

**BACON'S NOVA RESUSCITATIO;
OR, THE UNVEILING OF HIS
CONCEALED WORKS AND
TRAVELS; IN THREE VOLUMES,
VOL. I**

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Bacon's nova resuscitatio; or, The unveiling of his concealed works and travels; in three volumes, Vol. I by Walter Begley

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WALTER BEGLEY

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BACON'S
NOVA RESUSCITATIO

OR

The Unveiling of his Concealed Works
and Travels

BY THE

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.



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BACON'S RESUSCITATIO

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE LONG-EXISTING MYSTERY OF
GEORGE PUTTENHAM'S 'ARTE OF ENGLISH POESIE'

GEORGE PUTTENHAM'S 'Arte of English Poesie' is one of the most celebrated treatises on poetry that have been handed down to us from Elizabethan times. It is in many respects superior to the other books on the same subject by Sir Philip Sidney, Webbe, and other contemporaries. 'In this work,' says Hallam, who was a competent judge, 'we find an approach to the higher province of philosophical criticism.'

But critics have found the greatest difficulty in settling the point of authorship; for the book was published anonymously in 1589, and the printer, Richard Field, confessed that he was ignorant of the author's name, when he dedicated it to Lord Burghley. From internal evidence, the author

clearly intended it at one time to be dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and no reason is given why Lord Burghley took the Queen's place. Whatever the secret was, it was extremely well kept, and Sir John Harington, only two years after its first appearance, was unable to ascertain who had written it. A little later on, in 1605, Camden in his 'Remaines concerning Britaine,' refers to the work, but apparently could not or would not name the author, for he speaks of him as 'the gentleman which proved that Poets were the first Politicians, the first Philosophers, and the first Historiographers.' One of the two earliest references to a name for the author is by Bolton in his 'Hypercritica' (circa 1620, though not published till 1722). He simply mentions the name of Puttenham as the *reported* author, 'as the fame is,' he says. But he gives no Christian name, and no other information except that he was one of the Queen's Gentlemen Pensioners. Bolton's evidence is not free from suspicion, as I have shown elsewhere that he seems to have known certain literary secrets, and so might have an object in throwing people off the right scent.

The only other mention of this Puttenham without a Christian name is in 1614, in the second edition of Camden's 'Remaines,' where a certain

Richard Carew of St. Anthony, writing a paper 'On the Excellencie of the English Tongue,' speaks of Sir Philip Sydney and Maister Puttenham and Maister Stanihurst as good versifiers. Thus, the contemporary *external* evidence is very weak, and what makes it still less convincing is that no Puttenham can be found in the lists of the Queen's Pensioners, as preserved in the records.

We consequently have to turn for help to the *internal* evidence, and what we can gather concerning the author from any autobiographical allusions we may be able to find. There are many, as it happens, but all very puzzling. First, it is known that there were two brothers, Richard and George Puttenham, who were nephews of Sir Thomas Elyot, the famous author of 'The Governour,' and our book in question has generally been attributed to George Puttenham, the younger brother, whose will was proved in 1590. But, as far as has been made out by careful inquiries, this George never left England, and therefore the many accounts in 'The Arte of Poesie' of the author's travels far and wide on the Continent quite exclude George Puttenham. Richard therefore has to be tried, and, as he was the heir of his uncle Elyot, he might well have gone with his suite when his uncle went as