand times more in short space than the dead advertisement and persuasion of Master Ascham to the same effect, whose *Schoolmaster* notwithstanding I reverence in respect of so learned a motive. I would gladly be acquainted with Master Drant's prosody, and I beseech you, commend me to good Master Sidney's judgment and gentle Master Immerito's observations. I hope your next letters, which I daily expect, will bring me in farther familiarity & acquaintance with all three. Mine own rules and precepts of art I believe will fall out not greatly repugnant, though peradventure somewhat different, and yet am I not so resolute but I can be content to reserve the copying out and publishing thereof until I have a little better consulted with my pillow, and taken some farther advice of Madame Sperienza.

In the mean, take this for a general caveat, and say I have revealed one great mystery unto you: I am of opinion there is no one more regular and justifiable direction, either for the assured and infallible certainty of our English artificial prosody particularly, or generally to bring our language into art and to frame a grammar or rhetoric thereof, than first of all universally to agree upon one and the same orthography, in all points conformable and proportionate to our common natural prosody, whether Sir Thomas Smith's in that respect be the most perfect, as surely it must needs be very good, or else some other of profounder learning & longer experience than Sir Thomas was, showing by necessary demonstration wherein he is defective, will undertake shortly to supply his wants and make him more absolute. Myself dare not hope to hop after him till I see something or other to or fro publicly and authentically established, as it were by a general council or act of parliament, and then peradventure, standing upon firmer ground, for company['s] sake I may adventure to do as other do. Interim, credit me, I dare give no precepts nor set down any certain general art.

And yet see my boldness, I am not greatly squeamish of my particular examples, whereas he that can but reasonably skill of the one will give easily a shrewd guess at the other, considering that the one fetcheth his original and offspring from the other. In which respect, to say troth, we beginners have the start and advantage of our followers, who are to frame and conform both their examples and precepts according to that precedent which

they have of us, as no doubt Homer or some other in Greek, and Ennius or I know not who else in Latin, did prejudice and overrule those that followed them, as well for the quantities of syllables, as number of feet and the like, their only examples going for current payment, and standing instead of laws and rules with the posterity, insomuch that it seemed a sufficient warrant (as still it doth in our common grammar schools) to make [Greek word] in [Greek word] and *u* in *Vnus* long because the one hath [Greek word] and the other *Vnus homo nobis*, and so consequently in the rest.

But to let this by-disputation pass, which is already so thoroughly discoursed and canvassed of the best philosophers, and namely Aristotle, that point us, as it were with the forefinger, to the very fountains and headsprings of arts and artificial precepts in the *Analytiks* and *Metaphysics*, most excellently set down in these four golden terms, the famousest terms to speak of in all logic and philosophy, [four Greek words], shall I now by the way send you a January gift in April, and as it were show you a Christmas gambol after Easter? Were the manner so very fine as the matter is very good, I durst presume of another kind of plaudite and gramercy than now I will, but being as it is, I beseech you, set partiality aside, and tell me your Mastership's fancy.

A New Year's Gift to my old friend Master George Bilchaunger
in commendation of three most precious accidents, virtue, fame and wealth,
and finally of the fourth, a good tongue

*Virtue sendeth a man to renown, fame lendeth abundance,
Fame with abundance maketh a man thrice blessed and happy.
So the reward of famous virtue makes many wealthy,
And the regard of wealthy virtue makes many blessed.
O blessed virtue, blessed fame, blessed abundance,
O that I had you three, with the loss of thirty commencements.
Now farewell, mistress whom lately I loved above all;
These be my three bonny lasses, these be my three bonny ladies,
Not the like trinity again save only the Trinity above all;
Worship and honour, first to the one and then to the other.
A thousand good leaves be forever granted Agrippa
For squibbing and declaiming against many fruitless
Arts and crafts devised by the devils and sprites for a torment
And for a plague to the world, as both Pandora, Prometheus
And that cursed good bad tree can testify at all times,
Mere gewgaws and baubles in comparison of these,
Toys to mock apes, and woodcocks in comparison of these,
Juggling casts and knick-knacks in comparison of these.
Yet behind there is one thing worth a prayer at all times,
A good tongue in a man's head, a good tongue in a woman's;
And what so precious matter and food for a good tongue
As blessed virtue, blessed fame, blessed abundance?*

L'envoy

*Marvel not what I mean to send these verses at evensong,
On New Year's even and old year's end, as a memento.
Trust me, I know not a richer jewel, newish or oldish,
Than blessed virtue, blessed fame, blessed abundance.
O blessed virtue, blessed fame, blessed abundance,
O that you had these three, with the loss of forty Valetes.*

He that wisheth you may live to see a hundred good New Year's, every one happier and merrier than other.

Now to requite your blindfolded pretty god (wherein by the way I would gladly learn why 'the' in the first, 'ye' in the first and third, 'he' and 'my' in the last, being short, 'me' alone should be made longer in the very same), imagine me to come into a goodly Kentish garden of your old Lord's, or some other nobleman, and spying a flourishing bay-tree there, to demand extempore as followeth. Think upon Petrarch's:

*Arbor vittoriosa, tiromfale,
Onor d'Imperadori, e di Poete,*

and perhaps it will advance the wings of your imagination a degree higher, at the least if anything can be added to the loftiness of his conceit whom gentle Mistress Rosalind once reported to have all the intelligences at commandment, and another time christened her 'Signor Pegaso'.

Encomium Lauri

*What might I call this tree? A laurel? O bonny laurel,
Needs to thy boughs will I bow this knee, and vail my bonneto;
Who but thou, the renown of prince and princely poeta,
Th' one for crown, for garland th' other thanketh Apollo.
Thrice happy Daphne, that turned was to the bay-tree
Whom such servants serve as challenge service of all men.
Who chief lord and king of kings but th' emperor only?
And poet of right stamp overaweth th' emperor himself.
Who but knows Aretine, was he not half prince to the princes?
And many a one there lives as nobly-minded at all points.
Now farewell, bay-tree, very queen and goddess of all trees,
Richest pearl to the crown, and fairest flower to the garland.
Fain would I crave, might I so presume, some farther acquaintance.
O, that I might. But I may not. Woe to my destiny therefore.
Trust me, not one more loyal servant longs to thy personage.
But what says Daphne? Non omni dormio, worse luck.
Yet farewell, farewell, the reward of those that I honour,
Glory to the garden, glory to muses, glory to virtue.*

*Partim Ioui, & Palladi,
Partim Apollini & Musis*

But seeing I must needs bewray my store, and set open my shop-windows, now I pray thee and conjure thee by all thy amorous regards and exorcisms of love, call a parliament of thy sensible & intelligible powers together, & tell me, in Tom Troth's earnest, what *Il secondo & famoso poeta*, Messer Immerito, saith to this bold satirical libel lately devised at the instance of a certain worshipful Hertfordshire gentleman of mine old acquaintance, *in Gratiam quorundam Illustrium Anglofrancitalorum, hic & ubique apud nos volitantium. Agedum vero, nosti homines, tanquam tuam ipsius cutem.*

Speculum Tuscanismi

*Since Galateo came in, and Tuscanism gan usurp,
Vanity above all, villainy next her, stateliness empress.
No man but minion, stout, lout, plain, swain, quoth a lording;
No words but valorous, no works but womanish only.
For life, magnificos. Not a beck, but glorious in show;
In deed, most frivolous. Not a look, but Tuscanish always;
His cringing side neck, eyes glancing, fisnamy smirking,
With forefinger kiss, and brave embrace to the footward.
Large-belled cod-pieced doublet, un-codpieced half-hose
Strait to the dock like a shirt, and close to the breech like a deviling.
A little apish flat, couched fast to the pate like an oyster.
French cambric ruffs, deep with a witness, starched to the purpose.
Every one A per se A, his terms, and braveries in print.
Delicate in speech, quaint in array, conceited in all points;
In courtly guiles, a passing singular odd man.
For gallants, a brave mirror, a primrose of honour,
A diamond for nonce, a fellow peerless in England.
Not the like discourser for tongue and head to be found out,
Not the like resolute man for great and serious affairs,
Not the like lynx, to spy out secrets and privities of states,
Eyed like to Argus, eared like to Midas, nosed like to Naso,
Winged like to Mercury, fittest of a thousand for to be employed.
This, nay more than this, doth practice of Italy in one year.
None do I name, but some do I know that a piece of a twelvemonth
Hath so perfected, outly and inly, both body, both soul,
That none for sense and senses half matchable with them.
A vulture's smelling, ape's tasting, sight of an eagle,
A spider's touching, hart's hearing, might of a lion.
Compounds of wisdom, wit, prowess, bounty, behaviour,
All gallant virtues, all qualities of body and soul.
O thrice ten hundred thousand times blessed and happy,
Blessed and happy travel, traveller most blessed and happy.
Penatibus Hetruscis laribusque nostris Inquilinis.*

Tell me, in good faith, doth it not too evidently appear that this English poet wanted but a good pattern before his eyes, as it might be some delicate and choice elegant poesy of good Master Sidney's or Master Dyer's (our very Castor & Pollux for such and many greater matters) when this trim gear was in hatching, much like some gentlewoman I could name in England, who by all physic and physiognomy too might as well have brought forth all goodly fair children, as they have now some ill-favoured and deformed, had they at the time of their conception had in sight the amiable and gallant beautiful pictures of Adonis, Cupido, Ganymedes, or the like, which no doubt would have wrought such deep impression in their fantasies and imaginations as their children, and perhaps their children's children too, might have thanked them for, as long as they have tongues in their heads.

But mine own leisure faileth me, and to say troth, I am lately become a marvellous great stranger at mine old Mistress Poetry's, being newly entertained and daily employed in our Emperor Justinian's service (saving that I have already addressed a certain pleasurable and moral politic natural mixed devise to his most honourable Lordship in the same kind, whereunto my next letter, if you please me well, may perchance make you privy).

Marry now, if it like you in the meanwhile, for variety['s] sake, to see how I task a young brother of mine (who of plain John our Italian master hath christened his Picciolo Giovannibattista), lo here (and God will) a piece of holiday's exercise. In the morning I gave him this theme out of Ovid to translate and vary after his best fashion:

*Dum fueris foelix, multos numerabis Amicos,
Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.
Aspicis, vt veniant ad candida tecta columbae?
Accipiat nullas sordida Turris Aues?*

His translation, or rather paraphrase, before dinner was first this:

*1. Whilst your barns are fat, whilst coffers stuffed with abundance,
Friends will abound; if barn wax bare, then adieu, sir, a God's name.
See ye the doves? They breed and feed in gorgeous houses;
Scarce one dove doth love to remain in ruinous.*

*2. Whilst your riches abound, your friends will play the placebos;
If your wealth do decay, friend, like a fiend, will away.
Doves light and delight in goodly fair-tiled houses;
If your house be but old, dove to remove be ye bold.*

And the last and largest of all, this:

*3. If so be goods increase, then daily increaseth a good's friend;
If so be goods decrease, then straight decreaseth a good's friend.
Then goodnight good's friend, who seldom proveth a good friend;*

*Give me the goods, and give me the good friend; take ye the good's friend.
 Dovehouse and lovehouse in writing differ a letter;
 In deed scarcely so much, so resembleth another another.
 Tile me the dovehouse trimly, and gallant, where the like storehouse?
 File me the dovehouse, leave it unhandsome, where the like poorhouse?
 Look to the lovehouse; where the resort is, there is a gay show;
 Gin port and money fail, straight sports and company faileth.*

Believe me, I am not to be charged with above one or two of the verses, and a four or five words in the rest.

His afternoon's theme was borrowed out of him whom one in your coat, they say, is as much beholding unto as any planet or star in heaven is unto the sun, and is quoted, as yourself best remember, in the gloze of your October:

*Giunto Alessandro ala famosa tomba
 Del fero Achille, sospirando disse,
 O fortunato, che si chiara tromba
 Trouasti.*

Within an hour or thereabouts, he brought me these four lusty hexameters, altered since not past in a word or two:

*Noble Alexander, when he came to the tomb of Achilles,
 Sighing spake with a big voice: O, thrice blessed Achilles,
 That such a trump, so great, so loud, so glorious hast found
 As the renowned and surprising arch-poet Homer.*

Upon the view whereof: Ah, my sirrah, quoth I, here is a gallant exercise for you, indeed. We have had a little pretty trial of you[r] Latin and Italian translation. Let me see now, I pray, what you can do in your own tongue. And with that, reaching a certain famous book called the new *Shepherd's Calendar*, I turned to Willy's and Thomalin's emblems in March, and bade him make them either better or worse in English verse. I gave him another hour's respite, but before I looked for him, he suddenly rushed upon me and gave me his devise thus formally set down in a fair piece of paper.

1. Thomalin's emblem

*Of honey and of gall in love there is store;
 The honey is much, but the gall is more.*

2. Willy's emblem

*To be wise, and eke to love,
 Is granted scarce to God above.*

3. Both combined in one

Love is a thing more fell and full of gall than honey,

And to be wise, and love, is a work for a god or a god's peer.

With a small voluntary supplement of his own on the other side in commendation of her most gracious and thrice excellent Majesty:

*Not the like virgin again in Asia or Afric or Europe
For royal virtues, for majesty, bounty, behaviour.
Raptim, vti vides.*

In both not passing a word or two corrected by me.

Something more I have of his, partly that very day begun and partly continued since, but yet not so perfectly finished that I dare commit the view and examination thereof to Messer Immerito's censure, whom after those same two incomparable and miraculous Gemini, *Omni exceptione maiores*, I recount and chalk up in the catalogue of our very principal English Aristarchi, howbeit I am nigh half persuaded that in time (*siquidem vltima primis respondeant*) for length, breadth and depth it will not come far behind your *Epithalamion Thamesis*, the rather having so fair a precedent and pattern before his eyes as I warrant him and he presumeth to have of that, both Master Collinshead and Master Hollishead [=Holinshed?] too being together therein. But ever & ever methinks your great Catos, *Ecquid erit pretij*, and our little Catos, *Res age quae prosunt*, make such a buzzing & ringing in my head that I have little joy to animate & encourage either you or him to go forward unless ye might make account of some certain ordinary wages, or at the leastwise have your meat and drink for your day's-works. As for myself, howsoever I have toyed and trifled heretofore, I am now taught, and I trust I shall shortly learn (no remedy, I must of mere necessity give you over in the plain field) to employ my travail and time wholly or chiefly on those studies and practices that carry, as they say, meat in their mouth, having evermore their eye upon the title *De pane lucrando* and their hand upon their halfpenny. For, I pray now, what saith Master Cuddy, alias you know who, in the tenth eclogue of the foresaid famous new *Calendar*?

*Piers, I have piped erst so long with pain
That all mine oaten reeds been rent and worn,
And my poor muse hath spent her spared store,
Yet little good hath got, and much less gain.
Such pleasance makes the grasshopper so poor,
And lie so layde(?) when winter doth her strain.
The dapper ditties that I wont devise
To feed youth's fancy and the flocking fry
Delighten much, what I the bet for thy?
They han the pleasure, I a slender prize;
I beat the bush, the birds to them do fly.
What good thereof to Cuddy can arise?*

But Master Colin Clout is not everybody, and albeit his old companions, Master Cuddy and Master Hobbinoll, be as little beholding to their Mistress Poetry as ever you wist,

yet he peradventure, by the means of her special favour and some personal privilege, may happily live by *Dying Pelicans* and purchase great lands and lordships with the money which his *Calendar* and *Dreams* have and will afford him.

Extra jocum, I like your *Dreams* passingly well, and the rather because they savour of that singular extraordinary vein and invention which I ever fancied most, and in a manner admire only in Lucian, Petrarch, Aretine, Pasquil and all the most delicate and fine conceited Grecians and Italians (for the Roman to speak of are but very ciphers in this kind), whose chiefest endeavour and drift was to have nothing vulgar, but in some respect or other, and especially in lively hyperbolical amplifications, rare, quaint and odd in every point, and as a man would say, a degree or two at the least above the reach and compass of a common scholar's capacity. In which respect notwithstanding, as well for the singularity of the manner as the divinity of the matter, I heard once a divine prefer Saint John's *Revelation* before all the veriest metaphysical visions & jolliest conceited dreams or ecstasies that ever were devised by one or other, how admirable or super excellent soever they seemed otherwise to the world. And truly, I am so confirmed in this opinion that when I bethink me of the very notablest and most wonderful prophetic or poetical vision that ever I read or heard, meseemeth the proportion is so unequal that there hardly appeareth any semblance of comparison, no more in a manner (especially for poets) than doth between the incomprehensible wisdom of God and the sensible wit of man. But what needeth this digression between you and me? I dare say you will hold yourself reasonably well satisfied if your *Dreams* be but as well esteemed of in England as Petrarch's *Visions* be in Italy, which, I assure you, is the very worst I wish you.

But see how I have the art memorative at commandment. In good faith, I had once again nigh forgotten your *Faerie Queen*, howbeit by good chance I have now sent her home at the last, neither in better nor worse case than I found her. And must you of necessity have my judgment of her indeed? To be plain, I am void of all judgment if your *Nine Comedies*, whereunto in imitation of Herodotus you give the names of the nine muses (and in one man's fancy not unworthily), come not nearer Ariosto's comedies either for the fineness of plausible elocution or the rareness of poetical invention than that elvish *Queen* doth to his *Orlando Furioso*, which notwithstanding you will needs seem to emulate and hope to overgo, as you flatly professed yourself in one of your last letters, besides that you know it hath been the usual practice of the most exquisite and odd wits in all nations, and specially in Italy, rather to show and advance themselves that way than any other, as namely those three notorious discoursing heads Bibiena, Machiavel and Aretine did (to let Bembo and Ariosto pass) with the great admiration and wonderment of the whole country, being indeed reputed matchable in all points both for conceit of wit and eloquent deciphering of matters either with Aristophanes and Menander in Greek, or with Plautus and Terence in Latin, or with any other in any other tongue. But I will not stand greatly with you in your own matters. If so be the *Faerie Queen* be fairer in your eye than the nine muses, and hobgoblin run away with the garland from Apollo, mark what I say, and yet I will not say that I thought, but here an end for this once, and fare you well till God or some good angel put you in a better mind.

And yet, because you charge me somewhat suspiciously with an old promise, to deliver you of that jealousy I am so far from hiding mine own matters from you that, lo, I must needs be revealing my friend's secrets, now an honest country gentleman, sometimes a scholar, at whose request I bestowed this palting hungerly rime upon him to present his mistress withal. The parties shall be nameless, saving that the gentlewoman's true or counterfeit Christian name must necessarily be bewrayed.

To my good Mistress Anne, the very life of my life and only beloved mistress

*Gentle Mistress Anne, I am plain by nature:
I was never so far in love with any creature.
Happy were your servant if he could be so Anned,
And you not unhappy if you should be so manned.
I love not to gloze where I love indeed,
Now God and good St Anne send me good speed.
Such goodly virtues, such amiable grace,
But I must not fall a praising; I want time and place.
Oh, that I had mine old wits at commandment,
I know what I could say without controlment,
But let this suffice: thy deserts are such
That no one in this world can love thee too much,
Myself most unworthy of any such felicity
But by imputation of thy gracious courtesy.
I leave to love the muses since I loved thee;
Alas, what are they when I thee see?
Adieu, adieu, pleasures and profits all,
My heart and my soul but at one body's call,
Would God I might say to her: My heart-root is thine,
And (O pleasure of pleasures) thy sweetheart-root mine.
Now I beseech thee by whatsoever thou lovest best,
Let it be as I have said, and soul, take thy rest.
By the faith of true love, and by my truest truly,
Thou shall never put forth thy love to greater usury.
And for other odd necessaries, take no care;
Your servant's daemonium shall rid you of that fear.
I serve but two saints, Saint Penny and Saint Anne;
Commend this I must, command that I can.
Now, shall I be plain? I pray thee, even most heartily,
Requite love with love, and farewell most heartily.*

Postscript

*I but once loved before, and she forsooth was a Susan,
But the heart of a Susan not worth the hair of an Anne.
A sus to Anne, if you can any Latin or pewter,
She flesh, her mother fish, her father a very neuter.*

*I would once, and might after, have sped a God's name,
 But if she coy it once, she is none of my dame.
 Now I pray thee most heartily, thrice gentle Mistress Anne,
 Look for no long service of so plain a man,
 And yet, I assure thee, thou shalt never want any service
 If myself or my St Penny may perform thy wish,
 And that once again (full loath) I take my leave of thy sweet heart
 With as many loving farewells as be loving pangs in my heart.*

He that longeth to be thine own inseparably, forever and ever.

God help us, you and I are wisely employed (are we not?) when our pen and ink and time and wit and all runneth away in this goodly younkerly vein, as if the world had nothing else for us to do or we were born to be the only non-proficients and nihilagents of the world. *Cuiusmodi tu nugis, atq{ue} naenijs, nisi vna mecum (qui solemnibus quodam iureiurando, atq{ue} voto obstringor, relicto isto amoris Poculo, iuris Poculum primo quoq{ue} tempore exhaurire) iam tandem aliquando valedicas, (quod tamen, vnum tibi credo [two Greek words] videbitur) nihil dicam amplius, Valeas. E. meo municipio. Nono Calendas Maias.*

But ho, I pray you, gentle sirrah, a word with you more. In good sooth, and by the faith I bear to the muses, you shall never have my subscription or consent (though you should charge me with the authority of five hundred Master Drants) to make your 'carpenter' our 'carpenter', an inch longer or bigger than God and his English people have made him. Is there no other policy to pull down riming and set upon versifying but you must needs correct Magnificat, and against all order of law and in despite of custom forcibly usurp and tyrannize upon a quiet company of words that so far beyond the memory of man have so peaceably enjoyed their several privileges and liberties without any disturbance or the least controlment? What? Is Horace's *Ars Poetica* so quite out of our English poet's head that he must have his remembrancer to pull him by the sleeve and put him in mind of *Penes vsu[m], & ius, & norma loquendi*? Indeed, I remember, who was wont in a certain bravery to call our Master Vallenger 'noble Master Vallenger'? Else never heard I any that durst presume so much over the English (excepting a few such stammerers as have not the mastery of their own tongues) as to alter the quantity of any one syllable otherwise than our common speech and general received custom would bear them out. Would not I laugh, think you, to hear Messer Immerito come in baldly with his 'majesty', 'royalty', 'honesty', 'sciences', 'faculties', 'excellent', 'taverner', 'manfully', 'faithfully', and a thousand the like instead of 'majesty', 'royalty', 'honesty', and so forth? And trow you any could forbear the biting of his lip or smiling in his sleeve if a jolly fellow and great clerk (as it might be yourself), reading a few verses unto him for his own credit and commendation, should now and then tell him of 'bargaineth', 'following', 'harrowing', 'thoroughly', 'travellers', or the like, instead of 'bargaineth', 'following', 'harrowing', and the rest? Or will Signor Immerito, because mayhap he hath a fat-bellied archdeacon on his side, take upon him to control Master Doctor Watson for his 'all travellers' in a verse so highly extolled of Master Ascham, or Master Ascham himself for abusing Homer and corrupting our tongue in that he saith:

Quite through a door flew a shaft with a brass head.

Nay, have we not sometime, by your leave, both the position of the first and diphthong of the second concurring in one and the same syllable, which nevertheless is commonly & ought necessarily to be pronounced short? I have now small time to bethink me of many examples, but what say you to the second in ‘merchandise’, to the third in ‘covenanteth’, & to the fourth in ‘appurtenances’? Durst you adventure to make any of them long either in prose or in verse? I assure you, I know who dare not, and ‘suddenly’ feareth the displeasure of all true Englishmen if he should. Say you ‘suddenly’ if you list; by my ‘certainly’ and ‘certainty’, I will not. You may perceive by the premises (which very word I would have you note by the way, too) the Latin is no rule for us. Or imagine aforehand (because you are like to prove a great purchaser, and leave such store of money and possessions behind you) your ‘executors’ will deal ‘fraudulently’ or ‘violently’ with your ‘successors’ (which in a manner is every man’s case), and it will fall out a resolute point the third in ‘executores’, ‘frauduleter’, ‘violeter’, and the second in ‘successor’, being long in the one and short in the other, as in seven hundred more, such as ‘disciple’, ‘recited’, ‘excited’, ‘tenement’, ‘orator’, ‘laudable’, & a number of their fellows are long in English, short in Latin; long in Latin, short in English. Howbeit in my fancy such words as ‘violently’, ‘diligently’, ‘magnificently’, ‘indifferently’, seem in a manner reasonably indifferent, and tolerable either way; neither would I greatly stand with him that translated the verse:

Cur mittis violas? vt me violentius uras?

Why send you violets? To burn my poor heart violently.

Marry, so that being left common for verse, they are to be pronounced short in prose after the manner of the Latins in such words as these: ‘cathedra’, ‘volueres’, ‘mediocres’, ‘celebres’.

And thus far of your ‘carpenter’ and his fellows, wherein we are to be moderated and overruled by the usual and common received sound, and not to devise any counterfeit fantastical accent of our own, as many otherwise not unlearned have corruptly and ridiculously done in the Greek.

Now for your ‘heaven’, ‘seven’, ‘eleven’, and the like, I am likewise of the same opinion. As generally in all words else, we are not to go a little farther, either for the prosody or the orthography (and therefore your imaginary diastole nothing worth) than we are licensed and authorized by the ordinary use & custom and propriety and idiom, and, as it were, majesty of our speech, which I account the only infallible and sovereign rule of all rules. And therefore having respect thereunto, and reputed it petty treason to revolt therefro, dare hardly either in the prosody, or in the orthography either, allow them two syllables instead of one, but would as well in writing as in speaking have them used as monosyllaba thus: ‘heavn’, ‘sevn’, ‘elevn’, as Master Ascham in his *Toxophilus* doth ‘iron’, commonly written ‘yron’:

Up to the pap his string did he pull, his shaft to the hard iron.

Especially the difference so manifestly appearing by the pronunciation between these two, ‘elevn a clock’ and ‘a leaven of dough’, which ‘leaven’ admitteth the diastole you speak of. But see what absurdities this ill-favoured orthography, or rather pseudography, hath engendered, and how one error still breedeth and begetteth another. Have we not ‘moneth’ for ‘month’, ‘sithence’ for ‘since’, ‘whilest’ for ‘whilst’, ‘fantasy’ for ‘fancy’, ‘even’ for ‘evn’, ‘devil’ for ‘devl’, ‘God his wrath’ for ‘God’s wrath’, and a thousand of the same stamp wherein the corrupt orthography in the most hath been the sole or principal cause of corrupt prosody in overmany?

Marry, I confess some words we have indeed, as for example ‘fair’, either for beautiful or for a mart; ‘air’, both *pro aere* and *pro haerede*, for we say not ‘heir’ but plain ‘air’ for him too (or else Scoggin’s Air were a poor jest), which are commonly and may indifferently be used either ways. For you shall as well and as ordinarily hear ‘fayer’ as ‘fair’, and ‘aier’ as ‘air’, and both alike, not only of divers and sundry persons, but often of the very same, otherwhiles using the one, otherwhiles the other, and so ‘dyed’ or ‘died’, ‘spyed’ or ‘spied’, ‘tryed’ or ‘tried’, ‘fyer’ or ‘fire’, ‘myer’ or ‘mire’, with an infinite company of the same sort, sometime monosyllaba, sometime pollysyllaba.

To conclude both points in one, I dare swear privately to yourself, and will defend publicly against any, it is neither heresy nor paradox to set down and stand upon this assertion (notwithstanding all the prejudices and presumptions to the contrary, if they were ten times as many mo) that it is not either position or diphthong or diastole or any like grammar school device that doth or can indeed either make long or short, or increase or diminish the number of syllables, but only the common allowed and received prosody taken up by an universal consent of all, wherein nevertheless I grant after long advice & diligent observation of particulars a certain uniform analogy and concordance being in process of time espied out. Sometime this, sometime that hath been noted by good wits in their analyses to fall out generally alike, and as a man would say, regularly in all or most words, as position, diphthong and the like, not as first and essential causes of this or that effect (here lieth the point), but as secondary and accidental signs of this or that quality.

It is the vulgar and natural Mother Prosody that alone worketh the feat as the only supreme foundress and reformer of position, diphthong, orthography, or whatsoever else, whose affirmatives are nothing worth if she once conclude the negative, and whose *secondae intentiones* must have their whole allowance and warrant from her *primae*. And therefore in short, this is the very short and the long: position neither maketh short nor long in our tongue but so far as we can get her good leave. Peradventure upon the diligent surview and examination of particulars some the like analogy and uniformity might be found out in some other respect that should as universally and canonically hold amongst us as position doth with the Latins and Greeks. I say peradventure because, having not yet made any special observation, I dare not precisely affirm any general certainty, albeit I presume so good and sensible a tongue as ours is, being withal so like itself as it is,

cannot but have something equipollent and countervailable to the best tongues in some one such kind of conformity or other. And this, forsooth, is all the artificial rules and precepts you are like to borrow of one man at this time.

Sed amabo te, a Corculi tui delicatissimas Literas, prope diem, qua potero accuratissime; tot interim illam exquisitissimis salutibus, atq{ue} salutationibus impertiens, quod habet in Capitulo, capillos semiaureos, semiargenteos, semigemmeos. Quid quaeris? Per tuam Venerem altera Rosalindula est: eamq{ue} non alter, sed idem ille, (tua, vt ante, bona cum gratia) copiose amat Hobbinolus, O mea Domina Immerito, mea bellissima Collina Clouta, multo plus plurimum salue, atq{ue} vale.

You know my ordinary postscript: you may communicate as much, or as little, as you list of these patcheries and fragments with the two gentlemen. But there a straw, and you love me, not with any else, friend or foe, one or other, unless haply you have a special desire to impart some part hereof to my good friend, Master Daniel Rogers, whose courtesies are also registered in my marble book. You know my meaning.

Nosti manum & stylum, G.