

**THE DOWNFALL OF  
ROBERT EARL  
OF HUNTINGTON**

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The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington by Anthony Munday & J. Payne Collier

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**ANTHONY MUNDAY & J. PAYNE COLLIER**

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DOWNFALL

OF

Robert Earl of Huntington.

BY

ANTHONY MUNDAY.

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WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS AND NOTES

BY

J. PAYNE COLLIER, ESQ.

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1828.

**THE DOWNFALL**

**OF**

**ROBERT EARL OF HUNTINGTON.**

*The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*\* were both formerly ascribed to Thomas Heywood on the always disputable authority of Kirkman the Bookseller. The discovery of the folio account-book of Philip Henslowe, proprietor of the Rose theatre on the Bank-side, enabled Malone to correct the error.† The following entries in Henslowe's MSS. contain the evidence upon the subject.

"Feb. 1597-8—The first part of Robin Hood by Anthony Mundy.

"The second part of the Downfall of Earl Huntington, surnamed Robinhood by Anthony Mundy and Henry Chettle."

It is to be observed that what Henslowe mentions as "the second part of the downfall of Earl Huntington" is in fact the play called on the printed title-page *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*. Hence we find that Anthony Munday wrote the *first part* or "Downfall" alone, and the *second part* or "Death" in conjunction with Henry Chettle: nevertheless there is a memorandum by Henslowe by which it seems that Chettle had something to do also with the *first part*. It is in these terms.

"Lent unto Robarte Shawe the 18 of Novemb. 1598, to lend unto Mr. Cheattle upon the mending of The First Part of Robart Hoode, the sum of xs."

The loan here mentioned was perhaps in anticipation

\* Malone originally supposed the plays to be by Heywood, and so treated them. In the last edit. of Shakespeare by Boswell (iii. 99) the mistake is allowed to remain, and in a note also *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* is quoted as Heywood's production.

† Ritson in his *Robin Hood*, l. ii. et seq. gives some quotations from them, as by Munday and Chettle.

of "the mending;" and Malone subsequently met with the following notice: "For mending of Robin Hood for the Corte;" which might be written after the improvements, considered necessary before the performance of the play at Court, had been completed.

Anthony Munday must have been born in 1553, for the monument to him in the Church of St. Stephen, Coleman street, states, that at the time of his death, 10th. August, 1633, he was 80 years old. From the inscription we likewise learn that he was "a citizen and draper." In 1589 he lived in the city, and dates his translation of *The History of Palmendos* "from my house in Cripplegate;" that he carried on the business of a draper, or had some connection with the trade as late as 1613, may be gathered from the following passage at the close of *The Triumphs of Truth*, the city Pageant for that year, by Thomas Middleton. "The fire-work being made by Maister Humphrey Nichols, a man excellent in his art; and the whole work and body of the Triumph with all the proper beauties of the workmanship, most artfully and faithfully performed by John Grinkin; and those furnished with apparel and porters by Anthony Monday, Gentleman." The stile of "gentleman" was probably given to him with reference to the productions of his pen.

At what date he acquired the title of "poet to the city" does not appear: he wrote the Lord Mayor's Pageant in 1605, but he had certainly earlier been similarly employed, as Ben Jonson introduces him in that capacity in *The Case is Altered*, which was written in the end of 1598, or beginning of 1599.\* He there throws some ridicule upon Don Antonio

\* Mr. Gifford fell into an error (Ben Jonson, vi. 320.) in stating that *The Case is Altered* "should have stood at the head of Jonson's works, had chronology only been consulted." In the *Life of Ben Jonson*, he refers to Henslowe's papers to prove that *Every Man in his Humour* was written in 1596, and in *The Case is Altered*, Ben Jonson expressly quotes *Meres' Palladis Tamia*, which was not published until 1598. Nash's *Lenten Stuff*, affords evidence that "the witty play of *The Case is Altered*" was popular in 1599.



Balladino (as he calls Munday) and Mr. Gifford was of opinion that Middleton meant to censure him in his *Triumphs of Truth*, as the "impudent common writer" of city pageants; but this is hardly consistent with the mention Middleton introduces of Munday at the close of that performance. Besides, Dekker wrote the pageant for the year 1612, immediately preceding that for which Middleton was engaged; and that Munday was not in disrepute is obvious from the fact that in 1614, 1615 and 1616, his pen was again in request for the same purpose.

Whatever might have been Munday's previous life, in the year 1582 he was placed in no very enviable situation. He had been mainly instrumental in detecting the Popish Conspiracy in that year, which drew down upon him the bitter animosity of the Jesuits. They charged him in their publications (from which extracts may be seen in Mr. A. Chalmers' Biographical Dictionary, and elsewhere) with having been "first a stage player and afterwards an apprentice," and after being "hissed from the stage" and residing at Rome, with having returned to his original occupation. Munday himself admits, in the account he published of Edmund Campion and his confederates, that he was "some time the Pope's scholar in the Seminary of Rome," but always stoutly denied that he was a Roman Catholic.—Perhaps the most curious tract upon this subject is in the hands of Mr. Rodd of Great Newport street: it is entitled "A breefe and true reporte of the Execution of certaine Traytours at Tiborne the xxviii, and xxx dayes of May 1582. Gathered by A. M. who was there present." He signs the Dedication at length "A. Munday," and mentions that he had been a witness against some of the offenders. The persons he saw executed were, Thomas Foord, John Shert, Robert Johnson, William Filbie, Luke Kirbie, Lawrance Richardson, and Thomas Cottom; and he seems to have been publicly employed to confute them at the foot of the gallows, and to convince the populace that they were

traitors and Papists, denying the supremacy of Queen Elizabeth. He there had a long dispute with Kirbie upon matters of fact, and, according to his own shewing, was guilty, while abroad, at least of a little duplicity.— He notices having seen Captain Stukely at Rome, who was killed at the battle of Alcazar in 1578. In the conclusion he promises his *English Romaine Lyfe* "so soon as it can be printed" in which he purposes to disclose the "Romish and Sathanical juggling" of the Jesuits.

Munday was a very voluminous author in verse and prose, original and translated, and is certainly to be reckoned among the predecessors of Shakespeare in dramatic composition. His earliest work, as far as can be now ascertained, was "The Mirror of Mutability," 1579, when he was in his 26th year: he dedicates it to the Earl of Oxford, and perhaps then belonged to the company of players of that nobleman, to which he had again attached himself on his return from Italy.\* The Council Registers shew that this nobleman had a company of players under his protection in 1575. Munday's "Banquet of Daintie Conceits" was printed in 1588, and we particularise it, because it was unknown to Ames, Herbert, and Ritson. Catalogues and specimens of his other undramatic works may be found in *Bibliographia Poetica*, *Censura Literaria*, *British Bibliographer*,† &c. The earliest praise of Munday is contained in Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586, where his "Sweete sobs of Sheepehardes and Nymphes" is especially pointed out as "very rare poetrie." Francis Meres in 1598

\* On the title-page of his translation of *Palmerin of England*, the third part of which bears date in 1602, he is called "one of the Messengers of her Majesty's Chamber;" but how, and at what date he obtained this "small court appointment" we are without information. Perhaps it was given to him as a reward for his services in 1582.

† Munday did not always publish under his own name, and according to Ritson, whose authority has been often quoted on this point, translated "The Orator, written in French by Alexander Silvayn," under the name of Lazarus Plot, from the dedication to which it may be inferred that he had been in the army. "A ballad made by Ant. Munday, of the encouragement of an English soldier to his fellow mates," was licenced to John Charlewood, in 1579.

(*Palladis Tamia*, fo. 283, b.) enumerating many of the best dramatic poets of his day, including Shakespeare, Heywood, Chapman, Porter, Lodge, &c. gives Anthony Munday the praise of being "our best plotter," a distinction that excited the spleen of Ben Jonson in his *Case is Altered*, particularly as he was omitted.

Nearly all the existing information respecting Anthony Munday's dramatic works is derived from Henslowe's papers. At what period he began to write for the stage cannot be ascertained: the earliest date in these MSS. connected with his name is December, 1597, but as he was perhaps a member of the Earl of Oxford's theatrical company before he went abroad, and as he was certainly at Rome prior to 1578, it is likely that he was very early the author of theatrical performances. In the old catalogues, and in Langbaine's *Momus Triumphans*, 1688, a piece called *Fidele and Fortunatus* is mentioned, and such a play was entered at Stationers' Hall, Nov. 12, 1584. There is little doubt that this is the same production, two copies of which have been discovered within the last few years, with the running title of *Two Italian Gentlemen*, that being the second title to *Fidele and Fortunatus* in the Register. Both copies are without title-pages; but to one of them, is prefixed a dedication signed A. M. and we may with tolerable certainty conclude that Anthony Munday was the author or translator of it, and that it was printed about the date of its entry on the Stationers' Books. It is pretty evident that the play now reprinted from the only known edition in 1601, was written considerably before 1597-8, the year when it is first noticed in the accounts of the proprietor of the Rose. The story is treated with a simplicity bordering upon rudeness, and historical facts are perverted just as suited the purpose of the writer. Whether we consider it as contemporary with, or preceding the productions of the same class by Shakespeare, it is a relic of high interest, and nearly all the sylvan portions of the play, in which Robin Hood and his "merry men" are engaged, are of no ordinary beauty. Some of the serious scenes