



Prose of the English Renaissance

*Selected from early editions
and manuscripts and edited by*

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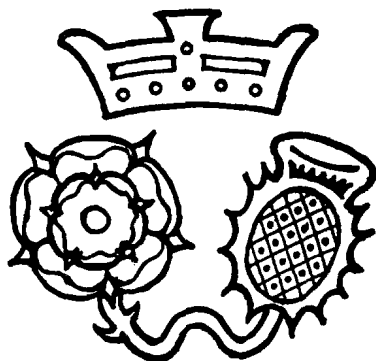
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PREFACE

THIS selection from the rich variety of prose written in England during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was from the beginning designed as a companion volume to J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson's *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, first published in 1929. Soon after that year Professors Hebel and Hudson undertook to edit a volume of the prose of the same period, and a short time later Professor A. Wigfall Green joined them, agreeing to prepare transcriptions of a large body of prose writings from which his collaborators were to make a final selection and occasional augmentation, check the text, and prepare introductions and notes. Before all of Professor Green's manuscript was ready for his fellow editors, Professor Hebel had died, and during the years before Professor Hudson's sudden death in 1944, the pressure of other tasks prevented his doing more than to complete the first drafts of the introductions and notes to three or four of the authors. The share of the editing of this volume that was to have been that of Professors Hebel and Hudson was then taken over by Professor Francis R. Johnson. The responsibility for the selections in the volume, and for the accuracy of the texts, the introductions, and the notes, therefore rests entirely with the surviving editors, and especially with Professor Johnson. They have sought to make the book worthy of its fellowship with the *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, but they assume the full responsibility for this collection of *Prose of the English Renaissance*. The contribution of Professors Hebel and Hudson to the present book consisted almost wholly in setting the plan for the volume rather than in carrying it out.

Since this volume is a companion to *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, we have followed its editorial and typographical policies. Our text is taken from original editions and manuscripts; if, in our opinion, a second or later edition, containing revisions and corrections, more accurately represents the author's final intention, we have followed that edition in preference to the first. The edition used is always indicated at the beginning of the selection; if an edition other than the first has been chosen, the reason for that choice is explained in the introductions and the Notes at the end of the volume. We have rarely found that our text required emendation, but in the few instances in which we have

preferred the reading of another edition or manuscript to that of our basic text, the change has been pointed out in the Notes. In order to identify the precise text used, we have noted, at the end of the introduction, both the number in Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue* (or in Donald Wing's for books printed after 1640) of the edition chosen, and the location of the exemplar we have transcribed.

In modernizing the spelling we have followed the practice of the companion volume of poetry. To have preserved the spelling of the originals would have retained the Elizabethan flavor which is partly lost when the sixteenth century's exuberant freedom in orthography is curbed by modern standardization, and would also have saved us many an editorial decision. But we have been guided by the needs of the modern reader who is not a specialist, and who, coming to Elizabethan literature for the first time, would find himself unnecessarily confused by the carefree inconsistencies of sixteenth-century spelling, which, after all, as often reproduced the idiosyncrasies of the compositor as those of the author. Archaic forms of words which will not puzzle a reader acquainted with the King James version of the Bible we have preserved; likewise elisions (marked with an apostrophe) which, if modernized, would alter the rhythm of the sentence (e.g., "th'intent," not "the intent," for "thentent").

Punctuation we have also modernized, pointing the text in a manner which will best bring out its meaning for the present-day reader. In general, punctuation in the earlier sixteenth-century manuscripts and printed texts is chaotic; moreover, even when punctuation is careful and consistent, as it often is in later texts, the difference between Elizabethan practice and ours in the use of the colon would at first confuse the student. We have therefore frequently replaced the colon by the period, the semicolon, or the comma—whichever stop would best assist the reader in grasping the author's meaning. Furthermore, we have not observed the Renaissance custom of italicizing proper names, but have reserved italics for phrases and quotations from foreign languages. Pronouns referring to the deity we print without capitals except where there is a possibility of mistaken reference.

Our guiding principle in all the modernizing of texts has never been to introduce a rigid consistency alien to Elizabethan habits, but merely to help the student who comes for the first time to a large body of English prose of the Renaissance. If we are to introduce the student to the prose of the period in chronological order—and this is desirable—we must place the most difficult texts, from the point of view of punctuation and spelling, at the beginning, an unsound pedagogical practice. Consequently we have been constrained to modernize most extensively

in the earlier pieces, but felt free to remove these aids later when they seemed to us no longer necessary or desirable. Thus, for example, we have at first followed the twentieth-century practice in reproducing direct conversation, introducing paragraphing and quotation marks; later we have tended to keep to the punctuation of the original, which can by then be followed readily by the student and will no longer diminish his ease and pleasure in reading. Within each selection, however, we have aimed to follow a consistent practice. Indeed, we have made our atonement for impressing so much standardization upon Elizabethan freedom in spelling and punctuation by departing from consistency toward the end of the volume, including one or two carefully printed texts—notably the selection from Browne's *Religio Medici*—exactly as they appeared in the original editions. This gives the student some acquaintance with the actual appearance of the printed texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The several introductions will make clear the practice we have adopted for each author.

Believing that a defect of many prose anthologies lies in the reprinting of numerous short extracts out of their larger contexts, we have adopted the principle of so far as possible including entire works, or unified major sections of works, at the sacrifice of the number of authors who could be represented in a single volume. Wherever we have omitted any part of the original, the fact of this omission is clearly indicated—by hiatus periods for those of a page or less, and by asterisks for those of two pages or more. In the notes we have usually recorded the subjects discussed in the longer of the omitted passages so that the student may have a clear idea of the structure of the work as a whole.

Our choice of the authors and works to be included in this volume has been determined by a desire to illustrate, in the words of writers of the time, the thought of the Tudor-Stuart period in its manifold complexity, as well as to provide examples of the artistic quality of its prose. We have intentionally allotted more space to the Tudor period than to the early seventeenth century because the latter period is more fully represented in the number of anthologies and inexpensive editions available to the student than is the prose of the sixteenth century—especially that which antedates the reign of Elizabeth. In the introduction and notes to each author at the end of the volume, our brief biographical and critical comments have been directed toward illustrating each man's place in the general course of the prose of the English Renaissance. To each introduction we have appended a selected bibliography of the best modern editions and works of critical commentary.

Our debt to the editors and authors of these books, and to the works of other scholars, will often be apparent in our notes; we can only

express the profound sense of gratitude that every scholar must have for the contributions to his own knowledge that have been made by the work of those who have preceded him. Finally, we gladly make a special acknowledgment to Professor William Ringler for his contribution to the introduction and notes on Gosson, and to Dr. Robert Hoopes for his contribution to the introductions and notes on several of the later authors in this volume.

F. R. J.
A. W. G.

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SIR THOMAS MORE

The Introduction and Notes are at page 788

FROM *A fruteful and pleasaunt worke of the beste state of a publyque weale, and of the newe yle called Utopia: written in Latine by Syr Thomas More, knyght, and translated into Englyshe by Raphe Robynson,*
1551

[The first Latin edition was published in 1516]

Utopia

The first book of the communication of Raphael Hythloday concerning the best state of a commonwealth.

THE MOST victorious and triumphant king of England, Henry, the eighth of that name, in all royal virtues prince most peerless, had of late in controversy with the right high and mighty king of Castile weighty matters, and of great importance, for the debatement and final determination²⁰ whereof the King's Majesty sent me ambassador into Flanders, joined in commission with Cuthbert Tunstall, a man doubtless out of comparison, and whom the King's Majesty of late, to the great rejoicing of all men, did prefer to the office of Master of the Rolls, but of this man's praises I will say nothing; not because I do fear that small credence shall be given to the testimony that cometh out of a friend's mouth; but because his virtue and learning be greater and of more excellency than that I am able to praise them: and also in all places so famous, and so perfectly well known, that they need not nor ought not of me to be praised, unless I would seem to shew and set forth the brightness of the sun with a candle,³⁰ as the proverb saith.

There met us at Bruges (for thus it was before agreed) they whom their prince had for that matter appointed commissioners, excellent men all. The chief and the head of them was the margrave (as they call him) of Bruges, a right honorable man; but the wisest and the best spoken of them was George Temsice, provost of Cassel, a man not only by learning but also by nature of singular eloquence, and in the laws profoundly learned: but in reasoning, and debating of matters, what by his natural wit, and what by daily exercise, surely he had few fellows. After that we had once or twice met, and upon certain points or articles could not fully⁴⁰ and thoroughly agree, they for a certain space took their leave of us, and

departed to Brussels, there to know their prince's pleasure. I, in the meantime (for so my business lay), went straight thence to Antwerp.

Whiles I was there abiding, oftentimes among other, but which to me was more welcome than any other, did visit me one Peter Giles, a citizen of Antwerp, a man there in his country of honest reputation, and also preferred to high promotions, worthy truly of the highest. For it is hard to say whether the young man be in learning or in honesty more excellent. For he is both of wonderful virtuous conditions, and also singularly well learned, and towards all sorts of people exceeding gentle; but towards his
 10 friends so kind-hearted, so loving, so faithful, so trusty, and of so earnest affection, that it were very hard in any place to find a man that with him in all points of friendship may be compared. No man can be more lowly or courteous. No man useth less simulation or dissimulation, in no man is more prudent simplicity. Besides this, he is in his talk and communication so merry and pleasant, yea, and that without harm, that, through his gentle entertainment and his sweet and delectable communication, in me was greatly abated and diminished the fervent desire that I had to see my native country, my wife and my children; whom then I did much long and covet to see, because that at that time I had been more than four
 20 months from them.

Upon a certain day as I was hearing the divine service in Our Lady's Church, which is the fairest, the most gorgeous and curious church of building in all the city, and also most frequented of people, and when the divine was done, was ready to go home to my lodging, I chanced to espy this foresaid Peter talking with a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black sunburned face, a long beard, and a cloak cast homely about his shoulders, whom by his favor and apparel forthwith I judged to be a mariner. But when this Peter saw me, he cometh to me and saluteth me. And as I was about to answer him: "See you this man?"
 30 saith he (and therewith he pointed to the man that I saw him talking with before). "I was minded," quod he, "to bring him straight home to you."

"He should have been very welcome to me," said I, "for your sake."

"Nay," quod he, "for his own sake, if you knew him, for there is no man this day living that can tell you of so many strange and unknown peoples and countries as this man can. And I know well that you be very desirous to hear of such news."

"Then I conjectured not far amiss," quod I, "for even at the first sight I judged him to be a mariner."

"Nay," quod he "there ye were greatly deceived: he hath sailed indeed,
 40 not as the mariner Palynure, but as the expert and prudent prince Ulysses: Yea, rather as the ancient and sage philosopher Plato. For this same Raphael Hythloday (for this is his name) is very well learned in the

Latin tongue; but profound and excellent in the Greek tongue: wherein he ever bestowed more study than in the Latin, because he had given himself wholly to the study of philosophy. Whereof he knew that there is nothing extant in the Latin tongue that is to any purpose, saving a few of Seneca's and Cicero's doings. His patrimony that he was born unto he left to his brethren (for he is a Portugal born) and for the desire that he had to see and know the far countries of the world, he joined himself in company with Amerigo Vespucci, and in the three last voyages of those four, that be now in print and abroad in every man's hands, he continued still in his company, saving that in the last voyage he came not home again¹⁰ with him. For he made such means and shift, what by entreatance and what by importune suit, that he got license of Master Amerigo (though it were sore against his will) to be one of the twenty-four which in the end of the last voyage were left [in the country of Gulike] in the fort. He was therefore left behind for his mind's sake, as one that took more thought and care for traveling than dying: having customably in his mouth these sayings. He that hath no grave is covered with the sky, and, The way to heaven out of all places is of like length and distance. Which fantasy of his (if God had not been his better friend) he had surely bought full dear.

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"But after the departing of Master Vespucci, when he had traveled through and about many countries, with five of his companions [Gulikians] of the fort, at the last by marvelous chance he arrived in Taprobane, from whence he went to Calicut, where he chanced to find certain of his country ships, wherein he returned again into his country, nothing less than looked for."

All this when Peter had told me: I thanked him for his gentleness, that he had vouchsafed to bring me to the speech of that man whose communication he thought should be to me pleasant and acceptable. And therewith I turned me to Raphael, and when we had hailed the one the³⁰ other, and had spoken these common words that be customably spoken at the first meeting and acquaintance of strangers, we went thence to my house, and there in my garden, upon a bench covered with green turves, we sat down talking together.

There he told us how that, after the departing of Vespucci, he and his fellows, that tarried behind in Gulike, began by little and little, through fair and gentle speech, to win the love and favor of the people of that country, insomuch that, within short space, they did dwell amongst them not only harmless, but also occupied with them very familiarly. He told us also that they were in high reputation and favor with a certain great⁴⁰ man (whose name and country is now quite out of my remembrance), which of his mere liberality did bear the costs and charges of him and his

five companions, and besides that gave them a trusty guide to conduct them in their journey (which by water was in boats and by land in wagons) and to bring them to other princes with very friendly commendations. Thus after many days' journeys, he said they found towns and cities, and weal publics full of people, governed by good and wholesome laws. For under the line equinoctial and of both sides of the same, as far as the sun doth extend his course, lieth (quod he) great and wide deserts and wildernesses, parched, burned, and dried up with continual and intolerable heat. All things be hideous, terrible, loathsome, and unpleasant to behold: all things out of fashion and comeliness, inhabited with wild beasts and serpents, or at the leastwise with people that be no less savage, wild, and noisome than the very beasts themselves be. But a little farther beyond that, all things begin by little and little to wax pleasant. The air soft, temperate, and gentle. The ground covered with green grass. Less wildness in the beasts. At the last shall ye come again to people, cities, and towns wherein is continual intercourse and occupying of merchandise and chaffer, not only among themselves and with their borders, but also with merchants of far countries both by land and water. There I had occasion (said he) to go to many countries of every side. For there was no ship ready to any voyage or journey, but I and my fellows were into it very gladly received. The ships that they found first were made plain, flat, and broad in the bottom, troughwise. The sails were made of great rushes, or of wickers, and in some places of leather. Afterward they found ships with ridged keels, and sails of canvas; yea, and shortly after, having all things like ours. The shipmen also very expert and cunning both in the sea and in the weather.

But he said that he found great favor and friendship among them for teaching them the feat and use of the loadstone, which to them before that time was unknown; and therefore they were wont to be very timorous and fearful upon the sea, nor to venture upon it, but only in the summertime. But now they have such a confidence in that stone that they fear not stormy winter; in so doing farther from care than jeopardy. Insomuch that it is greatly to be doubted lest that thing, through their own foolish hardness, shall turn them to evil and harm, which at the first was supposed should be to them good and commodious.

But what he told us that he saw, in every country where he came, it were very long to declare. Neither is it my purpose at this time to make rehearsal thereof. But peradventure in another place, I will speak of it, chiefly such things as shall be profitable to be known; as in special be those decrees and ordinances that he marked to be well and wisely provided and enacted among such peoples as do live together in a civil policy and good order. For of such things did we busily inquire and demand of him,

and he likewise very willingly told us of the same. But as for monsters, because they be no news, of them we were nothing inquisitive. For nothing is more easy to be found than be barking Scyllas, ravening Celaenos, and Laestrygons, devourers of people, and such like great and unbelievable monsters, but to find citizens ruled by good and wholesome laws, that is an exceeding rare and hard thing.

But as he marked many fond and foolish laws in those new-found lands, so he rehearsed many acts and constitutions whereby these our cities, nations, countries, and kingdoms may take example, to amend their faults, enormities, and errors, whereof in another place, as I said, I will entreat. ¹⁰ Now at this time I am determined to rehearse only that he told us of the manners, customs, laws, and ordinances of the Utopians. But first I will repeat our former communication, by the occasion, and, as I might say, the drift whereof he was brought into the mention of that weal public.

For when Raphael had very prudently touched divers things that be amiss some here and some there, yea very many of both parts, and again had spoken of such wise and prudent laws and decrees as be established and used both here among us and also there among them, as a man so cunning and expert in the laws and customs of every several country, as though into what place soever he came guestwise, there he had led all ²⁰ his life: then Peter much marvelling at the man: "Surely Master Raphael," quod he, "I wonder greatly why you get you not into some king's court, for I am sure there is no prince living that would not be very glad of you, as a man not only able highly to delight him with your profound learning, and this your knowledge of countries and peoples, but also are meet to instruct him with examples and help him with counsel. And thus doing you shall bring yourself in a very good case, and also be in ability to help all your friends and kinsfolk."

"As concerning my friends and kinsfolk," quod he, "I pass not greatly for them. For I think I have sufficiently done my part towards them ³⁰ already. For these things that other men do not depart from until they be old and sick, yea which they be then very loath to leave when they can no longer keep, those very same things did I being not only lusty, and in good health, but also in the flower of my youth, divide among my friends and kinsfolks, which I think with this my liberality ought to hold them contented and not to require nor to look that besides this I should for their sakes give myself in bondage to kings."

"Nay God forbid," quod Peter. "It is not my mind that you should be in bondage to kings, but as a retainer to them at your pleasure, which ⁴⁰ surely I think is the nearest way that you can devise how to bestow your time fruitfully, not only for the private commodity of your friends and for the general profit of all sorts of people, but also for the advancement

of yourself to a much wealthier state and condition than you be now in."

"To a wealthier condition," quod Raphael, "by that means—that my mind standeth clean against! Now I live at liberty after mine own mind and pleasure, which I think very few of these great states and peers of realms can say. Yea, and there be enough of them that seek for great men's friendships: and therefore think it no great hurt if they have not me nor two or three such other as I am."

"Well I perceive plainly friend Raphael," quod I, "that you be desirous neither of riches, nor of power. And truly I have in no less reverence
10 and estimation a man that is of your mind, than any of them all that be so high in power and authority. But you shall do as it becometh you, yea and according to this wisdom and this high and free courage of yours, if you can find in your heart so to appoint and dispose yourself that you may apply your wit and diligence to the profit of the weal public, though it be somewhat to your own pain and hindrance. And this shall you never so well do, nor with so great profit perform, as if you be of some great prince's counsel, and put in his head (as I doubt not but you will) honest opinions, and virtuous persuasions. For from the prince, as from a perpetual well-
spring, cometh among the people the flood of all that is good or evil. But
20 in you is so perfect learning that without any experience, and again so great experience that, without any learning, you may well be any king's counsellor."

"You be twice deceived Master More," quod he, "first in me, and again in the thing itself. For neither is in me that ability that you force upon me, and if it were never so much, yet in disquieting mine own quietness I should nothing further the weal public, for first of all the most part of all princes have more delight in warlike matters and feats of chivalry (the knowledge whereof I neither have nor desire) than in the good feats of peace, and employ much more study how by right or by wrong to en-
30 large their dominions, than how well and peaceably to rule and govern that they have already. Moreover they that be counsellors to kings, every one of them either is of himself so wise in deed that he need not or else he thinketh himself so wise, that he will not allow another man's counsel: saving that they do shamefully and flatteringly give assent to the fond and foolish sayings of certain great men. Whose favors, because they be in high authority with their prince, by assentation and flattering they labor to obtain. And verily it is naturally given to all men to esteem their own inventions best. So both the raven and the ape think their own young ones fairest.

40 "Then if a man in such a company, where some disdain and have despite at other men's inventions, and some count their own best—if among