

**MORE LYRICS FROM
THE SONG-BOOKS OF
THE ELIZABETHAN AGE**

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More Lyrics from the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age by A. H. Bullen

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A. H. BULLEN.



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PREFACE.

SOME months ago I issued a collection of "Lyrics from the Song-books of the Elizabethan Age," which was intended to serve as a companion volume to the Poetical Miscellanies published in England at the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. As many of the choicest poems in that collection were unknown even to specialists, I was confident that the value of my anthology would be recognized; and my expectations were not deceived. While the book was passing through the press I had already begun to go over the ground again, and I soon found that materials for a second collection—equal in interest to the first—were growing upon my hands. The present volume is not large, but it represents no inconsiderable amount of labour and research, for I have made it my aim to include only such poems as are, in Izaak Walton's phrase, "choicely good." I shall not reprint the two volumes of my anthology in their present form; but, pursuing my refining process, I shall discard

about one-third of the contents of the two series, and shall publish the remaining two-thirds in a single volume for the use of that wider public to which I have not hitherto appealed.

In the preface to the former collection I endeavoured to bring to notice the claims of a true poet, who has been too long neglected—Thomas Campion. It gives me pleasure to know that my efforts have been successful; and I am convinced that no future historians of English poetry will venture, as their predecessors have done, to ignore a lyrist who is worthy to rank with Shelley and Burns. I have read Campion's song-books many times, always with increased delight. He holds among Elizabethan song-writers the place that is held by Meleager in the Greek Anthology: for tenderness and for depth of feeling, for happiness of phrase and for chaste artistic perfection, he is supreme. One of his contemporaries, John Davies of Hereford, who was himself a genuine poet, though he wrote far too much and seldom did himself justice, addressed to Campion a sonnet which contains words of neat and appropriate praise:—

“ Never did lyrics' more than happy strains,
Strained out of Art by Nature so with ease,
So purely hit the moods and various veins
Of music and her hearers as do these.
So thou canst cure the body and the mind,
Rare doctor, with thy two-fold soundest art :

Hippocrates hath taught thee the one kind,
 Apollo and the Muse the other part :
 And both so well that thou with both dost please,
 The mind with pleasure and the corps with ease."

"Strained out of Art by Nature so with ease!"
 Davies has here just hit the mark. As we read
 Campion's lyrics we feel that the poet could with-
 out effort beat out of our rough English speech
 whatever music he chose. Whether he is pen-
 sively contemplating the flight of Time (p. 19), or
 treads the downs with the Fairy-queen Proserpina
 (p. 42), or sings an epithalamium that Catullus
 might have envied (p. 78), or falls prostrate at the
 throne of grace (p. 126),—to every varying mood the
 lyre-strings are responsive. Never a false or jarring
 note ; no cheap tricks and mannerisms ; everywhere
 ease and simplicity. From Campion's song-books¹ I

¹ In the former collection I tentatively assigned the publi-
 cation of Campion's "Third and Fourth Books of Airs" to
 the year 1613. Mr. Barclay Squire, of the British Museum,
 who has given me much friendly aid in my researches, points
 out to me that the date of publication could not have been
 earlier than 1617. The "Third Book" is dedicated to Sir
 Thomas Mounson (or Monson), and in the dedicatory address
 Campion writes :—

"Since now those clouds, that lately overcast
 Your fame and fortune, are dispersed at last ;
 And now since all to you fair greetings make,
 Some out of love and some for pity's sake ;
 Shall I but with a common style salute
 Your new enlargement, or stand only mute ?