

**THE POETICAL WORKS OF  
THOMAS TRAHERNE, 1636?-1674:  
FROM THE ORIGINAL  
MANUSCRIPTS. WITH A MEMOIR  
OF THE AUTHOR**

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The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, 1636?-1674: From the Original Manuscripts. With a Memoir of the Author by Thomas Traherne & Bertram Dobell

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**THOMAS TRAHERNE & BERTRAM DOBELL**

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THOMAS TRAHERNE, 1636?-1674:  
FROM THE ORIGINAL  
MANUSCRIPTS. WITH A  
MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR**



TO  
G. THORN DRURY

My youth was ever constant to one dream,  
Though hope failed oft—so hopeless did it seem—  
That in the ripeness of my days I might  
Something achieve that should the world requite  
For my existence ; for it was a pain  
To think that I should live and live in vain :  
And most my thoughts were turned towards the Muse,  
Though long she did my earnest prayers refuse,  
And left me darkling and despairing ; then  
By happy chance there came within my ken  
A hapless poet, whom—I thank kind fate !—  
It was my privilege to help instate  
In that proud eminence wherein he shines  
Now that no more on earth he sadly pines.  
This was a fortune such as I must ever  
Be thankful for—yet still 'twas my endeavour,  
With what, I hope, was no unworthy zeal,  
My life-work with some other deed to seal,

And lo ! when such a dream might well seem vain,  
Propitious fate smiled on me once again,  
And through the mists of time's close-woven pall  
A glint of light on one dim form did fall,  
Which, as I gazed more earnestly, became  
A living soul, discovered by the flame  
Of glowing inspiration which possessed  
Even now, as when he lived, the poet's breast.  
Did I deceive myself? Could it be true  
A new poetic star was in my view,  
And shining with a lustre bright and clear,  
Where, constellated in the heavenly sphere,  
Herbert and Vaughan, Crashaw and Milton shine  
With varying brightness, yet alike divine ?  
I gazed again, but still that star burned on,  
And ever with a deeper radiance shone,  
Until I knew no Will-o'-th'-Wisp's false light,  
No meteor delusive mocked my sight,  
But 'twas indeed a fulgent planet which  
Henceforth shall with its beams the heavens enrich.

Some vanity, I know, is in this strain,  
But men may be with reason sometimes vain :  
Shall he alone who does a worthy deed  
Not pay himself, if so he will, that meed  
Of self-applause from which all virtues spring,—  
Without it who would do a noble thing ?

## DEDICATION

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So let the world arraign me as it will,  
It cannot now my satisfaction chill,  
Since you, dear friend ! and all whose praise I prize,  
Look on my labours with approving eyes.

This book to you 'tis fit I dedicate  
Since you, my friend, so well appreciate—  
Nay, rather love, our poets of old time,  
Responding ever to their notes sublime :  
Who, though you treasure most those sons of light,  
Whose radiance glitters on the brow of night,  
Do not despise the faintest twinkling star  
That shines where Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton are :  
Who can, like Lamb, a brilliant flower descry  
Where all seems sterile to the common eye,  
Who, like Lamb, too, to no strait bounds confined,  
Have room for all fair fancies in your mind,  
And, with a taste that never errs, discover  
Faults like a censor, beauties like a lover.

Here is another offering for your store,  
Though not arrayed in that brown garb of yore  
Which, with quaint type and paper stained with age,  
Were for the Spirit of our Poet-Sage  
A fitter dwelling, more becoming page.  
I could not give him these, and so have sought  
To match his noble and exalted thought

With the best raiment that our time affords  
Of comely type, fine paper, seemly boards,  
Which, centuries hence, to our children's children's eyes  
May have an antique look which they shall prize,  
When Traherne's name, familiar to their ears,  
Shall hold assured a place among his peers.



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