

**SONNETS AND  
MISCELLANEOUS  
VERSE**

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Sonnets and miscellaneous verse by Sir Philip Sidney & Mary Sidney Herbert Pembroke & Matthew Roydon

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**SIR PHILIP SIDNEY & MARY SIDNEY  
HERBERT PEMBROKE & MATTHEW ROYDON**

**SONNETS AND  
MISCELLANEOUS  
VERSE**



Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnets and Miscellaneous Verse

Mary Sidney, Countess  
of Pembroke

Hymn to Astræa, etc.

Matthew Roydon

Friend's Passion for his Astrophel

*Sidneian showers*

*Of sweet discourse, whose powers*

*Can crown old Winter's head with flowers.*

CRASHAW: *Wishes.*

J. R. Tutin

Hull

1905

*Limited to 250 Copies*

## Sir Philip Sidney

(1554-1586)

*Astrophel . . .*

*Th' admir'd mirror, glory of our Isle,  
Thou far-far-more than mortal man, whose style  
Struck more men dumb to hearken to thy song  
Than Orpheus' harp or Tully's golden tongue.  
To him (as right) for wit's deep quintessence,  
For honour, valour, virtue, excellence,  
Be all the garland, crown his tomb with bay,  
Who spake as much as e'er our tongue can say.*

WILLIAM BROWNE: *Britannia's Pastorals*

llk. II. Song ii. ll. 247-256.

## Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke

(1561-1621)

*Urania, sister unto Astrophel,  
In whose brave mind, as in a golden coffer,  
All heavenly gifts and riches lock'd are;  
More rich than pearls of Ind, or gold of Ophir,  
And in her sex more wonderful and rare.*

SPENSER: *Colin Clout's Come Home Agoi*».

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## Prefatory Note

THIS little volume has been compiled in the hope that it will supply—in some measure, at any rate—what is unquestionably a felt need. For though the name of Sir Philip Sidney is as familiar in the ears of Englishmen “as household words,” and he himself deservedly honoured as one of the most chivalrous and romantic figures in our country’s history; and though his reputation as a writer of graceful and “poetic” prose is sufficiently well established,—it cannot be said that his verse has yet received the recognition which is its due. True, anthologists have familiarised the general reader with a few of the more notable of the *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets, while at least one other poem of Sidney’s, in quasi-sonnet form—the exquisite lines from the *Arcadia*, commencing, “My true love hath my heart”—has taken its place among the most beautiful of our national songs. Still, the bulk of Sidney’s verse—and in particular the lyrical part of it—is known to comparatively few save the lovers of that glorious legacy which Elizabethan England bequeathed to us three centuries ago. It may be that *Astrophel and Stella* has suffered—in regard to later appreciation of its beauty and its power—by reason of those very characteristics which stamp it as so distinctive a product of its writer and its age:—its closely imitative quality; its burden of poetical “conceits”; its author’s fondness for the “swelling phrase”; its aloofness from the more humanising realities of the ordinary lover’s passion; and the further fact of its kinship in style and literary character with the *Arcadia*. Nevertheless, it remains true that Sidney has yet to come into the poetical kingdom that is his by every literary and artistic right.

Of the story commonly supposed to be unfolded in the famous sonnet-sequence which has been so largely laid under contribution in the accompanying selection,

## Prefatory Note

and which takes rank second only to the greatest of that splendid Elizabethan line, it is not the place here to speak in detail. Regarding with disfavour, as the present editor does, the theory of the serious and intimately autobiographical significance of these poems, of which so much has been made by many latter-day writers, he has not scrupled, where necessary, to separate them from their context, and to let each sonnet speak for itself under a title of his own devising. In the case also of the majority of the remaining pieces, it may be remarked, the titles are the present writer's own. He trusts, however, that the liberty he has thus taken may not be regarded as in any sense derogatory to the genius of the maker of the poems themselves.

Mary Sidney, whose name has come down to us inextricably intertwined with that of her illustrious and devoted brother, is represented by her two extant original productions in verse. Apart from her memorable association with Sir Philip in regard to the latter's famous pastoral romance, and to their joint authorship of a metrical version of the Psalter; apart, moreover, from the loveliness of her own character,—Mary Sidney merits grateful recognition and remembrance as a bountiful and disinterested patroness of poets—among whom was the writer represented in the concluding section of this booklet—and as, in point of time, the first English authoress of repute.

The trio enumerated on our title-page is completed by the name of Matthew Roydon (*d.* 1588-1622), a writer of no little distinction in his day, whose *Elegy*—given here in its entirety, notwithstanding its unequal character, though usually represented in quotation by a few of the more musical and smoothly-flowing of its stanzas—was one of the most notable contributions to that rich stream of obituary verse which flowed in so full a flood from Zutphen's battlefield, and which Spenser himself augmented with his own melodious lament for the beloved and much-mourned "Astrophel."

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE,  
August 1905.

H. KELSEY WHITE.

# Sir Philip Sidney

## I. Sonnets and Quatorzains

### Heart's Transcript

*Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,  
That she, dear She, might take some pleasure of my  
    pain,  
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her  
    know,  
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—  
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;  
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain;  
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burned  
    brain.  
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's  
    stay;  
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's  
    blows;  
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.  
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my  
    throes,  
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,—  
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "Look in thy heart, and  
    write."*

*(Astrophel and Stella, I.)*