

SUMMARY: These verses by Nathaniel Baxter are from his *Sir Philip Sidney's Ourania, That is, Endimion's Song and Tragedie, Containing all Philosophie*, published in 1606. They honour Oxford's youngest daughter Susan, who two years earlier had married Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery. Baxter says that he was with Oxford on his continental tour, and that at the time Oxford wore a gold ring with the de Vere motto, *Vero Nihil Verius*, engraved on it. In honour of Susan de Vere, the first letters of each line play on the de Vere motto, spelling out VERA NIHIL VERIUS SUSANNA NIHIL CASTIUS, that is, Nothing truer than truth, nothing chaster than Susan. In these verses Baxter mentions two interesting facts about Oxford's continental tour: that the Queen ordered Oxford to return home, and that Oxford's ship was attacked by pirates as he crossed the Channel on the way back to England.

To the right noble and honourable Lady Susan Vera Mongomriana

Valiant whilom the prince that bare this mot
Engraved round about his golden ring,
Roaming in Venice, ere thou wast begot,
Among the gallants of th' Italian spring,

Never omitting what might pastime bring,
Italian sports, and sirens' melody.
Hopping Helena with her warbling sting
Infested th' Albanian dignity
Like as they poisoned all Italy;

Vigilant then th' eternal Majesty
Enthralled souls to free from infamy,
Remembering thy sacred virginity,
Induced us to make speedy repair
Unto thy mother, everlasting fair.
So did this prince beget thee debonair,

So wast thou, chaste and princely nymph, begot
Under Cecilia's education,
Strong in allied friends of highest lot
Amid the court of estimation.
Nor do I give thee this for adulation;
No pen can show thy propagation,
All heavens bless thine operation.

Naked we landed out of Italy,
Inthralled by pirates, men of no regard;
Horror and death assailed nobility,

If princes might with cruelty be scared.
Lo! thus are excellent beginnings hard.

Conjoined thou art to great Mongomria,
A peerless lady, only fit for him.
Sober and chaste he was in Cardiff Cambria,
The knight I knew before mine eyes were dim;
If temperance and continence an earl may trim,
Under the orb of mighty Phoebe's round
Sydneyan knights like him are hardly found.

N.B.