

**THE POETICAL WORKS OF  
ROBERT HERRICK. VOL. I:  
HESPERIDES, OR THE WORKS  
BOTH HUMANE & DIVINE OF  
ROBERT HERRICK**

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The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick. Vol. I: Hesperides, or The Works both Humane & Divine of Robert Herrick by Robert Herrick

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*Robert Hearick*

THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
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ROBERT HERRICK.

VOL. I.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

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ROBERT HERRICK, to the variety and fertility of whose genius we are indebted for the following volumes, was descended in a direct line, by the father's side, from Robert Eyrick of Houghton, a gentleman of an ancient family in Leicestershire, who lived about the middle of the fifteenth century. His intermediate ancestors, of whom an elaborate account may be found in Nichols's *History of the County of Leicester*,<sup>1</sup> were Thomas Eyrick, who settled in Leicester, and became a member of the corporation of that city in 1511—John Eyrick, who was admitted a freeman of Leicester in 1535,

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. II. p. 615-631.

and afterwards held the office of mayor—and Nicholas Heryck, who settled as a goldsmith in Cheapside, London, in 1556, and in 1582 married Julian, daughter of William Stone, Esq. of Segenhoe, in Bedfordshire. This lady brought her husband five sons and two daughters. Robert, the fourth son of Nicholas and Julian, and author of *HESPERIDES*, was born in 1591.<sup>1</sup>

We have his own authority for assigning Cheapside as the place of his birth :

The golden Cheapside, where the earth  
Of Julian Herrick, gave me birth.

His baptism is recorded to have taken place at St Vedast, Foster-Lane, on the 24th of August, 1591, and it is likely that much

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<sup>1</sup> The orthography of his surname seems to have undergone various changes. The names of his earlier ancestors are spelled thus, *Ericke*, *Eyricke*, *Eyreke*, *Eyrick*. His father adopted the name of *Heryck*, or *Heyrick*. While at the University our poet spelled his name *Hearick*; but at a later period, in publishing the *Hesperides*, he took the name of *Herrick*, by which he is now generally known.



of his youth was spent in London. No anecdotes are preserved of the earlier period of his life. It is probable, that his education as a boy was somewhat neglected. His father was not wealthy, and the necessary demands of a numerous family, must have deprived him of the means of bestowing a liberal education upon his sons.

Fortunately for Robert Herrick, when he was about twenty-two years of age, he attracted the notice, and obtained the patronage of his uncle, Sir William Heyrick. This gentleman placed him at College, and assisted in supporting him there for several years. It was long a matter of doubt, to which of the Universities he belonged, but Nichols<sup>1</sup> has ascertained in a satisfactory manner, that he was entered as a Fellow Commoner of St John's College, Cambridge, in 1615. He remained there for three years, during which he applied with great ardour to the studies he had formerly

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<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the County of Leicester*, Vol. II. p. 631.

neglected. The expences of the College, however, exceeded his means, and he seems to have felt deeply and anxiously his inability to procure books. "My studie craves but your assistance," he says in writing to his uncle, "to furnish hir with books, wherein she is most desirous to laboure. Blame not her modest boldness, but suffer the aspersions of your love to distill upon her; and next to Heaven, she will consecrate hir laboures unto you; and because that *Time* hath devoured some years, I am the more importunate in the craving."<sup>1</sup> Herrick's demands upon the liberality of his uncle were generally successful, and probably the more so, that their invariable object was to obtain the means of prosecuting his education with success. Among his other pursuits at this period, he devoted much of his time to the poets of Greece and of Rome. Of the former, his favourites appear to have been Homer, Pindar, and Anacreon—Of the latter,

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<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the County of Leicester*, Vol. II. p. 631.

—— Stately Virgil, witty Ovid, by  
 Whom faire Corinna sits, and doth comply  
 With yvorie wrists his laureat head, and steeps  
 His eye in dew of kisses while he sleeps;  
 Then soft Catullus, sharp-fang'd Martial,  
 And tow'ring Lucan, Horace, Juvenal,  
 And snakie Persius.<sup>1</sup>

There are few better specimens of classical translation in our language, than Herrick's *Dialogue betwixt Horace and Lydia*, and his *Cheat of Cupid, or the Ungentle Guest*.

In 1618, Herrick turned his thoughts to the study of the law, and wrote to his uncle for advice upon the subject, complaining at the same time of the expence of St John's College, and expressing a desire to remove to Trinity Hall. "I make known my thoughts," he says, "and modestly crave your counsell whether it were better for me to direct my study towards the lawe or not."<sup>2</sup> His wishes were acquiesced in by

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<sup>1</sup> *Hesperides*, Vol. II. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of the County of Leicester*, ut sup.