

**THE ISHAM REPRINTS. NO. 4. A FOURE-
FOULD MEDITATION, OF THE FOURE
LAST THINGS: VIZ. OF THE
1. HOURE OF DEATH. 2. DAY OF
IUDGEMENT. 3. PAINES OF HELL. 4.
IOYES OF HEAUEN. STANZA 1-125**

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ROBERT SOUTHWELL & CHARLES EDMONDS

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No. 4.

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FOVLD MEDITATION OF THE
FOURE LAST THINGS. 1606.



THE ISHAM REPRINTS.

No. 4.



A FOVRE-FOVLD MEDITATION.

BY R. S.

1606.

A Fovre=Fobld Meditation,

Of the foure last things :

84945

viz.

- | | | | |
|----|----------|---|-------------------|
| 1. | } of the | { | Hour of Death. |
| 2. | | | Day of Iudgement. |
| 3. | | | Paines of Hell. |
| 4. | | | Ioyes of Heauen. |

Shewing the estate of the Eleit and Reprobate:

COMPOSED IN A DIUINE POEME

By R. S.

The author of *S. Peters complaint.*

[ROBERT SOUTHWELL, S.J.]

Imprinted at London by G. Eld: for Francis Burton.
1606.

WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

By CHARLES EDMONDS;

EDITOR OF THE "SHAM SHAKESPEARE;" "BASILICON DORON OF K. JAMES I.;"
"RAKE'S NEWS OUT OF FOWLES CHURCHYARDE;"
"THE POETRY OF THE ANTI-JACOBIN, BY THE RT. HON. G. CANNING, THE
RT. HON. J. HOOKHAM FREER, G. ELLIS, W. GIFFORD, ETC.;"
"THE PITCHLEY HUNT, PAST AND PRESENT, BY H. G. NETHERCOTE."



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ELKIN MATHEWS,

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MDCCLXXV.

1875

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A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE BY THE
DISCOVERER AND EDITOR.

AS the merits of Southwell, both as a Poet and a Martyr, have been continually eulogized by Catholics and Protestants alike, it is unnecessary to dilate upon them here. My intention is, therefore, to address myself only to the discovery and subsequent adventures of the interesting Tractate, now for the first time submitted to the notice of the public.

It was one amongst many of the valuable works of Old English Poetry and Prose of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages which I discovered at Lamport Hall in September, 1867, and the circumstances under which it was brought to light, and its author's identity proved, are so uncommon that they might form a chapter in a Romance of Bibliography. The facts are these:

After the issue of Nos. 1 and 2 of the "Isham Reprints," which were the hitherto-unknown edition of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" of 1599, and Hake's rare "Newes out of Powles Churchyarde" of 1579, the next volume of which I recommended the publication was "A Foure-fould Meditation of the Foure Last Things; composed in a Divine Poeme. By R. S., the author of S. Peters Complaint," London, 1606, *if* the missing portion of the

poem could be found, for I had only a slight fragment containing the first eight leaves alone; but these were precious, as in addition to the first 35 stanzas, they gave, not only a Dedication by W. H.¹ (himself a literary discoverer) in these striking words: "Long haue they lien hidden in obscuritie, and happily [haplie] had neuer seene the light, had not a meere accident conuayed them to my hands," etc.; but also, most fortunately, the Title-page, for it revealed the name of the illustrious author.

I therefore sent a communication at the end of October, 1873 (inserted November 1), to the "Athenæum," which, from its high character and world-wide circulation, was most likely to effect my object. Nor was I disappointed, for a few days after I received the following note:

"St. Mary's College,

"Ofcott, Birmingham.

"Nov. 8, 1873.

"Dear Sir,

"Would you kindly tell me whether the fragment of the poem of Southwell which you have discovered begins thus:

'O wretched man which lovest earthlie things
And to this worlde haft made thyselfe a thrall.'

"This is the first stanza of a poem which we have here at the Coll. in MS., and if I can identify it as

¹ I have always presumed this "W. H." to be the same "W. H." who gave Shakespeare's Sonnets to the world three years after the present work was issued from the press of the same printer, George Eld.

Southwell's I should think it worth while, with the President's permission, to have it printed. In any case, as a Catholic, I should wish to thank you for bringing to light something illustrative of the life and works of F. Robert Southwell, and therefore of such interest to English literature. Believe me, Dear Sir, yours very truly, S. SOLZ.

"Charles Edmonds, Esq."

A few days later I received the following letter from the President, who, after expressing his regret at not being able to see me when I called owing to press of business, continues thus: "Mr. Solz has explained to me your wish to publish the whole of this poem of Southwell's; and as you have been the means of identifying the poem as his, I think it is only fair that you should receive every help we can give you in carrying out your desire. I therefore will send you the MS. tomorrow, trusting with confidence to your taking all possible care of it, and returning it to us as soon as you have transcribed this poem. Yours truly, J. SPENCER NORTHCOTE."

This was the title under which the "Fourefould Meditation" was concealed; probably for sufficient prudential reasons: "Sartaine moste holfome & necessarie considerations, or meditations verye meete and convenyent (for all degrees) and att all tymes to be duelye considered of and had in Remembrance To withdrawe our affections from this vaine & wicked worlde, to the desire of Heaven and heavenlye thinges. Reade with good advifement."