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978-0-521-15835-0 - Sir Philip Sidney: The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia: Being the Original Version

Edited by Albert Feuillerat

Excerpt

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*The First Booke or Acte of the
Countess of PEMBROOKES
ARCADIA*

ARCADIA amonge all the Provinces of *Grece* was ever had in singuler reputation, partly for the sweetnes of y^e Aire and other naturall benefittes: But, principally, for the moderate & well tempered myndes of the people, who, (fynding howe true a Contentation ys gotten by following the Course of Nature, And howe the shyning Title of glory somuche affected by other Nacions, dothe in deede help litle to the happines of lyfe) were the onely people, w^{ch} as by their Justice and providence, gave neyther Cause nor hope to theyre Neighboures to annoy them, so were they not stirred with false prayse, to truble others quyett. Thinking yt a smallle Rewarde for y^e wasting of their owne lyves in ravening, that their posterity shoulde longe after saye, they had done so: Even the *Muses* seemed to approve their good determinacōn, by chosing that Contrie as their cheefest repairing place, and by bestowing their perfections so largely there, that the very *Sheperdes* them selves had their fancyes opened to so highe Conceiptes (as the moste learned of other nations have bene longe tyme since content) bothe to borrow theyre names, and imitate their Conning. In this place some tyme there dwelte a mighty Duke named *Basilius*, a Prince of sufficient skill, to governe so quyett a Contrie, where the good myndes of the former Princes had sett downe good Lawes, and the well bringing up of the People did serve as a moste sure Bonde to keepe them: Hee married *Gynacia*, the Daughter of the Kinge of *Cyprus*, a Lady worthy enoughe to have had her Name in continuall Remembrance, yf her later tyme had not blotted her well governed youthe: Allthough the wounde fell more to her owne Conscience, then to the knowledg of the worlde, fortune somethinge supplying her wante of vertue. Of her the Duke had two faire Daughters, the elder *Pamela*, the younger *Philoclea*, bothe

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so excellent in all those giftes w^{ch} are allotted to reasonable Creatures, as they seemed to bee borne for a sufficient proof that, Nature ys [no] Steppmother to that Sexe: Howmuche soever the Rugged disposicōn of some men sharp witted onely in evill speaking, have soughte to disgrace them. And thus grewe they on, in eche good increase, till, *Pamela*, a yeare older then *Philoclea* came to the poynte of Seaventeene yeares of age: At w^{ch} tyme, the Duke *Basilus*, not so muche stirred wth the Care for his Contrie and Children, as with the vanity w^{ch} possesseth many who (making a perpetuall mansion of this pore baiting place of mans lyfe) are desyerus to knowe the Certeinty of thinges to come, wherein there ys no thinge so certeyne as oure Continuall uncerteinty. *Basilus*, I say, wolde needes undertake a Journey to *Delpbos*, there, by the Oracle to enforme him self, whither the rest of his lyfe shoulde bee continewd in like tenor of happynes, as thitherunto yt had bene accompanied wth the wellbeeing of his wyfe and Children: Whereuppon hee had placed greatest parte of his owne felicity, neyther did hee longe stay; But the woman appoynted to that Impiety (furiously inspired) gave him in verse, this Answer.

*Thy Elder care shall from thy carefull face
 By Princely meane bee stolne, and yet not lost;
 Thy Younger shall with Natures bliss embrace
 An uncouth Love, whiche Nature hateth moste:
 Thow with thy Wyffe adultery shalt committ,
 And in thy Throne, a forreyn State shall sitt,
 All this on thee this fatall yeare shall hitt.*

Whiche as in parte yt was more obscure, then hee coule understand, so did the whole beare suche manifest threatninges, that his amasement was greater then his fore Curiosity: Bothe passions proceedinge oute of one weykenes, in vayne, to desyer to knowe that, of whiche in vayne thow shalt bee sory after thow haste knowne yt. But thus the Duke answered, though (not satisfied) hee returned into his Contrie wth a Countenance well witnessing the dismayednes of his hart, whiche, notwithstandinge upon good Consideracōns hee thought not good to disclose, but onely to one chosen frende of his named *Philanax*; whome hee had ever founde a frende, not onely in affection but judgment, and no less of the Duke, then Dukedome: A rare temper

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whilst moste men eyther servilly yeelde to all appetites, or with an obstinate austerity, looking to that they fancy good, wholly neglect y^e Princes person. But suche was this man, and in suche a man had *Basilus* bene happy, yf his mynde (corrupted wth a Princes fortune) had not resolved to use a frendes secretsie, rather for Confirmacōn of fancyes, then correcting of errors, w^{ch} in this mighty matter hee well shewed: For having with many wordes discovered unto him bothe the Cause and success of his *Delphos* Journey, in the ende hee tolde him that to prevent all these inconvenyences, of the losse of his Crowne and Children: For, as for the poynte of his wyfe, hee coulde no way understand yt. Hee was resolved for this fatall yeare to reteyre him self with his wyfe and Daughters into a Solitary place: Where beeyng twoo Lodges buylte of purpose, hee wolde in the one of them recomend his Daughter *Pamela* to his Principall Hearde-man, A place (in that worlde not so farr goñ into paynted vanities) of some credit by name *Dametas*. In whose blunt truthe hee had greate Confidence, thincking y^t a Contrary salve ageanst the Destinie threatning her myshapp by a *Prince*, to place her wth a Shepeard: In the other lodge hee and his wyfe woulde keepe theyre younger Jewell *Philoclea*. And (bycause the Oracle tuched some straunge love of hers) have the more Care of her in especiall keeping away her nearest Kinsemen, whome, hee deemed cheefly understood; and therewithall, all other likely to moove any suche humor. And so for him self, beeyng so crewelly menassed by fortune hee wolde drawe him self oute of her way by this Lonelynes, whiche hee thought was the surest meane to avoyde her blowes: where for his pleasure, hee woulde bee recreated wth all those sportes and Eglogues, wherein y^e Shepeardes of that Contry did muche excell. As for the government of the Contrie, & in especiall manning of his Frontiers, for, that onely way, hee thoughte a foreyne Prince mighte endanger his Crowne, hee wolde leave the Charge to certeyne selected persons: The Superintendance of all w^{ch} hee woulde committ to *Philanax*, and so ended his speeche for fashions sake, askinge him his Counseyll. But *Philanax* having forthewth taken into y^e depth of his Consideracōn, bothe what the Duke saide, and wth what mynde hee spake yt, with a true harte and humble Countenance, in this sorte answerede. Moste Redoubted and beloved Prince, yf aswell yt had pleased yo^w at

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yo^r goyng to *Delphos*, as nowe to have used my humble service, bothe I shoulde in better season and to better purpose have spoken, and yo^w perhaps at this tyme shoulde have bene, as no way more in daunger, so, undoubtedly muche more in quyetnes. I woulde then have saide unto yo^w that wisdome and vertue bee the onely destinyes appointed to man to followe, wherein one oughte to place all his knowledge; synce they bee suche guydes as can not fayle, whiche besydes theyre Inwarde Comforte, do make a man see so direct a way of proceeding, as prosperity must necessarily ensewe: And although the wickednes of the worlde shoulde oppress yt, yet, coulde y^t not bee sayde, that evell happened to him, who should falle accompanied wth vertue. So that eyther standing or falling with vertue, a man ys never in evell Case: I woulde then have sayde, the heavenly powres to bee revered and not searched into, and theyre mercy rather by prayers to bee soughte, then theyre hidden Counsell, by Curiosity; These kyndes of sowthesaying Sorcerers (since the heavens have lefte us in oure selves sufficient) to bee nothing but fancyes wherein there must eyther bee vanity or infalliblenes, and so eyther not to bee respected, or not to bee prevented: But, since yt ys weykenes to muche to remember what shoulde have bene done, and that youre Commaudem^t stretcheth what shall bee done, I doo (moste deare Lorde) wth humble boldenes say that the maner of youre Determeynacōn dothe in no sorte better please mee, then the Cause of your goynge. These thirty yeares past have yow so governed this Realme, that, neither youre Subjectes have wanted Justice in yo^w, nor yow obeydience in them, and youre Neighboures have founde yow so hurtlesly stronge, that they thought yt better to rest in youre friendship then make nowe tryall of youre enmity: Yf this then have proceedede oute of the good Constitution of youre State, and oute of a wyse providence generally to prevent all those thinges, w^{ch} mighte encomber youre happynes, why shoulde yow now seeke newe Courses, since youre owne example comfortes yo^w to continew on? and that yt ys moste certeyne, no Destiny nor influence, whatsoever can bringe manns witt to a higher poynte then wisdom and goodnes. Why shoulde yo^w deprive youre self of governing youre Dukedome, for feare of loosing youre Dukedome, like one that should kill him self for feare of deathe? Nay rather, yf this Oracle bee to bee accounted of, arme up

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youre corage the more ageanste yt, for who will sticke to him that ab[and]ones him self: Let youre Subjectes have yo^w in theyre eyes, Let them see the benefit of youre Justice daily more and more, and so must they needes rather like of present suretyes, then uncerteyne Chaunges, Lastly, whether youre tyme calle yo^w to live or dye, doo bothe like a Prince. And even y^e same mynde holde I as tuching my Ladies youre Daughters, in whome Nature promyseth nothing but goodnes, and theyre education by youre fatherly Care hathe bene hetherto suche, as hathe bene moste fitt to restreyne all evell giving their myndes to all vertuous delightes, and not greiving them for want of well ruled Liberty, now to falle to a sodeyn Streytning them: What can yt doo, but argue suspicōn, the moste venemoust galle to vertue: Leave womens myndes, the most untamed that way, of any, See, whither any Cage can please a Byrde, or whether a Dogg growe not fiercer wth tyinge: what doth Jelosy else but stirr up y^e mynde to thincke what yt ys, from whiche they are restreynd? For they are Treasures or things of great delighte, w^{ch} men use to hyde, for the aptnes they have to catche mens fancyes, and the thoughtes once awaked to that, harder sure yt ys to keepe those thoughtes from accomplishment, then yt had bene before to have kept the mynde (whiche beeyng the cheef parte by this meanes ys defyled) from thincking. Now further, reco^mending so principall a Charge of her (whose mynde goeth beyonde the governing of many hundreds of suche), to suche a person, as *Dametas* ys, besydes that, y^e thinge in yt self ys straunge, yt comes of a very yll grounde, that ignorance shoulde bee y^e mother of faythfullnes. O, no, hee can not bee good, that knowes not whye hee ys good, but standes so farr good, as his fortune may keepe him unassayed, but, coming to y^t his rude simplicity ys eyther easily chaunged, or easily deceyved: And so growes that to bee the last excuse of his faulte, w^{ch} seemed might have beene the first foundacōn of his faythe. Thus farr hathe youre Comaundemēt and my zeale drawne mee to speake, whiche I like a man in a valley may discerne hilles, or like a pore passinger may espy a Rock, so humbly submitt to youre gracyous Consideracōn: Beseeching yo^w to stand wholly uppon youre owne vertue, as the surest way, to meyntheyne yow in that yo^w are and to avoyde any evell w^{ch} may bee imagined. Whilest *Philanax* used these

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wordes, a man mighte see in the Dukes face, that as hee was wholly wedded to his owne opinion, so, was hee greeved to have any man saye that, w^{ch} hee had not seene: yet did the good will hee bare to *Philanax* so farr prevail wth him, that hee passed into no further Choler, but, with shorte maner asked him: And woulde yow then (saide hee) that, in change of fortune I shoulde not change my Determinacōn, as wee doo oure apparell according to the ayer, and as the Shipp dothe her course wth the wynde? Truly sir (answered hee) neither doo I as yet see any change, and thoughe I did, yet woulde I thincke a constant vertue well settled litle Subject unto yt: And as in greate necessity I wolde allowe a well proportioned change, so in the sighte of an Enemy to arme him self the lighter, or at every puffe of wynde to stryke saile, ys suche a Change, as eyther will breade yll Success, or no success. To give place to blowes (sayde the Duke) ys thoughte no smalle wisdome: That ys true saide *Philanax*, but to give place before they come, taketh away the occasion when they come to give place. Yet, the Reedes stand with yeelding, saythe the Duke, and so are they but Reedes: Moste worthy Prince sayde *Philanax*, but the Rockes stand still and are Rockes. But, the Duke having used thus muche Dukely sophistry to deceyve him self and making his will, wisdom, tolde him resolutely, hee stooode upon his owne determeynacōn, and therefore willed him with certeyne other hee named, to take the governement of the State, and specially to keepe narrowe watche of the Frontiers. *Philanax* acknouledging him self muche honored by so great trust, went, with asmuche care to performe his Comaundement, as before hee had wth faythe yeilded his Counsell: whiche in the later short disputacyons hee had rather proportioned to *Basilus* wordes, then to any soundnes of argument. And *Basilus*, according to his determeynacion retyered him self into the solitary place of the twoo Lodges, where hee was daily delighted with the Eglogues and pastymes of Shepheardes: In the one of whiche Lodges hee him self remayned wth his wyfe, and ye beauty of the worlde *Philoclea*, in the other neare unto him hee placed his Daughter *Pamela* with *Dametas*, whose wyfe was *Miso*, and Daughter *Mopsa*, unfitt Company for so excellent a Creature, but to exercyse her patience and to serve for a foyle to her perfections. Nowe, newly after that the Duke had begone

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this solitary lyfe there came (following the trayne theyre vertues ledd them) into this Contry, twoo young Princes: The younger, but cheefer, named *Pyrocles* onely sonne to *Evarchus* kinge of *Macedon*, the other his Cosyn germayne, *Musidorus* Duke of *Thessalia*, bothe like in vertues, nere in yeares, nere in blood, but nearest of all in frendshipp: And bycause this matter ronnes principally of them, a fewe wordes, howe they came hether, will not bee superfluous. *Evarchus* kinge of *Macedon*, a Prince of suche Justice, that hee never thought him self privileged by beeyng a Prince, nor did measure greatenes by any thinge but by goodnes, as hee did thereby roote an Awfull love in his subjectes towards him, so yet coulede hee not avoyde the assaultes of Envy ye enemy and yet the honor of vertue: For, the Kinges of *Thrace*, *Pannonia* and *Epyrus* not beeyng able to attayne to his perfections, thoughte in theyre base wickednes best to take away so odious a Comparison, least his vertues joyned to the fame and force of the *Macedonians*, might in tyme bothe conquer the bodyes, and winne the myndes of theyre Subjectes. And thus Conspiring together, they did three sondry wayes enter into his kingdome at one tyme: whiche sodeyne, and daungerus Invasions, although they did no thinge astonish *Evarchus*, who carryed a hart prepared for all extremityes, (as a man that knewe bothe whatt yll mighte happen to a Man never so prosperus, and with all, what the uttermoste of that yll was) yet were they Cause, that *Evarchus* did sende away his youngest sonne *Pyrocles* (at that tyme but sixe yeares olde) to his Sister the *Dowager* & Regent of *Thessalia*, there to bee brought up wth her sonne *Musidorus*: whiche thoughe yt proceeded of necessity, yet, was not ye Counsell in yt self unwyse. The sweete Emulation that grewe, beeyng an excellent Nurse of the good partes in these twoo Princes in deede borne to the exercyse of vertue: For, they accountyng thincrease of theyre yeares wth thincrease of all good Inward and owteward qualityes, and taking very tymely into theyre myndes, that the Devine parte of man was not inclosed in this body for nothinge, gave them selves wholly over to those knouledges, w^{ch} mighte in the Course of theyre lyfe bee Ministers to theyre well dooyng. And so grewe they on till *Pyrocles* came to bee xvii^{teene} and *Musidorus* xviii^{teen} yeares of age: At whiche tyme *Evarchus*, after tenne yeares warr having conquered

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the Kingdome of *Thrace*, and brought the other twoo to bee his Tributaries, lived in the principall City of *Thrace* called at that tyme *Bisantium*. Whether hee sent for his sonne and Nevew to delight his aged eyes in them, and to make them to enjoy the fruites of his victories: But so pleased yt God, who reserved them to greater traverses bothe of good and evell fortune, that the sea (to whiche they committed them selves) stirred to terrible tempest, forced them to falle farr from theyre Course, uppon the Coaste of *Lydia*. Where, what befell unto them, what valyant actes they did, passing, (in one yeares space) throughe the lesser *Asia*, *Syria* and *Egipt*, how many Ladyes they defended from wronges, and disinherited persons restored to theyre Righte, yt ys a worcke for a higher style then myne: This onely shall suffice, that, theyre fame returned to fast before them into *Grece*, that the Kinge of *Macedon* receyved that, as the Comfort of theyre absence although accompanied wth somuche more longing, as hee founde y^e manifestacyon of theyre worthynes greater. But they desyerus, more and more to excercyse theyre vertues, and increase theyre experience, tooke theyre Journey from *Egipt* towards *Grece*: whiche they did, they twoo alone, because that (beeyng their native Contry) they mighte have the more perfect knowledg of yt, wherein, they that holde the Countenaunces of Princes, have theyre eyes moste daseled: And so taking *Arcadia* in theyre way, for the fame of the Contry, they came thether newly after that this straunge solitarynes had possessed *Basilus*. Now so fell yt unto them, that they lodged in the howse of *Kerxenus* a principall gentleman in *Mantineia* (so was the City called) nereto the sollitary dwelling of the Duke: yt was *Pyrocles* eyther evell or good fortune, walking with his hoste in a fayre gallery, that hee perceyved a picture newly made by an excellent Artificer, w^{ch} conteyned the Duke and Duches, with theyre younger Daughter *Philoclea* with suche Countenance and fashion as the maner of theyre lyfe held them in. Bothe the Parentes eyes cast with a loving Care upon theyre beutyfull Chylde, shee drawne aswell as yt was possible Arte shoulde counterfeict so perfect a worckmanship of Nature: For therein, besydes the shewe of her beutytes a man might judge even the nature of her Countenance, full of bashfullnes love and reverence, and all by the Cast of her eye, mixt with a sweete greef

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to fynde her vertue suspected. This moved *Pyrocles* to falle into questions of her, wherein beeyng answered of the gentleman so muche as hee understoode, w^{ch} was of her straunge kynde of Captivity neyther was yt knowne, how Longe yt should last, and there was an opinion growne, the Duke wolde graunte his Daughters in mariage to nobody: As the moste noble harte ys moste subject unto yt, from questyons grewe to pittie, and when with pittie once his harte was made kinder according to the aptnes of the humor, yt receyved streight a crewell impression of that wonderfull passion, w^{ch} to bee defined ys impossible, by reason no wordes reache neare to the straunge nature of yt, they onely knowe yt whiche Inwardly feele yt, yt ys called Love. Yet did not the pore youthe at first knowe his Disease, thincking yt onely suche a kynde of desyer, as hee was wonte to have to see suche unwonted sightes and his pittie to bee no other but the fruites of his gentle Nature: But even this arguyng with him self, came to a further thoughte, and the more hee argued, the more his thoughte increased. Desyerus hee was to see the place where shee remayned as though the Architecture of the Lodges woulde have beene muche for his learning: But more desyerus to see her self to bee Judge forsoothe of the paynters Conning, for thus at the first did hee flatter him self, as though y^e wounde had bene no deeper. But when within short tyme hee came to the Degree of uncerteyn wisshes and that those wisshinges grewe to unquyett longinges: when hee coule fixe his thoughtes uppon no thinge, but that within a litle varying, they shoulde ende with *Philoclea*. When eche thing hee sawe seemed to figure oute some parte of his passions, and that hee hearde no worde spoken, but that he Imagined yt carryed the sounde of *Philocleas* name: Then did pore *Pyrocles* yelde to the burthen, fynding him self prisoner, before hee had leysure to arme him self, and that hee mighte well (like the Spanyell) gnawe upon y^e Cheyne that tyes him, but hee shoulde sooner marr his teeth thèn procure liberty. Then was his cheef delighte, secretly to drawe his dere frend a walking to the desert of the two Lodges, where hee sawe no grass upon w^{ch} hee thoughte *Philoclea* mighte happ to treade, but that hee envyed y^e happynes of yt: And yet, with a contrary folly wolde some-tymes recomend his whole estate unto yt, till at y^e lengthe, Love, the Refyner of Invention putt in his heade, a way, howe

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to come to the sighte of his *Philoclea*. For w^{ch} hee wth greate speede and secretsy prepared every thinge that was necessary for his purpose, but, yet woulde not putt yt in execucōn, till hee had disclosed yt to *Musidorus*, bothe to performe the true Lawes of Frenshipp and withall to have his Counsell and allowance: And yet oute of y^e sweetenes of his Disposicōn was basshfully afrayde, to breake yt wth him, to whome (besydes other bondes) because hee was his Elder, hee bare a kynde of reverence, untill some fitt oportunity mighte, as yt were, drawe yt from him. Whiche occasion tyme shortly presented untō him, for *Musidorus* having informed him self fully of the strengthe and Riches of y^e Contry, of the nature of the people, and of the manner of theyre Lawes, & seeyng the Dukes Courte coulde not bee visited, and that they came not wthoute danger to that place, (prohibited to all men, but to certeyn Shepehardes) grewe no less weary of his aboade there, then mervyeled of the greate delighe *Pyrocles* tooke in that place: Where uppon one day at *Pyrocles* earnest request, beeyng walked thether ageane, began in this maner to say unto him. A mynde well trayned and longe exercysed in vertue, (my sweete and worthy Cossen) dothe not easily chaunge any Course yt once undertakes, but uppon well grounded and well weyed Causes: For, beeyng witness to yt self of his owne Inwarde good, yt fyndes no thinge with oute yt of so highe a pryce, for w^{ch} yt shoulde bee altered: Even the very Countenance and behavyo^r of suche a man dothe shewe forthe Images of y^e same constancy by meynteyning a right harmony betwixt yt, and the Inwarde good, in yeelding yt self sutable to the vertuous resolutions of the mynde. This speeche, I direct to yow, Noble frende *Pyrocles*, the excellency of whose mynde and well chosen course in vertue, yf I doo not sufficiently knowe, (havinge seene suche rare Demonstracyons of yt) yt ys my weykenes, and not youre unworthynes: But as in deede I knowe yt, and knowyng yt, moste derely love bothe yt, and him that hathe yt, so must I needes say, that since oure late comming into his Contrey I have marcked in yow^w, (I will not say an alteracyon) but a Relenting truely and slaking of y^e mayne Carryer yow^w had so notably begun and allmoste performed. And y^t in suche sorte as I can not fynde sufficyent reasons in my greate love towards yow howe to allowe yt: For, to leave of other secrett argumentes w^{ch} my acquayntance wth yow