

**THE SCOURGE OF VENUS:
OR, THE
WANTON LADY WITH THE
RARE BIRTH OF ADONIS**

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HENRY AUSTIN & ALEXANDER B. GROSART

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IX.

THE

SCOURGE OF VENUS

(1614.)

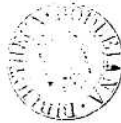
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INTRODUCTION.

IT will be noticed that on the title-page of our text (1614) of the *Scourge of Venus* it is designated "The second Impression corrected and enlarged by H. A." Like Mr. J. Payne Collier, I have not met with the first edition. Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, in his *Bibliography* (under Ovid), thus records the original title-page—*The Scourge of Venus. Or, The wanton Lady. With the rare Birth of Adonis.* Written by H. A. London printed by Nicholas Okes, dwelling neere Holbourne-bridge. 1613. 8vo. Mr. Corser (Freeling's copy.) It is to be regretted that this should not have gone to some of our great public libraries. At present it remains untraced from Mr. Corser's Sale. In the third edition, "London, printed by Nicholas Okes, and are to be sold by John Wels at his shop in Fetter-lane and in the Temple. 1620"; it is called "The third Impression. Written by A. H." not "H. A." as in the first and second. The Address to the Reader is the same in the second and third editions; and it would seem that neither an H. A. nor an A. H. was the Author, spite of the first title-page. The Editor or Publisher, whoever he were, says of the anonymous Author, "I have heard 'twas done for his pleasure, without any intent of an impression; this much I excuse him, that I know not, and commend that which deserueth well"; and again this Poem is described as "the labour of a man well-deserving." Thus the *Scourge of Venus* is of our large anonymous poetical literature. The text of 1620 is mutilated and very carelessly printed. That of 1613 would appear to have been shorter, as the second (1614) is "enlarged." So that in every way the text of our reproduction is the preferable one, albeit I should right gladly have given variations, &c., from the first edition, had it been accessible.

The main interest of the *Scourge of Venus* is that it was evidently intended as an introduction to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, albeit, unlike Barksted, the later Poet makes no reference whatever to his great predecessor. The

story is told with all the realism of the original in Ovid ; but nowise pruriently or offensively. The odd introduction of *God's Holy Bible* (p. 15, stanza 4) and other allusions, suggest that the Writer was probably a parson. There are *bits* that arrest sympathetic Readers, *e.g.*, in the opening stanza (p. 5), "ambitious eye," is a grandly characteristic description of the sun, and the calling of England "world," even with "small" as the epithet, is also fine, and tells of the pride of an Englishman in "this England."

There are noticeable lines, such as these :—

" A maiden asketh but a maids denial." (p. 9, st. 4, l. 6.)

" A fearefull minde, doth bring a shaking fit." (p. 11, st. 4, l. 6.)

" The minde is bafe that fill continuall feares." (p. 12, st. 1, l. 4.)

" It is most vile to stand in such a need,
To make the actor safer then the deed." (p. 20, st. 4, ll. 5, 6.)

" It is too late of abstinence to preach,
Whē one is drunk, & notes not what you teach." (p. 23, st. 4, ll. 5, 6.)

" I long for this yet know no reason why,
Valeffe a womans will a reason bee." (p. 24, st. 4, ll. 3, 4.)

" Such diuine beauty in her face doth lurke,
The Gods enuy at nature for the worke." (p. 29, st. 4, ll. 5, 6.)

" Where are those eyes, those glasse eyes of thine,
That lent the glorious Sunne his chiefest light?" (p. 43, st. 4, ll. 1, 2.)

There are also occasional complete stanzas that constrain us to re-read them, *e.g.* :—

" And now the fable hories of the night,
Haue drawne a mantle o're the filier fly,
And all the stars do show their borrowed light,
Each breathing thing oprest with sleep doth ly
Saue *Philomena*, that sings of *Torrens* rape,
And *Myrrha* plotting some incestuous scape."

Again :— (p. 14, st. 2.)

" Looke how you see a pleasant field of Corne
Moue here & there by gentle breathing wind,
Now vp and downe, as waues in Sea are borne:
So doubtful thoughts had motion in her mind:
Now shee'l furceafe, and now to him repaire
Inflable, like a feather in the aire."

(p. 14, st. 4.)

Once more:—

“ Take this example of me, from the Sky,
Behold a shooting star from heauen fall,
Whose glimmering light you scarcely do espye;
But it is gone as nothing were at all;
And fo their sports being scarce begun doth leaue
As in the aire confections we perceiue.”

(p. 21, st. 2.)

Further:—

“ Euen as in Summer one may aptly note,
The fire and water in one cloud contain'd;
And neither yet the mastery haue got,
Being opposites, their furies not refrain'd,
But do contend in strife and deadly warre,
Till folding Thunder do pronounce the sarre.”

(p. 22, st. 2.)

Yet again:—

“ The glory of her haire is wonderous bright,
Vpon her browes doth ebbe and flow content,
Her eies in motion do beget delight,
Her cheeks a tincture to *Aurora* lent;
Her teeth no pearle, her eies no rubies are,
But flesh and bone, more red and white by farre.”

(p. 27, st. 3.)

Once more:—

“ At which the Sunne his glorious face did hide,
Each Planet pulleth in his golden head,
The other stars out of the heaueus glide:
And *Cynthia* from her filuer Palace fled,
The night is robbed of her wonted light,
Each thing turn'd dark that formerly was bright.”

(p. 30, st. 1.)

Again:—

“ Looke how you see a blind man on the way
Led by another through some defart place,
Stagger and grope and at each trife stay
For feare lest hee should fall: euen in like case,
The wretched nurse, the fearefull Lady leads,
Who shakes and starts at euery step she treads.”

(p. 31, st. 3.)

Further:—

“ It's like a tender flower nipt with frost,
That euer after hangs his drooping head,
And hath her wonted prime of glory lost,
Or like the cup that hath this *Nectar* shed:
Cracke you the richest pointed Diamond,
And all his prife and glory's loft and gone.”

(p. 37, st. 3.)