

T H E

Muses Library ;

Or a Series of

English POETRY,

FROM THE
SAXONS, to the Reign of King
C H A R L E S II.

CONTAINING,

The Lives and Characters of all the known Writers
in that Interval, the Names of their Patrons ;
Complete Epifodes, by way of Specimen of the
larger Pieces, very near the intire Works of some,
and large Quotations from others.

B E I N G

A General Collection of almost all the old valuable Poetry
extant, now so industriously enquir'd after, tho' rarely to be
found, but in the Studies of the Curious, and affording
Entertainment on all Subjects, Philosophical, Historical,
Moral, Satyrical, Allegorical, Critical, Heroick, Pastoral,
Gallant, Amorous, Courtly, and Sublime,

B Y

<i>Langland,</i>	<i>Skelton,</i>	<i>Higgins,</i>	<i>Sir John Har-</i>
<i>Gower,</i>	<i>Howard Earl</i>	<i>Warner,</i>	<i>ington,</i>
<i>Chaucer,</i>	<i>of Surrey,</i>	<i>Gascoign,</i>	<i>Chalkbill,</i>
<i>Lidgate,</i>	<i>Sir T. W'yat,</i>	<i>Turberville,</i>	<i>Fairfax,</i>
<i>Occliffe,</i>	<i>Dr. Bourd,</i>	<i>Nash,</i>	<i>Sir John Davis,</i>
<i>Harding,</i>	<i>Sackville Earl</i>	<i>Sir Philip Sidney,</i>	<i>Sir W. Raleigh,</i>
<i>Barclay,</i>	<i>of Dorset,</i>	<i>Grevill L. Brook,</i>	<i>Sir Edw. Dyer,</i>
<i>Fabian,</i>	<i>Churchyard,</i>	<i>Spencer,</i>	<i>Daniel, &c.</i>

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:

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Chaucer,

The Morning-Star of the *English* Poetry! was, by his own Record, in the *Testament of Love*, born in *London*; in the Reign of *Edward* the Third. His Family is suppos'd to come in with *William* the *Norman*, and, some say, his Father was a Merchant. He had his Education partly at *Oxford*, partly at *Cambridge*, and, by Circumstance, we find he was enter'd a Student of the *Inner-Temple*. He travelled in his Youth, thro' *France* and *Flanders*; and, in the Reign of *Richard* the Second, was famous for his Learning. After this he marry'd the Daughter of a Knight of *Hainault*, by which Alliance he is said to become Brother-in-Law to *John* of *Gaunt* Duke of *Lancaster*: He had several Children, a large, and ample Revenue, resided chiefly at *Woodstock*, was employ'd on several Embassies, received many great Rewards from the Crown, and was in high Esteem with the most Noble and Excellent Persons of his Time. --- In the latter Part of his Life, he met with many Troubles, of which he complains, very pathetically, in some of his Pieces; yet liv'd to the Age of Seventy Two Years, and was bury'd at *Westminster*.

All agree he was the first Master of his Art among us, and that the Language, in general, is much oblig'd to him for Copiousness, Strength, and Ornament. It would be endless, almost, to enumerate the Compliments that have been paid to his Merit, by the Gratitude of those Writers, who have enrich'd themselves so much by his inestimable Legacies. --- But his own Works, are his best Monument. In those appear a real Genius, as capable of inventing, as improving; equally suited to the Gay, and the Sublime; soaring in high Life, and pleasant in low: Tho' I don't find the least Authority in History to prove it.

Ever both entertaining, and instructive! All which is so well known, 'tis, in a Manner, needless to repeat: But the Nature of this Work requires it, and I should not be excus'd for saying less, or omitting a Quotation; tho' it is not a little difficult to chuse one that will do him Justice: Most of his principal Tales have been already exhausted by the Moderns, and, consequently, neither of them would appear to Advantage in their antiquated, original Dress; tho' the same in Complexion and Harmony of Parts.

The Pardners Prologue.

L Ordings! quoth he, in Chirch when I preche,
 I paine mee to have an hauteine Speche;
 And ring it out, as round as doth a Bell:
 For I can all by rote that I tell.
 My Teme is alway one, and ever was,
 (*Radix omnium Malorum est Cupiditas*)
 Firft, I pronounce fro whence I come,
 And then my Bills I shew all and some:
 Our Liege-Lords Seal on my Patent!
 That shew I firft, my Body to warrent;
 That no Man be so bold, Priest ne Clerke,
 Me to disturbe of *Cbrists* holy Werke.
 And, after that, I tell forth my Tales
 Of Buis, of Popes, and of Cardinales,
 Of Patriarkes, and of Bishops I shew;
 And in *Latine* I speake Wordes a Few,

To faver with my Predication,
And for to ftere Men to Devotion.
Then fhew I forth my long, Chrifall-ftones,
Ycrammed full of Clouts and of Bones ;
Relickes they been, as wene They, Echone !
Then have I, in *Laton*, a Shoder-Bone,
Which that was of an holy *Jewes*-Shepe.
Good Men, fay I, take of my Words kepe !
If this Bone be wafhen in any Well,
If Cow, or Calfe, Sheepe, or Oxe fwel
That any Worme hath eaten, or hem fting,
Take Water of this Well, and wafh his Tong,
And it is hole a-non : And, furthermore,
Of Pockes, and of Scabs, and every Sore
Shall Shepe be hole, that of this Well
Drinketh a Draught : Take keepe of that I tell !
If that the good Man, that Beafte oweth,
Woll every Day, ere the Cocke croweth,
Fasting, drink of this Well, a Draught,
(As thilk holy *Jew* our Elders taught)
His Beafte and his Store fhall multiplie :
And Sirs, alfo it healeth Jealoufie,
For, though a Man be fall in jealous rage,
Let make with this Water his Potage,

And

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And never shall he more his Wife mistrift,
Though he, in sooth, the Defaut by her wift :
All had she taken Priests Two or Thre !
Here is a Mittaine eke, that ye may see :
He that his Hand woll put in this Mittaine ;
He shall have multiplying of his Graine,
When he hath fowen, be it Wheat or Otes ;
So that he offer good Pens or Grottes !

And Men and Women, a Thing I warne you !
If any Wight been in this Church now,
That hath done Sinne horrible, that he
Dare not, for Shame, of it Shriven be ;
Or any Woman, be she yong or old,
That hath made her Husband a Cokewold,
Such Folke shall have no Power, ne no Grace
To offer to my Relickes in this Place.
And who so findeth him out of such Blame,
Commeth up and offer in Godes Name !
And I affoyle him by the Authoritie,
Such as by Bull was graunted undo me.

By this Gaude have I won every yere
An hundred Mark, fithen I was Pardonere.
I stond, like a Clerk, in my Pulpet
And, when the leud People been doune y fet,

I preach so as ye have lered before,
And tell to them an hundred Yapes more.
Then paine I me to stretch forth my Necke
And, East and West, upon the People I becke,
As doth a Dove, sitting upon a Berne :
My Honds and my Tongue gone so yerne,
That it is Joy to see my Bufiness.
Of Avarice and of such Cursednesse
All my Preaching is, for to maken hem free
To yeven her Pens, and, namely, unto me.
For mine Entent is not but for to Winne,
And nothing for Correction of Sinne.
I recke never when that they bin buried,
Though her Soule gone a black-buried.
For, certes, many a Predication
Commeth oft time of Evill Entention :
---Some for Pleasance of Folke, and for Flaterie,
To been advanced by Hipocrisie :
And some for vain Glory, and some for Hate.
For when I dare not, other ways, debate,
Then woll I sting hem with my Tongue smert
In Preaching ; so that he shall not assert
To ben defamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespassed to my Brethren, or to me.

For,

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For, though I tell not his proper Name,
Men shall well know that it is the fame
By Signes, or by other Circumstances.
Thus quite I Folke, that doth us Displeasaunces:
Thus put I out my Venum under Hew
Of Holinefs, to see Men holy and trew.
But shortly mine Entent I woll devise,
I preach of nothing but of Couetife.
Therefore my Teme is yet, and ever was,
Radix omnium Malcrum est Cupiditas.

Thus can I preach against the fame Vice
Which that I use, and that is Avarice.
But, though my self be guilty in that Sinne,
Yet can I maken other Folke to twinne
From Avarice, and foue hem to repent:
But that is not my principal Entent;
I preach nothing but for Couetife.
Of this Matere it ought ynough suffise.

Then tell I hem Ensamples many a One
Of old Stories done long time agone.
For leaud People aye loven Tales old,
Which things they can well report and hold.
What, trowen ye whiles that I may preach,
And win Gold and Silver for to tech,

That

That I woll live in Povert wilfully ?
Nay, nay, I thought it never truly,
For I woll preach, and beg in fundry Londs ;
I woll not doe no Labour with mine Honds ;
Ne make Baskets and live thereby,
Because I woll not beg idelly.
I woll none of the Apostles counterfete :
I woll have Mony, Mault, Cheefe, and Whete,
All were it yeven of the poorest Page,
Or of the poorest Widdow in a Village :
Though her Children should sterue for Famine.
Nay, I woll drinke the Licour of the Vine,
And have a jolly Wench in every Toun.
But hearkeneth Lordings my Conclusion !
Your liking is that I should tell a Tale,
Now I have drunken a Draught of corny Ale :
By God I hope I shall tell you a Thing,
That shall by reason been at your asking :
For, though my self be a full vicious Man,
A morall Tale yet I you tell can,
Which I am wont to preach, for to win.
Now hold your Peace, my Tale I woll begin.