

To the Right Honourable,
John Lord Vicount Bracly,
Son and Heir apparent to the Earl
of *Bridgewater*, &c.

My Lord,

This Poem, which receiv'd its first occasion of Birth from your Self, and others of your Noble Family, and much honour from your own Person in the performance, now returns again to make a finall Dedication of it self to you. Although not openly acknowledg'd by the Author, yet it is a legitimate off-spring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often Copying of it hath tir'd my Pen to give my severall friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the publike view; and now to offer it up in all rightfull devotion to those fair Hopes, and rare Endowments of your much-promising Youth, which give a full assurance, to all that know you, of a future excellence. Live sweet Lord to be the honour of your Name, and receive this as your own, from the hands of him, who hath by many favours been long oblig'd to your most honour'd Parents, and as in this representation your attendant Thyrsis, so now in all reall expression

*Your faithfull, and most
humble Servant
H. Lawes.*

The Copy of a Letter Writt'n
 By Sir Henry Wootton,
 To the Author, upon the
 following Poem.

From the Colledge, this 13. of April, 1638.

SIR,

It was a special favour, when you lately bestowed upon me here, the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer then to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly; and in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. *H.*, I would have been bold in our vulgar phrase to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst) and to have begged your conversation again, joyntly with your said learned Friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together som good Authors of the antient time: Among which, I observed you to have been familiar.

Since your going, you have charg'd me with new Obligations, both for a very kinde Letter from you dated the sixth of this Month, and for a dainty peece of entertainment which came therwith. Wherin I should much commend the Tragical part, if the Lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your Songs and Odes, wherunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our Language: *Ipsa mollities*. But I must not omit to tell you, that I now onely owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true Artificer. For the work it self, I had view'd som good while before, with singular delight, having receiv'd it from our common Friend Mr. *R.* in the very close of the late *R.*'s Poems, Printed at *Oxford*, wherunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the Accessory might help out the Principal,

according to the Art of *Stationers*, and to leave the Reader
Con la bocca dolce.

Now Sir, concerning your travels, wherin I may challenge a little more priviledge of Discours with you; I suppose you will not blanch *Paris* in your way; therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. *M. B.* whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord *S.* as his Governour, and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into *Italy*, where he did reside by my choice som time for the King, after mine own recess from *Venice*.

I should think that your best Line will be thorow the whole length of *France* to *Marseilles*, and thence by Sea to *Genoa*, whence the passage into *Tuscany* is as Diurnal as a *Gravesend* Barge: I hasten as you do to *Florence*, or *Siena*, the rather to tell you a short story from the interest you have given me in your safety.

At *Siena* I was tabled in the House of one *Alberto Scipioni* an old *Roman* Courtier in dangerous times, having bin Steward to the *Duca di Pagliano*, who with all his Family were strangled, save this onely man that escap'd by foresight of the Tempest: With him I had often much chat of those affairs; Into which he took pleasure to look back from his Native Harbour; and at my departure toward *Rome* (which had been the center of his experience) I had wonn confidence enough to beg his advice, how I might carry my self securely there, without offence of others, or of mine own conscience. *Signor Arrigo mio* (sayes he) *I pensieri stretti, & il viso sciolto* will go safely over the whole World: Of which *Delphian* Oracle (for so I have found it) your judgement doth need no commentary; and therefore (Sir) I will commit you with it to the best of all securities, Gods dear love, remaining

Your Friend as much at command
 as any of longer date
Henry Wootton.

Postscript.

Sir, I have expresly sent this my Foot-boy to prevent your departure without som acknowledgement from me of the receipt of your obliging Letter, having my self through som busines, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad, and diligent to entertain you with Home-Novelties; even for som fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the Cradle.

The Persons.

The attendant Spirit afterwards in the habit of *Thyrsis*.
Comus with his crew.

The Lady.

1. Brother.

2. Brother.

Sabrina the Nymph.

The cheif persons which presented, were

The Lord *Bracly*,

Mr. *Thomas Egerton* his Brother,

The Lady *Alice Egerton*.

A
 MASK
 Presented
 At LUDLOW-Castle,
 1634. &c.

The first Scene discovers a wilde Wood.

The attendant Spirit descends or enters.

Before the starry threshold of *Joves* Court
 My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
 Of bright aëreal Spirits live inspear'd
 In Regions milde of calm and serene Ayr,
 Above the smoak and stirr of this dim spot,
 Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care
 Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
 Strive to keep up a frail, and Feaverish being
 Unmindfull of the crown that Vertue gives
 After this mortal change, to her true Servants
 Amongst the enthron'd gods on Sainted seats.
 Yet som there be that by due steps aspire
 To lay their just hands on that Golden Key
 That ope's the Palace of Eternity :
 To such my errand is, and but for such,
 I would not soil these pure Ambrosial weeds,
 With the rank vapours of this Sin-worn mould.
 But to my task. *Neptune* besides the sway
 Of every salt Flood, and each ebbing Stream,
 Took in by lot 'twixt high, and neather *Jove*,

Imperial rule of all the Sea-girt Iles
 That like to rich, and various gemms inlay
 The unadorned boosom of the Deep,
 Which he to grace his tributary gods
 By course commits to severall government,
 And gives them leave to wear their Saphire crowns,
 And weild their little tridents, but this Ile
 The greatest, and the best of all the main
 He quarters to his blu-hair'd deities,
 And all this tract that fronts the falling Sun
 A noble Peer of mickle trust, and power
 Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
 An old, and haughty Nation proud in Arms :
 Where his fair off-spring nurs't in Princely lore,
 Are coming to attend their Fathers state,
 And new-entrusted Scepter, but their way
 Lies through the perplex't paths of this drear Wood,
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows
 Threats the forlorn and wandring Passinger.
 And here their tender age might suffer perill,
 But that by quick command from Soveran *Jove*
 I was dispatcht for their defence, and guard ;
 And listen why, for I will tell ye now
 What never yet was heard in Tale or Song
 From old, or modern Bard in Hall, or Bowr.
Bacchus that first from out the purple Grape,
 Crush't the sweet poyson of mis-used Wine
 After the *Tuscan* Mariners transform'd
 Coasting the *Tyrrhene* shore, as the winds listed,
 On *Circes* Iland fell (who knows not *Circe*
 The daughter of the Sun? Whose charmed Cup
 Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
 And downward fell into a groveling Swine)
 This Nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,
 With Ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
 Had by him, ere he parted thence, a Son

Much like his Father, but his Mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up and *Comus* nam'd,
Who ripe, and frolick of his full grown age,
Roaving the *Celtick*, and *Iberian* fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous Wood,
And in thick shelter of black shades imbowr'd,
Excells his Mother at her mighty Art,
Offering to every weary Travailer,
His orient liquor in a Crystal Glasse,
To quench the drouth of *Phœbus*, which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst)
Soon as the Potion works, their human count'nance,
Th'express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
Into som brutish form of Woolf, or Bear,
Or Ounce, or Tiger, Hog, or bearded Goat,
All other parts remaining as they were,
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely then before
And all their friends, and native home forget
To roule with pleasure in a sensual stie.
Therefore when any favour'd of high *Jove*,
Chances to passe through this adventrous glade,
Swift as the Sparkle of a glancing Star,
I shoot from Heav'n to give him safe convoy,
As now I do : But first I must put off
These my skie robes spun out of *Iris* Wooff,
And take the Weeds and likenes of a Swain,
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft Pipe, and smooth-dittied Song,
Well knows to still the wilde winds when they roar,
And hush the waving Woods, nor of lesse faith,
And in this office of his Mountain watch,
Likeliest, and nearest to the present ayd
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hatefull steps, I must be viewles now.

Comus enters with a Charming Rod in one hand, his Glass in the other, with him a rout of Monsters headed like sundry sorts of wilde Beasts, but otherwise like Men and Women, their Apparel glistring, they com in making a riotous and unruly noise, with Torches in their hands.

Comus. The Star that bids the Shepherd fold,
 Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,
 And the gilded Car of Day,
 His glowing Axle doth allay
 In the steep *Atlantick* stream,
 And the slope Sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky Pole,
 Pacing toward the other gole
 Of his Chamber in the East.
 Mean while welcom Joy, and Feast,
 Midnight shout, and revelry,
 Tipsie dance, and Jollity.
 Braid your Locks with rosie Twine
 Dropping odours, dropping Wine.
 Rigor now is gon to bed,
 And Advice with scrupulous head,
 Strict Age, and sowre Severity,
 With their grave Saws in slumber ly.
 We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the Starry Quire,
 Who in their nightly watchfull Sphears,
 Lead in swift round the Months and Years.
 The Sounds, and Seas with all their finny drove
 Now to the Moon in wavering Morrice move,
 And on the Tawny Sands and Shelves,
 Trip the pert Fairies and the dapper Elves ;
 By dimpled Brook, and Fountain brim,
 The Wood-Nymphs deckt with Daisies trim,
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :
 What hath night to do with sleep ?

Night hath better sweets to prove,
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.
 Com let us our rights begin,
 Tis onely day-light that makes Sin
 Which these dun shades will ne're report.
 Hail Goddess of Nocturnal sport
 Dark vaild *Cotyto*, t'whom the secret flame
 Of mid-night Torches burns; mysterious Dame
 That ne're art call'd, but when the Dragon woom
 Of Stygian darknes spets her thickest gloom,
 And makes one blot of all the ayr,
 Stay thy cloudy Ebon chair,
 Wherin thou rid'st with *Hecat'*, and befriend
 Us thy vow'd Priests, till utmost end
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
 Ere the blabbing Eastern scout,
 The nice Morn on th'*Indian* steep
 From her cabin'd loop hole peep,
 And to the tel-tale Sun discry
 Our conceal'd Solemnity.
 Com, knit hands, and beat the ground,
 In a light fantastick round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace,
 Of som chast footing neer about this ground.
 Run to your shrouds, within these Brakes and Trees,
 Our number may affright: Som Virgin sure
 (For so I can distinguish by mine Art)
 Benighted in these Woods. Now to my charms,
 And to my wily trains, I shall e're long
 Be well stock't with as fair a herd as graz'd
 About my Mother *Circe*. Thus I hurl
 My dazling Spells into the spongy ayr,
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
 And give it false presentments, lest the place