

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00311-7 - Worke for Cutlers: A Merry Dialogue betweene Sword, Rapier and Dagger

Albert Forbes Sieveking

Excerpt

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AT TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE

(by the courtesy of the Master and Fellows)

This present Thursday, July 23rd, 1903, at 4 o'clock

Will be Presented Tudor Sword-Play by Captain ALFRED HURTON, F.S.A., and Mr T. H. TOYNBEE.

and will be Re-Presented WORKE FOR CVTLERS, a Jacobean Dialogue (last "Acted in a Shew in the Famous Universitie of Cambridge" A.D. 1615) revived by A. FORBES SIEVEKING, F.S.A.

and will be Performed A Consort of Music by English Composers of the Elizabethan period upon the Lute, the Virginals, and the Treble and Bass Viols, under the direction of Mr ARNOLD DOLMETSCH.

1. Pavan and Galliard for the Treble Viol, Bass Viol and Virginals:

*"The Lord of Salisbury." William Byrd.**Treble Viol: Mr Arnold Dolmetsch.**Bass Viol: Miss Mabel Johnston.**Virginals: Miss Kelly.*

2. Broad Sword and Buckler.

3. Two Pieces for the Bass Viol accompanied by the Virginals:

- i. "A Tune."

- ii. "Heart's Ease." Anonymous.

Miss Mabel Johnston and Mr Arnold Dolmetsch.

4. Dagger v. Unarmed Man.

5. Two Pieces for the Lute:

- i. "The Buffens."

- ii. "Canarie." Anonymous.

Mr Arnold Dolmetsch.

Two Songs accompanied by the Lute:

- i. "O Willo Willo."

- ii. "Have you seen but a whyte Lillie grow." Anonymous. Words by Ben Jonson.

Miss Van Wagner and Mr Arnold Dolmetsch.

6. WORKE FOR CVTLERS: or a Merry Dialogue betweene

SwordMr A. G. Ross.

RapierMr M. Compton Mackenzie.

Dagger.....Mr A. Forbes Sieveking.

7. Two pieces for the Treble Viol accompanied by the Virginals:

- i. "Fortune."

- ii. "Green Sleeves." Anonymous.

Mr Arnold Dolmetsch and Miss Mabel Johnston.

8. Case of Rapiers.

Pages: Masters R. and F. B. Snowice.

9. Two Fantasies for Two Viols:

- i. Fantasia.

"Alfonso Coperario."

- ii. "La Caccia."

Thomas Morley.

10. Rapier and Dagger.

11. A Song accompanied by Two Viols and the Virginals:

*"O Mistress Mine." Anonymous. Words by Shakespeare.**Miss Van Wagner, Mr Arnold Dolmetsch, Miss Mabel Johnston and Miss Kelly.*

DEUS SERVET REGEM ET REGNUM

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Mr Forbes Sieveking's valuable contribution to a field of literary research which notwithstanding its many attractions still remains relatively neglected needs, I am sure, no commendation on my part. To begin with, this scholarly edition, alike instructive and suggestive, of a very curious and very creditable specimen—shall I say of University wit or of wit suitable for University consumption?—will be welcomed by many Cambridge readers as a pleasant reminiscence. Last summer, the performance of *Worke for Cutlers*, when Sword, Rapier and Dagger carried on their subtle contention in the open, set the crown upon the pleasant hospitalities of a Long Vacation afternoon spent in the congenial surroundings of Trinity Hall. And, remembering how near we were to Clare and Trinity and St John's, some of us could not on the occasion repress the wish that in these days, when there is so much theatre of one kind or another, 'shews' bringing to mind the polite recreations of our predecessors were more frequent; and that the revival *in loco* of this 'merry dialogue' might lead to the reproduction of some full-blown specimens of a far from insignificant literary growth—our native academical drama. *Worke*

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for Cutlers dates from a period in our University history signally memorable in respect of its efforts in this direction; for it was printed in the very year of the famous royal visit to Cambridge, during which among other plays *Ignoramus* and *Albumazar* were performed; and, when one comes to think of it, Oliver Cromwell, who is fabled to have filled a part in a much earlier academical comedy, only came up a year or so too late to have a chance of playing *Sword*. But the savour of this dialogue is of Court and Town as well as of the University; or perhaps it might be said that its matter is of the former, though its manner makes special appeal to the kind of trained intelligence necessarily abounding in the Universities and in the Inns of Court. Mr Forbes Sieveking has ventured on a highly ingenious conjecture which suits both ingredients in the product; but though I have every reason for welcoming any addition to the literary reputation of Thomas Heywood, I must for the present be content with advising that this Dialogue be placed in the Library of my College as a 'doubtful' work of one of its worthies. Thomas Heywood would have been capable of this *tour de force*, no doubt; for his range was wide, and his versatility was part, though not the most characteristic part, of himself.

The historical value of this little piece is by no means trifling; for, as Mr Forbes Sieveking has made clear, King James I.'s Edict against Duels gives its point to the discussion, and this Edict marks an important stage in the gradual evolution of a social reform for which there is reason enough to bless the Pacific King's

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name. The literary characteristics of the dialogue are on the surface, but they deserve attention for their own sake. Just as so large an amount of professorial insight into the entire philosophy and art of the practice of single combat was sure sooner or later to lead to its ultimate suppression as a national institution or custom—so an excess of verbal wit which overlaid everything with its too well-meant efforts could not but stifle what dramatic possibilities there lay in such a dialogue. In truth it is best enjoyed in print; and to do itself full justice, it needs the expenditure of technical and antiquarian lore which it has been fortunate enough to receive at the hands of its present editor.

A. W. WARD.

PETERHOUSE LODGE,
March, 1904.

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Royal Historical Society.

At the Hall of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn,
By permission of the Treasurer, Edward Dacey, Esq., C.B., and
Masters of the Bench



On Thursday, January 7th, 1904, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon,

A Concert of Seventeenth Century English Music will be performed by Mr. W. A. BOXALL and Mr. W. SUTCLIFFE (Violins), Mr. J. ANSELL (Viola), Mr. B. PATTERSON PARKER (Violoncello), and Miss ENID GABELL (Singer);

Tudor Sword-Play will be presented by Captain CYRIL G. R. MATTHEY, F.S.A., and Mr. T. H. TOYNBEE;

And a Jacobean Dialogue, entitled *WORKE FOR CUTLERS*, first acted at the University of Cambridge A.D. 1615, will be revived under the direction of Mr. A. FORBES SIEVEKING, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

I. Music from the Masque
"Cupid and Death," by
Matthew Locke (1628-
1677).

II. Broad Sword and Buckler,
against Broad Sword
and Bagger, as taught
by George Silber in his
"Paradoxes of Be-
fentt," 1599.



From Jacob Bator's "Kunstliche Fechtbuch," 1618

III. Ayre, Corant, and Saraband, by John Jenkins (1592-1678).

IV. Miss Enid Gabell:

(a) "Dear, thy face is Heav'n to me."

Henry Lawes,

(b) "Go, young man, let my heart alone."

1658.

V. A *Case of Rapiers* (right and left hands) according to Vincentio
Sabiolo, his *Prattise*, 1596.

VI. Music from "Cupid and
Death," by Matthew
Locke.

VII. Preludio, and Song-Tune
composed for the
Lute by Henry Pur-
cell, 1658-1695, and
"Canaries" (Anon.).



VIII. *Rapier and Bagger*.

IX. *WORKE FOR CUTLERS, or a Merry Dialogue*

(Ascribed to Thomas Heywood).

SwordMr. A. G. Ross.

Rapier.....Mr. Edward G. Ehot.

Dagger.....Mr. A. Forbes Sieveking.

Pages Masters F. B. Sedgwick and Cecil Sprigg

X. Aire and Contre Danse, by Henry Purcell

Music from "Cupid and Death," by Matthew Locke.

XI. Miss Enid Gabell.

(a) *When I am laid in earth.*

From "*Dido and Aeneas*."

Henry Purcell,

1675.

(b) *Kind Fortune smiles.*

XII. God Save the King, by Dr. John Bull (1568-1628).

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PROLOGUE.

The following reprint of what, taking a hint from Beaumont and Fletcher, may be called a Combat of “Wit at several Weapons,” or, in still earlier language, a “Wappenschaw”—is from one of the rarest of early English plays, if so minute an opuscle may assert a claim to so dignified a title. My attention being drawn to *Worke for Cutlers* in the modernised version of the *Harleian Miscellany* (10 vols. 4°, 1808—13)¹, I at first naturally accepted the current belief that the only known copy of the original (of which this is an exact line-for-line and word-for-word reproduction) was the one in the British Museum.

But the bibliographical curiosity of my friend, Mr M. Compton Mackenzie of Magdalen College, Oxford, discovered another example in the Library of Worcester College, and the courtesy of its Librarian, Mr H. A. Pottinger, has enabled me to identify a twin copy, alike in all respects.—The first reprint with modernised spelling was given in vol. x. of the *Harleian Miscellany* under the editorship of Thomas Park, with the following brief introduction:—

That punning species of gladiatorial wit, with which the following dramatic dialogues abound, is likely to have procured them academical admirers, in the time of our first James, when scarce a word—

“to royal favour had pretence
But what agreed in sound, and clashed in sense.”

The particular occasion which introduced these pieces as parts of a University shew does not appear: but they are curious specimens of the taste of a former age in its scholastic entertainments.

¹ It is not in Oldys's original edition in 8 vols., 4°, 1744—6.

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It was next, I believe, reproduced (evidently from the copy of 1615) by Mr Charles Hindley with other tracts, under the general title of *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana* and the better known sub-title of *The Old Book Collector's Miscellany*, 3 vols. (Reeves and Turner). In vol. 2 is also given another *Merry Dialogue* on precisely similar lines, evidently from the same hand, or some other deliberately imitating it—the very turns of the sentences and the expressions and phrases bearing a close resemblance. Its full title is as follows:—“A Merry Dialogue between Band, Cuffe and Ruff.—Done by an excellent wit, and lately acted in a Shew in the famous Universitie of Cambridge. London, printed by W. Stansby for Miles Patrick and are to be sold at his Shop neare Saint Dunstone's Churchyard in Fleet Street, 1615” (11 pp.). This is also contained in the same vol. of the *Harleian Miscellany*¹.

But between these two issues of *Worke for Cutlers*, allusion had been made to it in an able and original article in the *Retrospective Review*, as follows:—

The Returne from Parnassus was called by its Author a *Show*. In 1615 another was performed, entitled *Worke for Cutlers*...its author is unknown, and the interlude itself almost equally so; it may be classed among the very scarcest of the early English dramas².

The title may have been inspired by Thomas Dekker's *Worke for Armorours: or The Peace is broken* (1609), from which I take the following extract bearing upon our subject:

“*Cutlers and Armorers* have got more by them (the *Hollander* and

¹ The Second Edition (also in 1615) is called “*Exchange Ware and the Second Hand*, viz. Band Ruffe and Cuffe, lately cut, and now newly dearned up, or a Dialogue, acted in a Shew in the Famous Universitie of Cambridge. The Second Edition. London. Printed by W. Stansby for Myles Patrick, and are to be sold at his Shop, neere Saint Dunstones Church Yard, in Fleet Street. 1615.

² *The Retrospective Review*, 1825. Vol. XII. p. 1, Art. “The Latin Plays acted before the University of Cambridge.” (For this reference, and for several other valuable ones, I am indebted to Mr J. Bass Mullinger, the latest and most philosophical historian of the University, whose chapter on the Academic Drama is, like the rest of the work, full of original research and critical insight.)

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the *Spaniard*) within these few yeares, then by any fowre Nation (besides them) in Christendome all their whole liues.”

A few words of speculation in regard to the unknown author may perhaps be allowed me. Having no reputation for historical scholarship to jeopardise, I venture to hazard the daring opinion that this *Merry Dialogue* may be from the pen of no less a dramatist than Thomas Heywood himself. So much for irresponsible free-lancedom in dogmatic criticism—*credo, ergo est*. Having, however, a certain respect for what amongst lawyers is called “the weight of evidence” (with whatever levity of argument it may be adduced), I feel it desirable to give my sparse reasons as concisely as possible for the faith that is in me.

1. There is evidence that Thomas Heywood was at one time a resident at Cambridge; and it is probable that he was a member of Peterhouse. Wm Cartwright says definitely that he was a Fellow of that College.

By Heywood’s own confession, (in the Preface to the *English Traveller*), he had a hand in no less than 220 plays. “This tragic comedy, (being one reserved amongst 220) in which I had either the entire hand or at least a main finger, coming accidentally to the press.” Moreover he was notoriously careless of his own fame, living or posthumous, although he is unwilling to let the play in question pass as “*Filius Populi*—a Bastard without a father.” He continues, “True it is that my plays are not exposed to the world in Volumes, to bear the title of works (as others)” —Charles Lamb comments “he seems to glance at Ben Jonson” —one reason being that “many of them by shifting and change of companies, have been negligently lost—others of them are still retained in the hands of some actors who think it against their peculiar profit to have them come in print, and a third that it never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind voluminously read.”

Upon this, Charles Lamb, who first threw open to us moderns the gates of the rich and royal domain of Elizabethan drama, makes this further remark :—

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Of the 220 pieces which he here speaks of as having been concerned in, only 25, as enumerated by Dodsley, have come down to us, for the reasons assigned in the preface. The rest have perished, exposed to the casualties of a theatre. Heywood's ambition seems to have been confined to the pleasure of hearing the players speak his lines while he lived. It does not appear that he ever contemplated the possibility of being read by after ages. What a slender pittance of fame was motive sufficient to the production of such Plays as the *English Traveller*, the *Challenge for Beauty*, and the *Woman Killed with Kindness*! Posterity is bound to take care that a writer loses nothing by such a noble modesty.

Heywood, indeed, seems to have regarded it almost as a dishonest act to print his plays as well as to act them; for in the Preface to his *Rape of Lucrece* (fourth impression 1630) he makes the following explanation:

Though some have used a double sale of their labours, first to the stage, and after to the press, for my own part, I here proclaim myself ever faithful to the first, and never guilty of the last; yet since some of my plays have, unknown to me, and without any of my direction, accidentally come into the Printers hands, and therefore so corrupt and mangled, copied only by the ear, that I have been as unable to know them, as ashamed to challenge them.

And in the Prologue to a play of his, entitled *If you know not me, you know nobody*¹ (1623 edition), Heywood has the following lines:

'Twas ill nurst
 And yet receiv'd as well perform'd at first,
 Grac'd and frequented; for the cradle age
 Did throng the seats, the boxes, and the stage,
 So much, that some by stenography drew
 The plot, put it in print, scarce one word true:
 And in that lameness it has limp'd so long,
 The author now, to vindicate that wrong,
 Hath took the pains upright upon his feet
 To teach it walk, so please you sit and see it.

2. In Heywood's *Apologie for Actors* dated 1612 we read in book 1:

In the time of my residence in Cambridge I have seen tragedyes, comedyes, histories, pastorals, and *Sbeaves* publicly acted in which the graduates of good place and reputation have been specially parted.

¹ See p. 45 for 'Nobody' twice.

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(Note that he uses the very word *Shewe* applied to this *Merry Dialogue*.)

3. Heywood was the author of a play called *Cutting Dick* now lost (see Epilogue, p. 62).

In the text (page 42) Rapier says “Did you nere heare of *Cutting-Dicke*, this is the very same man.”

This, I contend, has very little point, unless Heywood was either the author of *Worke for Cutlers*, the player of the part of “Sword”—or both.

4. As Heywood was one of Her Majesty’s (Queen Anne’s) Players, in which capacity he attended her funeral, nothing is more probable than that he may have been in James I.’s train, when he visited Cambridge in 1615; and if he were the author of the play (which in certain respects may be regarded as a “skit” upon James I.’s Edict against Duels), there would be every reason for his not acknowledging the authorship; and the possible suppression of copies when printed after the performance would account for their rarity.

5. In others of Heywood’s few extant works I find several of the puns and expressions recurring—e.g. that on “Matches” in his play *If you know not me, you know nobody*, 1605.

I think I have met with a better commodity than Matches, and my master cannot say *but he hath met with his match*.

And later on in the same play the word “match” is again punned upon.

6. ‘*S foot* and *God’s foot* are favourite oaths with Heywood, whereas Shakspeare, I believe, only once employs this form of strong speech¹.

7. The *Dagger in Cheap* is not of frequent mention in the contemporary dramatic literature, but I do find it spoken of elsewhere by Heywood: e.g. 2nd Prentice in *If you know not me &c.* (1605). p. 76 *post*.

¹ I owe this instance (not given in Littledale’s edition of Dyce’s “Glossary” 1902) to Mr F. G. Fleay, who from memory referred me to *Troilus and Cressida* Act II. Sc. 3, *Thersites*, “‘*S foot*, I’ll learn to conjure and raise devils.”