A Letter Consolatory for the Death of a Nobleman’s Sister
A Letter Consolatory
for
the Death of a
Nobleman’s Sister
by
St. Robert Southwell, S.J.

Edited by in a modernized text by
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Introduction

Some years ago, on a dark January afternoon in the Chapin Library, Williamstown, I read for the first time this short piece written for a man mourning the death of a sister, and realized with some excitement that I was in the presence of one of the most gifted prose writers in English. There was, first, the quality of Robert Southwell’s mind, which Geoffrey Hill summed up in the phrase, “absolute reasonableness.”¹ And there was the musicality or concinnity—to use Pierre Janelle’s word—of his style, plain in vocabulary but unfailingly exact in its rhythms.

Not everyone, though, has liked this piece. Janelle admired the prose, but disliked the content. He preferred Southwell’s earlier Epistle of Comfort written to encourage his fellow-Catholics to be prepared for martyrdom because, “It breathed an exhilarating enthusiasm in the glad acceptance of tribulation.” A Consolatory Epistle, on the other hand, was disappointingly sober and rational, spoiled by a “strangely dry-hearted and scarcely uplifting spiritual selfishness.”

The passage that occasioned that criticism comes towards the end:

If we were diligent in thinking of our own, we should have little leisure to bewail other’s deaths. When the soldier in skirmish seeth his next fellow slain, he thinketh it more time to look to himself, than to stand mourning in a helpless mischance, knowing that the hand that sped so near a neighbour, cannot be far from his own head. But we in this behalf are much like the silly birds, that seeing one stick in the lime-bush crying to get away, with a kind of native pity are drawn to go to it, and so mesh themselves in the same misfortune.

The whole passage, Janelle thought, was “Harsh, aloof, and

scarcely human,” the result of a doomed attempt to reconcile classical stoicism with Christian resignation.\textsuperscript{1} Southwell certainly knew Seneca, but there is nothing surprising about that. A fellow Catholic, Thomas Lodge, translated Seneca. But if we are to appreciate the appeal of Senecan stoicism, we should bear in mind the circumstances in which Southwell wrote his \textit{Epistle}.

While he was writing in the fall of 1591, his friend Thomas Pormort, newly captured, was undergoing torture in Richard Topcliffe’s house. In December, Topcliffe would bring off one of his master-strokes when he personally took part in the executions of seven Catholic men in one day, four laymen and three priests. The man for whom Southwell was writing his epistle was a prisoner in the Tower of London under sentence of death, and he would never emerge. As for Robert Southwell himself, he knew that he could be taken, tortured, tried, and killed at any time.

As I asked in the little book on Southwell that I contributed to the Twayne authors series, what did it mean to write a consolatory epistle under those circumstances?

The first and most obvious comment to make about these passages is that Southwell did not write them in a country vicarage with the scent of hollyhocks blowing through the window and the Sunday roast in the oven. He wrote them in conditions of terrible danger, both to him and to his friend. The soldier who loses his comrade is an image of Southwell himself, watching fellow priests being captured and killed. His stoicism is the mood of a man who, like a World War II fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain, has to fly until he is killed himself. For the first time, we hear Southwell speaking as an aristocratic, classically educated humanist to a fellow aristocrat in the words of the great, ancient commonplaces about death: “Yet this general tide washeth all passengers to the same shore, some sooner, some later, but all at the last” (9.18–19), and his purpose is to clear the mind of use-

less, distracting emotion: “If sorrow cannot be shunned, let it be
taken in time of need, sith otherwise being both troublesome, and
fruitless, it is a double misery and an open folly” (11.3–5). The
second point is that Southwell’s stoicism is meant to offer
severely practical advice on maintaining presence of mind and a
sense of proportion in the presence of impending death. Imitate
the merchant, he advises, who lost wife, children, and fortune in
one shipwreck: he visited a lazar hospital, “where finding in a lit-
tle room, many examples of greater misery, he made the smart of
others’ sores, a lenitive to his own wound” (20.2–4)—a passage
that carries one into the moral world of King Lear and Edgar’s
announcemnt of a rock-bottom principle on which one might
decide to continue living in the face of horrors: “The worst is not
/ So long as we can say ‘This is the worst’” (4.278–28).¹

For Robert Southwell, rock-bottom was a faith that we are exiles
in this world, and that a good death takes us home to an infi-
nitely more precious life than this one. Lady Margaret, he tells
her brother, has moved house, following her deceased children
whom she had sent on ahead of her:

Yet had she sent her first fruits before her, as pledges of her own
coming. Now may we say that the sparrow hath found a home,
and the turtle-dove a nest, where she may lay her younglings
(13.18–21).

For Southwell’s Catholic readers, too, the book carried an
important item of news. Lady Margaret had died a Catholic,
with Catholics in attendance at her death—a fact no doubt
known to the Queen and Council and their spies, which probably
explains the admonitory executions that took place near the
Sackville’s town house in Fleet Street at just this period.² Even

²Three priests were executed in that part of Fleet Street: Christopher Bales (4
March 1590), Edward Jones (6 May 1590), and George Beesley (1 July 1591).
See also Christopher Devlin, The Life of Robert Southwell, Poet and Martyr
though the head of the family, Thomas, Lord Buckhurst, had conformed to the state church, he seems to have protected his daughter-in-law. His younger son became a Catholic, and he is reputed to have been reconciled to the Church himself on his deathbed.

Less than a year later, Topcliffe captured Robert Southwell on the night of 25 June 1592. After torture, imprisonment, and trial, he was hanged, drawn and quartered, 21 February 1595 for the crime of being a priest in England. Eight months later, after ten years’ imprisonment in the Tower of London, Philip Howard, earl of Arundel, who never saw his wife and children in all that time, died alone there of dysentery, 19 October 1595. Some people, not without reason, thought he had been poisoned.

Pope Paul VI canonized Robert Southwell and Philip Howard 25 October 1970. St. Philip Howard is a patron saint of the diocese of Arundel and Brighton, and Arundel cathedral is now dedicated to him and the Blessed Virgin. His feast day is observed on 19 October. St. Robert Southwell’s feast is observed on 21 February, the anniversary of his death.

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After a conventional young manhood passed largely in the ambience of Elizabeth I’s court, Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, influenced by his wife, Anne Dacres, was reconciled to the Catholic Church by Father William Weston, S.J., who thereupon became spiritual adviser and domestic chaplain to the earl and his wife. In 1585, shortly after his reconciliation, Arundel was captured attempting to cross to Europe to confer with William Allen, brought back to England, and imprisoned in the Tower. Then in the summer of 1586, Father Weston was captured in the general round-up of Catholics following the Babington Plot, leaving the Countess of Arundel and her imprisoned husband without spiritual direction.

As son of the fourth Duke of Norfolk (beheaded in 1572 for his role in the Ridolphi plot), Philip Howard was the premier
nobleman in England, and his reconciliation was an important success for the Catholic mission, bringing access to funds and influence. Hence, after Weston’s capture there was competition for his place in the Arundel household, which the Countess of Arundel decided in favor of the Society of Jesus when she appointed as her chaplain Robert Southwell, a young man whose aristocratic and Norfolk connections as well as hereditary Catholicism made him an ideal candidate. Under the Countess’s protection, Southwell and his superior Henry Garnet were able to establish a safe house from which they ran the affairs of the mission, including the writing and printing of books.

Robert Southwell (1561–1596), son of Richard and Bridget Southwell (née Copley) of Horsham St. Faith, Norfolk, had been sent overseas for his education at the age of fourteen. After two years at Jesuit schools in Douai and Paris, he went to Rome, where he entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1578. In 1584 he was ordained priest, and in 1586 after several years teaching at the English College, Rome, he left with Henry Garnet for the English mission, virtually certain that he would not survive. As he wrote to Father General Claudio Aquaviva in Rome as he and Garnet were waiting to take ship for England, he was writing “from the threshold of death.”

Southwell had begun writing prose and poetry in English while still living in Rome, and very soon after his arrival in England his writing in both kinds began to find a wide audience. A long poem, *Saint Peter’s Complaint*, and his shorter lyrics circulated in manuscript. He and Garnet printed his prose *Epistle of Comfort* surreptitiously in 1587, and in 1591, another prose work, *Mary Magdalen’s Funeral Tears*, was published by Gabriel Cawood, licensed for printing by no less a person than the Archbishop of Canterbury. Southwell prepared *Saint Peter’s Complaint* for publication as a companion volume to his *Funeral Tears*, but his capture in June 1592 prevented his publisher Cawood from printing it until shortly after Southwell’s death in 1595.
In September 1591 Southwell composed his Senecan epistle, later published under the title *The Triumphs Over Death*, to console Philip Howard for the death of his half-sister Lady Margaret Sackville. Lady Margaret, the daughter of the fourth duke’s first wife, Margaret Audley, had married Robert Sackville, son of the co-author of *Gorboduc*. When she died at the age of twenty-nine in August 1591, her brother, under sentence of death, was in the Tower, from which he never emerged. It appears from the dedicatory letter to the epistle that Arundel, having succeeded in suggesting the topic to Southwell, was never able to read the finished work. Like Southwell’s other writings, the epistle began circulating in manuscript in the author’s lifetime. Then, after Southwell’s execution in 1595, and Arundel’s own death later in the same year, John Busby published the epistle under the editorship of a young poet called John Trussell:

THE / Triumphs ouer Death: / OR, / A Consolatorie Epistle, for afflicted / mindes, in the affects of / dying friends. / First written for the consolation of one: but now / published for the generall good of all, by R. S. / the Author of S. Peters Complaint, and Maonie / his other Hymnes. [Device] LONDON / Printed by V.S. for John Busbie, and / are to be sold at Nicholas Lings shop / at the West end of Paules / Church 1595.

Trussell gave the piece its title, and he prefaced it with three poems. In each of them, very surprisingly, he names the recently executed author. The first poem dedicates the epistle to Lady Margaret’s three surviving children; the second is an acrostic on the name SOUTHEWELL, and the third directs the work to the general reader. The effect of these poems and of Trussell’s plural title, *The Triumphs Over Death*, was to place the epistle in a context of severe religious controversy, and to encourage its

1In May 1585, when Lady Margaret was living under house arrest with Sir Robert Jermaine she was herself ordered to be committed to the Tower, but the order seems not to have been carried out (CRS 2.239). Robert Southwell translated Estella’s *Hundred Meditations* for her.
readers to approach it with four deaths in mind, Lady Margaret’s, The Earl of Arundel’s, the author’s, and the reader’s own.¹

There are three editions of Busby’s quarto. As one would expect, the two later are based upon the first, and although they correct some of the manifold errors of the first edition, they introduce errors and sophistications of their own. These printed texts are so inaccurately and negligently printed that they have no textual authority.

Fortunately, the epistle survives in three manuscript copies, of varying quality, but all far more reliable than the quartos. Each contains, in addition, a collection of fifty-two poems by Southwell, copied in the same order, and another epistle, addressed to Southwell’s father. The similarity of the manuscripts suggests that they are based on a common original that the copyists approached with some reverence, itself probably taken from a holograph of the poems.²

1. STONYHURST COLLEGE, MS A.V.27 (S).

This manuscript is sometimes called the Waldegrave manuscript on account of a childish inscription on the second leaf, “iereneme waldGrave is a go0D garle BVt that noBoDi cer for her.” The Waldegraves, of Borley in Essex, produced two Jeronimas who might have written this childish cry for affection. One became a Benedictine nun, Dame Hieronima Waldegrave; she died at the abbey of Ghent, 22 July 1635, hav-

¹Incidentally, Trussell’s poems make it very clear that the author’s name should be pronounced Southwell, not Southall.

ing entered the order twelve years earlier aged about twenty. She was of an age to write in the manuscript circa 1609 when she would have been approximately five. She was the daughter of Nicholas, the second son of Sir Edward Waldegrave. His elder brother, Charles, also had a daughter called Jeronima, and it may have been she who wrote in the manuscript.

In any case, we can be sure that the manuscript existed by 1608–10 at the latest, a conclusion reachable on grounds of paper and handwriting alone, and in fact it probably dates from the mid-nineties. It may even have been compiled before the author’s death. It is a small paper book of eighty leaves, 7.2 x 5.5 inches, gathered in fours and bound in vellum, with the letters IHS on the front cover in a gold medallion. The paper, which Nancy Pollard Brown has dated to the 1580s, is French. The writing is a neat, clear secretary hand, with corrections in a second hand and spelling which Grosart, mistakenly, thought was Southwell’s: e.g., the other for thother (e inserted), f.20v, it for his, dumbe for dead, f.22v, iniuryes for enymies, f.23v, certaine inserted, f.25v, yow for god, f.29v, so happie inserted, f.34v, and add inserted, f.35v. These indicate careful correction against an original, but do not suggest reference to a second, superior manuscript, as Nancy Pollard Brown thought. The Stonyhurst manuscript, the earliest and best of the three survivors, seems to have been copied very shortly before or after Southwell’s death.

The epistle to the earl occupies ff. 20–36. There is a somewhat cryptic dedicatory preface, explaining that the person for whom the work was written has been unable to see it, and addressing it, therefore, to an unnamed, unknown audience. Two poetic eulogies of Lady Margaret follow it, one in Latin, one in English. There is no title.

2. BODLEIAN LIBRARY, MS. Eng. Poet. e. 113 (V).

This manuscript, MS. 8635 of the Virtue and Cahill Library belonging to the Roman Catholic diocese of Portsmouth, is now
deposited in the Bodleian Library.

Like the Stonyhurst manuscript, this is a small paper book. It has 75 leaves, made from sheets of a continental paper folded in quarto and sewn in gatherings of eight, and bound with Sigs. A–E of the first edition of *Saint Peters Complaint, With other Poemes*, containing the text of ‘Saint Peter’s Complaint.’ It too has a vellum binding with the letters IHS on the front cover. The manuscript is written in an exceptionally clear and elegant secretary hand by a scribe who provided italic titles for its various parts. Two of these, the headings of the poems on Lady Margaret, by naming her Lady Buckehurst, may provide some evidence of the manuscript’s date, since her husband was Lord Buckhurst between 1603 and 1608, when he succeeded his father as Earl of Dorset.

The epistle on Lady Margaret’s Sackville’s death occupies ff. 63–74v, where it is called ‘A Letter consolatorye for the death of a noble man his sister.’ The dedicatory letter is not separated from the body of the text; the initials ‘R.S.’ are appended to the epistle and the two poems that follow it. Although the scribe was an elegant calligrapher, he was a poor copyist, who took liberties with his original.

3. BRITISH LIBRARY, MS. ADDITIONAL 10422 (*Ad*).

Like the preceding manuscripts, this too is a paper book, measuring approximately 7.75 x 5.625 inches, and containing 110 leaves, and lightly cropped in the British Museum’s nineteenth-century rebinding in blue leather. Richard Heber owned this manuscript; the British Museum bought it at the Heber sale, April 1836, lot 1447. Like *S, Ad* contains the 52 lyrics plus Southwell’s letter to his father and the epistle on Lady Margaret. Like *V*, it also contains two other short letters; but unlike either of the other two manuscripts, it contains the text of ‘Saint Peters Complaint’ in the scribe’s handwriting, but copied from the first printed quarto text, 1595. The epistle to Lady Margaret occupies ff. 86–109, and includes the dedicatory letter and the two poems.
As in S, there is no title, and there are no headings to the dedi- 
catory letter or the poems. The copyist seems to have been an 
amateur scribe who made many careless mistakes, often miss-
ing out whole words and phrases.

Either Ad itself or a text very like it provided the copy for the 
Busby-Trussell editions. J. W. Trotman based his edition (1914) 
on it.

The text represented here is that of the Stonyhurst MS, col-
lated with V, Ad, and the printed editions: A (STC 22971, dated 
1595), B (STC 22972, dated 1596, but printed later) and C (STC 
22973, dated 1596). In the process of transcribing and moderniz-
ing this manuscript I have expanded abbreviations, and regu-
larized the orthography and normalized capitalization. I have 
used C’s title and headings, conforming his possessive ‘a noble man his sister’ to the more conventional usage ‘a nobleman’s sister.’
A Letter Consolatory for
the Death of a Nobleman’s Sister
The Author to the Reader

IF THE ATHENIANS erected an altar to an unknown god, supposing that he would be pleased with their devotion, though they were ignorant of his name: better may I presume that my labor may be grateful, being devoted to such men, whose names I know, and whose fame I have heard, though unacquainted with their persons. I intended this comfort to him, whom a lamented fortune hath left most comfortless, by him to his friends that have equal portions in this sorrow. But I think the philosopher’s rule will be here verified, that it shall be last in execution that was first designed, and he last enjoy the effect that was first mover of the cause. This let chance overrule, sith choice may not, and into whichever of their hands it shall fortune, much honor and happiness may it carry with it, and leave in their hearts as much joy as it found sorrow. Where I borrow the person of an historian as well touching the dead as the yet surviving, I build upon report of such authors, whose hoary heads challenge credit, and whose eyes and ears were witnesses to their words. To crave pardon for my pain were to slander a friendly office with the title of an offense, and to wrong their courtesies, whom nobility never taught to answer affection with anger, or to wage duty with dislike. And therefore I humbly present it unto them with as many good wishes as good will can measure from a best meaning mind, that hath a willingness rather to afford than to offer due services, were not the man as worthless as the mind is willing.

R.S.
A Letter Consolatory for the Death of a Nobleman’s Sister

IF IT BE A BLESSING of the virtuous to mourn, it is the reward of this blessing to be comforted, and he that pronounced the one, promised the other. I doubt not but that spirit whose nature is love, and whose name Comforter, as he knoweth the cause of your grief, so he hath salved it with supplies of grace, pouring into your wound no less oil of mercy, than wine of justice. Yet sith courtesy oweth compassion as a duty to the afflicted, and nature hath ingrafted a desire to find it, I thought it good to show you by proof, that you carry not your cares alone, though the load, that lieth on others can little lighten your burden. Her decease cannot but sit near your heart, whom you had taken so deep into a most tender affection; that which dieth to our love, being always alive to our sorrow. You would have been loving to a less lovely sister: yet finding in her so many worths to be loved, your love wrought more earnestly upon so sweet a subject, which now being taken from you, I presume your grief is no less than your love was, the one of these being ever the measure of the other.

The scripture alloweth us to bring forth our tears upon the dead, a thing not offending grace and a right to reason. For to be without remorse in the death of friends, is neither incident nor convenient to the nature of man, having too much affinity with a savage temper, and overthrowing the ground of all pity, which is a mutual sympathy in each of other’s miseries. But as not to feel sorrow in sorrowful chances is to want sense, so not to bear it with moderation is to want understanding,
the one brutish, the other effeminate; and he hath cast his account best that hath brought his sum to the mean. It is no less fault to exceed in sorrow, than to pass the limits of competent mirth, sith excess in either is a disorder in passion, though that of courtesy be less blamed of men because if it be a fault, it is also a punishment, at once causing and tasting torment. It is no good sign in the sick to be senseless in his pains, as bad it is to be unusually sensitive, being both ether harbingers or the attendants of death. Let sadness, sith it is a due to the dead, testify a feeling of pity, not any pangs of passion, and bewray rather a tender than a dejected mind. Mourn so, that your friends may find you a loving brother, all men a discreet mourner, making sorrow a sequel, not a superior of reason.

Some are so obstinate in their own evil, that even time the natural remedy of the most violent agonies, cannot by any delays assuage their grief. They entertain their sorrow with solitary muses, and feed it with sighs and tears. They pine their bodies, and draw all pensive considerations into their minds, nursing their heaviness with a melancholy humor, as though they had vowed their souls to sadness, unwilling it should end till it had ended them. Wherein their folly sometimes findeth too ready effect, that being true which Salomon observed, that as a moth the garment, and a worm the wood, so doth sadness consume the heart. But this impotent softness fitteth not sober minds. We must not make a life’s profession of a seven nights’ duty, nor under color of kindness, be unnatural to ourselves. If some in their passions wind their thoughts into such labyrinths that neither wit knoweth nor will careth how long or how far they wander in them, it discovereth their weakness, but deserveth not our imitation. It is for the most part the
fault, not of all, but of the silliest women, who, next to
the funerals of their friends, deem it a second widow-
hood to forgo their tears, and make it their happiness to
seem most unhappy, as though they had only been left
alive to be perpetual maps of dead folks’ misfortunes.
But this is to arm an enemy against ourselves, and to
yield reason prisoner to passion, putting the sword in
the rebel’s hand when we are least able to withstand his
treason.

Sorrow once settled is not lightly removed, easily
winning, but not so easily surrendering, possession; and
where it is not excluded in time, it challengeth a place
by a kind of prescription. The scripture warneth us not
to give over our hearts to sadness, yea rather to reject it
as a thing not beneficial to the dead, yet prejudicial to
ourselves. Ecclesiasticus alloweth but seven days to
mourning, judging moderation in plaint to be a suffi-
cient testimony of good will, and a needful office of
wisdom. Much sorrow for the dead is either the child of
self love or of rash judgment. If we shed our tears for
others’ deaths as a maim to our contentment, we bathe
but our own wound, as perfect lovers of ourselves. If we
lament their decease as their hard destiny, we attach
them of evil deserving with too peremptory a censure,
as though their life had been the rise, and their death a
leap, into final perdition: for otherwise a good departure
craveth small condoling, being but a harbor from
storms, and an entrance into felicity. But you knew your
sister too well, to incur any blame in these respects, and
experience of her life hath stored your thoughts with
notice of so rare virtues, as might sooner make her
memory an enforcement to joy than any inducement to
sorrow, and move you to esteem her last duties rather
the triumph of her victory than the funerals of her
decease.
She was by birth second to none but to the first in the realm, yet she measured greatness only by goodness, making nobility but the mirror of virtue, as able to shew things worthy to be seen, as apt to draw many eyes to behold it. She suited her behavior to her birth, and ennobled her birth with her piety, leaving her house more beholding unto her for having honored it with the glory of her virtues, than she was to it for the titles of her pedigree. She was high minded in nothing but in aspiring to perfection, and in the disdain of vice: in other things covering her greatness with humility among her inferiors, and showing it with courtesy among her peers. Of the carriage of herself, and her sober government, this may be a sufficient testimony, that envy itself was dumb in her dispraise, finding in her much to repine at, but nothing to reprove. The clearness of her honor I need not mention, she having always armed it with such modesty, as taught the most intemperate tongues to be silent in her presence, and answered their eyes with scorn and contempt, that did but seem to make her an aim to passion, yea and in this behalf, as almost in all other, she hath the most honorable ladies of the land so common and known witnesses, that those that least liked her religion were in love with her demeanor, delivering their opinions in open praises. How mildly she accepted the check of fortune, fallen upon her without her desert, experience hath been a most manifest proof, the temper of her mind being so easy that she found little difficulty in taking down her thoughts to a meaner degree, which true honor, but no pride had raised to the former height. Her faithfulness and love where she found true friendship is now written with tears in many eyes, and will be longer
registered in grateful memories: diverse that have tried her in that kind, avowing her for secrecy, wisdom, and constancy to have been a miracle in her sex. Yea, when she found least kindness in others, she never lost it in herself, more willingly suffering than offering wrongs, and often weeping for their mishaps, whom, though less loving her, she could not but affect. Of the innocency of her life, this in general all can aver, that as she was graceful many ways, and memorable for virtues, so was she free from the blemish of any vice, using to her power the best means to keep continually an undefiled conscience.

Her attire was ever such as might both satisfy a curious eye, and yet bear witness of a sober mind, neither singular nor vain, but such as her peers of best report used. Her tongue was very little acquainted with oaths, unless ether duty or distrust did enforce them; and sure they were needless to those that knew her, to whom the truth of her words could not justly be suspected. Much less was she noted of any unfitting talk, which as it was ever hateful to her ears, so did it never defile her breath. Of feeding she was very measurable, rather of too sparing than too liberal a diet, so religious in observing all fasts, that even in her sickness she could be hardly won to break them. And if our souls be possessed in our patience, surely her soul was truly her own, whose rock though often stricken with the rod of adversity, never yielded to any more than to give issue to eye-streams. And though these through the tenderness of her nature and aptness of her sex were the customary tribute that her love paid more to her friends’ than to her own misfortunes, yet were they not accompanied with distempered words, or ill-seeming actions, reason never forgetting decency, though remembering pity. Her devo-
tions she duly observed, offering the daily sacrifice of an innocent heart, and stinting herself to her time of prayer, which she performed with so religious a care as well showed that she knew how high a majesty she served. I need not write how dutifully she discharged all the behoofs of a most loving wife, sith that was the commonest theme of her praises. Yet this may be said without improof to any, that whosoever in this behalf may be counted her equal, none can justly be thought her superior. Where she ought, she paid duty; where she found, she returned courtesy; wheresoever she was known, she deserved amity, desirous of the best, yet disdaining none but evil company. She was readier to requite benefits than to revenge wrongs, more grieved than angered with the unkindness of friends, when either mistaking or misreport occasioned any breaches. For if their words may carry credit that entered deepest into her thoughts, they have acquitted her from all spice of malice, not only against her friends, whose dislikes were but a retire to step further into friendship, but even her greatest enemies, to whom if she had been a judge, as she was a suppliant, I assuredly think that she would have redressed, but not revenged, her injuries.

In sum she was herself an honor to her predecessors, a light to her age, and a pattern to her posterity. Neither was her conclusion different from her premises, or her death from her life. She showed no dismay being warned of her danger, carrying in her conscience the safe-conduct of innocency; but having sent her desires before her to heaven, with a mild countenance and a most calm mind, in more hope than fear, she expected her own passage. She commended both her duty and good will to all her friends, and cleared her heart from all grudge against her enemies, wishing true happiness
to them both as best became so soft and gentle a mind,
in which anger never stayed but as an unwelcome
stranger. She made open profession that she died a
Catholic, true to her religion, true to her husband, true
to God and the world. She enjoyed her judgment as long
as her body, earnestly offering her last devotions, sup-
plying in thought, what faintness suffered not her
tongue to utter. In the end, when her glass was run out,
and death began to challenge his interest, some laboring
with too late remedies to hinder the delivery of her
sweet soul, she desired them eftsoons to let her go to
God; and her hopes calling her to eternal kingdoms, as
one rather falling asleep than dying, she most happily
took her leave of all mortal miseries.

Such was the life, such the death of your dearest sis-
ter, both so full of true comfort that this little survey of
her virtues may be a sufficient lenitive to your bitterest
griefs. For you are not, I hope, in the number of those
that reckon it a part of their pain to hear of their best
remedies, thinking the rehearsal of their dead friends’
praises an upbraiding of their loss. But sith the oblivion
of her virtue were injurious to her, let not the mention
of her person be offensive unto you; and be not you
grieved with her death, with which she is best pleased.
So blessed a death is rather to be wished of us, than pit-
tied in her, whose soul triumpheth with God, whose vir-
tue still breatheth in the mouths of infinite praisers, and
liveth in the memories of all to whom either experience
made her known, or fame was not envious in concealing
her deserts. She was a jewel that both God and you
desired to enjoy, he to her assured benefit without self-
interest, you for allowable respects, yet implying her
restraint among certain hazards and most uncertain
hopes.
Be then Umpire in your own cause, whether your wish or God’s will importeth more love, the one pleading the adjournment of her exile, the other her return into a most blissful country. And sith it pleased God in this love to be your rival, let your discretion decide the doubt, who in due should carry the suit, the prerogative being a right but to the one. For nature and grace being the motives of both your loves, he had best title in them that was author of them, and she, if worthy to be loved of either, as she was of both, could not but prefer him to the dearest portion of her deepest affections. Let him with good leave gather the grape of his own vine, and pluck the fruit of his own planting and think so curious works ever surest in the artificer’s hand, who is likeliest to love them, and best able to preserve them. She did therefore her duty in dying willingly, and if you will do yours, you must be willing with her death; sith to repine at her liking is a discourtesy, at God’s an impiety, both unfitting for your approved virtue.

She being in place where no grief can annoy her, she hath little need and less joy of our sorrow, neither can she allow in her friends that she would loath in herself, love ever affecting likeness. If she had been evil, she had not deserved our tears, being good she cannot desire them, nothing being less to the liking of goodness than to see itself any cause of unjust disquiet or trouble to the innocent. Would Saul have thought it friendship to have wept for his fortune, in having found a kingdom by seeking cattle: or David accounted it a courtesy to have sorrowed at his success, that from following sheep came to foil a giant, and to receive in fine a royal crown for his victory? Why then should her lot be lamented, whom higher favor hath raised from the dust, to set with the princes of God’s people? If security had
been given, that a longer life should have been still guided by virtue, and followed with good fortune, you might pretend some cause to complain of her decease. But if different effects should have crossed your hopes, process of time being the parent of stranger alterations, then had death been friendlier than yourself. And sith it hung in suspense, which of the two would have happened, let us allow God so much discretion, as to think him the fittest arbiter in decision of the doubt.

Her foundations of happiness were in the holy hills, and God saw it fittest for her building to be but low in this vale of tears. And better it was it should be soon taken down, than by rising too high to have oppressed her soul with the ruins. Think it no injury that she is now taken from you, but a favor that she was lent you so long, and show no unwillingness to restore God his own, sith hitherto you have paid no usury for it. Consider not how much longer you might have enjoyed her, but how much sooner you might have lost her, and sith she was held upon courtesy, not by any covenant, take our sovereign’s right for a sufficient reason of her death. Our life is but a lent good, to make thereof during the loan our best commodity. It is a due debt to a more certain owner than ourselves, and therefore so long as we have it we receive a benefit, when we are deprived of it we have no wrong. We are tenants at will of this clayey farm, not for term of years. When we are warned out, we must be ready to remove, having no other title but the owner’s pleasure. It is but an inn, not a home; we came but to bate, not to dwell, and the condition of our entrance was in fine to depart. If this departure be grievous, it is also common, this day to me, tomorrow to thee, and the case equally afflicting all, leaveth none any cause to complain of injurious
usage. Nature’s debt is sooner exacted of some than of others, yet is there no fault in the creditor that exacteth but his own, but in the greediness of our eager hopes: either repining that their wishes fail, or willingly forgetting their mortality, whom they are unwilling to see by experience mortal.

Yet this general tide washeth all passengers to the same shore, some sooner, some later, but all at the last; and we must settle our minds to take our course as it cometh, never fearing a thing so necessary, yet ever expecting a thing so uncertain. It seemeth that God purposely concealed the time of our death, leaving us unresolved between hope and fear, that fear of a speedy passage might keep us in a readiness, and hope of longer continuance cut off unripe cares: lest with the notice and pensiveness of our divorce from the world, we should loose the comfort of needful contentments, and before our dying day languish away with the expectation of death. Some are taken in the first step into this life, receiving in one their welcome and farewell, as though they had been born only to be buried, and to take their passport in this to pass presently into another world Others are cut off in the middle of their course, the good to prevent a change, the bad to shorten their impiety. Some live till they be weary of life, to give proof of their good hap that had a timelier passage.

Yet though the date be diverse, the debt is all one, equally to be answered by all as their time expireth. For who is the man that shall live and not see death, sith we all die, and like water slide upon the earth? In Paradise we received the sentence of death, and here as prisoners we are kept in ward, tarrying but our turns till the jailor call us to our execution. Whom hath any virtue eternized, or desert commended to posterity, that hath
not mourned in life, and been mourned after death, no assurance of joy being sealed without some tears? Even Our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, was thrown down as deep in temporal miseries as she was advanced high in spiritual honors, none amongst all mortal creatures finding in life more proofs than she of her mortality. For having the noblest son that ever woman was mother of, not only above the condition of men, but above the glory of Angels, being her son only, without temporal father, and thereby the love of both parents doubled in her breast, being her only son without other issue, and so her love of all children finished in him: yea, he being God, and she the nearest creature to God’s perfections, yet no prerogative acquitted her from mourning, or him from dying, and though they surmounted the highest Angels in all other preeminence, yet were they equal with the meanest men in the sentence of death. And howbeit Our Lady, being the pattern of Christian mourners, so tempered her anguish that there was neither any thing undone that might be exacted of a mother, nor any thing done, that might be disliked in so perfect a matron: yet by this we may guess with what courtesy death is likely to friend us, that durst cause so bloody funerals in so heavenly a stock, not exempting him from the law of dying, that was the author of life, and soon after to honor his triumph with the ruins and spoils of death.

Seeing therefore that death spareth none, let us spare our tears, for better uses, being but an idle sacrifice to this deaf and implacable executioner, and for this not long to be continued where they can never profit. Nature did promise us a weeping life, exacting tears for custom at our first entrance, and suiting our whole course to this doleful beginning. And therefore they
must be used with measure that must be used often; and so many causes of weeping lying yet in the dark, sith we cannot end our tears, let us at the lest reserve them. If sorrow cannot be shunned, let it be taken in time of need, sith otherwise being both troublesome and fruitless, it is a double misery and an open folly. We moisten not the ground with precious waters. They were stilled for nobler ends, either by their sweetness to delight our senses, or by their operations to preserve our health. Our tears are water of too high a price to be prodigally poured in the dust of any grave. If they be tears of love, they perfume our prayers, making them odor of sweetness fit to be offered on the altar before the throne of God. If tears of contrition, they are water of life to dying and corrupting souls. They may purchase favor and repeal the sentence, till it be executed, as the example of Ezechial doth testify. But when the punishment is past, and the verdict performed in effect, their pleading is in vain, as David taught us when his child was dead, saying that he was likelier to go to it, then it by his weeping to return to him. Learn therefore not to give sorrow any long dominion over you, whereof the wise should rather make, than expect an end. Meet it not when it cometh, do not invite it when it is absent, when you feel it not do not force it, sith the very brute creatures which nature, seldom erring in her courses, guideth in the mean, have but a short though a vehement sense of their losses. You should bury the sharpness of your grief, with the corpse, and rest contented with a kind, yet a mild, compassion, neither less than decent for your love, nor more than agreeable to your mature judgment. Your much heaviness would renew a multitude of griefs, and your eyes would be springs to many streams, adding to the memory of the
dead a new occasion of plaint by your own discomfort.

The motion of your heart measureth the beating of many pulses, which in any distemper of your quiet, with the like stroke will soon bewray themselves sick of your disease. Your fortune though hard, yet is it notorious; and though mewed in mishap, and set in an unworthy lantern, yet your own light shineth far, and maketh you markable. All will bend an attentive eye upon you, observing how you ward this blow of temptation, and whether your patience be a shield of proof or easily entered with these violent strokes. It is commonly expected, that so high thoughts, which have already climbed over the hardest dangers, should not now stoop to any vulgar or female complaints.

Great personages, whose estate draweth upon them many eyes, as they cannot but be themselves, so may they not use the liberty of meaner estates, the laws of nobility not allowing them to direct their deeds by their desires, but to limit their desires to that which is decent. Nobility is an aim for lower degrees to level at marks of higher perfection, and like stately windows in the worthiest rooms of a politque and civil building to let in such light, and lie open to such prospects as may afford their inferiors both means to find, and motives to follow, heroical virtues. If you should determine to dwell ever in sorrow, it were a wrong to your wisdom, and countermanded by your quality. If ever you mind to suence it, no time fitter than the present, sith the same reasons, that hereafter might move you, are now as much in force. Yield to wisdom, that you must yield to time. Be beholding to yourself, not to time for the victory, and make that a voluntary work of discretion, that will otherwise be a necessary effect of delay.

We think it not enough to have our own measure
brimful with evils, unless we make it run over with others’ miseries, taking their misfortunes as our punishments and executing foreign penalties upon ourselves. Yea, disquieted minds, being ever bellows to their own flames, mistake often times others’ good for ill, their folly making that a true scourge to them that, howsoever it seemed, was to others a benefit. Jacob out of Joseph’s absence sucked such surmises that he made his heart a prey to his agonies, whereas that which buried him in his own melancholies raised Joseph to his highest happiness. If Christ had been truly taken out of his tomb, as poor Mary Magdalen said and supposed, she could have sunk no deeper in grief than she already had plunged herself; and yet that which she imagined the uttermost of evils, proved in conclusion the very bliss of her wishes. The like may be your error, if you comber your mind with musing upon her death, who could neither be discharged from cares, till death set his hand to her acquaintance, nor receive the charter of eternal well-being till her singled soul were present at the sealing.

I am loath to rub the scar of a deeper wound, for fear of reviving a dead discomfort. Yet if you will favor your own remedies, the mastery over that grief, that sprang from the root, may learn you to qualify this, that buddeth from the branch. Let not her losses move you that are acquainted with greater of your own, and taught by experience to know how uncertain their chance is for whom unconstant fortune throweth the dice. If she want her wonted titles, her part is now ended, and they were due but upon the stage. Her loss therein is but a wreck of words, in which she is but even with the highest princes, surpassing both herself and them in the new honors of a heavenly style. If she have left her children, it was her wish they should outlive her, and she bred
them into the world to repay her absence with usury. Yet had she sent her first fruits before her as pledges of her own coming, and now may we say that the sparrow hath found a home, and the turtle dove a nest, where she may lay her younglings, enjoying some, and expecting the rest.

If she be taken from her friends, she is also delivered from her enemies, in hope hereafter to enjoy the first, out of fear of ever being troubled with the latter. If she be cut of in her youth, no age is unripe for a good death, and having ended her task, though never so short, she hath lived out her full time. Old age is venerable, not long, to be measured by increase of virtues, not by number of years. For hoariness consisteth in wisdom, and an unspotted life is the ripeness of the perfectest age. If she were in possibility of preferment, she could hardly have mounted higher than from whence she was thrown, and having been bruised with the first, she had little will to climb for a second fall. Wee might hitherto have truly said, this is that Noemi, she being to her end enriched with many outward, and more inward graces. But whether hereafter she would have bidden us not to call her Noemi that is fair, but Mara that signifieth bitter, it is uncertain, sith she might have fallen into that widow’s infelicity, that so changed her name to the likeness of her lot. In sum, she is freed from more miseries than she suffered losses, and more fortunate by not desiring, than she could be by enjoying, fortune’s favors, which if it be not counted a folly to love, yet is it a truer happiness not to need. We may rather think that death was provident against her imminent harms than envious at any future prosperity, the times being great with so many broils, that when they once fall in labor, we shall think their condition securest whom absence
hath exempted both from feeling the bitter throes, and beholding the monstrous issue that they are likely to bring forth.

The more you tendered her, the more temperate should be your grief, sith seeing you upon going, she did but step before you into the next world, to which she thought you to belong more than to this, which hath already given you the last ungrateful congee. They that are upon remove send their furniture before them, and you still standing upon your departure, what ornament could you rather wish in your future abode, than this that did ever so highly please you? God thither sendeth your adamants, whither he would draw your heart, and casteth your anchors where your thoughts should lie at road, that seeing your loves taken out of the world, and your hopes disanchored from this stormy shore, you might settle your desires, where God seemeth to require them. If you would have wished her life for an example to your house, assure yourself she hath left her friends so inherited with her virtues, and so perfect patterns of her best parts, that who knoweth the survivors, may see the deceased, and shall find little difference but in the number, which before was greater but not better, unless it were in one repetition of the same goodness.

Wherefore set yourself at rest in the ordinance of God, whose works are perfect, and whose wisdom infinite. The terms of our life are like the seasons of the year, some for sowing, some for growing, and some for reaping: in this only different, that as the motions of the heavens keep their prescribed periods, so the successions of times have their appointed changes. But in the seasons of our life, which are not tied to the law of necessary causes, some are reaped in the seed, some in the blade, some in the unripe ear, all in the end, this harvest
only depending upon the reaper’s will. Death is to ordinary a thing, to seem any novelty, being a familiar guest in every house. And sith his coming is expected, and his errand known, neither his presence should be feared, nor his effects lamented. What wonder is it to see fuel burned, spice pounded, or snow melted? And as little, sure, it is, to see those dead that were born upon condition once to die. She was such a compound as was once to be resolved into her simples, which is now performed, her soul being given to God, and her body sorted into the first elements.

It could not afflict you to see your friend removed out of a ruinous house, and the house itself destroyed and pulled down, if you knew it were but to build it in a statelier form, and to return the inhabitant with more joy into a fairer lodging. Let then your sister’s soul depart without grief, let her body be also altered to dust. Withdraw your eyes from the ruins of this cottage, and cast them upon the majesty of the second building: which, as St. Paul saith, shall be incorruptible, glorious, strong, spiritual, and immortal. Night and sleep are perpetual memories and mirrors of our decease, figuring in their darkness, silence, and shutting up of our senses, the final end of our mortal bodies. And for this some have entitled sleep the eldest brother of death; but with no less conveniency it might be called one of death’s tenants, near unto him in affinity of conditions, yet far inferior in right, being but tenant for a time of that which death claimeth as inheritance. For by virtue of the conveyance that was made unto him in Paradise, that dust we were, and into dust we shall return, he hath hitherto generally showed his signory over all, exacting of us not only the yearly, but hourly revenues of time, which even by minutes we defray unto him. So that our
very life is not only a memory, but a part of our death, sith the longer we have lived, the less we have to live, and what is the daily lessening of our life, but a continual dying?

As therefore none is more grieved with the running out of the last sand in an hourglass than with all the rest, so should not the end of the last hour trouble us any more than of so many that went before, sith that did but finish a course, that all the rest were still ending. Not the quantity, but the quality, commendeth our life, the ordinary gain of long livers being only a greater burden of sin. For as in trees, so in life, the value is not esteemed by the length, but by the fruit and goodness, which is often more in the least than in the longest. What your sister wanted in continuance, she supplied in speed; and as with her needle she wrought more in a day than many ladies in a year, having both excellent skill, and no less delight in working, so with her diligence doubling her endeavors, she won more virtue in half, than others in a whole life. Her death to time was her birth to eternity, the loss of this world an exchange for a better, no endowment that she had being impaired, but many far greater added to her store.

Mardocheus’ house was too obscure a dwelling for so gracious a Hester, shrouding royal parts in the mantle of a mean estate, and shadowing immortal beauties under earthly veils. It was fitter that she, being a sum of so many perfections, and so well worthy a spouse for our heavenly Assuerus, should be carried to his court from her former abode, there to be invested in glory, and to enjoy both place and preeminence answerable to her worths. Her love would have been less able to have borne your death, than your constancy to brook hers. And therefore God mercifully closed her eyes, before
they were punished with so grievous a sight, taking out
to you but a new lesson of patience out of your old
book, in which long study hath made you perfect. And
though your hearts were equally balanced with a mutual
and most entire affection, and the doubt insoluble which
of you loved most, yet death, finding her the weaker,
though not the lighter, vessel, laid his weight in her bal-
ance to bring her soonest to her rest.

Let your mind therefore consent to that which your
tongue daily craveth, that God’s will may be done, as
well in the earth of her mortal body, as in that little
heaven of her purest soul, sith His will is the best mea-
sure of all events. There is in this world continual inter-
change of pleasing and grieving accidents, still keeping
their successive turns, and overtaking each other in their
several courses. No picture can be all drawn of the
brightest colors, nor a harmony consorted only of treb-
les: shadows are needful in expressing proportions, and
the base is a principal part in perfect music. The condi-
tion of our exile alloweth here no unmeddled joy, our
whole life is tempered between sweet and sour, and we
must all look for a mixture of both. The wise so wish
better, that they still think of worse: accepting the one,
if it come, with liking, and bearing the other without
impatience; being so much masters of either fortune,
that neither shall work them to excess.

The dwarf groweth not on the highest hill, nor the
tall man loseth his height in the lowest valley; and as a
base mind, though best at ease, will be still dejected, so
a resolute virtue in the deepest distresses is most
impregnable. They ever most perfectly enjoy their com-
fort, that least fear their contraries: for a vehement
desire to enjoy carryeth with it as great a fear to lose,
and both desire and fear are enemies to quiet posses-
sion, making men rather servants than owners of God’s benefits. The causes of our troubles are that our misadventures happen either to unwitting or to unwilling minds. Foresight preventeth the one, indifferency the other; for he taketh away the smart of present evils that attendeth their coming, and is not amated with any cross, that is armed against all. Where necessity worketh without our consent, the effect should never greatly afflict us, grief being bootless where it cannot help, needless where there was no fault. God casteth the dice and giveth us our chance: the most we can do is to take the best point that the cast will afford us, not grudging so much that it is no better, as comforting ourselves that it is no worse. If men should all lay their evils together, to be afterward by equal portions divided amongst them, most men would rather take what they brought, than stand to that division. Yet such is the partial judgment of self love, that every one judgeth his own misery too great, feigning if he cannot find some circumstance to increase it, and making it intolerable by unwillingness to endure it. When Moses threw his rod from him it became a serpent ready to sting, and frighted him so much that it made him fly. But being quietly taken up, it was a rod again, serviceable for his uses, no way hurtful. The cross of Christ and rod of every tribulation seemeth to threaten stinging and terror to those that shun and seek to eschew it. But they that mildly take it up, and embrace it with patience, may say with David, Thy rod and thy staff hath been my comfort. In this, affliction resembleth the Crocodile: fly it, it pursueth and frighteth, follow it, it flieth and feareth, a slave to the constant, a tyrant over the timorous.

Soft minds that think only upon delights, and admit no other considerations but of soothing things, become
so effeminate that they are apt to bleed with every sharp impression. But he that useth his thoughts to expectation of troubles, making them travel through all hazards, and opposing his resolution against the sharpest encounters, findeth in the proof facility in patience, and easeth the load of the most heavy combers. We must have temporal things in use, but eternal in wish, that in the one neither delight exceed in that we have, nor desire in that we want, and in the other our most delight be here in desire, and our whole desire hereafter to enjoy. They straighten their joys too much that draw them into the reach and compass of our senses, as if that were no felicity whereof no sense is witness. Whereas if we exclude our passed and future contentments, present pleasures have so fickle assurance, that either they are forestalled before their arrival or interrupted before their end, or ended before they are well begun. The repetition of former comforts, and the expectation of after hopes is ever a relief to a virtuous mind: whereas others, not suffering their life to continue in the connection of that which was and shall be, divide this day from yesterday and tomorrow, and by forgetting all and foreseeing nothing, abridge their whole life into the moment of present time. Enjoy therefore your sister in her former virtues, enjoy her also in your future meeting, being both titles of more certain delights than her casual life could ever have warranted.

If we will think of her death, let it be as of a warning to provide us, sith that which happeneth to one may happen to any, yea, none can escape that is common to all. It may be the blow that hit her was meant to some of us, and this missing was but a proof to take better aim in the next stroke. If we were diligent in thinking of our own, we should have little leisure to bewail oth-
ers’ deaths. When the soldier in skirmish seeth his next fellow slain, he thinketh it more time to look to himself than to stand mourning in a helpless mischance, knowing that the hand that sped so near a neighbor, cannot be far from his own head. But we in this behalf are much like the silly birds, that seeing one stick in the lime-bush crying to get away, with a kind of native pity are drawn to go to it, and so mesh themselves in the same misfortune. For so many in their friends’ decease, by musing on their lot, wittingly surfeit of such sorrow that sometimes they make mourning their last disease. But step not you into this toil, that hath taken none but weak affections. Hold not your eye always upon your hardest haps, neither be you still occupied in counting your losses. There are fairer partes in your body than scars, better eye-marks in your fortune then a sister’s loss.

You might happily find more comforts left, then you would be willing to lose, but that you have already resigned the solaces of life, and summed all comforts into the hope of heaven. Yet sith there is some difference between purpose and proof, intending and performing, a subdued enemy being ever ready to rebel when he findeth mighty helps to make a party, it is good to strengthen reason against the violence of nature, that in this and like cases will renew her assaults. It was a forcible remedy that he used to withstand the conceit of a most lamentable occurrent, who, having in one ship lost his wife, children and substance, and hardly escaped himself from drowning, went presently into an hospital of lazars: where, finding in a little room many examples of greater misery, he made the smart of others’ sores, a lenitive to his own wound. For beside that his loneness and poverty was common to them, they had also many combers private to themselves, some
wanting their senses, some their wits, others their limbs, but all their health. In which consideration, he eased his mind, finding that fortune had not given him the greatest fall. If God had put you to Abraham’s trial, commanding you to sacrifice the hope of your posterity, and to be to your only son an author of death as you were of life: if you had been tied to the straits of Jephtha’s bitter devotion, in imbruıng his sword in his own daughter’s blood and ending the triumphs over his enemies with the voluntary funerals of his only offspring: yet sith both their lives, and your labor had been God’s undeniable debt, your virtue ought to have obeyed maugre all encounters of carnal affection. And how much more in this present case should you incline your love to God’s liking, in which he hath recovered a less part of his own, and that by the usual and easiest course of nature’s law.

Let God strip you to the skin, yea to the soul, so he stay with you himself. Let his reproach be your honor, his poverty your riches, and he in lieu of all other friends. Think him enough in this world, that must be all your possession for a whole eternity. Let others ease their carefulness with borrowed pleasures, not bred out of the true root, but begged of external helps. They shall still carry unquiet minds, easily altered with every accident, sith they labor not any change in their inward dis-tempers but by forgetting them for a time by outward pastimes. Innocency is the only mother of true mirth, and a soul that is owner of God, will quietly bear with all other wants, nothing being able to impoverish it, but voluntary losses. Bear therefore not with the loss, for she is won for ever, but with the momentary absence of your most happy sister. Yea, it cannot justly be called an absence, many thoughts being daily in parley with
her. Only men’s eyes and ears, unworthy to enjoy so sweet an object, have resigned their interest and entrusted this treasure unto their hearts, being the fittest shrines for so pure a Saint, whom as none did know, but did love, so none can now remember but with devotion.

Men may behold her with shame of their ill life, seeing one of the frailler sex honor her weakness with such a train of perfections. Ladies may admire her as a glory to their degree, in whom honor was portrayed in the true likeness, grace having perfected nature’s first draught with all the due colors of an absolute virtue. All women may accept her for a pattern to imitate, her gifts and good parts having been so manifold, that even they that can teach the finest stitches may themselves take new works out of her sampler. Who then could drink any sorrow out of so clear a fountain, or bewail the state of so happy a creature, to whom, as to be he self was her greatest praise, so to be as she is was her highest bliss. You still float in a troublesome sea, and you find it by experience a sea of dangers, how then can it pity you to see your sister on shore, and safely landed in a blissful harbor?

Sith your Judith hath wrought the glorious exploit against her ghostly enemies for the accomplishment whereof she came into the dangerous camp and warfare of this life, you may well give her leave to look home to her Bethulia, to solemnize her triumph with the spoils of her victory: yea, you should rather wish to have been porter to let her in, than mourn to see her safe returned from so apparent hazards. She carried a heavenly treasure in an earthly vessel, which was too weak a treasury for so high riches, sin creeping in at the windows of our senses, and often picking the locks of the strongest hearts: and for this it was laid up in a surer custody, to
which the heavens are walls and the Angels keepers.
She was a pure fish, but here swimming in muddy
streams. It was time now to draw her to shore, and to
employ the inwards of her virtues to medicinable uses,
that laid on the coals of due consideration, they may
drive from our thoughts the devil’s suggestions, and
applied to their eyes that are blinded with the dung of
flying vanities, the film of their former folly may fall
off, and leave them able to behold the true light. The
base shell of a mortal body, was an unfit room for so
precious a margarite. And the Jeweller that came into
this world to seek good pearls, and gave not only all he
had, but himself also to buy them, thought it now time
to take her into his bargain, finding her grown to a
margarite’s full perfection. She stood upon too low a
ground, to take view of her Savior’s most desired coun-
tenance, and forsaking the earth with good Zacheus, she
climbed up into the tree of life, there to give her soul a
full repast of his beauties. She departed with Jephtha’s
daughter from her father’s house, but to pass some
months in wandering about the mountains of this trou-
blesome world which, being now expired, she was after
her pilgrimage by covenant to return, to be offered to
God in a grateful sacrifice, and to ascend out of this
desert like a stream of perfume out of burned spices.

Let not therefore the crown of her virtue be the foil
of your constancy, nor the end of her combers a renew-
ing of yours. But sith God was well pleased to call her,
she not displeased to go, add you the third twist to make
a triple cord, saying with Job, Our Lord gave and our
Lord took away; as it hath pleased our Lord so is it
fallen out, the name of our Lord be blessed. The last of
September 1591.
Epitaphium eiusdem, in obitum clarissimae comitissae, dominae Buckhurst

Clara ducum soboles superis nova sedibus hospes
Clausit in offenso tramite pura diem.
   Dotibus ornavit, superavit moribus ortum
Omnibus una prior, par fuit una sibi
   Lux genus ingenio generi lux inclita virtus
Virtutique fuit mens generosa decus.
   Mors minuit properata dies orbamque reliquit,
Prolem matre virum, conjuge flore genus.
   Occidit ast alium tulit hic occasus in ortum.
Vivit ad occiduas non reditura vices.

R. S.
Another Epitaph upon  
the death of the Lady Buckhurst.

OF Howard’s stem a glorious branch is dead:  
    Sweet lights eclipsed were in her decease.  
In Buckhurst line she gracious issue spread;  
    She heaven with two, with four did earth increase  
Fame, honor, grace, gave air unto her breath.  
    Rest, glory, joys were sequels of her death.  

Death aimed too high; he hit too choice a wight,  
    Renowned for birth, for life, for lovely parts.  
He killed her cares, he brought her worths to light  
    He robbed our eyes, but hath enriched our hearts.  
He let out of the Ark a Noah’s dove;  
    But many hearts are arks unto her love.  

Grace, nature, fortune, did in her conspire  
    To show a proof of their united skill:  
Sly Fortune ever false did soon retire,  
    But doubled grace supplied false Fortune’s ill;  
And though she wrought not to her fortune’s pitch,  
    In grace and nature few were found so rich.  

Heaven of this heavenly pearl is now possessed,  
    Whose luster was the blaze of honor’s light:  
Whose substance pure of every good the best,  
    Whose price the crown of vertue’s highest right,  
Whose praise to be her self, whose greatest bliss,  
    To live, to love, to be where now she is.
Commentary

19.1. an unknown god] “But Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For passing by, and seeing your idols, I found an altar also, on which was written: to the unknown God. What therefore you worship, without knowing it, that I preach to you” (Acts. 17.22–23).


19.8. friends] relations.


19.15. Where I borrow] This seems to suggest that Southwell did not know Lady Margaret, and based his letter on the reports of those who did. Yet there is evidence that he not only knew her, but acted as an advisor to her (Devlin, The Life of Robert Southwell, Poet and Martyr [London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1956], 216).

19.23. unto them] I.e., to Arundel’s “friends,” including Southwell’s informants. The Sackvilles were nominally Protestant. Southwell’s epistle to the reader implies that Lady Margaret’s immediate family wanted it known that she lived and died Catholic.

21.1. If it be a blessing] “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5.5).

21.21. The scripture alloweth us] “My son, shed tears over the dead, and begin to lament as if thou hadst suffered some great harm, and according to judgment cover his body, and neglect not his burial” (Ecclesiasticus 38.16).

21.27–22.4. But as not to feel...competent mirth] There is a certain decorum, even in sorrow which ought to be observed by a wise-man. And as in other things, so likewise in tears there is somewhat that is sufficient: unwise men, as in their joys, so keep they no measure in their sorrows (Seneca, “The Epistles to Lucilius,” Workes, 421).

22.26. as a moth] “As a moth doth by a garment, and a worm by the wood: so the sadness of a man consumeth the heart” (Proverbs 25.20).

22.27–23.5. But this impotent softness...misfortunes] “For it is a foolish and unbridled affection in any one to torment himself incessantly, for
the death of another whom he loveth. As contrariwise not to be moved, is to be reputed to have a heart both obdurate and inhumane. The best mean that we can observe betwixt piety and reason, is to feel some remorse, and afterwards to extinguish the same. There is no reason thou shouldst build upon certain women, that having once begun to entertain sorrow, never give it over till death hath made an end of them” (Seneca, “To Helva,” Workes, 749–50).

23.13. The scripture warneth us “[G]ive not up thy heart to sadness, but drive it from thee: and remember the latter end. Forget it not: for there is no returning, and thou shalt do him no good, and shalt hurt thyself” (Ecclesiasticus 38.21–22).

23.16. Ecclesiasticus alloweth “The mourning for the dead is seven days” (22.13).

28.29. seeking Cattle] Saul, searching for his father’s lost asses, came to Suph, where Samuel anoints him king (1 Kings 9.1–27, 10.1).

29.31. to foil a giant] David, the shepherd boy, having left his sheep to fight the giant Goliath, came to the notice of Saul, and eventually succeeded him (1 Kings 17).

28.34. to set with the princes[ “Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill: That he may place him with princes, with the princes of his people” (Psalm 112. 7–8).

29.10. Her foundations] “The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains” (Psalm 86.1). Southwell’s wording is closer to the Coverdale psalter of the Book of Common Prayer (“Her foundations are upon the holy hills”) than to the Douay Rheims version.

29.22. Our life is but a lent good] See note to 12.31–2.

30.28–29. For who is the man] “Who is the man that shall live, and not see death?” (Psalm 88.49)

30.30. and like water] “We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth” (2 Kings 14.14).

30.31. sentence of death] “For dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return” (Genesis 3.19).

32.12–13. prayers...offered on the altar] “And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel” (Apocalypse 8.3–4).

32.17. the example of Ezechias] “Go back, and tell Ezechias the captain of my people: Thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father: I have heard thy prayer, and I have seen thy tears: and behold I have healed thee” (4 Kings 20.5)
32.19. as David taught us] “Now that he is dead, why should I fast? Shall I be able to bring him back any more? I shall go to him rather: but he shall not return to me” (2 Kings 12.23).

32.25–28. the very brute creatures...their losses] “Consider how unbried the desires of brute beasts are, and yet they are short. Cows for a day or two low after the Bull, neither doth the wanton and wandering course of mares last long” (Seneca, “To Marcia,” The Workes, 714).

34.8. sucked such surmises] “And all his children being gathered together to comfort their father in his sorrow, he would not receive comfort, but said: I will go down to my son into hell, mourning. And whilst he continued weeping, The Madianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Putiphar, an eunuch of Pharao, captain of the soldiers” (Genesis 37.35–36).

34.11–12. as poor Mary Magdalen...supposed] “She ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him” (John 20.2).

34.28-30. If she want...the stage] “All these accessaries Marcia that shine about us as children, honors; riches, large palaces, and people that expect at our door to salute and attend us, a worthy, noble and fair wife, and other such goods as depend on the inconstancy of mutable fortune, are but foreign and hired ornaments, which are not given but lent us to deck the Theatre wherein the Scene of our life is acted, and which ought to be returned to those to whom they appertain. Some of these must be brought home the first day, others the next day; few shall persevere, and continue to the end. We are not therefore to esteem them, as if they were our own, they are but lent us. The use of them is ours, according as it pleaseth him to whom they appertain” (Seneca, “To Marcia,” Workes, 716).

35.12. Old age is venerable] “For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of a man is grey hairs. And a spotless life is old age” (Wisdom 4.8–9).

35.20–26. This is that Noemi...of her lot] “And the women said: This is that Noemi. But she said unto them: Call me not Noemi, (that is, beautiful,) but call me Mara, (that is, bitter,) for the Almighty hath quite filled me with bitterness” (Ruth 1.19–20).

38.24–32. Mardocheus...her worths] An allegorical interpretation of Esther 2.15–17: “For [Ester] was exceeding fair, and her incredible beauty made her appear agreeable and amiable in the eyes of all. So she was brought to the chamber of king Assuerus...And the king loved her more than all the women, and she had favour and kindness
before him above all the women, and he set the royal crown on her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti."

40.21–25. When Moses...hurtful] Exodus 4.1–4: “2. Then he said to him: what is that thou holdest in thy hand? He answered: A rod. 3. And the Lord said: Cast it down upon the ground. He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent: so that Moses fled from it. 4. And the Lord said: Put out thy hand and take it by the tail. He put forth his hand, and took hold of it, and it was turned into a rod.”

44.23. glorious exploit] When Holofernes, general of Nabuchodonosor, besieged Bethulia, in Israel, Judith, the widow of Manasses, having gained his confidence, beheaded him in his tent, and returned to Bethulia with the head. A rout of the panicked Assyrians followed. “And Joachim the high priest came from Jerusalem to Bethulia with all his ancients to see Judith. And when she was come out to him, they all blessed her with one voice, saying: Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people ...And thirty days were scarce sufficient for the people of Israel to gather up the spoils of the Assyrians” (Judith 15.9–13).

44.30. She carried a heavenly treasure] “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4.7).

45.2. She was a pure fish] “And he went out to wash his feet, and behold a monstrous fish came up to devour him. And Tobias being afraid of him, cried out with a loud voice, saying: Sir, he cometh upon me. And the angel said to him: Take him by the gill, and draw him to thee. And when he had done so, he drew him out upon the land, and he began to pant before his feet. Then the angel said to him: Take out the entrails of this fish, and lay up his heart, and his gall, and his liver for thee: for these are necessary for useful medicines” (Tobias 6.2–5).

45.11. And the Jeweller] “Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13.45–46).

45.15. margarite] A pearl. A play on Lady Margaret’s name.

45.17. forsaking the earth with good Zacheus] “And [Zacheus] sought to see Jesus who he was, and he could not for the crowd, for he was low of stature. And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him; for he was to pass that way” (Luke 19.3–4).
Textual Notes

The reading within the lemma is that of $S$, and agrees with other witnesses unless otherwise noted. The variants of the printed texts are of no textual significance; their only value is to show that Busby used for copy a text identical to, or of the same kind as, $Ad$. For the first five pages I have recorded fully the variants from the printed texts as evidence of the printer’s negligence and carelessness, but thereafter only those that indicate the relationship with $Ad$, or that are supported by $S$ or $V$. One cannot assume that uncorroborated variants in the quartos derive from copy; even some of the corroborated ones will be owing to coincidence.

19.6. intended] intend $Ad$.
19.7. lamentedfortune] lamenting fortune $Ad$; lamenting sort $ABC$.
19.8. that] who $ABC$.
19.10 that] which $ABC$. last] shall last $BC$.
19.11. that] which $AC$; mover] owner $ABC$.
19.12 This] thus $BC$.
19.12 overrule, sith] be our rule since $ABC$.
19.13 of their] of your $ABC$.
19.15. as much] so muche $DV$.
19.19. to their] of their $ABC$.
19.20. with the title of an offense] omit $VABC$.
19.23. it] omit $AC$.
21.2. blessing] omit $ABC$.
21.3. pronounced] pronounceth $V$.
21.5. your] our $BC$.
21.5. he hath] $V$; hath $S$; hath he $ABC$.
21.10. it good] good $BC$.
21.16. loving to a less lovely] loving to a lesse loving $A$; kind to a lesse loving $BC$.
21.21. alloweth] moveth $AdVABC$. 53
21.25. with a] with the V; to a ABC.
21.26. pitie] pietie ABC.
22.1. the other] and the other V.
22.5. that of courtesie be] that in curtesye is to bee V; that sorow of
curtesie be ABC.
22.7. torment] tormentes AdABC.
22.9. or the] or VA.
22.11. of pity] omit of Ad.
22.11. pangs] pang ABC.
22.12. so] as ABC; loving] living ABC.
22.14. seuell] signell ABC.
22.16. evil] evil will Ad; wil ABC.
22.17. the most] most V.
22.19. feed it with] feepe with A; feed their BC.
22.21. considerations into] consideration to AB.
22.23. their souls] them selves ABC.
22.24. sometimes findeth too] findeth sometimes a Ad; sometimes
findeth a AB.
22.27. consume] perswade ABC.
22.30–31. passions wind] passion joynd ABC.
22.32. knoweth] careth V.
22.34. deserveth not our imitation] discerneth our meditation ABC;
parte] omit SAC.
23.2. to the funerals] to the funeral AdAC; the funeralles V.
23.3. forgo] force ABC; it] omit Ad.
23.4. only been] beene onely V.
23.5. perpetual maps of dead folks] perpetuall mappes of dreadfull V;
a perpetual map of dead folke ABC.
23.7. passion] passions Ad.
23.11. not so] omit so Ad.
23.13. a kind of] omit AdABC.
23.14. over] omit ABC.
23.15. yet] yea V.
23.18. of good] in good ABC.
23.20. shed] shoulde shedd AdABC.; deaths] death AdABC; meane
mayne Ad; meane ABC.
23.21. bathe] shewe ABC; as perfect] as present Ad; perfitt C.
23.25–26. a leap] the leape V.
23.27–28. from storm] for stormes AdV.
23.28. knew] knowe AdVABC;
23.34. funeralls] farewelles A.
24.3. greatness only] V; only greatnes] S.
Textual Notes

24.12. other] either Ad.
24.17. itself] her selfe AdABC; dumb] dolefull V.
24.28. without her] omit her AdABC.
25.2. avowing] avowching V.
25.17. sure] surelye V.
25.24. be hardly] hardly bee V.
26.1. duly] daylie AdABC.
26.2. time] tymes AdABC.
26.7. Yet this] This yet V.
26.10. ought] owed AdV.
26.29–30. her desires before her] before her her desires V.
26.31. a most] most AdV.
27.5. God and the] God and to the V.
27.9. his interest] her interest V.
27.11. let] omit Ad.
27.15. your] our V.
27.20. remedies] memoryes V.
27.22. virtue] vertues AdABC.
27.23. be not you] bee yow not V. with her] at her AdV;
27.24. with which] in which Ad.
27.27. praisers] praises AdABC.
28.2. God’s will] God his will V.
28.7. a right but] but a right AdV.
28.8. best] the best AdABC.
28.14. artificer’s] artificer his V.
28.21. less joy of our] lesse joy of your Ad; lesse joy in your V; or
lesse joy of your ABC; in her] it in her V.
29.33. dust] duste, as it is in the 112 Psalme V; God’s] God his V;
29.1. longer] long Ad.
29.1. should have] had V.
29.5. stranger] strange AdABC.
29.11. but] put V.
29.14. the ruins] her ruines V.
29.20. held upon] helde by V.
29.21. sovereign’s] soveraigne his V.
29.29. owner’s] owner his V.
30.9. minds] minde V.
30.14. in a] in V.
30.29. sith] sith that V.
30.33. Whom] Who V.
31.4. deep in] deepe into V.
31.7. that ever] as ever V.
31.13. God’s] God his V.
31.15. or] nor V.
31.24. cause] omit V.
31.26. triumph] triumphes V.
32.6. and an] and our V.
32.8. stilled] distilled V.
32.9. operations] operation V.
32.11. in the] out in the Ad; into the V.
32.21. it by his weeping] that by his weeping it shoulde V.
32.22. not to give sorrow any] to give sorrowe no AdABC.
32.24. it not] not it V.
32.31. your love] you AdABC.
32.34. to many] of manye V.
33.6. mewed] morde Ad; moved ABC.
33.8. bend an] bend SC.
33.12. have already] allreadye have V.
34.3. ourselves] themselves Ad.
34.5. often times others’ good] oftentimes good V.
34.7. Joseph’s] Joseph his V.
34.8. such] some V.
34.9. prey to] praye for V.
34.12. could] shoulde V.
34.17. who could neither] who would ether Ad.
34.19. of] of an AdABC.
35.25. her] your Ad.
35.2. Yet] and yet Ad.
35.9. latter] laste Ad.
35.27. and more] but more V.
35.29. folly to love] follye in her to love V.
35.32. times] time Ad; that when] and when V.
35.34. securest] surest V.
36.4. temperate] tempred V.
36.14. thoughts] harte V.
37.1. only depending] depending onely V.
37.1. reapers] reaper his V.
37.22. decease] death Ad.
37.26. conveniency] inconveniencye V.
37.26. death’s] death his V.
37.33. of us] us V.
38.2. sith] seeing V.
38.3. lessening] blessing V;
38.6. in an] in the V.
38.8. of so] of V.
38.12 trees] a tree Ad.
38.16–17. a day] one day V.
38.22. no] an V.
38.27. sum] sunne V.
38.32. would] could V.
39.3. hath] had V.
39.10. God’s] God his V.
39.20–21. our whole] our V.
39.23. that] as V.
39.29. best] most V.
40.2. causes] cause AdABC.
40.3. or to] or V.
40.6. amated] amazed V; that is] but is V.
40.10. help,] helpe, and V.
40.10. was] is V.
40.13. no better] not better V.
40.14. all lay] laye all AdABC.
40.15. afterward] afterwardes V.
40.19. own misery] selfe-misery AdABC; feigning] seinge Ad; fearing ABC.
41.23. But] and V.
41.31. follow it, it] followe, it Ad; followed, it ABC.
41.34. but of] but onely of V.
41.1. with] at V. his] omit V.
41.12. as if] as thoughte V.
41.17. or ended] or els ended V.
42.23. the moment] a moment V.
42.26. than] they V.
42.6. seeing] seekinge Ad; sticke] sticking V.
42.7. mesh] mash V.
42.10. such] so verie much Ad; too much ABC.
42.12. not you] yow not V.
42.20. sith] seeing V.
42.27–28. one ship lost] lost Ad; one shippe V.
42.33. loneness] lownesse AdV; unto V.
43.2. health] healthes V.
43.4. Abraham's] Abraham his V.
43.9. triumphs] triumpe V.
43.11. God's] God his V.
43.15. God's] God his V.
44.31. Bear therefore not] Beare not therefore Ad; Beare therefore V.
44.34. an] *omit V.*
44.20. none can now] now none can *V.*
44.15. her] their *Ad.*
44.24 accomplishment] accomplishinge *AdABC.*
44.28. her] your *V.*
44.31. earthly] unworthie *Ad.*
45.3. time now] now time *V.*
45.16. Saviour’s] Saviour his *V.*
45.18. into] unto *V.*
45.19. Jephthes] Joseph his *V.*
45.31. is it] it is *Ad.*
45.32–33. The last of September 1591] *omit 1591 Ad; The last of September, in the yeare of our Lord, one thousand, five hundred ninetye three. 1593 R.S. V; R.S. AB.*
47. Title] V; *omit SAd.* R.S.] V; *omit S.*
48.3. Buckhurst] Buckehurstes *V.*
48.10. enriched] encreasde *V.*
48.22. price] prise *V.*
Appendix: John Trussell's
Title Page and Prefatory Matter

THE

Triumphs over Death:

OR,

*An Consolatorie Epistle, for afflicted*

mindes, in the affects of

dying friends.

First written for the consolation of one: but now
published for the generall good of all, by R. S.
the Author of *S. Peters Complaint*, and *Moeoniae*
his other Hymnes.

LONDON

*Printed by V. S. for John Busbie, and*
are to be sold at Nicholas Lings shop
at the West end of Paules
  Church  1 5 9 5.
To the Worshipful M. Richard Sackville,
Edward Sackville Cecily Sackville and Anne Sackville,
the hopeful issue\(^1\) of the honorable Gentleman
master Robert Sackville Esquire.

Most lines do not the best conceit contain,
Few words well couched may comprehend much matter:
Then, as to use the first is counted vain,
So is’t praiseworthy to conceit the latter:
The gravest wits that most grave works expect,
The quality, not quantity respect.

The smallest spark will cast a burning heat:
Base cottages may harbor things of worth,
Then though this volume be nor gay nor great,
Which under\(^2\) your protection I set forth,
Do not with coy disdainful oversight
Deny to read this well-meant orphan’s\(^3\) mite.

And since his father in his infancy
Provided patrons to protect his heir,
But now by Death’s\(^4\) none-sparing cruelty
Is turn’d an orphan to the open air:
I his unworthy foster-sire have dared,
To make you patronizers of this ward.

You glorying issues of that glorious dame,
Whose life is made the subject of death’s will,
To you succeeding hopes of mother’s fame,

\(^1\) issue] issues \(BC\).
\(^2\) Which under] BC under A.
\(^3\) orphan’s] orphants \(B\).
\(^4\) Death’s] Death \(AC\).
I dedicate this fruit of Southwell’s quill:
He for your Uncle’s comfort first it writ,
I for your consolation print and send you it.

Then deign in kindness to accept the work,
Which he in kindness writ, I send to you,
The which till now clouded, obscure did lurk:
But now opposéd to each reader’s view,
May yield commodious fruit to every wight
That feels his conscience pricked by Parcae’s spite.

But if in aught I have presumptuous been,
My pardon-craving pen implores your favor:
If any fault in print be past unseen,
To let it pass, the printer is the craver,
So shall he thank you, and I by duty bound,
Pray, that in you may all good gifts abound.

Your Worships’ humbly devoted,

John Trussell.
Read with regard, what here with due regard, Our second Ciceronian Southwell sent, By whose persuasive pithy argument, Each well-disposéd eye may be prepared, Respectively their grief for friends’ decease To moderate without all vain excess.

S Sith then the work is worthy of your view, Obtract not him which for your good it penned: Unkind you are if you it reprehend, That for your profit is\(^1\) presented you, He penned, I publish, this to pleasure all, Esteem of both then as we merit shall:

T Weigh his works worth, accept of my goodwill, Else is his labor lost, mine crossed, both to no end: Let my goodwill all small\(^2\) defects fulfill: He here his talent trebled doth present, I, my poor mite, yet both with good intent, Then take them kindly both, as we them meant.

John Trussell.

\(^1\) is] it \textit{BC}.

\(^2\)all small] and small \textit{BC}.
To the Reader.

Chancing to find with Aesop’s Cock a stone,
   Whose worth was more than I knew how to prize:
And knowing, if it should be kept unknown,
   T’would many scathe, and pleasure few or none,
   I thought it best the same in public wise
   In print to publish, that impartial eyes
   Might, reading, judge, and judging, praise the wight
The which this Triumph over Death did write.

And though the same he did at first compose
   For one’s peculiar consolation,
Yet will it be commodious unto those,
   Which for some friend’s loss, prove their own self-foes:
   And by extremity of exclamation,
   And their continuate lamentation
Seem to forget, that they at length must tread
The self-same path which they did that are dead.

But those as yet whom no friend’s death doth cross,
   May by example guide their actions so,
That when a tempest comes their bark to toss,
   Their passions shall not superate their loss:
   And eke this treatise doth each reader show,
   That we our breath, to Death by duty owe,
   And thereby proves, much tears are spent in vain,
When tears can not recall the dead again.

1 In] I B.
2 commodious] BC; commodions A.
3 each] the BC.
Yet if perhaps our late-sprung sectaries,
Or for a fashion Bible-bearing hypocrites,
Whose hollow hearts do seem most holy wise,
Do for the author’s sake the work despise,
  I wish them weigh the words,¹ and not who writes:  ²⁹
  But they that leave what most the soul delights,
Because the preacher’s no precisian, sure,
To read what Southwell writ will not endure.

But leaving them, since no persuades suffice
  To cause them read, except the spirit move,
I wish all other read, but none² despise  ³⁵
This little treatise: but if Momus’ eyes
  Espy Death’s triumph, it doth him behove,
The writer, work, or me for to reprove:
But let his³ pitched-speeched mouth defile but one,  ³⁹
Let that be me, let t’other two alone:
  For if offense in either merit blame,
The fault is mine, and let me reap the shame.

  John Trussell.

¹ words] worke BC.
² none] not BC.
³ his] this B.
A Note on John Trussell

Very little is known about John Trussell, the young poet who published the *Letter Consolatory* as well as Busby’s selection of Southwell’s poems under the title *Moeoniae*. He may be the same person as the John Trussell who was an antiquarian and historian living in Winchester. If so, then he was born in January, 1575 in London to Henry Trussell, first cousin of Thomas Trussell of Billingsley, Stratford-upon-Avon. The identification is still not absolutely certain, but it seems probable.¹

In his later years as a historian and an important resident of Winchester, he became a supporter of Charles I and his Church of England; but in his younger days as a poet, he was evidently—like other members of his family—a Catholic as well as a keen proponent of Robert Southwell’s writing, and he had interesting connections.

His “*Raptus I. Helenae. The First Rape of Faire Hellen. Done into Poeme, by I.T,* was entered in the Stationers’ Register by Richard Jones, 16 April 1595, and published by him the same year. I.T. identified himself as John Trussell in an epistle ‘To the Reader’ which, it has been noticed, echoes Shakespeare’s dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. M.A. Shaaber, in “The First Rape of Faire Hellen by John Trussell” (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 8 (1957): 409–48), was skeptical of the implied connection. Nonetheless, the echoes are there, a couple of them striking:

“my untutord Lines” (*L*): “my untutord Poeme” (*RFH*).
“my unpolisht lines” (*V&A*): “my rude unpollisht poetrie.”
“the first heire of my invention” (*V&A*): “this oversleight first

¹See in particular the article on him in *ODNB* by Adrienne Rosen, and a doctoral dissertation, *John Trussell: A Life (1575-1648)*, prepared by Robert F.W.Smith for the History department, Southampton University, 2013. I owe the information on John Trussell’s immediate genealogy to this work’s Appendix C.
fruits of my over barren Muse.”
“I leave...your Honor to your hearts content” (V&A): “I leave you to your hearts content.”
“...vowe to take advantage of all idle houres, till I have honoured you with some graver labour” (V&A): “...manie moneths shall not passe, before I pleasure you with some more pleasing Poetrie.”

So many echoes in such short space are convincing evidence that young Trussell knew and admired Shakespeare’s poems. Shaaber pointed out that OED’s first use of *untutored* is from Shakespeare (*3 Henry VI*, 5.5.32). He also pointed out that the least impressive parallel (the last) is a commonplace used by Lodge, Spenser, Chettle, Barnes, Drayton, and others. On the basis of his examples, though, one is tempted to say that Shakespeare took his version of the commonplace from Lodge or Spenser, and that J.T. then took it from Shakespeare.

Something else that troubled Shaaber was the possibility that Trussell had Stratfordian and Shakespearean connections. The Rosenbach text of Trussell’s poem that Shaaber prints is unique, and when A.W. Rosenbach bought it in 1931, he made a great deal of a possible link with Shakespeare. The Times Literary Supplement, 9 July 1931, p. 552, gave a report on the sale and the book, and printed a prefatory sonnet by I.T. that Rosenbach thought was addressed to Shakespeare. TLS also gave some account of the Trussells, a Stratford family, associated with the Ardens and Shakespeares, and linked the poet Trussell with the historian called Trussell mentioned in DNB.

All this was too much for M.A. Shaaber, who, after consulting the published pedigrees of the Harleian Society, could not make out the parentage of John Trussell with any certainty, nor could he be sure whether he was the same man as the historian, who wrote, among other things, *A Continuation of the History of England, beginning where S. Daniell Ended* (1636: STC 24297).

All this, however, is beside the point. The Trussells had been in Stratford, living at a manor called Billesley, since
Henry II’s time, but they alienated the manor by lease in 1585, and then permanently after the then owner was indicted and convicted of felony.\(^1\) As another writer (S.C. Wilson) observed in *TLS*, 16 July 1931, J.S. Smart in *Shakespeare, Truth and Tradition*, 64, had shown that Thomas Trussell of Billingsley had been concerned in Thomas Arden of Wilmcote’s purchase of the Snitterfield estate that came to Shakespeare’s father through his wife, Mary Arden. It is extremely probable that Shakespeare and the Trussells of Billingsley were related.

Shaaber was on stronger ground when he decided that it was unlikely that I.T’s prefatory sonnet is addressed to Shakespeare. However, he went too far when he suggested that it was a dedicatory poem by yet another I.T. addressed to John Trussell himself. It reads very like a sonnet written by Trussell to accompany the presentation of his poem to someone else, whereas the two dedicatory poems undoubtedly addressed to Trussell himself are quite specifically about him, mentioning his youth and his inexperience as well as his poem.

I.T’s sonnet, on the other hand, was addressed to someone who was an experienced, very good poet, so good indeed that “Fames eternitie” sat on his brows. I.T. was so bashful about offering to praise this unnamed poet that he would not have ventured upon the attempt at all but for “our friendship and our amitie.”

Is this other poet Shakespeare? Possibly, but had he been still alive in 1595, Thomas Watson would be a more likely candidate. Watson, however, died in 1592, probably of the plague, and the person addressed in the sonnet is apparently still alive in 1595. A dedicatory sonnet intended for Watson could, of course, have been written

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\(^1\)This was Thomas Trussell, John Trussell’s second cousin. He was pardoned, and lived a long life, dying in 1640 (ODNB). The Trussells’ financial difficulties are traceable to John Trussell’s great-uncle Avery Trussell, who suffered the relatively common misfortune in Elizabethan times of a long wardship during which his guardian plundered the estate.
before his death; but would Trussell, who was only twenty in 1595, have been writing to Watson at sixteen or seventeen?

Watson was a scallywag, but a good writer. He was a friend of Christopher Marlowe and Sir Francis Walsingham. He lived with Marlowe, and he was Ingram Frizer’s master (Mark Eccles, *Christopher Marlowe in London*, 1934, 8). In 1581, he had been with Walsingham in Paris. From September 1589–February 1590, he was in prison for killing William Bradley, and there was an extraordinary episode in which he set about confirming a Catholic lady, Anne Burnell, in the belief that she was Philip II’s illegitimate child (Eccles, 145–61).

Was Watson, like Trussell, Catholic? He visited Douai as a student of civil law in October 1576, and the Douai Diary notes that he was admitted to the community in May 1577, but that he left in July (*First and Second Douay Diaries* [1878], 112, 121, 125, 127). He then left for England in August (Eccles, 137). A stay at the Douay-Rheims seminary does not necessarily make him a Catholic, although it certainly suggests that he had leanings that way. More sinisterly, his connection with Walsingham raises the possibility that he was one of the informers who passed through the seminary: to be admitted, such people needed to convince William Allen that they either were, or wished to become, Catholic.

Eccles announced (170), “I shall discuss elsewhere the interesting question whether ‘I.T. gent.’ [who translated Watson’s *Amintae Gaudia*, 1594, as *An ould facioned love* (*STC* 25118)] was the John Trussell who in 1595 published another imitative poem, *The First Rape of the Fair Helen* (sic), following in the footsteps of Shakespeare, ‘Watson’s heyre’.” Eccles never published the results of these inquiries, although he supplied Shaaber with information for his article. There is surely very little doubt that Trussell was the I.T. who translated Watson’s *Amintae gaudia*, especially since Watson also wrote a *Raptus Helenae* (1586), based on Colluthus: Thebanus Coluthus. *Coluthi Thebani*. 
Shaaber seems not to have known about Trussell’s link to Watson. It is also interesting that Watson, who considered himself primarily a Latinist, composed a Latin translation of *Antigone*, which he dedicated to Philip, Earl of Arundel in 1581.

Like the author of the *ODNB* article and Robert Smith, Shaaber thought there was no reliable evidence that Trussell was Catholic. But like them, he was closing his eyes to obvious probabilities. In 1595, Southwell was a famous, recently executed Jesuit, and Trussell’s only reason for dedicating *Triumphs over Death* to the Sackville children was that, besides celebrating their mother’s life and death, it announced to the world’s more attentive readers the news that she was a Catholic who had made a good Catholic death. Given that fact, several of Trussell’s remarks in his prefatory poems prove more than conventionally interesting:

1) Only a year earlier, the musician John Bolt, captured with a manuscript copy of Southwell’s *Saint Peter’s Complaint* in his possession, was only saved from torture by the intervention of Penelope Rich. Yet Trussell does not even bother to disguise Southwell’s authorship; instead, he names him four times in three pages.

2) Young John Trussell, trained at Westminster School under William Camden, was an accomplished Latinist—hence his admiration for, and translation of, Thomas Watson’s neo-Latin verse, and the learned title, *Moeoniae*, that he supplied for the selection of Southwell’s poems that he published with Busby in this same year, 1595. In calling Southwell “Our second Ciceronian,” therefore, in his acrostic poem spelling out the poet’s name, he was delivering a very precise judgment as well as indicating his rever-
ence for Southwell as a master writer of prose in English. Who, though, was our *first* Ciceronian? Watson himself?

3) The poem “To the Reader” begins by implying very strongly that Trussell wants readers to understand that although Southwell wrote his epistle to console one man for one death, he now wishes it to be read under its new title, *The Triumphs over Death* (supplied by Trussell himself) as covering and anticipating multiple deaths, and as celebrating multiple triumphs over death at the same time.

By the time Trussell published the little book, Southwell himself was dead, savagely executed under cruel and unconstitutional laws, and Philip Arundel, imprisoned under the same laws, was dead in the Tower, as many people thought, from poisoning. As for the readers, if they were Catholic, they could expect a similarly violent death. They could also expect to become the exponents of a similar triumph over death, grounded in their witness to religious faith well lived.

4) That being so, the “late sprung Sectaries, /...Bible-bearing hypocrites, / Whose hollow hearts do seem most holy wise,” attacked in the same poem are not necessarily, as Shabber thought, merely the extreme Protestants. In 1595 a Catholic writer could so describe all Protestants, including the members of the state’s Church of England, which was still overwhelmingly Calvinist at that time. Challenged by, say, the court of Star-Chamber, Trussell could of course have defended himself by saying his attack was only meant for the extremists.

5) Most interesting of all, if we take Trussell’s words in his first poem in their simple, literal sense, he lays claim to a personal relationship with Southwell that allowed him to consider himself a kind of literary executor:

Do not with coy disdainful oversight
Deny to read this well-meant orphan’s mite.

And since his father in his infancy
Provided patrons to protect his heir.
But now by Death’s none-sparring cruelty
Is turn’d an orphan to the open air:
I his unworthy foster-sire have dared,
To make you patronizers of this ward.

Robert Southwell’s death had orphaned his literary offspring, but he, having anticipated that possibility, had “provided patrons,” i.e., had seen to it that copies of his work were safe in other people’s hands. One of those people was the twenty-year-old John Trussell. Collation of Busby’s editions of the Epistle and the poems suggests that Trussell’s manuscript, from which both books were printed, was similar to, perhaps identical to, the manuscript now in the British Library (MS Additional 10422).1 It therefore contained Southwell’s 52 shorter poems as well as the Consolatory Epistle, and Southwell’s letter to his father as well.

Trussell’s words imply that his manuscript came to him, whether directly or indirectly, from Southwell himself, and that, in turn, implies something that Southwell’s editors (including me) have been reluctant to consider: that the three surviving manuscripts, like Trussell’s, are exemplars of an original compiled by, or planned by, Southwell himself. If that were so, it would certainly explain the reverence with which their copyists preserved the order of the poems. It would explain, too, the same concern for the poems’ proper order that appears in Busby’s “The Printer to the Gentlemen Readers” that Trussell probably wrote for him:

One thing amongst the rest I am to admonish thee of, that having in this treatise read “Mary’s Visitation,” the next that should follow is “Christ’s Nativity,” but being afore printed in the end of Peter’s Complaint, we have here of purpose omitted.

When Southwell was captured, John Trussell was only seventeen, and so it is unlikely that Southwell gave him his manu-

1There are over 35 shared errors between the two Busby quartos and Add.10422. Hence Trussell’s Ms. and 10422 were either copied from the same Ms. or were the same Ms.
script personally. Nonetheless, the tone of Trussell’s words implies that he had known Southwell, and if that were indeed so, he would have had to be familiar with a household that was hospitable to the priest himself as well as his works.

Not long after the publication of John Trussell’s Southwellian materials his parents moved from London to Winchester, and he went with them. At that time the family was still Catholic, but like so many others they all eventually yielded to the pressure of the penal laws, and conformed to the state’s own Church of England. John’s brother William became an Anglican priest. John Trussell, after an exemplary life as one of Winchester’s conforming and governing elite, died sometime in the early autumn of 1648, aged 73, having lived long enough to see the desecration of Winchester and its cathedral by the parliament’s puritan soldiers, but soon enough to be spared knowledge of the killing of the king whose church and whose authority he had long since accepted.