

**SILEX SCINTILLANS:
SACRED POEMS AND
PRIVATE EJACULATIONS**

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Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations by Henry Vaughan & William Clare

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HENRY VAUGHAN & WILLIAM CLARE

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SILEX SCINTILLANS.

SACRED POEMS AND PRIVATE
EJACULATIONS.

BY HENRY VAUGHAN
(SILURIST).

*Being a Facsimile of the First Edition,
published in 1650,*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE REV. WILLIAM CLARE, B.A. (ADELAIDE).



LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1885.

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Introduction.

The genesis of this little volume is soon told. The present writer, during a residence abroad of some ten years, having received in reply to all inquiries for a copy of Vaughan's Poems the uniform answer that they were "out of print," resolved that when he should visit England he would suggest to some publisher the desirability of reissuing the works of so true, but, as it seemed, so unappreciated a poet. Having in his possession a copy of the First Edition of the "Silex Scintillans," he felt that a facsimile of that volume would be an acceptable addition to Mr. Stock's series of facsimiles, the more so as in that series had been published "The Temple" of George Herbert. The needful arrangements having been made, the lovers of our Sacred Poetry may set side by side, and in their original forms, what is deepest and most sacred in the utterance of these kindred souls.

*The following is believed to be a complete
list*

list of the previous editions of the "*Silex Scintillans*."

1. *SILEX SCINTILLANS; or, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, by HENRY VAUGHAN, Silurist. London, printed by J. W. for H. Blunden, 1650.
2. *Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. The Second Edition. In two Books*, by Henry Vaughan, Silurist. London, printed by Henry Crips and Lodswich Lloyd, 1655.
3. *Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations of Henry Vaughan, with Memoir* by Rev. H. F. Lyte. London: Pickering, 1847.
4. *The Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations of Henry Vaughan, with a Memoir* by the Rev. H. F. Lyte. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1856.
5. *Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, by Henry Vaughan. London: Bell and Daldy, 1858.
6. (Fuller Worthies Library.) *The Works in Verse and Prose Complete, of Henry Vaughan, Silurist. For the first time collected and edited, etc., by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, in four volumes. Printed for private circulation*, 1871.
7. *Silex Scintillans, etc.: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, by Henry Vaughan, "Silurist," with a Memoir by the Rev. H. F. Lyte. London: George Bell and Sons, 1883.

Of the first of these it is not necessary to say anything, as the reader now holds an exact facsimile of it in his hand; the few occasional misprints being of course reproduced as accurately as any of the text.

The

Introduction.

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The Edition of 1655, as is evident by comparison, consists of the unfold copies of that of 1650, with other poems added, entitled *Silex Scintillans*, Part 2. The pagination of the second part is quite independent of that of the first. The engraved frontispiece, which forms so striking a feature of the first edition, is not found in the second; but there is added an "Author's Preface," and an arrangement of Scripture texts setting forth the author's sickness, recovery, or at least his partial recovery, and suggesting that the volume of poems is his thankoffering. Two slight dedicatory poems complete the additions. The only alterations are in the poem on "Isaac's Marriage," where for the reading given in lines 11 and 12, page 20, we find—

*But being for a bride prayer was such
A decayed course sure it prevail'd not much.*

In line 14 "dull" is read instead of "corse."
Line 19 runs—

*When conscience by lewd use had not lost sense,
and lines 5 and 6, page 21—*

*But in a Virgin's native blush and fears
Fresh as those roses which the day spring wears.*

By a close comparison it is seen that the four pages 19-22 of the first edition have been

been removed, and replaced in the so-called second by four others, in which these alterations are made.

From this time a period of nearly two hundred years elapsed before another edition of Vaughan was given to the world, and it seems that in the meantime he was forgotten, except that here and there some stray copy may have fallen into hands that cherished it, as, for instance, to our lasting gain, into the hands of Wordsworth. Since the discovery that Wordsworth had in his scanty library a copy of the *Silex Scintillans*, well read and with notes in his own handwriting, it is no longer a matter of conjecture that his thought was largely influenced by that of Vaughan, or that the "Retreat" has provided, so to speak, the groundplan of the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality." During the eighteenth century the genius of Vaughan lay buried like his own "Hidden Flower," but in the Ode of Wordsworth it lives again a glorified and assuredly an immortal life. The only thing to be regretted in connexion with Wordsworth's translation of the "Retreat" into his own larger utterance, is that he did not complete the work, by making the closing thought of the "Retreat" the closing thought also of the Ode. The abrupt suggestiveness

suggestiveness of the former is to our mind more beautiful than the melancholy splendour, as of one of Turner's sunsets, of the latter. It is more beautiful and more satisfying to think with Vaughan that we may go back to God, as we came from Him, with the hearts of little children, that our latest days may be as our earliest, heaven round about us, our thoughts white and celestial, no longer looking back indeed to that glory whence we came, but forward to that glory whither we go; than with Wordsworth to find our rest

*In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.*

Though some of our poet's thought thus found speech in Wordsworth, it was meet that his own voice should be heard again speaking in all things his true self. Welcome therefore was Mr. Lyte's edition of 1847, with its admirable biographical sketch. His book is practically a reprint of the editions of 1650-55, with some "Pious Thoughts and Ejaculations" from a volume entitled "Thalia Rediviva." The editing is not indeed perfect, but the errors are so few that there can be no other verdict upon
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