

**THE HONESTIE OF THIS AGE:  
PROVING BY GOOD  
CIRCUMSTANCE THAT THE  
WORLD WAS NEVER HONEST TILL  
NOW**

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The Honesty of This Age: Proving by Good Circumstance That the World Was Never Honest till Now by Barnabe Rich & Peter Cunningham

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**BARNABE RICH & PETER CUNNINGHAM**

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HONESTIE OF THIS AGE:

PROVING BY GOOD CIRCUMSTANCE  
THAT THE WORLD WAS NEVER  
HONEST TILL NOW.

BY  
BARNABY RICH,

GENTLEMAN,  
SERVANT TO KING JAMES I.

With an Introduction and Notes  
By PETER CUNNINGHAM.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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BARNABY RICH was a prolific pamphleteer in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James. His first known production is dated in 1574, and his last in 1624. His tracts, some six-and-twenty in number, are all of them curious pictures of the age, and all are scarce.

It is not known when or where he was born, or when or where he died. He was perhaps of Welsh descent.

Like Gascoigne, Churchyard, and other poetic spirits of that age, he was a soldier carrying arms. Ireland and the Low Countries were then the seats of war, and Churchyard, in his "True discourse historical of the succeeding Governors in the Netherlands," refers to *Captain Barnaby Rich his notes*, as his authority for several circumstances related therein.

Rich is a vehement inveigher against vice in all its subdivisions. He is a *school of abuse*, like Gosson, or like Prynne. He anathematizes periwigs, picardils, and shaparownes, rich wines and yellow-starch, side saddles, and coaches,—no new enormity escapes him, and he blows a *Counterblast*

to Tobacco, carrying odour to the nostrils of King James.

Rich, in one of his early productions, employed the poet Lodge to lop the superfluities of his pen. But Lodge became one of the wicked, and Rich relied in future on his own unassisted knowledge.

That his writings were read and admired there is other testimony than their number, or the successive editions they went through. In his "*Have with you to Saffron Waldon*," Nash says: "*A rich spirit, quoth-a? nay then, a spirit in the way of Honesty too. Loe! this it is to be read in nothing but Barnaby Riche's workes.*"

I have been at some pains to make out a correct catalogue of Rich's writings. Mr. Collier's kindness has enabled me to add the name of another work to the hitherto ascertained list of his publications.

CATALOGUE OF BARNABY RICH'S WORKS.

1. "A Right Exelent and pleasaunt Dialogue, betwene Mercury and an English Souldier: contayning his Supplication to Mars: Bewtified with sundry worthy Histories, rare inuentions, and politike deuises. Wrytten by B. Rich, Gen. 1574."—16mo., b. 1.

The dedication (signed Barnabe Rych) is addressed to Ambrose Earl of Warwick, "Generall of the Queenes Maiesties Ordinance, within her highnes Realms and Dominions."

"In this little book," he says, "I haue descrybed certayne noble facts and other high exploytes,



achieved by great and mighty Princes, and other valiaunt Captaines; also not forgetting to manifest the great abuse that is generally vsed, in the setting forth of Souldiers, in the tyme of seruice, which I my selfe haue scene and marked."

*The maner of chosing Souldiers in England.*

"The Prince, or Counsayll, sendeth downe theyr warrant, to certayne Commissioners, of euerye such Shyer where they mynde too haue suche a number of Souldyers to bee leuyed and appoynted, the Commissioner he sendeth hys precept to the hie Constable of euerye Hundred, the hie Constable of euerye Hundred, he geueth knowledge to euerye pety Constable of euerye Parrysh within his cyrquet, that uppon such a daye, he must bring two or three able and suffycient men, to serue y<sup>e</sup> Prince, before such Commissioners, to such a place. The pety Constable when he perceyueth that wars are in hand, foreseeing the toyles, the infinite perilles, and troublesome trauayles that is incident to Souldyers, is loth that anye honest man, through his procurement, shuld hazard himselfe amongst so many daungers, wherfore if within his office, there hap to remayne any idle felow, some dronkerd, or sediciouse quariler, a priuie picker, or such a one as hath some skill in stealing of a Goose, these shall bee presented to the seruyce of the Prince; and what seruyce is too bee loked for amongst such fellowes, I thinke may easily be deemed."

There is a copy in the Bodleian Library, and a second, imperfect at the end, in Mr. Collier's possession.

2. "Allarme to England, foreshewing what perilles are procured, where the people live without regarde of Martiall Lawe. With a short discourse conteyning the decay of Warlike Discipline, conuenient to be perused by Gentlemen, such as are desirous by seruice to seeke their owne deserued prayse, and the preseruation of their Countrey. Newly deuised and written by Barnabe Riche, Gentleman. *Malui me diuitem esse quam vocari.*" Perused and allowed, 1578."

Dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton. "What I have written," he says, "was onely done in Ireland where there is no great choice of bookes to be had....My training up," he adds, "has been more with my pike than with my pen; not in the schools among clerks, but in the fields among unlettered soldiers."

There is a copy in the British Museum, another in the Bodleian, and a third in the possession of the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Churchyard has a copy of verses, and Barnabe Googe a prose letter, prefixed. Googe's letter is dated from Kingstone, to his "very louing friend Captaine Barnabe Riche: That noble gentleman," he writes, "Sir William Drurie, a paragon of armes, at this day was wont (I remember) to say that the Souldiers of England had alwayes one of these three ends to looke for—to be slaine, to begge, or to be hanged."

"I was never able," says Rich, "to climb Parnassus hill, although I have travailed over Gaddes hyll in Kent, and that sundrie tymes and often."

3. "Riche his Farewell to Militarie profession: conteinyng verie pleasaunt discourses fit for a peaceable tyme: gathered together for the onely delight of the courteous Gentlewomen, bothe of Englande and Irelande, for whose onely pleasure thei were collected together, and unto whom thei are directed and dedicated by Barnabe Riche, Gentleman." *Malui me diuitem esse quam vocari.* Imprinted at London, by Robart Walley, 1581."

The only copy known of this edition is in the Bodleian Library. The second edition is dated 1606.

Shakespeare is said to have been indebted to the history of "Apolonius and Silla," in this book, for part of the story of "Twelfth Night." Apolonius and Silla forms a part of Mr. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library" (2 vols. 8vo.) n. d.

Rich's interesting account, in this book, of Sir Christopher Hatton's house at Holdenby in Northamptonshire, has been copied by Mr. Collier into his *Poetical Decameron*, vol. ii. p. 138. "Riche his Farewell" is about to be reprinted by the *Shakespeare Society*.

4. "The straunge and wonderfull adventures of Don Simonides, a gentilman Spaniarde. Conteinyng verie pleasaunt discourse: Gathered for the recreation as well of our noble yong gentilmen, as our honourable courtly Ladies; by