



T H E

DEFENCE OF POESIE,

BY

Sir PHILIP SIDNEY Knight,

VHEN the Right virtuous *E.W.* and *I* were at the Emperor's Court together, we gave our selves to learn horfmanship of *John Pietro Pugliano*, one that with great commendation had the place of an E-squire in his Stable: and he according to the fertileness of the *Italian* wit, did not only afford us the demonstration of his Practice, but sought to enrich our mindes with the contemplation therein, which he thought most precious. But with none I remember mine ears were at any time more loaden, that when (either anged with slow payment, or moved with our learner-like admiration) he exercised his speech in the praise of his faculty. He said Souldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horfmen the noblest of Souldiers. He said they were the Masters of war, and ornaments of peace, speedy goers, and strong abiders, triumphers both in Camps and Courts: nay, to so unbelieved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a Prince, as to be a good horfman. Skill of Government was but a *Pedenteria* in comparison: Then would he add certain praises, by telling what a peerless Beast the Horf was, the only serviceable Courtier without flatterie, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage, and such more, that if I had not been a piece of a *Logician* before *I* came to him, *I* think he would have perswaded me to have wisht my self a horf. But thus much at least with his no few words he drave into me, that self-love is better then any gilding, to make that seem gorgeous wherein our selves be parties. **V**wherein if *Pugliano's* strong affection and weak arguments will not satisfie you, *I* give you a nearer example of my self, who, *I* know not by what mischance in these my not old years and idlest times, having slipt into the title of a Poet, am provoked to say something unto you in defence of that my unelected vocation; which if *I* handle with more good-will than good reasons, bear with me, since the Scholar is to be pardoned that followeth the steps of his Master. And yet *I* must say, that as *I* have more just cause to make a pitiful defence of poor Poetry, which from almost the highest estimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughing stock of Children; so have *I* need to bring some more available proofs, since the former is by no man barr'd of his deserved credit, the silly latter hath even the names of Philosophers used to the defacing of it, with great danger of civil war among the Muses. And first truly to all them that professing Learning inveigh against Poetry, may justly be objected, that they go very near to ungratefulness to seek to deface that which in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath bin the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk little and little

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