
SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in John Lyly's *Euphues and his England*, containing his voyage and adventures, mixed with sundry pretty discourses of honest love, the description of the country, the court and the manners of that isle, published in 1580. *Euphues and his England* was the second part of Lyly's prose romance. The first part, *Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit*, was published in 1578.

To the right honourable my very good lord and master Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of Escales and Badlesmere and Lord Great Chamberlain of England, John Lyly wisheth long life with increase of honour

The first picture that Phidias, the first painter, shadowed was the portraiture of his own person, saying thus: If it be well, I will paint many besides Phidias; if ill, it shall offend none but Phidias.

In the like manner fareth it with me, right honourable, who never before handling the pencil did for my first counterfeit colour mine own Euphues, being of this mind, that if it were liked I would draw more besides Euphues; if loathed, grieve none but Euphues.

Since that, some there have been that, either dissembling the faults they saw for fear to discourage me, or not examining them for the love they bore me, that praised mine old work and urged me to make a new, whose words I thus answered: If I should coin a worse, it would be thought that the former was framed by chance, as Protogenes did the foam of his dog; if a better, for flattery, as Narcissus did who only was in love with his own face; if none at all, as froward as the musician, who being entreated will scarce sing sol fa, but not desired, strain above ela.

But their importunity admitted no excuse, insomuch that I was enforced to prefer their friendship before mine own fame, being more careful to satisfy their requests than fearful of others' reports, so that at the last I was content to set another face to Euphues, but yet just behind the other like the image of Janus, not running together like the hoplitudes of Parrhasius lest they should seem so unlike brothers that they might be both thought bastards, the picture whereof I yield as common all to view but the patronage only to your Lordship, as able to defend, knowing that the face of Alexander stamped in copper doth make it current, that the name of Caesar wrought in canvas is esteemed as cambric, that the very feather of an eagle is of force to consume the beetle.

I have brought into the world two children. Of the first I was delivered before my friends thought me conceived; of the second I went a whole year big, and yet when everyone thought me ready to lie down I did then quicken, but good housewives shall make my excuse, who know that hens do not lay eggs when they cluck but when they cackle, nor men set forth books when they promise, but when they perform. And in this I resemble the lapwing, who fearing her young ones to be destroyed by passengers, flieth with a false cry far from their nests, making those that look for them seek where they are not; so

I, suspecting that Euphues would be carped of some curious reader, thought by some false show to bring them in hope of that which then I meant not, leading them with a longing of a second part that they might speak well of the first, being never farther from my study than when they thought me hovering over it.

My first burthen coming before his time must needs be a blind whelp; the second, brought forth after his time, must needs be a monster. The one I sent to a nobleman to nurse, who with great love brought him up for a year, so that wheresoever he wander he hath his nurse's name in his forehead, where sucking his first milk he cannot forget his first master.

The other, right honourable, being but yet in his swath-clouts, I commit most humbly to your Lordship's protection, that in his infancy he may be kept by your good care from falls, and in his youth by your great countenance shielded from blows, and in his age by your gracious continuance defended from contempt. He is my youngest and my last, and the pain that I sustained for him in travail hath made me past teeming, yet do I think myself very fertile in that I was not altogether barren. Glad I was to send them both abroad, lest making a wanton of my first with a blind conceit I should resemble the ape, and kill it by culling it, and not able to rule the second, I should with the viper lose my blood with mine own brood. Twins they are not, but yet brothers, the one nothing resembling the other, and yet (as all children are now-a-days), both like the father. Wherein I am not unlike unto the unskilful painter, who having drawn the twins of Hippocrates (who were as like as one pease is to another), & being told of his friends that they were no more like than Saturn and Apollo, he had no other shift to manifest what his work was than over their heads to write: The Twins of Hippocrates. So may it be that had I not named Euphues, few would have thought it had been Euphues, not that in goodness the one so far excelleth the other, but that both being so bad, it is hard to judge which is the worst.

This unskilfulness is no ways to be covered but as Accius did his shortness, who being a little poet framed for himself a great picture, & I being a naughty painter have gotten a most noble patron, being of Ulysses' mind, who thought himself safe under the shield of Ajax.

I have now finished both my labours, the one being hatched in the hard winter with the halcyon, the other not daring to bud till the cold were past like the mulberry, in either of the which, or in both, if I seem to glean after another's cart for a few ears of corn, or of the tailor's shreds to make me a livery, I will not deny but that I am one of those poets which the painters feign to come unto Homer's basin, there to lap up that he doth cast up.

In that I have written, I desire no praise of others but patience, altogether unwilling, because every way unworthy, to be accounted a workman.

It sufficeth me to be a water-bough, no bud, so I may be of the same root; to be the iron, not steel, so I be in the same blade, to be vinegar, not wine, so I be in the same cask; to grind colours for Apelles, though I cannot garnish, so I be of the same shop. What I have

done was only to keep myself from sleep, as the crane doth the stone in her foot, & would also with the same crane I had been silent holding a stone in my mouth.

But it falleth out with me as with the young wrestler that came to the games of Olympia, who having taken a foil thought scorn to leave till he had received a fall, or him that being pricked in the finger with a bramble thrusteth his whole arm among the thorns for anger. For I, seeing myself not able to stand on the ice, did nevertheless adventure to run, and being with my first book stricken into disgrace, could not cease until I was brought into contempt by the second, wherein I resemble those that having once wet their feet, care not how deep they wade.

In the which my wading, right honourable, if the envious shall clap lead to my heels to make me sink, yet if your Lordship with your little finger do but hold me up by the chin I shall swim, and be so far from being drowned that I shall scarce be ducked.

When Bucephalus was painted, Apelles craved the judgment of none but Zeuxis; when Jupiter was carved, Prisius asked the censure of none but Lysippus; now Euphues is shadowed, only I appeal to your Honour, not meaning thereby to be careless what others think, but knowing that if your Lordship allow it, there is none but will like it, and if there be any so nice whom nothing can please, if he will not commend it, let him amend it.

And here, right honourable, although the history seem unperfect, I hope your Lordship will pardon it.

Apelles died not before he could finish Venus, but before he durst; Nichomachus left Tindarides rawly for fear of anger, not for want of art; Timomachus broke off Medea scarce half coloured, not that he was not willing to end it, but that he was threatened. I have not made Euphues to stand without legs for that I want matter to make them, but might to maintain them, so that I am enforced with the old painters to colour my picture but to the middle, or as he that drew Cyclops, who in a little table made him to lie behind an oak where one might perceive but a piece, yet conceive that all the rest lay behind the tree, or as he that painted an horse in the river with half legs, leaving the pasterns for the viewer to imagine as in the water.

For he that vieweth Euphues will say that he is drawn but to the waist, that he peepeth, as it were, behind some screen, that his feet are yet in the water, which maketh me present your Lordship with the mangled body of Hector as it appeared to Andromache, & with half a face as the painter did him that had but one eye, for I am compelled to draw a hose on before I can finish the leg, & instead of a foot to set down a shoe. So that whereas I had thought to show the cunning of a chirurgeon by mine anatomy with a knife, I must play the tailor on the shop-board with a pair of shears. But whether Euphues limp with Vulcan as born lame, or go on stilts with Amphionax for lack of legs, I trust I may say that his feet should have been old Helena, for the poor fisherman that was warned he should not fish did yet at his door make nets, and the old vintner of Venice that was forbidden to sell wine did notwithstanding hang out an ivy-bush.

This pamphlet, right honourable, containing the estate of England, I know none more fit to defend it than one of the nobility of England, nor any of the nobility more ancient or more honourable than your Lordship, besides that describing the condition of the English court & the majesty of our dread sovereign I could not find one more noble in court than your Honour who is or should be under her Majesty chiefest in court, by birth born to the greatest office, & therefore methought by right to be placed in great authority, for whoso compareth the honour of your Lordship's noble house with the fidelity of your ancestors may well say, which no other can truly gainsay, *Vero nihil verius*. So that I commit the end of all my pains unto your most honourable protection, assuring myself that the little cock-boat is safe when it is hoised into a tall ship, that the cat dare not fetch the mouse out of the lion's den, that Euphues shall be without danger by your Lordship's patronage; otherwise I cannot see where I might find succour in any noble personage. Thus praying continually for the increase of your Lordship's honour, with all other things that either you would wish or God will grant, I end.

Your Lordship's most dutifully to command,
John Lyly