

**THE COUNSELS OF  
WILLIAM  
DE BRITAINNE**

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The counsels of William de Britaine by William De Britaine & Herbert H. Sturmer

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**WILLIAM DE BRITAINE & HERBERT H. STURMER**

**THE COUNSELS OF  
WILLIAM  
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THE COUNSELS  
OF  
WILLIAM DE BRITAINE



HERBERT H. STURMER

Author of 'Some Poitevin Protestants in London'



LONDON  
F. E. ROBINSON  
20 GREAT RUSSELL STREET  
1897

Enscribed to  
SIR CLEMENT COURTENAY KNOLLYS, K.C.M.G.,

WITH ADMIRATION AND REGARD

BY

H. H. S.





## PREFACE.

(1) *This book.*

**I**T is hoped that this volume may not only be of general interest to thoughtful people, but may be considered specially suitable as a gift-book for any young man 'coming of age,' or leaving a public-school to enter the wider world of men and affairs.

It is a revision, or perhaps it would be more correct to say a re-writing, of the eleventh (1717) edition of a book called '*Humane Prudence*,' the first edition of which appeared in 1680. Although the lesser writers of the Stuart period have been of interest to me for many years, it was not until 1895 that the title '*Humane Prudence*' caught my eye from a catalogue-page which I was looking through. Since then I have examined copies of various editions of the work, and I consider the eleventh edition to be in some ways the best one. But anyone who has come across it will have seen that its puzzling printer's errors, and its extraordinary *mélange* of styles, make it little less in need of revision for a modern reader than any other edition of the work. As to my aims, method, and success (or failure) in the revising of '*Humane Prudence*,' I can only feel



confident that no reviewer will treat me severely if he has had experience in sub-editorial work, and remembers how anxiously he strove to reconcile the altering of contributors' work with the preserving of their 'good things' intact. For the toil involved in hundreds of little alterations, transpositions, and excisions, I shall be amply repaid if any thoughtful reviewer (and it is wonderful to think how careful and kind reviewers usually are) feels obliged to say that some expression of 'De Britaine's' is 'rather more modern than Mr. Sturmer should have inserted in "De Britaine's" text,' or praises some phrase of mine as being one of 'De Britaine's' good things. Also, painful as it is to put a sacrificial knife to the throat of Style, the presence of Justice must sometimes compel the act. And then, if one has anything of the passion for the perfect word—the desire for the ultimate union of thought and expression—which influences a Flaubert or a Henry James, one suffers. But dead authors are like dead creeds, in that they should be handled as tenderly as possible.

I have added an occasional note to the text of this volume, chiefly to call attention to puzzling or curious points in the text of 'Humane Prudence,' but sometimes in the hope of making the pages look less monotonous than they otherwise might do. As a rule, I have tried to correct or verify allusions in the text rather than put notes to them.

The Latin quotations have been kindly revised for me by a friend who, I hope, remembers more Latin than I have forgotten.

(2) *The eleventh edition of 'Humane Prudence.'*

There is a copy of the *eleventh* edition of 'Humane Prudence' in my possession. Its title-page reads as follows ('Human' for 'Humane' being possibly a printer's error, as the pages of my copy are headed

with the older spelling throughout, and the spelling is 'Humane' upon the title-page of the twelfth edition): 'Human Prudence: or, The Art by which a Man may Raise Himself and His Fortune to Grandeur. Corrected and very much Enlarged. The Eleventh Edition. [Latin quotation]. London, Printed for Richard Sare, at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn. MDCCXVII.' The sub-title may have been a 'happy thought' of a publisher's, but is hardly fair to the writer, although there are a few passages in the book which seem to have a lower tone than I cared to reproduce in my version. This eleventh edition begins with an 'Epistle Dedicatory' addressed 'To the Virtuous and most Ingenious Edw. Hungerford, Esq.', which ends thus: 'I will not detain you any longer at present, than to intreat you to look into this Mirror; as made up of other Men's Crystals, and my own Errors; wherein you may see what you are, as well as what you ought to be.

Worthy Sir,

I am your faithful Friend and Servant,  
*W. de Britaine.'*

This edition consists of title-page, four pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' a two-page table of contents, and pp. 1-254 of text. The text is made up of thirty-two numbered and titled 'Sections,' and of a kind of appendix entitled 'Sententiæ Stellares: or, Maxims of Prudence to be observed by Artisans of State.' These 'Sententiæ' are numbered 1-122.

'De Britaine,' having frankly stated that his book is mainly a compilation, does not indicate by quotation marks or otherwise the sources he has utilized, but welds his extracts into a more or less continuous text. The reader of this volume who knows his 'Seneca' will, however, recognise a fine passage upon page 79; the influence of Epictetus runs throughout

the book (*e.g.*, p. 121); Marcus Aurelius is sometimes quoted almost exactly (*e.g.*, p. 49), and his exquisite personality seems constantly to hover near us as we read. Sir Roger L'Estrange's 'Seneca's Morals' is said to have first appeared in 1688, but the earliest edition of its second part which I have seen is the one printed in 1693 and paged continuously from the last page of the fifth edition of the first part printed for Hindmarsh in 1694. I have compared this edition in places with the *fifth* (1689) edition of 'Humane Prudence,' and I find that some sentences are almost identical in the two books. Thus, the sentence which this volume has on page 148, 'It goes a great way,' etc., will be found both at page 247 of 'Humane Prudence' and at page 277 of L'Estrange's 'Seneca' with no essential difference.

(3) *Editions of 'Humane Prudence.'*

'Humane Prudence' was translated into French under the title of 'Prudence Humaine, . . .' The 'Quatorzième Edition,' the only edition of which I have seen a copy, says that it is 'traduit de l'Anglois sur la douzième Edition de Londres . . . Par James de la Cour.' In his dedication-preface the translator says: 'Cet ouvrage a été imprimé douze fois à Londres en Anglois, & a été si estimé dans ce Royaume & ailleurs, parmi les gens d'Esprit & de bon goût, qu'ils se faisoient un plaisir de le lire presque (*sic*) continuellement, y trouvant tout ce qui peut rendre un homme parfait dans quelqu'Etat qu'il soit.' This French version 'Se vend a Francfort sur le Mein, dans la Ziegelgasse chez l'Editeur, demeurant chez Mr. Herford. MDCCLXIV.'

Not being able to hear of a copy of the *first* edition of 'Humane Prudence' as existing in London, and having come across only one person (Mr. Salkeld,