

**THREE BOOKS OF POLYDORE  
VERGIL'S ENGLISH HISTORY,  
COMPRISING THE REIGNS OF  
HENRY VI., EDWARD IV., AND  
RICHARD III**

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**POLYDORUS VERGILIUS & SIR HENRY ELLIS**

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THREE BOOKS  
OF  
POLYDORE VERGIL'S ENGLISH HISTORY,  
COMPRISING THE REIGNS  
OF  
HENRY VI., EDWARD IV., AND RICHARD III.

FROM AN EARLY TRANSLATION,  
PRESERVED AMONG THE MSS. OF THE OLD ROYAL LIBRARY IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

EDITED BY  
SIR HENRY ELLIS, K.H.

"Ornatissime Polydore, Opera sua sunt eleganter et feliciter excusa."  
*Brosset Epist. fol. Lugd. Bat. 1708, Ep. noelx. 5 Sept. 1523.*



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## P R E F A C E.

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POLYDORE VERGIL, otherwise named de Castello, was a native of Urbino in Italy; born in the latter half of the fifteenth century, and educated in the University of Bologna. Of his family we know but little. Burton, who wrote the History of Leicestershire, says his father's name was George Vergil;\* he himself tells us that Antony Vergil, his great-grandfather, taught philosophy at Paris; and he had a younger brother whom he mentions with affection, John Matthew Vergil, a professor of Philosophy at Pavia,† who died at a premature age. He had also a

\* See Burton's MS. as quoted in Nichols's Hist. of Leicestershire, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 598.

† "Habes enim (prout probe scis) Antonium Vergilium proavum nostrum Archetypon, qui medicæ etiam rei ac astrologis peritissimus olim apud Gallos, in Lutetia Parisiorum, philosophiam docuit, quam tu Patavii in præsentî publicè profiteris.

"Non est infima utique laus, duos ex Vergiliana familia viros in duobus totius orbis præcipuis gymnasiis, haud longo temporis intervallo, professores bonarum disciplinarum non absque nominis gloria publicitus extitisse. Sed tu qui proavum jam longe relinquis, efficies (spero) ut aliquando posteritas

kinsman of the name of Adrian de Castello, of whom more will be said hereafter.

Polydore himself was first known to the literary world by the publication of a Collection of Proverbs, "*Proverbi-orum Libellus*," printed at Venice in 1498, gathered chiefly from Latin writers, and dedicated to Guido Ubaldo then Duke of Urbino.\* It was the first attempt of its kind, and the author was subsequently not a little mortified when Erasmus claimed that same priority for his "*Adagia*." Polydore Vergil gently reproached him in the preface to his next work: Erasmus protested his unacquaintance with Vergil's previous book; and Polydore expunged the censure. Of this literary collision Polydore's biographers have said more than was sufficient. It created a friendship between these eminent scholars which lasted to the close of Erasmus's life, cemented by the congeniality of their pursuits, and evidenced no where more strongly on Erasmus's part than in his Correspondence.†

dicat, fuisse olim Polydorum quendam, qui illum Joannem Matthæum Vergilium à puero bonis moribus atque disciplinis nutrierat. Vale, Londini nonis Decembris, An. M. D. XVII."

\* Other editions of the "*Proverbi-orum Libellus*" were 4<sup>to</sup>, Ven. 1506; Argentor. 1510; 8 Basle, 1524, 1532; 12<sup>o</sup> 1536, and 8<sup>vo</sup> 1541 and 1550. To the edition of 1536 is subjoined a short commentary upon the Lord's Prayer, afterwards, about 1554, said to have been printed separately.

† See particularly the letters DCCLX. DCCCXV. DCCCLIV. MCLXXVI. in *Erasmi Epist.* fol. Lugd. Bat. 1706.

In 1499 Polydore Vergil published his second work, a Treatise "de Inventoribus Rerum." This also was the first publication of its kind, subsequent to the revival of Literature. It gained him great reputation; was afterwards much enlarged by its author; passed through numerous editions in different countries;\* and was translated into several of the modern languages of Europe.†

\* "Polydori Vergilii Vrbinatis de Inventoribus Rerum, Libri tres," 4to. Ven. 1499; reprinted there in 1508. This work was increased to eight books in the Basle edition of 1521, followed by other editions from the same place in 1524, 1545, 1550, 1554, and 1570, in 8<sup>vo</sup> and 12<sup>mo</sup>; printed at Leyden in 1544, 8<sup>vo</sup>; at Amsterdam, 8<sup>o</sup>, 1571, and by Dan. Elzevir, 12<sup>o</sup> 1651 and 1662; Rome, 1576, 8<sup>o</sup>; Lyons, 1586, 12<sup>o</sup>; Frankfort, 1599; Geneva, 1604; and Argentorat. 1606, 8<sup>o</sup> and 12<sup>o</sup>.

† Two editions of an Italian translation of this work, by Pietro Lauro of Modena, occur, 8<sup>o</sup> Ven. 1543 and 1545. A Spanish translation by Fr. Thamar Medina, appeared in 8<sup>o</sup> 1551.

Wood in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, edit. Bliss, vol. iii. col. 435, says, that Bale translated Polydore Vergil's work "de Rerum Inventoribus" in the time of Edward VI. but in rude and old English. He does not say whether this translation was published. Three if not four editions of an Abridgement, however, in English, appeared much about that time; viz. One, "An Abridgement of the Notable Woorke of Polidore Vergile. Containing the deuisers and fyrste fynders oute as well of Artes, Ministeries, Feactes, and ciuill ordinaunces, as of the Rites and Ceremonies commonly vsed in the church: and the original beginnyng of the same. Compendiously gathered by Thomas Langley." Dedicated to Sir Antony Denny. "Imprynted at London by Richard Grafton, Printer to the Princes Grace, the xvi. daie of Aprill, the yere of our Lorde M.D.xlvi. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum." Square 12<sup>mo</sup>. Printed also "xxv. Januarie," 1546, which stands as a second edition. A third, "Imprynted at London by Richard Grafton,