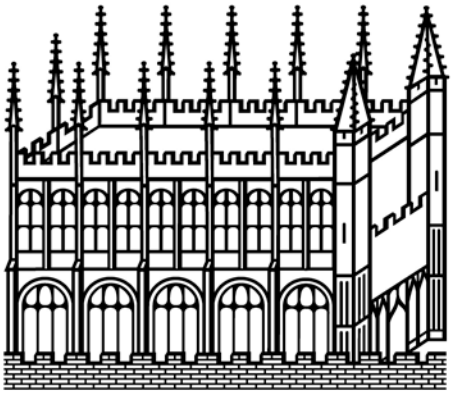

'THE SUBJECT OF ALL VERSE'

PHILIP SIDNEY.

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By
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Being

An Inquiry into the Authorship of a Famous Epitaph

By

Philip Sidney

Author of 'A History of the Gunpowder Plot', &c.

Henry Frowde
Oxford University Press
London, New York, and Toronto
1907

Price 2s. net

THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

(From a photograph by Emery Walker of the picture in the National Portrait Gallery)

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'Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the Subject of all Verse;
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,
Death! ere thou hast slain another,
Fair and learn'd and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.'

PREFACE

This little essay is intended to serve as a humble contribution towards the eventual settlement of the time-honoured controversy, which for so long has occupied the attention of students and lovers of Elizabethan literature, concerning the vexed question of the authorship of one of the most popular as well as one of the most frequently quoted epitaphs existing in the English language. So famous, indeed, has this panegyric become, that three of its lines have passed practically into household words. That I have been nearly, if not absolutely successful in demonstrating how this epitaph owes its origin, not, as has been generally conceived, to the facile pen of 'Rare' Ben Jonson, but to that of another contem-

porary poet, will, I venture to confide, admit of but little or no reasonable doubt.

In addition to penetrating into the curious mystery enveloping the authorship of these lines, I have also made myself responsible for a brief but concise memoir of the subject of their eulogy, to whose proud position, both as a writer and as a patron of letters and of science, adequate justice has not yet been rendered by her posterity.

P. S.

'THE SUBJECT OF ALL VERSE'

CHAPTER I

THERE is, probably, no single epitaph, extant in verse, in the English language, which has been more highly extolled, or more freely quoted as a model of literary grace, than that composed on Mary, Countess of Pembroke (sister to Sir Philip Sidney), the authorship of which is usually ascribed to Ben Jonson's Muse. At the same time, there is also, probably, no well-known epitaph in our language that is more often misquoted than this, and its actual authorship is still, as will be shown later, accredited generally to the wrong writer.

The illustrious lady, in whose honour were indited the famous lines—

'Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all Verse;
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,' &c.,

was the fourth and youngest daughter of Sir Henry Sidney, K.G., by his wife, Lady Mary Dudley, eldest daughter of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, sister to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, to Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, to Catherine, Countess of Huntingdon, and sister-in-law to Lady Jane Grey, the 'ten-days Queen'. Her birth took place at Tickenhill Palace, Bewdley, Worcestershire, October 27, 1561. Tickenhill, now called Ticknell, was the Council-House of the Lords President of the Marches of Wales, Sir Henry Sidney being then Lord President. It was at Tickenhill that Arthur, Prince of Wales, espoused (by proxy) the Princess

Katherine of Arragon, who afterwards married his younger brother, King Henry the Eighth. In 1577, Mary Sidney married (as his third wife) Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who died in 1601, her dowry being provided for her, either in whole or part, by the munificence of Lord Leicester. Her husband's father, William, Earl of Pembroke, had been her god-father. Lady Pembroke had two sons, each of whom became in turn Earl of Pembroke, and the elder of whom is still reckoned by some authorities to have been the mysterious 'Mr. W. H.' of Shakespeare's Sonnets, in the third of which the couplet—

'Thou art thy Mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime':

is by these authorities thought to refer to Lady Pembroke. Her husband succeeded her father, Sir Henry Sidney, as Lord President of

the Marches of Wales, and on her visiting Bewdley, in 1598, the inhabitants presented Lady Pembroke with a gift of a sugar-loaf, two boxes of comfits, and four boxes of marmalade, a donation that reminds us how, on her brother Philip entering Shrewsbury School as a scholar, 'the sum of seven shillings and two pence was spente and given to him in wine and cakes, and other things,' at the hands of the Corporation of that ancient town. Lady Pembroke died on the 25th of September, 1621, at her house in Aldersgate Street, in the City of London, and was buried in the Herbert vault at the east end of the choir in Salisbury Cathedral, on the 13th of October following.

Mary, Countess of Pembroke, was indubitably the most learned, as well as the most bountiful, patroness of letters of the Elizabethan age. She was, too, in point of time,

the first English authoress of repute. Under her generous régime, Wilton House was what Holland House was like in the palmy days of the vivacious Lady Holland (1770–1845), who used to entertain there Lord Macaulay, Sydney Smith, Samuel Rogers, and so many others of their most celebrated contemporaries in politics and literature. 'In her time,' wrote John Aubrey, 'Wilton House was like a college, there were so many learned and ingenious persons.' Of Lady Pembroke's virtues, talents, charms, good looks, hospitality, and piety, nearly all the poets of her period sang in unison their praises, without giving vent to one discordant note. Michael Drayton, Edmund Spenser, Matthew Roydon, and John Donne were among those who glorified her in verse. Sir Philip Sidney dedicated his 'Arcadia' to her, which she edited, revised, extended, and published. Sir Walter Ralegh

was her firm friend and admirer, and for his life she strenuously interceded with the King. Gabriel Harvey, Adrian Gilbert, Samuel Daniel, Abraham Fraunce, John Davies, Nicholas Breton, Thomas Nashe, Philip Massinger, Thomas Moffatt, and Henry Sandford, were all deeply indebted to her for many kindnesses. By Francis Meres she was compared to Octavia, the sister of Augustus and patroness of Virgil. She herself was a poet, a French scholar[1], a theologian, a chemist, and was eminent for her exceptional skill with her needle. As a student of chemistry, John Aubrey tells us, she was as clever as she was

[1] In 1905, a copy of her little 'Tragedie of Antonie', a translation from the French of Garnier, purchased for half a crown at a second-hand book-shop in Wales, was re-sold at auction for £560! This edition, compiled at Ramsbury, was published in 1592. She also translated from the French Philip Plessis du Mornay's 'Discourse of Life and Death'.

at writing poems. By Spenser she has been immortalized as—

'Urania, sister unto Astrofel,
In whose brave mind, as in a golden coffer,
All heav'nly gifts and riches lock'd are.'

and as

'That Clorinda hight,
The gentlest shepherdess that lives this day,
And most resembling both in shape and sprite
Her brother dear.'

But none of the contemporary versions dedicated to her, whilst living, can compare in popularity with the epitaph on Lady Pembroke attributed to Ben Jonson, the most common rendering of which runs:—

'Underneath this marble hearse
Lies the subject of all Verse;
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,
Death! ere thou hast slain another,
Wise and fair and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.'

This is the most usual version, and is printed thus in most of the anthologies containing specimens of Ben Jonson's verse. But these striking lines are, unfortunately, as they stand alone, incomplete, for there are six more, inferior both in metre and in merit to the first sextain, but which form, nevertheless, part and parcel of the whole, namely :—

> 'Marble piles let no man raise
> To her name ; for after days,
> Some kind woman, born as she,
> Reading this, like Niobe,
> Shall turn marble, and become
> Both her mourner and her tomb.'

The authorship of this epitaph has only been credited to Ben Jonson since 1756, when it was first printed in Peter Whalley's elaborate edition of 'Rare Ben's' collected works. The lines are not to be found in any previous edition of Ben Jonson, and Whalley fails to

adduce any valid reason whatever in support of his supposition that Jonson was their author. But, if they were not written by Ben Jonson, by whom were they? Other claimants there are, however, in favour of one of whom there is much to be said. This claimant is William Browne (1591–1645), author of 'Britannia's Pastorals', and in the interesting issue of his verse, in manuscript, preserved in the Library of the British Museum (Lansdowne MSS. 777, p. 43), the lines are to be found intact. This edition has the date, 1650, inscribed on the title-page, whilst the whole poem is penned in the same neat calligraphy as the others in the volume, and there remains nothing to show that it has been interpolated into the text. I quote it below, as transcribed from the original:—

'Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse

Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother
Death ere thou hast slain another
ffaire and learned and good as she
Tyme shall throw a dart at thee.
Marble pyles let no man raise
To her name for after dayes
Some kind woman born as she
Reading this like Niobe
Shall turn marble and become
Both her mourner and her tombe.'

It will be observed that the text of this early MS. version agrees, so far as the second sextain is concerned, with the popular version credited to Jonson, but that the first and superior sextain is not identical. That William Browne was the actual author of the epitaph was implicitly believed in by John Aubrey (1626–1697), who refers thus to the epitaph in his 'Brief Lives': 'An Epitaph on the Lady Mary, Countesse of Pembroke (in print somewhere[1]) by William Browne, who wrote the

[1] In the fourth edition of William Camden's 'Remaines': 1629.

"Pastorals", whom William, Earl of Pembroke, preferr'd to be tutor to the first Earl of Carnarvon' (Robert Dormer, killed in the battle of Newbury, 1643).

William Browne was, for several reasons, more likely to have written the epitaph than Ben Jonson, who, it is interesting to note, dedicated one of his odes 'To my truly beloved Friend, Master William Browne'. The latter lived, for some years, at Wilton House, and was much attached to Lady Pembroke's eldest son. Ben Jonson, on the other hand, although he stayed at Penshurst, the Kentish home of her brother, Robert, and wrote a fine poem on Penshurst, and dedicated odes to several of Lady Pembroke's relatives, never appears to have been on terms of intimacy with the Countess herself. As regards his epigram addressed 'To the Honoured Countess of . . .', it is conjectured in the 'Dictionary of National

Biography', and by other authorities, that this anonymous Countess was Lady Pembroke; but this was certainly not the case, the lady in question being evidently her niece, the Countess of Rutland, daughter of Sir Philip Sidney, whose husband's temporary absence in Denmark accounts for the lines—

> 'Whilst your Ulysses hath ta'en leave to go,
> Countries and climes, manners and men to know.'

The 'Ulysses' could not possibly have been Lord Pembroke, for he was in England when this poem was written, and was then too old to travel abroad.

In another seventeenth-century MS. edition of William Browne's works, preserved at Trinity College, Dublin, the epitaph is inserted amongst his poems; but in this edition, in the fourth line, 'killed' is substituted for 'slain', and in the sixth, '*his* dart' appears for

'*a* dart'. In favour of the plausible theory that the epitaph was the joint composition of two pens, instead of one only, something remains, perhaps, to be urged, since the second sextain is so inferior to the first that it seems hard to realize how the same hand could be responsible for both. Yet William Browne was a very unequal writer. One authority, indeed, speculates that Ben Jonson wrote the first sextain, and William Browne the second; another that William Browne wrote the first, and William, Earl of Pembroke, the second; whilst it has also been argued that Ben Jonson wrote the first, and William, Earl of Pembroke, the second. Still, not an iota of proof has been advanced, so far, in corroboration of any of these theories. The epitaph does appear, it is true, in the first edition of Lord Pembroke's poems, but without any information being given as to its authorship.

Although the remains of Mary, Lady Pembroke, were quietly buried within the Herbert vault in Salisbury Cathedral, minus any monument to distinguish or adorn their resting-place, many writers, misled by the language of the epitaph, have gathered that they lie interred in a splendid tomb, with the poet's words engraved on the external marble. Thus, we find one of Lady Pembroke's most recent biographers asserting that 'She was buried in Salisbury Cathedral, where stands her marble sarcophagus, bearing the well-known epitaph'. As a matter of fact, her funeral rites were of so simple and inexpensive a character as to suggest that the quaint lines—

> 'Marble piles let no man raise
> To her name,' &c.;

were penned by one of her sons, as a sort of apology for his not having erected a costly memorial in honour of his mother, whose

surviving brother, Robert, writing shortly after her death, says: 'Touching the funeral of my noble sister, the resolution is that she shall be taken to Salisbury privately, yet in a decent sort.' It seems evident, then, that Lady Pembroke's obsequies were carried out on no grand scale.

To sum up on the vexed question of the authorship of the epitaph, it may be reasonably contended that, if it cannot be proved to a demonstration that William Browne wrote it, or the first sextain of it at any rate, there still exists far more evidence to be quoted in his favour than in that of all the other claimants taken together! The shadowy legend of Ben Jonson's authorship seems to rest mainly on Peter Whalley's bald statement that the epitaph was 'universally assigned to him'. In this respect, Whalley may possibly have thought that the style of

the first sextain of the epitaph sufficiently resembled that in Jonson's lines—

> 'Underneath this stone doth lie
> As much beauty as could die;
> Which in life did harbour give
> To more virtue than doth live';

to render it likely that Ben must have written the first sextain. But, as early as the year 1629, the epitaph had appeared in print, in the fourth edition of William Camden's 'Remaines Concerning Brittaine', without any reference being made to Ben Jonson as its author. This version of the epitaph ran thus:—

> 'Under the Marble hearse
> Lyes the subject of all Verse;
> Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother,
> Death, ere thou hast kil'd another
> Faire and learn'd and good as she
> Time shall throw a dart at thee.

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name, for after-dayes
Some kind woman, borne as she
Reading this (like Niobe)
Shall turne Marble and become
Both her mourner and her tombe.'

At what precise date, between, of course, the years 1621 and 1629, the epitaph was written, it is difficult to calculate, but it was very probably composed when William Browne was staying at Wilton, in which case William, Earl of Pembroke, might have been responsible for the latter part of it. But, it should be remembered that Browne was also the author of a poem on Lady Pembroke, entitled 'An Elegy on the Countess Dowager of Pembroke', consisting of one hundred and seventy-nine lines, of which I quote the first nine below, for they contain proof in the poet's own words of his warm regard for Lady Pembroke, and of the fact that he knew her well:—

'Time hath a long course run since thou wert
clay;
Yet had'st thou gone from us but yesterday,
We in no nearer distance should have stood,
Than if thy Fate had call'd thee ere the flood;
And I that knew thee, shall no less cause have
To sit me down and weep beside thy grave
Many a year from hence, than in that hour
When all amazed, we had scarce the power
To say that thou wert dead.'

CHAPTER II

Our fascinating Lady Pembroke, even if she may not quite have deserved all the pretty things said and sung about her by her friends, lovers, poets, parasites, disciples, chaplains, and dependents, was, all the same, a woman of a very learned, charming, and accomplished character. Her devotion, 'inter alia,' to the pursuit of the science of chemistry was remarkable, and she spent much time and money in consequence thereof, as Aubrey relates in this connexion: 'Mr. Adrian Gilbert, uterine brother to Sir Walter Ralegh, was a great chymist. . . . He was house-keeper at Wilton. . . . There lived at Wilton, in those days, one Mr. Boston, a Salisbury man (his father was a brewer there), who was a great chymist, and did great cures by

his art. The Lady Mary, Countess of Pembroke, did much esteeme his skill, and would have had him to have been her operator, but he would not accept of her ladyship's kind offer.' Lady Pembroke, with all her virtues, was, like Queen Elizabeth, very masculine in her pleasures and pursuits.

In his curious 'Memoirs' of the court and reign of James I, Francis Osborne (1593–1659) relates how angry Lady Pembroke was with her second son, Philip (created Earl of Montgomery in 1605, and succeeding his elder brother, William, as Earl of Pembroke in 1630), on account of his tamely submitting to a public thrashing from one Ramsey, a Scot, at some horse-races held close to Croydon.[1]

[1] The Herberts were also fond of cock-fighting, and a contemporary ballad runs:—

'The Herberts every Cockepitt day
Doe carry away
The gold and glory of the day.'

'I have been told,' says Francis Osborne, 'that the mother of Herbert tore her haire at the report of her son's dishonour, who, I am confident, upon a like opportunity, would have ransomed her own repute, if she had not redeemed her Countries. She was that Sister of Sir Philip Sidney, to whom he addressed his "Arcadia", and of whom he had no other advantage than that what he received from that partiall benevolence of Fortune in making him a Man, which yet she did in some Judgments recompense in beauty: her pen being nothing short of his, As I am ready to attest, as far as so inferior a Reason may be taken, having seene incomparable letters of hers. But, lest I should seeme to trespass upon truth, which a few doe unsubborn'd, as I protest I am, unlesse by her Rhetoric, I shall leave the World her Epitaph, in which the Author doth

manifest himself a Poet, in all things but untruth :—

'Underneath this Sable Hearse
Lies the subject of all Verse;
Sidney's Sister, Pembroke's Mother;
Death ere thou killest such an other,
Faire and good and learned as She,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.
Marble piles let no man raise
To her name, For, after dayes
Some kind woman born as she
Reading this, like Niobe,
Shall turn Statue and become
Both her Mourner and her Tombe.'

In this version of the epitaph, it will be noted that the fourth, fifth, and eleventh lines differ from those included in the manuscript edition of William Browne's poems preserved in the Lansdowne Collection. Francis Osborne, moreover, omits all mention of the author's name, which tends to strengthen the conviction that he was not Ben Jonson, since it

is most unlikely, considering that the lines were in print in 1629, when Jonson was alive, and at the zenith of his fame, that William Camden's publishers (Camden was dead) would have printed the epitaph in his 'Remaines Concerning Brittaine', without naming Jonson as the author, if he had written it.

John Aubrey, who gleaned most of his information concerning Lady Pembroke from some Wiltshire neighbours (or their sons) of hers, such as Sir Walter Long of Draycott, and Mr. Tyndale, in spite of his admiration for her talents and benevolence, speaks unkindly of her moral character, and in his 'Brief Lives' repeats some unpleasant tittle-tattle, which it is to be hoped is, all of it, untrue. His story that the Countess married, after Lord Pembroke's death, Sir Matthew Lister, her physician and trustee, is, at any rate, as incorrect as another, and coarser one, related by him

concerning Lady Pembroke and her husband. Aubrey, in his version of the epitaph, only records the first sextain, making no allusion to the second. His version is:—

'Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death! er'st thou shalt kill such another
Fair and good and learn'd as shee,
Time will throw a dart at thee.'

Inveterate gossip as the versatile John Aubrey was, he seems to have derived some sources of his information about Lady Pembroke, and her brother Philip, from Mr. Thomas Browne, a great-uncle of his own, whom he quotes as saying that Sir Philip 'was often wont, as he was hunting on our pleasant plaines, to take his table-booke out of his pocket, and write downe his notions, as they came into his head, when he was writing his

"Arcadia", which was never finished by him'. It was from this relative, who 'remembered' Sir Philip, that he evidently procured his knowledge as to the strong family likeness existing between the brother and sister. Sir Philip Sidney, he states, 'was not only of an excellent wit, but extremely beautiful; he much resembled his sister, but his hair was not red, but a little inclining, viz. a dark amber colour. If I were to find a fault in it, methinks 't is not masculine enough; yet he was a person of great courage.' Elsewhere, he mentions that Lady Pembroke had 'a pritty sharpe-ovall face. Her hair was of a reddish yellow. She was very salacious.' In his will, Sir Philip bequeathed to Lady Pembroke his 'best jewell besett with diamonds'.

Mr. Thomas Browne is, presumably, John Aubrey's authority for the statement that much of the 'Arcadia' was written at Ivy-

Church, 'which adjoyns to the park pale of Clarendon Parke, situated on a hill that overlooks all the country westwards, and into the delicious parke (which was accounted the best of England) eastwards. It was heretofore a monastery (the cloisters still remain); 't was called *coenobium Edrossium.*' The 'Arcadia', therefore, could have been only composed in part at Wilton, and certainly not, as often urged, at Houghton Conquest, in Bedfordshire, since the widowed Countess was not granted that estate till over five-and-twenty years after the death of Sir Philip Sidney.[1] From 1609 to 1615, she had rented, from Lord Northampton, the old palace of Crosby Hall, in the City of London. Lady Pembroke was, in 1615, granted the royal manor of Houghton, near

[1] Equally incorrect seems to be the legend, quoted by Ruskin, to the effect that Lady Pembroke and her brother once resided together in the Lake District.

Ampthill, by James I, where that king paid her a visit. The house at Houghton was built by her, says Aubrey, 'according to the description of Basilius' house in the first booke of the "Arcadia" (which is dedicated to her). It is most pleasantly situated, and hath four vistas, each prospect twenty-five, or thirty miles. . . . The architects were sent for from Italy.'

It was at Ivy-Church, or at Wilton, or both, in the year 1580, probably, that Lady Pembroke and Sir Philip planned and began their joint metrical translation of the Psalms of David into English verse. Although Sir Philip has received the lion's share of the merit in this undertaking, most writers crediting him with the major part in the transaction, it is upon his sister that the praise should really be bestowed, since it is most probable that his pen was not responsible for translating more than the first forty-three Psalms, of

which fact Steele, Ruskin, and Ben Jonson (as reported by Drummond), were obviously in ignorance. Lady Pembroke was responsible for the remainder, and John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, has a poem entitled 'Upon the translation of the Psalmes by Sir Philip Sydney and the Countesse of Pembroke his Sister'; whilst Samuel Daniel, tutor for some time at Wilton to Lady Pembroke's eldest son, in his 'Tragedie of Cleopatra', refers as follows to Lady Pembroke's translation of the Psalms:—

'Those Hymnes which thou dost consecrate to Heaven,
Which Israel's Singer to his God did frame:
Unto thy voyce Eternitie hath given,
And makes thee deare to him from whence they came,
In them must rest thy venerable name,
So long as Sion's God remaineth honoured;
And till confusion hath all zeale bereaven,
And murthured Faith, and Temples ruined.

By this (Great Lady) thou must then be
knowne,
When Wilton lies low levell'd with the
ground:
And this is that which thou maist call
thine owne,
Which sacriligious Time cannot confound;
Here thou surviv'st thyself, heere thou art
found
Of late succeeding ages, fresh in fame:
This monument cannot be overthrowne,
Where, in eternal Brasse remaines thy
Name.'

But that Lady Pembroke, too, received help in her task seems indisputable, and this third collaborator was her then chaplain, Dr. Gervase Babington, Queen's Counsel for the Marches of Wales, and Bishop, successively, of Llandaff, Exeter, and Worcester. This edition of the Psalms remained in manuscript till 1823, when it was printed from a fine copy, transcribed early in the seventeenth century by John

Davies, of Hereford, who died in the year 1618. Its eventual appearance in print was due to the enterprise of James Boswell the younger, second son of the biographer of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who intended to write an introduction to the volume, but died in 1822, just before he could put his praiseworthy plan into execution.

The publication of this metrical version of the Psalms revealed the truth as to Lady Pembroke's larger share in the transaction, as it did the manifold beauties of the versification done by her, which ranks as easily the best of all her literary efforts, and as likely, in the words of Sir John Harington, to 'outlast Wilton walls'. But, even now it may be questioned whether adequate justice has been rendered her as regards her proportionate part undertaken in another of the works which has conduced to set her brother's fame on so high

a pedestal, namely, in the authorship of the 'Arcadia', or, to call it by its original title, 'The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia,'— 'done as it was, for her, as it is, by her,' says 'H. S.[1]' in his preface, inserted in the first complete edition of that romance. The dedication, indeed, of the 'Arcadia' to his sister by Sir Philip explains how earnestly he desired, and how confidently he expected that this book would be in after ages identified with her name. 'Here now, have you,' he wrote, 'Most deare, and most worthy to bee most deare Ladie, this idle worke of mine: which I fear (like the Spider's web) will be thought fitter to bee swept away, than borne to any other purpose. For my part, in very truth (as the cruell Fathers among the Greekes were wont to doe to the babes they would

[1] According to Aubrey, this gentleman was Lady Pembroke's secretary, Henry Sandford.

not foster) I could well find in my heart, to cast out into some Desert of forgetfulnesse this child which I am loth to father. But you desired me to doe it, and your desire, to my heart is an absolute commandement. Now, it is done onely for you, onely to you: if you keepe it to your selfe, or to such friends, who will weigh errors in the balance of good will, I hope, for the father's sake, it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it hath deformities. For indeede, for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled. Your deare selfe can best witnesse the manner, being done in loose sheetes of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest, by sheetes, sent unto you, as fast as they were done. In summe, a young head, not so well staied as I would it were (and shall bee when God will) having many many fancies begotten in it, if it had not beene in some

THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

(*From a Reputed Miniature by Isaac Oliver*)

way delivered, would have growne a monster, and more sorrie might I be that they came in, than they got out. But his chiefe safetie, shall be the not walking abroad; and his chiefe protection, the bearing the liverie of your name, which (if much good will doe not deceive me) is worthy to bee a sanctuarie for a greater offendor. This say I, because I know the vertue so; and this say I, because it may be ever so, or to say better, because it will be ever so. Reade it then at your idle times, and the follies your good judgement will finde in it, blame not, but laugh at. And so, looking for no better stuff, than, as in a Haberdasher's shop, Glasses, or Feathers, you will continue to love the writer, who doth exceedingly love you, and most heartily prayes you may long live, to bee a principall ornament to the family of the Sidneis.'

Lady Pembroke died in the sixtieth year of her age, although owing to the majority of those writers dealing with her career having been mistaken as to the date of her birth, she has generally been held, in error, to have been several years older at the time of her death than she really was, but it is satisfactory to record, nevertheless, that the desire of 'Astrophel's' heart was not doomed to disappointment, that his cherished hopes were realized, and that his favourite sister lived long enough to continue for many years 'to bee a principall ornament' to two illustrious families. At the period of her decease, indeed, the 'Subject of all Verse' still remained in the enjoyment of the full vigour of her great mental abilities. She had survived her father, her husband, her mother, her niece (Lady Rutland), and all her brothers and sisters, excepting one. Her popularity

and renown, however, she had not outlived, and 'Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother' will never be forgotten, so long as the glorious literature of the Elizabethan age is read.

Of original portraits of Lady Pembroke there are several in existence, but that which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery is considered the best, notwithstanding the fact that it represents her when she was over fifty years of age. It was purchased for the nation in 1859, and is, in all probability, painted by Marc Gheeraedts. It measures forty-four inches by thirty-one and a half. The portrait at Penshurst of Lady Pembroke represents her in younger days, and does justice to the exactness of John Aubrey's description of her personal appearance. In the edition of the Psalms, published in 1823, is a portrait of the Countess, from an engraving by Simon

Pass, which cannot, however, be considered a flattering likeness. It depicts her at a late period of her life, and as holding a Psalter[1] in her hands.

[1] As a final proof of the fact that Lady Pembroke was responsible for the translation of the majority of the Psalms, it should be mentioned that Fulke Greville, writing to Sir Francis Walsingham, November, 1586, refers only to '40' of the Psalms as being 'translated into metre by Sir Philip'.

Oxford: Horace Hart, Printer to the University.