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To Revere Osler

By CAROL WIGHT, '19, Ph.D., 1922

"Sidney's Sister, Pembroke's Mother:" A Consideration of the Elizabethan Woman in Her Sphere as a Patron of Learning

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TO REVERE OSLER

*(On the occasion of the creation of the Tudor and Stuart Club in his
memory, Homewood, January, 1923)*

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It is not fancy that they never die,
Who hold a heritage in things unseen
Which are eternal. So this English world
Is richer for your life; a gentler air
Now blows through English skies and kindlier suns
Warm England's earth with which you now are one—

For all the world where England walks is one—
A world men could not knowingly let die,
That garners from the gold of setting suns
The wealth of deathless dawns. Your spirit unseen,
Nurtured on pure Elizabethan air,
Bids us hold fast our heritage—the world

Shakespeare enriched and Spenser sang, the world
Milton immortalized. These worlds are one.
Tudor and Stuart breathe one English air.
Kings come and go—the Kingdom cannot die.
The scarlet stream of kinship flows unseen,
As constant in its course as is the sun's.

And as we see no splendor like the sun's,
We know naught nobler than this English world,
A spiritual world most glorious though unseen,
Buildd of lives whereof your life is one,
Sharing its immortality—for to die
Is not of lives that wing God's higher air.

And you have bid us breathe God's higher air
And quicken our lives like yours at those bright suns
Of English song that have not lived to die,
So we may help to mould that loftier world
Which shall unfold, when earth at last is one,
The coming of God's Kingdom now unseen,

Which is eternal. So may strength unseen
Uplift our thoughts from earth's ignobler air
And like our language make our purpose one.
As star-strewn worlds are formed from burning suns,
So from these burning suns of song a world
Shall form—an English world that shall not die.

They shall not die, eternal and unseen,
Your dreams of loftier suns, of larger air,
One with God's world and with God's purpose one.

“SIDNEY’S SISTER, PEMBROKE’S
MOTHER:” A CONSIDERATION OF THE
ELIZABETHAN WOMAN IN HER SPHERE
AS A PATRON OF LEARNING¹

BY FELIX E. SCHELLING, PH.D., LITT.D., LL.D.

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IT IS an unusual pleasure which you have offered in asking that I give this, the first public lecture, as I understand it to be, before a Club not only dedicated to the period of English literature to which I have given much of my time, but founded and endowed by one who was at once an eminent man of science and a devoted lover of literature. I have always felt that it was a peculiar honor to have been personally acquainted with the late Sir William Osler. He was possessed of a charming faculty of making his guest, even of the moment, feel himself chosen from among the host of friends which were Sir William’s on two continents; for, with you, as with each other, he was wholly and courteously yours. Two moments of touch with him are vivid in my recollection: the day when meeting me, then a very young man, in our University Club in Philadelphia, when I had but recently recovered from an illness which had given my friends anxiety, he looked at me with a professional eye and, putting his hand on my arm, said: “There is a long and useful life before you.” The other was a year or two before the war, when I was one of his guests at the Atheneum Club in London and he sat among us, the kindly, genial, delightful host. Pity it is that sorrow and bereavement should have come to one so generous, so bountiful, so kind in deed to others. And beautiful it is that he

¹ Address delivered under the auspices of the Tudor-Stuart Club, May 11, 1923.

should have remembered in bereavement the furtherance of letters and the maintenance of an appreciation for good literature in this, your Johns Hopkins, which he so dearly loved among the several universities which he honored with his sojourn and his learning. I congratulate you on the foundation which is yours. It should—and I know will—grow to be one of the choicest ornaments of this great university, upholding those fine standards of scholarship and those leadings into a higher culture which Johns Hopkins was among the foremost of our American universities to recognize and cherish.

My theme, this afternoon, is the Elizabethan titled lady in her dignity and power to foster high ideals, in her place as patron and encourager of letters, and in the function by which she added, in the degree of her ability, to the splendid chorus of song, the wealth of drama, and the spirit of the devotion of her time. There were several noble ladies who fulfilled in some sort these conditions. To one or other of them many important contemporary books were inscribed; and, again and again, were they sung and sonneted by the poets. Some are charmingly and allegorically figured by Spenser, with other ladies of Elizabeth's court, in *Colin Clouts Come Home Again*. But without enumeration here, none so completely fulfills our conditions of a patron, a writer herself, and an encourager of letters, as does the sister of the renowned Sir Philip Sidney, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, who long survived her heroic brother and that grave honorable gentleman, her husband, Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke. It is a commentary on the mutations of time that the two noble sons who were the product of this union, William Herbert, who succeeded to his father's earldom, and his brother, Philip, Earl of Montgomery, are best remembered as the two noble patrons of the drama to whom was dedicated the greatest single volume in secular English literature—the first folio of Shakespeare's collected plays.

But it is not my purpose in what is to follow to tie you to a mere enumeration of the particulars of the life of Mary Herbert, interesting as many of these particulars are. Lady Pembroke touched Elizabethan life at many points, some influentially; and through kinship, association, and patronage, her relations with men of letters in her day were many. She stands, as I hope to make clear to you, the centre, if not altogether the guiding spirit, of a group of writers, who, in a sense, maintained the aristocratic and cultivated traditions in which the lamented Sir Philip had conceived and dreamed of a future for English literature; and it was not her fault that, wanting her brother's brilliant experimental and adventurous temper, she should have been unable to realize his dreams. It is, then, not only Lady Pembroke, the collaborator and reviser of the *Arcadia*, the sharer in her brother's literary plans and aspirations that shall concern us; but the Lady Pembroke whose patronage sustained the literary efforts of men like Breton and Daniel, next to Spenser and alongside of Drayton, quite the most popular poet of his day; the Lady Pembroke whose example in the translation of contemporary French tragedy begot a little group of dramas in protest against the amateurishness of the contemporary London stage and beguiled even so successful a playwright as Thomas Kyd, the author of the enormously popular *Spanish Tragedy*, into experiment in the manner of ancient and sanctioned usage.

It is a mistake into which none will fall who know somewhat of this old age, to think that the position of women in Tudor times was degraded. It was Samuel Johnson, not Ben Jonson, who, hearing of the extraordinary circumstance that a certain young gentlewoman had become quite proficient in Greek, likened such an accomplishment in a woman to "the curiosity of a dog dancing in a doublet." In point of fact the position and education of women deteriorated steadily from the accession of the Stuarts. But, much in contrast, in the reign of Henry VIII, women of

rank and station received a remarkably thorough training, in which such accomplishments as an ability to dance a galliard, to sing madrigals at sight, and perform pavaues and corantoes on the virginals by no means usurped the entire place of a rigorous reading of the classics, Greek as well as Latin, and a current conversancy with French and Italian, and even at times with "High Almain," delectable term for a language so guttural as German. The rigors of the education to which unhappy Lady Jane Grey was subjected are well known and need not be repeated. Queen Elizabeth was not only an accomplished linguist, as the accounts of many a carefully unpremeditated speech of hers in Latin and other foreign languages go to show; she was likewise an exquisite penwoman, and was as proud of the calligraphy of her writings as she was of their graceful ceremoniousness. In the latest book on Queen Elizabeth,² which by the way quite vindicates the great queen of many of the lingering aspersions on her memory, you can see facsimile reproductions of her handwriting and of letters the cleverness and perspicacity of which were equalled by no man of her time or any other. And while the Queen may have been distinguished in her accomplishments according to her station, she was by no means alone among the clever women of her England.

From quite another point of view, I should advise him who would know the Elizabethan woman to read her in the literature of her age. While much of the adulation to which she was subjected rings strange and discordant now—because we pay our adulation in other coin—I find a sincerity, take it all in all, in the eulogistic poetry of the older days which I do not find later. If any modern young woman shall fire with indignation at the patient Griseldas of our older literature and the rampant shrews, tamed to eat out of hand by the prowess of man, I advise that she read Fletcher's comedy of *The Tamer Tamed*, the return match, so to speak, in which Maria, immortal second wife

² J. C. Chamberlin, *The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth*, 1922.

of Petruchio, triumphantly vindicates her sex. And if doubt still persists, make acquaintance with the many Elizabethan leading ladies—shall we call them?—who take life and fate into their own hands and, competently playing the game, worst what is veritably the weaker sex in every encounter. To be quite serious, it was not in idle compliment that Ruskin wrote, in a famous and familiar passage:

Shakespeare has no heroes;—he has only heroines.
The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and failing that, there is none.

There is in Shakespeare no cheap gallantry. His is a faithful replica of the Elizabethan man and woman in the life that he knew so well and reproduced so unerringly. There were three things which healthy Elizabethan society did not know; and these are gallantry, sentimentalism, and cynicism: all of this affects our portraiture of the Elizabethan woman.

When I say that gallantry was unknown to the Elizabethans, perhaps I say too much. It is the cheap and degenerate gallantry of the days of the Restoration, to be sure, that I have in mind, when every man was Nimrod and every woman potentially game of the chase. This was not Elizabethan gallantry, however we recall Sir Walter Raleigh, the puddle, her majesty, and the velvet cloak. The gallantry that identified allegiance to an incomparable sovereign, respect for womanhood, and the protecting spirit which comes to the physically strong at the thought of the weak—such gallantry there was; and it was an admirable union this, begetting the splendid patriotism that rose to the defeat of the Spanish Armada and other heroic deeds by land and sea. But by my two other denials, I stand. There is not a sentimental passage in all Shakespeare, nor yet in Dekker nor Jonson; we must wait until Fletcher and Ford for that. People were too busy, too adventurous, too vividly alive in this period of the adoles-

cence of the English race to turn their thoughts back upon their inner consciousness in pity and mawkish study of the ego. Cynicism was sooner to come, but in Elizabeth's own lifetime as yet there was little of it. Jaques, pondering in the Forest of Arden, is a very gentle cynic; even Hamlet is no real misanthrope, however his world is out of joint. For cynicism, too, we must pass into the reign of James and wait for the full influence of that strange and enigmatic poet, Donne. There are advantages in growing up in a world in which our eyes may still maintain that openness to direct impressions which belongs to childhood, in which their lids have not been contracted by too great a glare of the world to a cynical scrutiny of the conduct of others or narrowed to that absorbing and belittling self-consciousness which we call sentimentalism.

Freedom from all this was Lady Mary's. Born the daughter of Sir Henry Sidney and Mary Dudley, sister of the famous Earl of Leicester, Mary Sidney's childhood combined the advantages of noble ancestry with comparative poverty; for Sir Henry was a man of little wealth and too honest, despite several ambassadorships and the governorship, successively of Ireland and Wales, to amass a fortune. At beautiful Penshurst, in Kent, and at picturesque Ludlow Castle, on the marches of Wales, the young Sidneys passed their childhood, Philip, Robert, Mary, and a younger sister who died early; and, although her marriage with the Earl of Pembroke, a man much her senior and not unscarred with political intrigue, was made by high contracting parties who little consulted the inclinations of the lady, the union turned out remarkably happy. Scrutiny of the acquisitive purposes and intricate negotiations of Elizabethan marriages in high life is not altogether edifying. Mammon largely entered into them; though notwithstanding, a cynic might perhaps remark that the god of gold was often as benign a sovereign in these cases as the giddy young bowman whom he supplanted. The tastes of the earl and his young countess were much in accord. Neither

cared for the glitter of the court, and they joined in their stately Baynard's Castle, on what is now the Thames Embankment, and at their seat at Wilton, in charitable offices and in the patronage of scholarship and religion. We hear of substantial gifts and pensions not only to retainers such as the poet Samuel Daniel, but for the maintenance at the universities on the Pembroke bounty of promising young men like Philip Massinger, later to become a notable dramatic poet. Meres compares Lady Pembroke to Octavia, sister of Augustus and patron of Vergil; and Nash declares that "arts do adorn [her] as a second Minerva, and our poets extol her as the patron of their inventions." In this Lady Pembroke was but following the example of "her own Philip," as she called her brother, who had aided the education of more than one who was needy and had become, by the time of his death, despite the fact that he was far from rich, all but the universal patron of science and letters.

At the mention of the name of Philip Sidney, the lover of literature recalls his exquisite sequence of sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella*, and the transfer in them of Petrarchan lyricism to the romantic circumstances of the poet's own love story. The historian will remember the important services of Sir Philip abroad and the golden opinions which his gracious personality gathered at every hand for his judgment, his courtesy, and his competency in scholarship and statecraft. No truer touchstone of this young idol of his time, for whose untimely death all England mourned, could we find than the often repeated tale of his denial of the draught of water, brought him as he lay mortally wounded, because he saw in a common soldier, even more grievously hurt than himself, a need greater than his own. Sidney, with all his gentleness, was bold even to the criticism of his sovereign; and when the young Earl of Oxford, however his superior in rank, had the impertinence, in a quarrel on the tennis court, to call Sir Philip "a puppy," that fiery young gentleman had to be enjoined by the royal

command to keep the peace and to go into exile from court until he could command his temper. It was at Wilton, not Penshurst, while under the queen's displeasure, that Sir Philip wrote *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, as he called his heroic romance, because it was inspired by her ladyship and owed more, he would have said, to that inspiration and her suggestion than to any inventiveness of his own. It is a charming picture this of the young brother and sister, pacing the formal knotted Elizabethan gardens or sitting in the shade of leafy beeches, and yet afar off in their fresh imaginative minds among the unrealities of Arcadian adventure, delighting in the ingenuities of invention and in the flowery and fervid poetical expression in which they clothed their fantastic thoughts. The scholar will tell you that the *Arcadia* was borrowed ultimately from the Greek romances and point you parallels in Montemayor and Sannazaro; and the precisian will explain that its luxuriant prose is a usurpation by that useful every day medium of the functions of poetry. Of course such a romance as this was never finished. And there was no reason in the world why it ever should be. It straggles on with the curves, the new directions, the involutions, and the complexities of a beautiful, flowering vine. You or I might bind up a fallen spray here or twist back an exuberant shoot; but the shears of criticism only lop its foliage and its blossoms to leave behind a twisted and contorted stalk.

Neither the *Arcadia* nor any other writing of Sidney was printed in his lifetime. Such a thing was quite unthinkable in a gentleman of his station; and it has been said that a suggestion to Sir Philip that one of his passionate sonnets should appear in print might have cost the impertinent suggester precipitation down a flight of stairs. The lyrics which Sidney wrote he regarded as purely a private affair; and however well the select circle of the court might know by way of gossip, or in sympathy perhaps, of his attachment for Lady Rich, the Stella of his sonnets, the matter was no business of a reading public. The degree to which

any of the Elizabethan sequences of sonnets is to be conceived of as actually autobiographical, remains one of the moot questions of modern scholarship. The determination of the point at which Sidney's poetry lies between the extremes of a story little to his credit and a species of Anglicized Petrarchanism utterly unautobiographical, happily does not concern us here.

On Sidney's death, Lady Pembroke cherished his manuscripts, we may feel sure, with the same wealth of sisterly affection which she had bestowed upon him living. Much of his poetry now came indirectly and surreptitiously into print, manuscripts being readily procurable; for few about the cultivated and gallant court of Elizabeth who cared for poetry, would lose an opportunity to transcribe verses of the celebrated Sir Philip into the commonplace books, as they were called, which everyone pretending to culture habitually kept. In 1596, therefore, the Countess procured the publication of the *Arcadia* in what has now become for bibliophiles, as well as lovers of literature, a precious little quarto; and she lived to see five more editions follow. The question of Lady Pembroke's personal share in the *Arcadia* is set forth, we may well believe faithfully, in the printer's address to the reader, prefixed to a late folio edition in which we read:

It moved that noble lady to whose honor consecrated, to whose protection it was committed, to take in hand the wiping away those spots wherewith the beauties thereof were unworthily blemished. But, as often repairing a ruinous house, the mending of some old part occasioneth the making of some new; so here her honorable labor, began in correcting the faults, ended in supplying the defects; by the view of what was ill done, guided to the consideration of what was not done. . . . It is now by more than one interest *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*; done, as it was, for her; as it is by her. Neither shall these pains be the last (if no unexpected accident cut off her determination) which the everlasting love of her excellent brother will make her consecrate to his memory.

Turning now to other matters, there is a well known passage in Sir Philip Sidney's famous little tract, *The De-*

fense of Poesie, in which he praises that stiff and amateurish production, *Gorboduc*, the earliest English tragedy of regular construction, and passes severe strictures on the popular stage for its want of decorum and its failure to preserve the classical unities. Sidney was writing about 1582; *Gorboduc* was already twenty years old, as it had been acted before Elizabeth by students of the Inner Temple two years before the birth of Shakespeare. Inconsiderate comment on Sidney still sometimes inquires: Why was that keen mind oblivious to the glories of Elizabethan literature and drama? And the obvious answer is that in 1582 there were as yet few such glories; Marlowe, Kyd, to say nothing of Shakespeare, all were yet to come. Sidney was dead in 1586; the earliest successes of the popular tragic stage were just then beginning; even the vogue of Lyly and Spenser's greater fame, neither was as yet. With all his conservative and aristocratic tastes, Sidney was an experimentalist in literature, however he believed that the future of English poetry and drama lay less in the affectation of mere novelty than in an effort to try out every lead. Sidney had attempted classical meters in English; he had imitated Italian madrigals, sestinas, terza rima, ottava rima, and what not; and he believed implicitly, as we have just seen, in the acceptance of classical usages for the cultivated drama of school and court which he looked forward hopefully to see develop in England, as it had already developed in Italy and France. Wherefore when we find the Countess of Pembroke translating a tragedy of French Robert Garnier, on Antony, preserving its severe Senecan features, we recognize at once that her ladyship was only attempting to sustain the avowed ideals of her brother, although they were now at least a generation out of date. The Countess of Pembroke's *Antonie* is no unusual specimen of its dreary kind; the interesting thing is that it should have heralded, at so late a date, a group of like plays, all of them penned by courtly writers of the little circle which surrounded her ladyship: Daniel, her poet, Kyd, who dedicated his trans-

lation of Garnier's *Cornelia* to her, Fulke Greville, her brother's boyhood friend and biographer, each attempted this stilted tragic art, possibly less in any conscious rivalry of the stage of Marlowe and Shakespeare than in protest against its discard of their beloved classical usages and examples; for few, if any, of these productions were acted, despite the genuine poetic value of several of them. It speaks volumes for the influence of Lady Pembroke and the persistency of the Sidnean ideals of literary art that this group of courtly and reactionary tastes should have written, tied to the ancients at a time so late. Had their influence prevailed, as similar influences continued to prevail in France, our drama might now chronicle an English *Cornelle* and Racine in place of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Fletcher.

There are other things to show how assiduously Lady Pembroke trod in the footsteps of her brother. A pleasing chapter in the annals of Elizabeth tells of her royal progresses, as they were called, in season of fine weather, from noble house to noble house of her liege subjects. There could be, of course, no greater honor than this, the entertainment of the queen. And some there were who essayed it to the impoverishment of their fortunes; for Elizabeth was possessed of little appreciation of the blessedness of the giver. The elaboration of some of these royal entertainments was extraordinary; and her majesty seems never to have wearied of speeches of welcome, decorative pageantry, allegorical tableaux, and dramatic performances of every conceivable variety. As long ago as 1578, Sidney had devised for his uncle Leicester's entertainment of Elizabeth at Wansted Garden, the earl's seat in Waltham Forest, a lively little pastoral scene, *The Lady of May*; and three years later he and his friend, Fulke Greville, were conspicuous participants in a sumptuous mock tournament, likewise provided for the royal pleasure. Towards the end of 1599, it appears that the Countess of Pembroke had the honor of becoming the queen's hostess on her majesty's visit into Wiltshire.

Her ladyship, on this occasion, followed once more her brother's lead, writing with her own hand a *Pastoral Dialogue in Praise of Astrea*—who is Elizabeth of course—, in which, to be quite frank, neither the form, by this time quite outworn, nor the quality of its poetical expression successfully sustained the undoubted loyalty which prompted the effort.

In the matter of minor poetry, I am not altogether sure that a fellow feeling always makes us wondrous kind; although our own contemporary minor poets do seem to tend to a certain flocking together in small groups, much sustained, we may well believe, by mutual admiration. However, as to Lady Pembroke, many were the minor poets who dedicated their efforts to her kindly encouragement. Abraham Fraunce, belated producer of that abomination, English hexameters; Charles Fitzgeoffrey, Latin epigrammatist; Davies of Hereford, mild, effusive satirist; Dr. Moffatt, who wrote "a poem" on the silkworm; Henry Lok, unrepentant, after the perpetration of several hundred devotional sonnets characterized solely by piety; these are some of them. Donne, the eminent Dean of Saint Paul's, was the personal friend of the countess and wrote to her several fine occasional poems. Nicholas Breton, graceful pastoralist, dedicated several of his verse pamphlets to her. But it was Samuel Daniel who was, by all odds, the most complete and typical outcome of the Sidney-Pembroke circle. Tutor to the nobility, especially to several noble ladies, a courtier, conservative, reticent, well bred, accomplished, Daniel represents in his smooth and uniformly adequate poetry the development which Sidney had presaged for the art he so loved. It was Daniel who earned from his contemporaries the adjective "well-linguaged," from the purity and grace of his diction; and as we read his delicately wrought sonnets, his graceful pastorals, his carefully modelled classic drama and grave occasional poetry, we recognize in him the very incarnation of the Sidnean spirit. It is in Daniel's noble poem, *Musophilus*, in praise of learning, that we find

that remarkable outburst of prophecy as to our English tongue which places him among the poets of vision. Maintaining the excellence of English and conjuring us that we be not careless of it, our birthright, the poet at last bursts forth:

And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
The treasures of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
T' enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
What worlds in th' yet unformèd occident
May 'come refin'd with th' accents that are ours?
Or who can tell for what great work in hand
The greatness of our style is now ordained?

It has been said that in a wider sense the literary associations of the Herberts may be extended to include practically every important book in general literature published in England from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* to Milton's *Comus*; and in that wider range must not be forgotten the cultivated Lady Magdalen Herbert, mother of three notable sons: the conceited poet autobiographer, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Sir Henry Herbert, busy Master of the Revels and licencer of plays, and the holy poet, George Herbert, whose beautiful devotional poetry still finds place in the hearts of the devout. Lady Magdalen Herbert was the friend and correspondent of Dr. Donne when he was Dean of St. Paul's, and, left a widow early, devoted herself to the education of her younger sons, residing the while at Cambridge for the purpose and mingling in learned as well as noble circles. Her husband was a kinsman of the Pembrokes, however in a younger branch of the Herberts.

Let us now turn back to William Herbert, the Pembroke of our title and first of the two noble dedicatees of the famous first folio edition of the plays of Shakespeare. An earlier association of these two names than this has been sought in the attempt to identify his lordship with the mysterious "Mr. W. H." who figures as "the only begetter" in the cabalistic dedication of the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare.

But his lordship was known before his father's death as "Lord Herbert" and, before we accept this identification, it is to be remembered that there might be citation before Star Chamber with pains and penalties to such as would dare so to derogate, especially in print, from the proper title of the son of a peer. Moreover, if we accept the notion that "Mr. W. H." was really William, Lord Herbert, Shakespeare, at any reasonable date for the writing of the *Sonnets*, must be represented as urging a boy of fourteen or fifteen to hasten his marriage and settlement in life, an advocacy of early wedlock outstripping even the Shakespearean example.

Returning to the dedication of the first folio of Shakespeare's plays, we are on more certain ground. As we turn to the familiar words of the epistle dedicatory, we are at once given pause at the obsequiousness, if not the absolute servility, of its tone. Their lordships, Pembroke and Montgomery, are addressed in words to which we can only apply the term of worship. There is "rashness" and "fear" in the enterprise and "a kind of religious address," to quote the actual words. Though we are assured that "the meanest of things are made more precious when they are dedicated to temples." But we learn, too, that their lordships had been "pleased to consider these trifles"—such as *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*—"somewhat;" and that "so much were your lordships' likings of their several parts when they were acted, as (that) before they were published, the volume asked to be yours." The age had proceeded far in drama as contrasted with the frigidities of Lady Pembroke's translations; and her sons in their appreciation clearly had advanced with the age. It is good to know that these noble lords had "prosecuted with favor," as the quaint phrase goes, the dramatist whose genius more than anything else has made their age and language famous; and thus to realize how the whirligig of time has wrought in his revenges. As we read these old dedications with their prostrations of talent and even genius before rank,

we may console ourselves that many an insolent dedicatee has now only this slender claim on remembrance. After all, however, we may make too much of all this. The language of eulogy, of compliment and adulation is not unlike fashionable attire, a thing elegant and approved in its time; but quaint to the degree of the ridiculous ever after.

One great poet seems not to have been drawn into the Sidnean circle until late. And strange to say this was Ben Jonson to whom has been attributed the fine epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke, a line of which has served for the title of this lecture. Jonson, with all his love of learning and with the host of his titled friends, was in many respects antithetical to the Sidnean ideals. Where Sidney, as with respect to the ancients, had been imitative and experimental, Jonson was assimilative and made what he abundantly borrowed his own. Sidney's attitude was that of the enthusiastic amateur; Jonson's that of the assiduous scholar to whom learning had become a vocation. As to Daniel, Jonson had recognized almost from the first, in Daniel's Italianate poetry and manner of the courtier-retainer, an object marked for the bolts of his ridicule. However, there seems little question that when the printers and the actor friends of Shakespeare were projecting the publication of his collected plays, it was Jonson whom they procured to write this very dedication of which I have just spoken, together with the precious "address to the reader" and other prefatory matter. Nor was this unnatural. Jonson had already dedicated "the ripest of my studies," as he called his *Epigrams*, to William, Earl of Pembroke. One of the epigrams is addressed to his lordship, and a fine poem of Jonson's *Forest* dilates on the hospitality and rural delights of Penshurst, in these later days of King James the seat of Robert, Earl of Leicester, the brother of Sidney. Both the hospitality and the delights of Penshurst, we have reason to know, Jonson had more than once enjoyed. But this intimacy was with a younger generation than that of our Countess of Pembroke.

Her ladyship survived to the year 1621; and her later literary activities were devoted to charitable offices and religious exercises. Lady Pembroke had long since translated from the French of her brother's friend, Plessis de Mornay, her *Discourse of Life and Death*; and she now gave her attention to the revision and completion of a translation of the *Psalms*, long ago begun by Sir Philip. This version resisted print until just a hundred years ago, when a limited edition was published by a bibliophile, one of the laborious tribe that spare us none of the neglected leavings of genius. But the *Psalms* of the Sidneys had existed during all these years in several manuscript copies, especially in private hands, and their translation appears to have been employed in several noble families for private worship in preference to the plebeian version in print of Sternhold and Hopkins; a pretty commentary, by the way, on class consciousness carried into poetry and devotion. As to the translation of the *Psalms* in these old times, I should like, on proof, to chronicle the only prince, the single nobleman, the one literary lady or every-day poet who did not, at one time or another, translate at least three or four of the *Psalms of David*. Such a man or woman would be conspicuous in his or her time. King James translated psalms, and Queen Elizabeth, of course; and so, by the way, did my Lord Bacon, and very badly, that being his chief claim to a place among poets. To return to Lady Pembroke, I do not really know the poetical value of her translation of the *Psalms*. In these matters I confess that, like Charles Lamb with respect to the soliloquy, "To be or not to be," from very familiarity, I do not know whether this is good, bad, or indifferent poetry. An excellent old writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, some eighty years ago, declared of Lady Pembroke's efforts in this kind: "For melodious cadence, variety of metre, and faithfulness of translation, they will hardly be found to be equalled by any other English version." Let us gallantly, or shall I say charitably, let it go at that.

The ordinary cultivated lover of English poetry, asked to name the best epitaph, not in the English language perhaps, but at least in our elder age, would doubtless reply: "Why Jonson's epitaph about 'Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,' to be sure." And he would quote:

Underneath this marble hearse,
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Wise and fair and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

Now these famous lines occur in none of Ben Jonson's works until they were included by Whalley in his edition of that poet, on the principle that they are so good that nobody but Jonson could possibly have written them. This highly scientific method of the attribution of authorship is not unknown to our own enlightened times. Although it is not to be denied that the epigram is in Jonson's mode, on the other hand these lines do occur in a holographic manuscript volume of William Browne of Tavistock, an excellent poet who enjoyed the intimacy of the Earl of Pembroke, the countess's son; and he very well may have written them. Another stanza is sometimes added, surmised to be the addition of Pembroke himself. I shall not quote these verses to show how bad they are, although that might be a reason for quoting them. If they were written in lieu of the monument which was never erected to the memory of Lady Pembroke in Salisbury cathedral where she was interred, they are but a poor recompense for so unfilial a neglect.

It must not be supposed that Lady Pembroke was without rivals in her patronage of the poets. An even more universal patroness of learning was Lucy Farington, for the celebration of whose marriage at court with Edward Russell, Earl of Bedford, in 1594, there are some who think that Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was to Lady Bedford that Ben Jonson paid, in one of his

epigrams, quite the finest compliment to perfect womanhood in the language. As this epigram sets forth the contemporary ideal of the patroness of letters as well, I shall make no apology for quoting it. It runs:

This morning, timely rapt with holy fire,
 I thought to form unto my zealous Muse,
 What kind of creature I could most desire
 To honor, serve, and love, as poets use.
 I meant to make her fair and free and wise,
 Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great,
 I meant the day-star should not brighter rise,
 Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat.
 I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,
 Hating that solemn vice of greatness, pride;
 I meant each softest virtue, there should meet,
 Fit in that softer bosom to reside.
 Only a learned and a manly soul
 I purposed her; that should with even powers,
 The rock, the spindle, and the sheers control
 Of destiny; and to spin her own free hours.
 Such when I meant to fain and wished to see,
 My Muse bade, "Bedford write," and *that* was she.

Besides her taste in poetry, Lady Bedford was reported to have been an authority on "ancient medals," which I take it means numismatics. She had, too, the good sense to leave no verse of her own writing behind to be damned with faint praise in a generation which had forgotten her. A like restraint can not be claimed for Lady Mary Wroth. As the daughter of Sidney's brother, Robert, she added to a sympathetic patronage of contemporary literature an ambition to contribute to it. This she at last satisfied in *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, as she called her endeavor to emulate the style and the story of her uncle's *Arcadia*. The title of *Urania* sets forth with much detail her ladyship's relations to the Sidneys and the Pembrokes, the "Countess" being Susan, Countess of Montgomery, Lady Wroth's cousin, also not unsung by poets. There seems to have been some notion at the time that *Urania* reflected certain amorous adventures, not without a basis

in fact, in the court of King James. If true, in this as in any real genius, Lady Mary's romance differs widely from that of her uncle Sidney. She was Jonson's special patron. To her he dedicated his famous play, *The Alchemist*, besides writing several eulogistic poems in her name. Still nearer to Sidney was Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland, his only daughter. There is a fine epistle by Jonson, once more, to this lady in which he asks,

What sin 'gainst your great father's spirit
Were it to think that you should not inherit
His love unto the Muses, when his skill
Almost you have, or may have, when you will?

It does not appear that Lady Rutland seriously exercised her inherited talents. Jonson was a consummate courtier, yet his verses to these fine ladies, with all their compliments and charming things well put, are often serious and always self-respecting.

And Jonson in this, as in so much more, was the measure of his time, however it had fallen away somewhat from the simpler days of his childhood. In Elizabeth's age we find, take it all in all, a fine sense of the obligations of station in this matter of the patronage of letters as well as in the more common associations of life. There is this to be said for the feudal relations of society, they suppress, but they also sustain; and the link that binds their mutual obligations is in its essence a personal one. Where these relations have been superseded by those which are determined almost wholly, as now, by barter and sale, the personal element is reduced to a minimum and the obligations of duty, generosity, and charity all but disappear. The cultivated Elizabethan women who encouraged letters, graciously received the praises of poets, and dabbled in writing as did their lords and husbands and with about equal success, could little have dreamed of such a person, for example, as scandalous Mistress Aphra Behn of Restoration times, the first English professional literary woman, who wrote plays, poetry, fiction with the swagger and abandon of a man,

and eked out a precarious and checkered career by serving her sovereign as an informer and a spy. Even the Matchless Orinda, as she was dubbed by her admiring friends, Aphra's contemporaries, with her salon on the borders of Wales, poetizing to an admiring group of stiffly proper people who masqueraded in the disguises of classical names and tried to behave as nearly as possible like the characters in Honoré D'Urfée's graceful and interminable romance, *L'Astrée*, even this Matchless Orinda would sorely have puzzled my Lady Pembroke. A more comprehensible lady who intervened between these subjects of Elizabeth and of Charles II, was Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, who with the Duke, her husband, delighted in generous benefactions to the old Jonson in the latter years of his life. This interesting couple were not only munificent patrons both before and after the Restoration, but both were ambitious of literary fame. While the Duke appropriately wrote chiefly on horsemanship and fencing, her grace was much addicted to drama. Her comedies, which are veritable curiosities, if little more, show every here and there the guidance of a firmer hand. Even in the world of patronage there must be some compensations, some services rendered; and with the picture of her handsome, imperative, stage-struck grace, haughtily submitting her verbose and ill-considered scenes to the scrutiny of the greatest dramatic poet of his time, habitually testy, but now patient if harassed, we may leave a topic which has strayed out of its bounds.

In conclusion, I am not quite sure that, in such a presence, it is fitting for me to draw a moral to adorn my tale. We are told in these late days with somewhat wearisome repetition that women have at last "arrived;" and that they have come to stay. I do not question woman's arrival; biologically, if not mythologically, she may well have arrived before man. And for my part I sincerely hope that she may be prevailed upon to stay. In education I have never been able to see any good reason why opportunities should be extended to one sex to the exclusion or limitation

of the other. And this does not raise the nice question as to whether the same education, in the same subjects, in the same place, and at the same time, is the only solution of a troublesome problem. As to literature, too, it is no longer a marvel that a woman should write; the marvel is that there are still men left among the poets, the novelists, essayists, editors, and soon perhaps it will be legislators, and let us hope a stateswoman or so as well. And yet, if we are not to be content merely with swarming mediocrity in which, whether the work be that of man, woman, or child, assuredly is of little moment, can we not rise to a higher standard and leave out, at least in this matter of the arts, this oppressive, this ubiquitous question of sex? Moreover, need we all, save for the personal pleasure that is in it, need we all be creative? Is there not a function as necessary in its way to the healthy flourishing of literature, music, and art, all but as important as creation itself? It is a wise dispensation that where there is one born poet there are a hundred who can respond to the thought, the beauty, the significance which he has created, a thousand who may ultimately be reached through that imitative faculty which causes us to like to walk in the wake of those who lead. It is this function of those who lead, whether man or woman, which I want to emphasize in conclusion. We can not all be gracious patrons like Lady Pembroke, receiving homage and bestowing bounty; but we can cultivate our taste, refine our feelings, and so guide our appreciation that we can radiate helpfulness and encourage good art in our power to distinguish it. We can do more; like the Lady Mary, we can live by a great tradition—even granting that hers was a little outworn. Each can raise to himself or herself a standard of taste, an ideal as to sound art and, proving true to it, aid in the measure of his or her ability in a wider diffusion of veritable culture. And woman, in the degree of her more delicate perceptions, her sounder instincts, her more exalted ideals, may remain, let us hope, after all, for the future as she has been heretofore, the truest patron of poetry and the arts.

