

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Vaux
- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Thomas Vaux(1510 - 1556)

VAUX OF HARROWDEN, THOMAS VAUX, 2ND BARON (1510-1556), English poet, eldest son of Nicholas Vaux, 1st Baron Vaux, was born in 1510. In 1527 he accompanied Cardinal Wolsey on his embassy to France; he attended Henry VIII. to Calais and Boulogne in 1532; in 1531 he took his seat in the House of Lords, and was made Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Anne Boleyn. He was captain of the Isle of Jersey until 1536. He married Elizabeth Cheney, and died in October 1556. Sketches of Vaux and his wife by Holbein are at Windsor, and a finished portrait of Lady Vaux is at Hampton Court. Two of his poems were included in the *Songes and Sonettes of Surrey* (Tottel's Miscellany, 1557). They are "The assault of Cupid upon the fort where the lover's hart lay wounded, and how he was taken," and the "Dittye . . . representinge the Image of Deathe," which the gravedigger in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* misquotes. Thirteen pieces in the *Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576) are signed by him. These are reprinted in Dr A. B. Grosart's *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies Library* (vol. iv., 1872).

A Quiet Mind

When all is done and said,
In the end thus shall you find,
He most of all doth bathe in bliss
That hath a quiet mind:
And, clear from worldly cares,
To deem can be content,
The sweetest time in all his life
In thinking to be spent.

The body subject is
To fickle Fortune's power,
And to a million of mishaps
Is casual every hour;
And death in time doth change
It to a clod of clay;
Whereas the mind, which is divine,
Runs never to decay.

Companion none is like
Unto the mind alone;
For many have been harmed by speech,
Through thinking few or none.
Fear oftentimes restraineth words,
But makes not thought to cease;
And he speaks best, that hath the skill
When for to hold his peace.

Our wealth leaves us at death;
Our kinsmen at the grave;
But virtues of the mind unto
The heavens with us we have.
Wherefore, for virtue's sake,
I can be well content,
The sweetest time in all my life
To deem in thinking spent.

Thomas Vaux

The Aged Lover Renounceth Love

. I loathe that I did love,
In youth that I thought sweet;
As time requires for my behove,
Me thinks they are not meet.
My lusts they do me leave,
My fancies all be fled,
And tract of time begins to weave
Gray hairs upon my head.
For age, with stealing steps,
Hath clawed me with his crutch,
And lusty life away she leaps
As there had been none such.
My muse doth not delight
Me as she did before,
My hand and pen are not in plight
As they have been of yore.
For reason me denies
This youthly idle rhyme,
And day by day to me she cries,
Leave off these toys in time.
The wrinkles in my brow,
The furrows in my face,
Say limping age will hedge him now
Where youth must give him place.
The harbinger of death,
To me I see him ride;
The cough, the cold, the gasping breath,
Doth bid me to provide
A pickaxe and a spade,
And eke a shrouding sheet;
A house of clay for to be made
For such a guest most meet.
Me thinks I hear the clerk
That knolls the careful knell,
And bids me leave my woeful work
Ere nature me compel.
My keepers knit the knot
That youth did laugh to scorn,
Of me that clean shall be forgot

As I had not been born.
Thus must I youth give up,
Whose badge I long did wear;
To them I yield the wanton cup
That better may it bear.
Lo, here the bared skull
By whose bald sign I know
That stooping age away shall pull
Which youthful years did sow.
For beauty, with her band,
These crooked cares hath wrought,
And shipped me into the land
From whence I first was brought.
And ye that bide behind,
Have ye none other trust;
As ye of clay were cast by kind,
So shall ye waste to dust.

Thomas Vaux

Try Before You Trust

To counsel my estate, abandoned to the spoil
Of forged friends, whose grossest fraud is set with finest foil;
To verify true dealing wights, whose trust no treason dreads,
And all too dear th'acquaintance be, of such most harmful heads;
I am advised thus: who so doth friend, friend so,
As though tomorrow next he feared for to become a foe.

To have a feigned friend, no peril like I find;
Oft fleering face may mantle best a mischief in the mind.
A pair of angel's ears oft times doth hide a serpent's heart,
Under whose grips who so doth come, too late complains the smart.
Wherefore I do advise, who doth friend, friend so,
As though tomorrow next he should become a mortal foe.

Refuse respecting friends that courtly know to feign,
For gold that wins for gold shall lose the selfsame friends again.
The quail needs never fear in fowler's nets to fall,
If he would never bend his ear to listen to his call.
Therefore trust not too soon, but when you friend, friend so,
As though tomorrow next ye feared for to become a foe.

Thomas Vaux