This version of "The Rime of Sir Thopas"
was originally published in an edition
by L. Laing Purves

Ballantyne Press
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO., EDINBURGH
CHANDOS STREET, LONDON

Edited by Robert Simola

William and Geoffrey Press
Templeton, California
2022

BURLESQUE PLAYS AND POEMS

CHAUCER'S
RIME OF THOPAS.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER'S
KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE.

GEORGE VILLIERS, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S
REHEARSAL.

JOHN PHILIPS'S
SPLENDID SHILLING.

FIELDING'S
TOM THUMB THE GREAT.

HENRY CAREY'S
NAMBY PAMBY AND
CHRONONHOTONTHOLOGOS.

CANNING, FRERE & ELLIS'S
ROVERS.

W. B. RHODES'S
BOMBASTES FURIOSO.

HORACE & JAMES SMITH'S
REJECTED ADDRESSES.

AND SOME OF
THOMAS HOOD'S
ODES AND ADDRESSES TO GREAT PEOPLE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY.

LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
NEW YORK: 9 LAFAYETTE PLACE
1885

MORLEY'S UNIVERSAL LIBRARY.

VOLUMES ALREADY PUBLISHED.

SHERIDAN'S PLAYS.
PLAYS FROM MOLIÈRE. By English Dramatists.
MARLOWE'S FAUSTUS & GOETHE'S FAUST.
CHRONICLE OF THE CID.
RABELAIS' GARGANTUA and the HEROIC DEEDS OF PANTAGRUEL.
THE PRINCE. By MACHIAVELLI.
BACON'S ESSAYS.
DEFOE'S JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR.
LOCKE ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT & FILMER'S "PATRIARCHA."
SCOTT'S DEMONOLOGY and WITCHCRAFT.
DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.
BUTLER'S ANALOGY OF RELIGION.
HERRICK'S HESPERIDES.
COLERIDGE'S TABLE-TALK.
BOCCACCIO'S DECAMERON.
STERNE'S TRISTRAM SHANDY.
CHAPMAN'S HOMER'S ILIAD.
MEDIÆVAL TALES.
VOLTAIRE'S CANDIDE & JOHNSON'S RASSELAS
PLAYS and POEMS by BEN JONSON.
LEVIATHAN. By THOMAS HOBBES.
HUDIBRAS. By SAMUEL BUTLER.
IDEAL COMMONWEALTHS.
CAVENDISH'S LIFE OF WOLSEY.
DON QUIXOTE. IN TWO VOLUMES.
BURLESQUE PLAYS and POEMS.

"Marvels of clear type and general neatness."
Daily Telegraph.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word Burlesque came to us through the French from the Italian "burlesco"; "burla" being mockery or raillery, and implying always an object. Burlesque must, *burlarsi di uno*, mock at somebody or something, and when intended to give pleasure it is nothing if not good-natured. One etymologist associates the word with the old English "bourd," a jest; the Gaelic "burd," he says, means mockery, and "buirleadh," is language of ridicule. Yes, and "burrail" is the loud romping of children, and "burrall" is weeping and wailing in a deep-toned howl. Another etymologist takes the Italian "burla," waggery or banter, as diminutive from the Latin "burra," which means a rough hair, but is used by Ausonius in the sense of a jest. That etymology no doubt fits burlesque to a hair, but, like Launce's sweetheart, it may have more hair than wit.

The first burlesque in this volume—Chaucer's "Rime of Sir Thopas," written towards the close of the fourteenth century—is a jest upon long-winded story-tellers, who expatiate on insignificant detail; for in his day there were many metrical romances written by the ancestors of Mrs. Nickleby. Riding to Canterbury with the other pilgrims, Chaucer good-humouredly takes to himself the part of the companion who jogs along with even flow of words, luxuriating in all trivial detail until he brings Sir Thopas face to face with an adventure, for he meets a giant with three heads. But even then there is the adventure to be waited for. The story-teller finds that he must trot his knight back home to fetch his armour, and when he "is comen again to toune," it takes so many words to get him his supper, get his armour on, and trot him out again, that the inevitable end comes, with rude intrusion of some faint-hearted lording who has not courage to listen until the point of the story can be descried from afar. So the best of the old story-tellers, in a book full of examples of tales told as they should be, burlesqued misuse of his art, and the "Rime of Sir Thopas" became a warning buoy over the shallows. "I cannot," said Sir Thomas Wyatt, in Henry VIII.'s reign,

> "say that Pan
> Passeth Apollo in music manyfold;
> Praisé Sir Thopas for a noble tale,
> And scorn the story that the Knighté told."

The second burlesque in this volume, Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle," written in eight days, appeared in 1611, six years after the publication of the First Part, and four years earlier than the Second Part, of Don Quixote. The first English translation of Don Quixote (Shelton's) appeared in 1612. The Knight of the Burning Pestle is, like Don Quixote, a burlesque upon the tasteless affectations of the tales of

chivalry. Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher worked together as playwrights in the reign of James I. All their plays were produced during that reign. Beaumont died in the same year as Shakespeare, having written thirteen plays in fellowship with Fletcher. Forty more were written by Fletcher alone, but the name of Beaumont is, by tradition of a loving fellowship, associated with them all. "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" is all the merrier for being the work of men who were themselves true poets. It should be remembered that this play was written for a theatre without scenery, in which gentlemen were allowed to hire stools on the stage itself for a nearer view of the actors; and it is among this select part of the audience that the citizen intrudes and the citizen's wife is lifted up, when she cries, "Husband, shall I come up, husband?" "Ay, cony; Ralph, help your mistress up this way; pray, gentlemen, make her a little room; I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife. . . . . Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools, and then begin."

The next burlesque in our collection is "The Rehearsal," which was produced in 1671 to ridicule the extravagance of the "heroic" plays of the Restoration. The founder of this school in England was Sir William Davenant who was living and was Poet Laurcate—and wearer of the bays, therefore, was Bayes—when the jest was begun by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and other wits of the day. The jest was so long in hand that, in 1668, when Davenant died, and Dryden succeeded him as Laureate, the character of Bayes passed on to him. The plaster on the nose pointed at Davenant, who had lost great part of his nose. The manner of speaking, and the "hum and buzz," pointed at Dryden, who was also in 1671 the great master of what was called heroic drama. Bold rhodomontade was, on the stage, preferred to good sense at a time when the new French criticism was enforcing above all things "good sense" upon poets, as a reaction against the strained ingenuities that had come in under Italian influence. Let us leave to Italy her paste brilliants, said Boileau, in his *Art Poétique*, produced at the same time as "The Rehearsal," all should tend to good sense. But Dryden in his plays (not in his other poems) boldly translated Horace's *servit humi tutus*, into

> "He who servilely creeps after sense
> Is safe, but ne'er will reach an excellence."

The particular excellence attained by flying out of sight of sense is burlesqued in the Duke of Buckingham's "Rehearsal."

John Philips, the delicate and gentle son of a vicar of Bampton, read Milton with delight from his boyhood and knew Virgil almost by heart. At college he wrote, for the edification of a comrade who did not know how to keep a shilling in his pocket, "The Splendid Shilling," a poem first published in 1705—which set forth, in Miltonic style applied to humblest images, the comfort of possessing such a coin. The Miltonic grandeur of tone John Philips happily caught from a long and loving study of the English poet whom he reverenced above others, and "The Splendid Shilling" has a special charm as a burlesque in which nobody is ridiculed.

The burlesque poem called "Namby Pamby," of which the title has been added to the English vocabulary, was written by Henry Carey, in ridicule of the little rhymes inscribed to certain babies of distinguished persons by Ambrose Philips, or, as he is translated into nursery language, "Namby Pamby Pilli-pis." Ambrose Phillips was a friend and companion of

Addison's, and a gentleman who prospered fairly in Whig government circles. Pope's annoyance at the praise given to Ambrose Philips's pastorals which appeared in the same Miscellany with his own, and Addison's praise in the *Spectator* of his friend's translation of Racine's Andromache as "The Distrest Mother," have caused Ambrose Philips to be better remembered in the history of literature than might otherwise have been necessary. When he wrote no longer of

> "Mammy
> Andromache and her lammy
> Hanging panging at the breast
> Of a matron most distrest,"

and took to nursery lyrics, he gave Henry Carey an opportunity of putting a last touch to his monument for the instruction of posterity. The two specimens here given of the original poems that suggested "Namby Pamby" are addressed severally to two babes in the nursery of Daniel Pulteney, Esq. Another of the babies who inspired him was an infant Carteret, whose name Carey translated into "Tartaretta Tartaree." Some lines here and there, seven in all, which are not the wittier for being coarse, have been left out of "Namby Pamby." This burlesque was first published in 1725 or 1726; my copy is of the fifth edition, dated 1726, and was appended to "A Learned Dissertation on Dumpling; its Dignity, Antiquity, and Excellence, with a Word upon Pudding, and many other Useful Discoveries of great Benefit to the Publick. To which is added, Namby Pamby, A Panegyric on the new Versification address'd to A—— P——, Esq."

Henry Fielding produced his "Tom Thumb" in 1730, and added the notes of Scriblerus Secundus in 1731, following the example set by the Dunciad as published in April 1729, with the "Prolegomena of Scriblerus and Notes Variorum." Paul Whitehead added notes of a Scriblerus Tertius to his "Gymnasiad" in 1744. Fielding was twenty-four years old when he added to his "Tom Thumb" the notes that transmit to us lively examples of the stilted language of the stage by which, as a gentleman's son left to his own resources, he was then endeavouring to live. This was four years before his marriage, and ten years before he revealed his transcendent powers as a novelist.

Henry Carey's "Chrononhotonthologos," three years later, in 1734, carried on the war against pretentious dulness on the stage. The manner of the great actors was, like the plays of their generation, pompous and rhetorical, full of measured sound and fury signifying nothing. Garrick, who made his first appearance as an actor in 1741, put an end to this. "If the young fellow is right," said Quin, "we are all in the wrong;" little suspecting that they really were all in the wrong. Henry Carey, a musician by profession, played in the orchestra and also supplied the stage with ballad and burlesque farces and operas. But also he wrote "Namby Pamby." It was said of him that "he led a life free from reproach, and hanged himself October 4th, 1743."

"The Rovers, or the Double Arrangement," was a contribution to "The Anti-Jacobin," by George Canning, and his friends George Ellis and John Hookham Frere. Canning had established "The Anti-Jacobin," of which the first number was published on the 20th of November, 1797. Its poetry, generally levelled through witty burlesque at the false sentiment

of the day, was collected in 1801 into a handsome quarto. This includes "The Rovers," which is a lively caricature of the sentimental German drama. Goethe's "Stella," as read in the translation used by the caricaturists, is not less comical than the caricature. I have a copy of the "Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin," in which one of the original writers has, for the friend to whom he gave the book, marked with his pen and ink details of authorship. From this it appears that the description of the *dramatis personæ* in "The Rovers" was by Frere, the Prologue by Canning and Ellis, the opening scene by Frere as far as Rogero's famous song, which was by Canning and Ellis. All that follows to the beginning of the fourth act was by Canning, except that Frere wrote the scene in the second act on the delivery of a newspaper to Beefington and Puddingfield. The fourth act and the final stage directions were by Frere, except the Recitative and Chorus of Conspirators. These were by George Ellis.

"Bombastes Furioso," first produced in 1810, was by William Barnes Rhodes, who had published a translation of Juvenal in 1801 and "Epigrams" in 1803. He formed a considerable dramatic library, of which there was a catalogue printed in 1825.

Next comes in this collection the series of burlesques of the styles of poets famous and popular in 1812, published in that year as "Rejected Addresses," by Horace and James Smith. Of these brothers, sons of an attorney, one was an attorney, the other a stockbroker, one aged thirty-seven, the other thirty-three, when the book appeared which made them famous, and of which the first edition is reprinted in this volume. The book went through twenty-four editions. James Smith wrote no more, but Horace to the last amused himself with literature. "Is it not odd," Leigh Hunt wrote of him to Shelley, "that the only truly generous person I ever knew, who had money to be generous with, was a stockbroker! And he writes poetry too; he writes poetry, and pastoral dramas, and yet knows how to make money, and does make it, and is still generous." The Fitzgerald who is subject of the first burlesque used to recite his laudatory poems at the annual dinners of the Literary Fund, and is the same who was referred to in the opening lines of Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers:"

> "Still must I hear?—shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl
> His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,
> And I not sing."

This Miscellany closes with some of the "Odes and Addresses to Great People," with which Thomas Hood, at the age of twenty-six, first made his mark as a wit. The little book from which these pieces are taken was the joint work of himself and John Hamilton Reynolds, whose sister he had married. It marks the rise of the pun in burlesque writing through Thomas Hood, who, when dying of consumption, suggested for his epitaph, "Here lies one who spat more blood and made more puns than any other man."

H. M.

June, 1885.

Burlesque Plays and Poems.

The Rime of Sir Thopas.

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

When said was this mirácle, every man
As sober was, that wonder was to see,
Till that our host to japen he began,
And then at erst he lookéd upon me,
And saidé thus: "What man art thou?" quod he.
Thou lookest, as thou wouldest find an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.

"Approché near, and look up merrily.
Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place.
He in the waist is shapen as well as I:
This were a popet in an arm to embrace
For any woman, small and fair of face.
He seemeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he dalliance.

"Say now somewhat, sin other folk han said;
Tell us a tale of mirth, and that anon."
"Hosté," quod I, "ne be not evil apaid,
For other talé certes, can I none,
But of a Rime I learnéd yore agone."
"Yea, that is good," quod he, "we shullen hear
Some dainty thing, me thinketh by thy cheere."

THE RIME OF SIR THOPAS.

LISTENETH, lordings, in good entent,
And I wol tell you *verament*
Of mirth and of solás,
All of a knight was fair and gent
In battle and in tournaménd,
His name was Sir Thopás.

Yborn he was in far countree,
In Flanders, all beyond the sea,
At Popering in the place,
His father was a man full free,
And lord he was of that countree,
As it was Goddés grace.

Sir Thopas was a doughty swain,
White was his face as paindemaine
His lippés red as rose.
His rudde is like scarlét in grain,
And I you tell in good certain
He had a seemly nose.

His hair, his beard, was like saffroun,
That to his girdle raught adown,
His shoon of cordewaine ;
Of Bruges were his hosen brown ;
His robé was of ciclatoun,
That costé many a jane.

He could hunt at the wildé dere,
And ride on hawking for the rivere
With grey goshawk on hand :
Thereto he was a good archere,
Of wrestling was there none his peer,
Where any ram should stand.

Full many a maiden bright in bower
They mournéd for him *par amour*,
When them were bet to slepe ;
But he was chaste and no lechóur,
And sweet as is the bramble flower,
That beareth the red hepe.

And so it fell upon a day,
Forsooth, as I you tellen may,
  Sir Thopas would out ride;
He worth upon his stedé gray,
And in his hand a launcegay,
  A long sword by his side.

He pricketh through a fair forést,
Therein is many a wildé beast,
  Yea bothé buck and hare,
And as he prickéd North and Est,
I tell it you, him had almest
  Betid a sorry care.

There springen herbés great and smale,
The liquorice and the setewale,
  And many a clove gilofre,
And nutémeg to put in ale,
Whether it be moist or stale,
  Or for to lain in cofre.

The birdés singen, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the popingay,
  That joy it was to hear,
The throstel cock made eke his lay,
The wodé dove upon the spray
  He sang full loud and clear.

Sir Thopas fell in love-longíng
All when he heard the throstel sing,
  And pricked as he were wood;
His fairé steed in his pricking
So swatté, that men might him wring,
  His sidés were all blood.

Sir Thopas eke so weary was
For pricking on the softé gras,
  So fierce was his courage,
That down he laid him in that place
To maken his stedé som solace,
  And gave him good forage.

Ah, Seinte Mary, *benedicite*,
What aileth this love at me
  To bindé me so sore?
Me dreaméd all this night pardé,
An elf-queen shal my leman be,
  And sleep under my gore.

An elf-queen will I love ywis,
For in this world no woman is
  Worthy to be my make
    In town,—
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
  By dale and eke by down.

Into his saddle he clomb anon,
And prickéd over stile and stone
  An elf-queen for to espie,
Till he so long had ridden and gone,
That he found in a privee wone
  The contree of Faerié.

Wherein he soughté North and South,
And oft he spiéd with his mouth
  In many a forest wild,
For in that contree n'as ther non,
That to him durst ride or gon,
  Neither wife ne child.

Till that there came a great geaunt,
His namé was Sir Oliphaunt,
  A perilous man of deed,
He saidé, Childe by Termagaunt,
But if thou prick out of mine haunt,
  Anon I slay thy stede
    With mace.
Here is the Queen of Faerie,
With harp, and pipe, and symphonie,
  Dwelling in this place.

The Childe said, All so mote I thee,
To morrow wol I meten thee,
  When I have min armóur,
And yet I hopé *par ma fay*,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
  Abien it full soure;
    Thy mawe
Shal I perce, if I may,
Or it be fully prime of the day,
  For here thou shalt be slawe.

Sir Thopas drew aback full fast;
This geaunt at him stonés cast
  Out of a fell staff sling:
But faire escapéd Childe Thopás,
And all it was through Goddes grace,
  And through his fair bearíng.

Yet listeneth, lordings, to my tale,
Merrier than the nightingale,
For now I will you roune,
How Sir Thopás with sidés smale,
Pricking over hill and dale,
Is comen again to toune.

His merry men commandeth he,
To maken him bothe game and glee,
For needés must he fight,
With a geaunt with heades three,
For paramour and jolitee
Of one that shone full bright.

Do come, he said, my minestrales
And gestours for to tellen tales
Anon in mine armíng,
Of romauncés that ben reáles,
Of popés and of cardináles,
And eke of love-longíng.

They fet him first the sweté wine,
And mead eke in a maseline,
And regal spicerie,
Of ginger-bread that was full fine,
And liquorice and eke cummine,
With sugar that is trie.

He diddé next his whité lere
Of cloth of laké fine and clere
A breche and eke a sherte,
And next his shert an haketon,
And over that an habergeon,
For piercing of his herte,

And over that a fine hauberk,
Was all ywrought of Jewes werk,
Full strong it was of plate,
And over that his cote-armoure,
As white as is the lily floure,
In which he would debate.

His shield was all of gold so red,
And therein was a boarés hed,
A carbuncle beside ;
And there he swore on ale and bread
How that the geaunt shuld be dead,
Betide what so betide.

His jambeux were of cuirbouly,
His swordés sheth of ivory,
  His helm of latoun bright,
His saddle was of rewel bone,
His bridle as the sonné shone,
  Or as the moné light.

His speré was of fin cypréss,
That bodeth war, and nothing peace,
  The head full sharp yground.
His stedé was all dapple gray,
It goeth an amble in the way
  Full softély and round
    In londe—
Lo, Lordes mine, here is a fytte;
If ye wol ony more of it,
  To tell it wol I fond.

Now hold your mouth *pour charité*,
Bothé knight and lady free,
  And herkeneth to my spell,
Of bataille and of chivalrie,
Of ladies love and druerie,
  Anon I wol you tell.

Men speken of romauncés of pris,
Of Hornchild, and of Ipotis,
  Of Bevis, and Sir Guy,
Of Sir Libeux, and Pleindamour,
But Sir Thopás, he bears the flour
  Of reál chivalrie.

His goodé steed he all bestrode,
And forth upon his way he glode,
  As sparkle out of brond;
Upon his crest he bare a tower,
And therein sticked a lily flower,
  God shield his corps fro shond.

And for he was a knight auntrous,
He n'olde slepen in none house,
  But liggen in his hood,
His brighté helm was his wangér,
And by him baited his destrér
  Of herbés fine and good.

Himself drank water of the well,
As did the knight Sir Percivell
  So worthy under weede,
Till on a day———

"No more of this for Goddés dignitee,"
Quod ouré hosté, "for thou makest me
So weary of thy veray lewédnesse,
That all so wisly God my soulé blesse,
Min erés aken of thy drafty speche.
Now swiche a rime the devil I beteche;
This may wel be rime dogérel," quod he.
"Why so?" quod I, "why wolt thou letten me
More of my talé than an other man,
Sin that it is the besté rime I can?"
"Thou dost nought ellés but dispendest time.
Sir, at one word, thou shalt no longer rime."