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The Poetic Theory and Practice of James VI of Scotland, James I of England

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THE POETIC THEORY AND PRACTICE
OF
JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND, JAMES I OF ENGLAND

by

Helen M. Walker
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JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND, JAMES I OF ENGLAND

by
Helen M. Walker
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XI. A List of the King's Writings
During the lifetime of James VI of Scotland, James I of England, only two volumes containing any of the King's poems were published. The first, "The Essays of a Prentise, in the Divine Arts of Poesie," was published in 1584, when the author was eighteen years old. The second came in 1591, under the title of "His Majesties Poetical Exercises at vacant hours." Both of these are available in reprints.

The remaining poems were still in manuscript form until 1901, when Robert S. Rait published "Lyveva Regiva, being Poems and Other Pieces by King James Ye First," which is a collection consisting of nine poems and three prose pieces. These were taken from two MSS. in the Bodleian Library (MS. Bodl. 165-168), and they are written in the Scottish dialect in the King's own hand.

In 1911 Allan F. Westcott discovered a MS., a copy of the Bodleian one, in the British Museum. It consists of eighty-five folios, sixty-one containing poems. Though the identity of the copyist of the greater part of this MS. is not definitely known, that he was a Scotman is revealed by the dialect of his marginal notes. Some of the sonnets are in the hand of Prince Charles. Corrections throughout in the writing of the King indicate that he had been over the copy. This MS. differs from the Bodleian original chiefly in that it is in the more familiar Southern tongue.
Westcott's volume, which is entitled "New Poems by James I of England," contains not only the additional poems hitherto unpublished, but it includes also all of those in R. S. Rait's volume, which is an expensive edition limited to 275 copies.

These volumes represent the entire body of the King's poems with the exception of "The Paraphrase of the Psalms" which is still in MS. in the British Museum, (Old Royal, 18 B XIV).
SUMMARY

My thesis is: King James VI of Scotland, I of England, adhered with extreme care to his own definite rules governing poetic technique. I shall attempt, first, to present a study of the King's debt to Alexander Montgomerie, George Gascoigne, and to others for his theories and technique of poetry. Secondly, I shall show that in his own poems the King followed very closely the precepts discovered in his own treatise on poetry.
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to present a study of the theories and technique employed in the poetic composition of James I of England. This work has necessarily involved a study of the King's educational background, the influence of certain sixteenth century poets upon him, his own treatise on poetic composition, and, chiefly, his own poems.

The general plan of this thesis consists first, of the statement of the three facts discovered in the study of the available material upon which it is based; second, of a survey of the education of the King; third, of his indebtedness to Alexander Montgomerie and to George Gascoigne; and fourth, of a study of the technique used in the composition of his poetry. Aside from the King's poems, the most fruitful and important source of information is his own work which he entitled "Ane Schort Treatise, Containing Some Revlis and cautelis to be observit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie." ¹

In the "Preface" of the treatise the King quickly passes over the necessity of poetic ability; nevertheless he states very clearly and simply that such ability is necessary if rules are to be of any value to the poet. He apparently feels that such a

¹ This treatise, published in 1584, consists of a preface, eight short chapters, and some verso, inserted chiefly for illustrative purposes. It was written as a partial preparation for his intended career as a poet. It is in this treatise that the sonnet rhyme-scheme, ababbcbcccdeedee, appears.
fact, if generally known and accepted without question, needs no elaborate treatment. He says:

I will also wish now (docile Reidar) that or ze summer sow with reeding thir realis, ze may find in zour self sic a beginning of Nature, as ze may put in practise in zour verse many of thir foirsaidis preceptis, or ever ze sic them as they are heir set down. For gif Nature be nocht the chief worker in this airt, realis wilbe bot a band to Nature, and will mak sow within short space weary of the heill airt: quhair as, gif Nature be choief, and bent to it, realis will be ane help and staff to Nature. 1

The rest of his treatise is devoted to the details of verse-making, with a decided tone of authority throughout, the result, no doubt, of three factors: the King's extreme youth at the time he wrote it, his belief that poetry had reached its highest state of perfection, and the fact that his treatise is based upon a similar one by George Gascoigne. 2

The King's belief that the efforts of all preceding generations were merely steps toward the final perfected form of poetry is interesting. He says:

Because that now, quhen the world is waxit auld, we hawe all thair opinionis in writ, quhilk were learned before our tymes, besydes our awin ingynis, quhair as they then did it onsale be thair awin ingynis, but help of any ither. Thairfore, quhat I speak of Poesie now, I speik of it, as being come to mennis age and perfecitioun, quhair as then, it was bot in the infancie and chyldheid, 3

1 Arber, Part IV, p. 55.

2 "Certayne notes of Instruction, concerning the making of verse of ryme in English, written at the request of Master Eduardo Donati."

3 Arber, p. 54.
With the knowledge of these facts, it is easy to understand why he confines his discussion of poetry in his treatise to the externals rather than to a discussion of inspiration and genius. These latter qualities, he plainly realizes, could not be produced or improved by discussion, but once possessed, require careful guidance, which he proceeds to give.
THE EDUCATION AND LITERARY BACKGROUND OF KING JAMES

To appreciate fully the theories and the practice of James I, it is necessary to give some attention to the King's literary background. His unusually brilliant mind, his education, the literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the poets of his time all contributed to the poetic productions of the King.

Born in Edinburgh Castle in 1566, James was proclaimed King in 1567. The Earl of Mar, who was James's guardian, directed his childhood, imbuing his mind with religion, and grounding him in classical learning. George Buchanan and Peter Young, tutors to the King, were instructed by the Privy Council, upon the death of the Earl of Mar, to continue the King's education in "literature and religion" under "Maisteris George Buchanane and Petir Young his present Pedagogis, or sic as salbe heirefter appoint---agreing in religion with the saidis Maisteris." ¹ David and Adam Erskine were appointed by the Earl of Mar at the same time.

When James was three years old, he was taken to Stirling Castle, where he remained for twelve years. It was there that Buchanan and Young exerted their influence over him. George Buchanan, a Scotch humanist, was well-known all over Europe as a poet, dramatist, scholar, and was a figure of considerable

¹ Westcott, p.XVIII.
importance in theology and politics. His poems and dramas were written chiefly in Latin.

Although Buchanan had been tutor to Mary, Queen of Scots, James's mother, in 1562, he opposed her politically. Mary, in turn, did not wish Buchanan to be near her son. His "De Jure Regni apud Scotos" written at the time of Mary's downfall reveals the reason for her fear of him. It asserts the "accountability of a ruler to his subjects, justifies tyrannicide, and shows incidentally to what an extent radical political thought was in the air while the first Stuart king of England was still an infant." He was absolutely indifferent to the fact that his charge was a king. He plainly showed his contempt for artificial distinctions of rank and fortune. Upon one occasion he whipped the young King severely for disturbing him at study. Later, upon being accused of making James a pedant, he replied morosely that it was the best that could be made of him. Academically excellent, witty, satirical, and cynical, Buchanan left a decided mark upon James, whose accumulated mass of erudition was due largely to the scholarly ambitions gained from association with Buchanan.

Peter Young was perhaps the better of the two tutors. Buchanan was old; Young was about twenty-five when he assumed his duties. His great brilliance equaled his honor, and his disposition
left little to be desired. In fact, when the King was only thirteen, Bucheman had lost his position and was out of favor with James, but Young was retained, and in 1604 he was appointed tutor to Prince Charles.

Both tutors cared more for the intellectual development of their pupil than for his entertainment. And his response to their teachings was so ready that they made of him a prodigy of learning. Melville, the diarist, writes that he was "the sweetest sight in Europe that day for strange and extraordinary gifts of ingyne, judgement, memorie and language. I had him discours,. walking up and down in the auld Lady Marr's hand, of knowlage and ignorance, to my great marvell and astonishment." 1 Killigrew, in another well-known passage written just after the King's eighth birthday, wonders at his skill in translating any chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French, and out of French into English." 2

In later years James said, when he viewed the Bodleian Library at Oxford: "Were I not a king I would be an university man; and if it were so that I must be a prisoner I would have no other prison then this library, and be chained together with these good authors."

A schedule of the King's daily tasks, written by Young, is in existence. "After prayers a period was devoted to Greek, with reading from the New Testament, Isocrates, or Plutarch's

1 Westcott, p. xx.
2 Ibid., p. xxi.
Apotheosis, and practice in Greek grammar. The rest of the forenoon was given to Livy, Justin, Cicero, or Scottish and other history, and the afternoon to exercises in composition, or, if time permitted, to the study of arithmetic, geography and astronomy, dialectic, or rhetoric."

An examination of the list of contents of James's library reveals a surprising absence of English verse. Of the six hundred volumes to which he had access in 1578, over "half of the books in Young's list are, as one might expect, in Latin, perhaps one hundred and fifty in French, a few in Greek, Italian, and Spanish, and scarcely two score in English." James's own theory and practice were based indirectly upon French models, many of which he became acquainted with through the copies of the works which he had in his library.

Among his books were copies of the "Aenid" and "L'Oliwa augmentée" of Joachin Du Bellay, poet, critic, the founder of the French school of Renaissance poetry, and member of the Pleiade. Du Bellay's interest in the vernacular, and his application of the classical principles of criticism to the contemporary French writings no doubt interested King James. Works of Ronsard, who established the Pleiade with its tendency toward following the ancients, advocating scholarliness and the love of natural beauty, were included in the library of James. Volumes of Marot, Magny, Thyard, and Du Bartas were numbered among his

1 Westcott, p. xxi.
2 Ibid., p. xxii.
books.

At the age of eighteen just previous to the writing of his "Reulis and cautelis" James chose for study in preparation for it Buchanan's "De Jure Regni apud Scotos," Danseau's "Geographica Poetica," Ronsard's "La Frangialde" and two volumes of his poems, and Du Bellay's "Musagnaeanchie," and "L'Olive aumentée." But last and chief was Cascoigne's "Certeine Notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English," from which the treatise was taken almost bodily.

A perusal of the writings of the King reveals his great ambition to write good poetry. His own "Ane Schort Treatise, Containing Some Reulis and cautelis to be observait and aschewit in Scottis Poesie," written when he was nineteen is of interest chiefly because it discloses the author's very serious and earnest attitude toward poetic composition. The twelve sonnets contained in his "Essayses of a Prentise," all invocations to the gods, make a plea for inspiration and skill in writing poetry. The introductory lines entitled "Ane Quadrain of Alexandrin Verse" are

Immortall Gods, sen I with pen and Poets airt
So willingly has serve ye, thouh my skill be small,
I pray then everie one of you to help his peart,
In graunting this my cute, which after follow shall. 1

Of Jove he asks

That when in verse of thee I write my best,

That they do see they self in verse deid, 1
and in his sonnet to Apollo he begs

That when I do deserve thy shining Carte,
The Readers may esteem it in their sight. 1

In the third sonnet he continues his invocation by saying

Grant, when I lyke the Springtyme to display,
That Readers think they see the Springe alwayes. 2

Sonnets four, five, and six ask for aid in picturing summer, harvest,
and winter. He asks of Neptune

And when I do describe the Oceans force,
Yea, let them think, they heare a stormy sound,
Which threaten wind, and darkness come at hand. 3

He calleth upon Pluto to

Let Readers think, that both they see and heare
Alecto, threatening Turnus sister deare,
And see dog Cerberus rage with hideous beare,
And all that did AEneas once befall. 4

Mars and Pallas are asked that

Readers think, when combats manyfold
I do descriuo, they see two champions brave,
With armies huge approaching to resave
Thy will, with cloudes of dust into the air. 5

Mercury he wishes to be his "conducting guide."

The twelfth sonnet summarizes his genuine ambition to be a

"perfect" poet:

In short, you all forenamed gods I pray
For to concur with one accord and will
That all my works may perflyto be alway:

1 Hatt, p. 64. 4 Ibid, p. 71.
2 Ibid, p. 65. 5 Ibid, p. 72.
3 Ibid, p. 69.
Which if ye doe, then swear I for to fill
My works immortal with your praises still:
I shall your names eternall ever sing,
I shall tread downe the grasse on Parnass hill
By making with your names the world to ring:
I shall your names from all oblivion bring.
I lofty Virgill shall to life restoi,
My subjects all shalbe of heavenly thing,
How to deleate the gods immortals gloir.
Essay me once, and if ye find me swerve,
Then thinke, I do not graces such deserve. 1

1 Rait, p. 74.
MONTGOMERIE AND KING JAMES

Perhaps the greatest single influence upon the King was his association with Alexander Montgomerie, who was the leader of the intellectuals about the court. He was considered the only Scottish poet of importance in Scotland during the sixteenth century. This association with Montgomerie lasted about ten years, beginning in 1579, and from him the King gained most of his ideas about verse.

It is unfortunate that in spite of his comparative recentness and his fame as a poet little is actually known of him. He was born in Hazelhead-Castle, Ayrshire. The exact date of his birth is not known. His mother was the great-granddaughter of Sir John Stewart of Dernley, first Earl of Lennox, from whom James was also directly descended. Thus he was one of the Stuart clan.

In 1580 d'Aubigny, a kinsman of Montgomerie, was made Earl of Lennox. Robert Montgomerie, also a kinsman, "was appointed 'tulchan' archbishop, as the means by which money might reach Lennox."¹ One of Montgomerie's sonnets reveals the fact that he, through these two relatives, became a member of the King's household.

¹ Westcott, p xxvii.
The poems of the King and Montgomerie resemble in many ways. Examination reveals that striking similarities exist in subject matter, meter, kinds, and patterns of verse, the uses of "ornamentis," alliteration, repetition of words for emphasis, the predominance of the sonnet form, and in other lesser ways.

Perhaps the most interesting element in writing of any kind of poetry is the subject matter used. The close similarity between the subjects chosen by James and his exemplar is really remarkable. The largest group of Montgomerie's poems is devoted to that all important theme in the various forms of art, love. Praise of persons, epitaphs, devotional poems, complaints and laments, and "flyting" furnish the subject matter of the greater part of Montgomerie's poems. An examination of the King's verses reveals that about one-fourth of the poems are concerned with love. About one-eighth are devoted to the praise of persons, either for distinctive services to the King or for literary work, particularly poetry. We discover also four epitaphs, two prayers, and two complaints. The remainder are concerned chiefly with the art of poetry, political affairs, dedications, a journey, the Roman and Greek gods and goddesses, a satire, and a few other miscellaneous subjects.

Another close resemblance between the poems of the two writers is in the meter. Of the one hundred and fifty-six poems known to have been written by Montgomerie, one hundred and twenty-
three have lines of ten syllables. Twenty-eight use the eight syllable line. Fourteen, six, four, and two syllable lines appear less frequently. In James's poems, about nine-tenths make use of the ten syllable line, the remainder being combinations of fourteen, six, and four.

The arrangement of the sonnets of Montgomerie and James shows some similarity. Lines of ten syllables are used with the rhyme-scheme ababbababab in thirty-seven of Montgomerie's seventy-two sonnets, and in all but four of James's. 1 The sonnet is the preferred form of both poets, and the miscellaneous poems of both consist of stanzas of various lengths. In many cases the poems, not divided into stanzas at all, extend over several pages.

Montgomerie used alliteration freely, and James aptly followed his example. The following sonnet of Montgomerie's shows his use of alliteration:

---

1 The King's favorite rhyme-scheme, ababbababab, is of particular interest in that its origin is doubtful. Whether Spenser, Montgomerie, James, Gascoigne, or some other poet was the author of this form has not yet been proved. The Spenserian stanza might easily have developed from the Spenserian sonnet which did not appear in print with Spenser as the author until some years after the King's publication of 1594 of his "The Essays of a Prentice, in the Divine Arte of Poesie." Not only is this form used by the King in this volume, but the five introductory poems contributed by James's friends all use this same scheme. Westcott (pp. 1 and 11) says:

Little significance need be attached to the actual date of publication, and Spenser must have written sonnets—other than the unrhymed translations from Petrarch and DuBellelay—earlier than 1588; but he is not known to have published any
The Poets Apologie to the Kirk of Edinburgh

I wonder of your Wiscomes, that ar wyse,
That baith miskennis my method and my Muse;
Quhen I invcye, such epithets I use,
That evin Alecto laughing at me lyis.

My trumpets tone is terribler be tuyis
Nor son couhorne, whereof ze me accuse;
For fra the Furie me with fyr infuse,
Quhom Beutie byte, he deir that bargon byis;
For if I open wp my anger ses,
To plunçe my pen into that stinking styx,
My tongue is lyk the lyons; whair it like,
It brings the flesh, lyk Bryrie, fra the bane.
I think it soorne, besy the skalith and sklender,
To eun an ape with sufull Alexander. 1

The importance of classical learning is revealed by the frequent allusions to the gods and goddesses. In the following representative sonnet of Montgomerie's entitled "In Praise of the Kings Vranie" we find many classical names.

Bellona's sone, of Mars the chosen chyld,
Minerva's wit, and Mercurie goldin tung,
Apolló's light, that ignorance esyld,
From Jove ingendrit, and from Pallas sprung,
Thy Vranie, o second Psalmist! sung,
Triumphis ouer Death, in register of fame;
Quharfor thy trophe vs trislie sall be hung
With laurell grene, eternizing thy name.

before the dedicatory verses at the opening of "The Faerie Queene" in 1590, and by this time he would have been familiar with the King's reputation as a patron, and doubtless also with his verse. It is not in any case a matter to be settled by the relative merits of the writers concerned. Either James or Montgomerie, with their fondness for intricate and frequent rhyming, might have invented the scheme by following Gascoigne's statement that "the first twelve lines do xynam in staves of four lines by crosse mestre, and the last two xyming togither do conclude the whole."

1 Irving, p. 94.
Bot such as Phoebus shyning does ashamed
Diane, with hir boroude baimis, and blind;
So when I preis thy prayers to proclame,
Thy weightie words make myne appair bot wind,
Zit, wirthy Prince! thou wald tak in gude pair
My will for weill; I went bot only arte. 1

The twelve sonnets in "The Essayes of a Prentise, in the
Divine Arte of Poesie" are invocations to the gods for inspiration
and power in his attempts at writing poetry.

A most interesting study of Montgomery's influence upon
the poetry of James can be made through the following two sonnets,
both in praise of Chancellor Maitland. The first is Montgomery's,
and the second James's.

Of Mars, Minerva, Mercurio, and the Muses,
The curage, cunning, eloquence, and vaine
Make maikles MAINLAND mirror to remane,
As instrument whilk these for honour vsis,
Quhais fourthfold force with furie him infuses
In battells, counsels, orisones, and brain.
It maids no proffes; experience is plane;
A cunning King a cunning Chancellor chuises.
Quhat hapiness the hevins on him bestowes,
Hee triallke at this troublous tymes beno tryde,
Thoght worthynes of wreches be invyde;
Zit wanted vertue ay the grener groups.
Then, lyk his name, the Gods for armis him giyes;
Sword, pen, and wings, in crowne of laurel leyes. 2

1 Irving, p. 66.
2 Ibid., p. 67.
If he who valiant even within the space
That Titan six times twice his course does end
Did conquer olde Dame Rheas fruitfull face
And did his raigne from pole to pole extend
Hade thought him happier if that greeke hede penn'd
His worthie praise who traced the Trojans spoake
Then all his actes that forth his fame did send
Or his triumphant trophes might him make.
Then what am I that on Pegasian backs
Does flee amongs the Nymphes immortall faire
For thou o Maitland does occasion take
Even by my verse to spreade my name alllwhere
For what in barbarous leide I blocke and frames
Thou learnedlie in Minery's tongue proclames. 1

Of the two sonnets the first is more vigorous and natural.

The sonnet of James scane perfectly but it lacks something of
inspiration and sincerity.

1 Westcott, p. 31.
THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER POETS

Although the James's poems resemble those of Montgomerie chiefly, yet the King was very definitely influenced by other poets. Buchanan's influence is seen in some of his shorter poems, notably "An Aenigme of Sleeps" and a "Sonnet on the Moneth of May" which "are similar in theme and treatment to Latin poems of his tutor, and it is quite possible that many of the classical ornaments and allusions in his verse could be traced to the same source." As Buchanan's influence upon King James ended when the latter was twelve years old, it is doubtful if the poet had a great part in fixing the King's taste.

The King extravagantly admired Du Bartas, the French poet, whose grandiloquence and bombast were not recognized as faults. "Du Bartas's popularity among devout Protestants was due primarily to the highly commendable character of his subject-matter, drawn as it was so largely from the Bible." 2

In 1687 James invited Du Bartas to visit Scotland. "On his guest's departure in September, James gave him a 'chaine of 1000 crowns, made him knight, and accompanied him to the sea side, where he made him promise to return again." 3 In return Du Bartas translated the King's "Lepanto" into French with "a fulsome preface and dedicatory sonnet."

1 Westcott, p. xix.
2 Ibid., p. xxxiv.
3 Ibid., p. xxxvi.
The following lines, taken from the preface of "La Lepanthe,"

repay James fully for his patronage of Du Bartas:

Jacques, si tu marchois d'un pied mortel ça bas,
Hardy l'entreprendroy de telloner tes pas;
I'estendroy tous mes nerfs, et ma course secre
Loing, loing loiroit a dos les ailes de Boree;
Mais puis qu'Aigle nouveau tu te guindes de cieux,
Collé bas, ie te suy seulement de mes yeux;
Mais plustost du desir: ou, si ie me remu,
Ombre, ie voile en terre, et toy dedans la nué.

Hai fusse ie vrayement à Phoenix Escossois,
Ou l'ombre de ton corps, ou l'Echo de ta voix,
Si ie n'auoy l'azur, l'or, et l'argent encore
Dont ton plumage astre brillamment s'honnore,
Au moins f'auroy ta forme: et si mon rude vers
N'exprimoit la douceur de tant d'accords diuera,
Il reprendroit quelque air de tes voix plus qu'humaines,
Mais, Pies, taisez vous pour ouyr les Camoens.

James further showed his great admiration for Du Bartas in

the sonnets and the fragment dedicated to him which follow:

Since ye immortall sisters nine have left
All other countries lying far or neere
To follow him who from you all them reft
And now hath caused your residence be here
Who thoegh a stranger, yeit he lov'd so deere
This realmes and me, so as he spoil'd his swin
(And all the brookes, the bankes and fontains cleare
That be in it) of you, as he hath shawin
In this your worke, then let your breaths be blawin
In recompence of this his willing minde
On me, that then may with my penn be drawin
His praise: who thoegh him self be not inclin'd
Nor presseth but to touche the laurell tree
Yett well he morites crown'd therwith to be.

1 Westcott, pp. 27, 28.
O divin du Bartas, disciple d'Uranie
L'Honneur de nostre temps, poète du grand Dieu
Tes saints vers doux-coulants pleins de douce manie
Distillés des haute cieux volent de lieu en lieu
Comme esclairs foudroyants du grand esprit tonnant
Postillon tonnante du avant au ponant.

That Joshua Sylvester's translation of all of Du Bartas's works published in 1621 brought to him gifts and a pension of twenty pounds yearly from James is added evidence of the King's admiration for the poet. The following sonnet with several succeeding pages of dedicatory verse opens the large volume of Sylvester's translation:

James Stuart

A just Master

For a just Master I have labour'd long:
To a just Master have I vow'd my best:
By a just Master should I take no wrong:
With a just Master would my life be blest.
In a just Master are all Vertues met:
From a just Master flows abundant grace:
But, a just Master is so hard to get,
That a just Master seems of Phoenix race:
Yet, a just Master have I found in fine.
Of a just Master if you question This,
Whom a just Master I so just define;
My Liege James Stuart a just Master is.
And a just Master could by work deserve;
Such a just Master would I justly serve.

1 Westcott, p. 28.
2 Sylvester, p. A.
The arrival of James in England was particularly welcome since his reputation as a poet had already spread over Britain. The number of poems on his succession was rather unusually large. During his reign in England he showed little interest in writing poetry, nearly all of his production having been completed before 1603.

The King surrounded his court with men of culture, and the poets of the day received material as well as moral support. Ben Jonson, a favorite of the King and closely associated with him, received a generous pension. Sir David Murray, Sir Thomas Murray, and Sir Patrick Murray, all Scotsmen and kinsmen, who were men of cultivated tastes, were prominent in the English court.
JAMES'S DEBT TO GASCOIGNE

It appears that James's "Resulis and cautelie" has its foundation chiefly in George Gascoigne's "Certayn Notes of Instruction," 1575, which concerns the making of verse. In spite of certain rearrangements and additions, the resemblance between the two is evident. Quotations from each will give the most important points of likeness.

Gascoigne says concerning "invention" that

The first and most necessary poynt that ever I founde meete to be considered in making of a delectable poeme is this, to grounde it upon some fine invention. If I should undertake to wyte in prayse of gentlewoman, I would neither praise hir christal eyc, nor hir cherrie lippe, etc. For these things are trite and obiuia. But I would either finde some supernaturall cause whereby my penne might walke in the superlatiuue degree, or els I would undertake to sumware for any imperfection that she hath, and therowpon fayse the prayse of hir commendation.

On this same subject James says that

Ze man also be warre with composing any thing in the same maner, as hes bene ower oft veit of before. As in speciall, gif ze speik of Ioue, be warre ze descryye zour Loue mak dome, or hir fairnes. And acolyke that ze descryye not the morning, and ryseyng of the Sunne, in the Preface of zour verse: for thir thingis are so oft and dyuerelie written upon be Poetis already, that gif ze do the lyke, it will appeare, ze bot imitate, and that it cummis not of zour awin Inuentioun, quhilk is one of the chief propertie of ane Poete. Theirfore gif zour subject be to prayse zour Loue, ze sall rather prayse hir other qualitie, nor hir fairnes, or hir sheip; or ellis ze sall speik some lytill thing of it, and syne say, that zour wittis are sa small, and zour ytterance sa barren, that ze can not descrye any part of hir worthelie.

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1 Gascoigne, pps. 31, 32.
2 Arber, p. 65.
James apparently not only used Gascoigne's idea here, but
he also appropriated Gascoigne's illustration.

Similarity in ideas, expressed concerning accented syllables,
exists in each treatise. Gascoigne and James both recognize the three
kinds of accent. Gascoigne says:

And in your verses remembre to place every wordes in his
natural Emphasis or sound, that is to say in such wise, and with
such length or shortnesse, elacion or depression of syllables,
as it is commonly pronounced or used: to express the same we
have three maner of accents, grauis, lenis at circumflexa, the
which I would english thus, the long accent, the short accent,
and that which is indifferent. 1

In the "Reulis and cautelis" we find

First, ze man understant that all syllabes are deuydit in
thrie kindes: That is, some short, some lang, and some
indifferent. Be indifferent I meane, they quhilk ere ather lang
or achor, according as ze place them. 2

The casualue pause also takes some of the attention of both
writers. Gascoigne writes:

There are also certayne pausees or restes in a verse whiche
may be called Casures, whereof I wolde be loth to stonde long,
since it is at discretion of the wryter, and they have bene first
deuided (as should seeme) by the Musicians: but yet thus much I
will aduenture to wryte, that in mine opinion in a verse of eight
sillables, the pause will stand best in the midst, in a verse
of tenne it will best be placed at the ende of the first foure
sillables: in a verse of twelue, in the midst, in verses of
twelue in the first and fourtene in the seconde, wee place the
pause commonly in the midst of the first, and at the ends of the
first eight sillables in the second. 3

1 Gascoigne, p. 33.

2 Arber, p. 58.

3 Gascoigne, p. 37, 38.
The King is also definite on the subject of the pause when he says:

Remember also to mak a Section in the middes of every lyne, whethyre the lyne be lang or short. Be Section I mean, that gif zour lyne be of fourtene fete, zour aught fute, man not only be lenger then the seuint, or vther short fete, but also lenger nor any vther lang fete in the same lyne, except the second and the himmest. 3

Both Gascoigne and James finish their discussions of poetry by giving a list of the various kinds of poetic arrangements and the kind of subject matter suited to each. Here Gascoigne gives a detailed account of the uses of the various meters and stanza forms, whereas James writes one sentence about each with illustrations.

We find decided likeness in the following statements. Gascoigne says:

This hath been called Ritme royall, and surely it is a royall kindes of verse, servyng best for grave discourses. 2

In James's treatise we read:

For any heich and grave subiectic, specially drawin out of learnt authoris, vs this kynde of verse following, callit Ballat Royal. 3

The difference here is only in the length of the stanzas, the "Ritme royall" having seven lines to a stanza, and the "Ballat Royal" having eight.

1 Arber, p. 60.
2 Gascoigne, p. 38.
3 Arber, p. 67.
The principal difference in the two works appears to be in the personal tastes of the authors, resulting in variation in organization, length, and emphasis.
THE POETIC TECHNIQUE OF KING JAMES

The King's treatise on the "art of Scottis poesie," which reveals his theories in verse-making, is composed of a preface to the reader, eight short chapters, and ten short poems or sections of poetry. Some of the verse is used to illustrate his points; some is used purely as a gesture of courtesy to his reader. It is in this treatise that James's ideas and beliefs concerning poetry are given briefly and simply. In his own poems we discover conformity to the ideas which he expresses in his treatise.

A close examination of the treatise and of his poems will show that he put into careful practice his beliefs and theories concerning poetry.

A sonnet contained in the treatise describes his conception of the "perfect poet:"

Ane rype ingyne, aue quick and waked witt,
With sommes rasons, suddanlie applyit,
For euery purpose vaeing reasons fitt,
With skilfulnes, where learning may be spyit,
With pithie wordis, for to express sow by it
His full intention in his proper leid,
The purtie quhairof, weill hes he triyit:
With memorie to keip quhat he does Reid,
With skilfulnes and figuris, quhilks proceid
From Rhetorique, with everlasting fame,
With othres woundring, presssing with all sped
For to atteine to merite sic a name,
All thir into the perfyte Poete be,
Goddis, grant I may obtenie the Laurell trie. 1

1 Arber, p. 56.
The first chapter of the "Reulis and Cautelis" is devoted entirely to rhyming. The young King gives three rules in the use of rhymes which he believed absolutely essential to the art of poetry. Without preliminaries, he states that the poet must "ryme nocht twyse in ane syllabe. As for example, that ze make not proue and reproue ryme together, nor haue for hauing on hore tak, and behaua." James seemed to have little difficulty in finding suitable rhymes for his verses. He does in two cases rhyme "hurt" with "hart," both in "A Dreame on His Mistrie My Ladie Glammes."

"The Amethyst in forme of hart
Doeth signifie the hart—

But that her hand does holde her hart
I take it for to be,
That willinglie she lette her hart
Be shotte into for me."

In the second sonnet "A Sonnet on Ticho Brahe" the word "confound" is rhymed with "founde," although "rounde" and "grounde" are also used as rhymes in the same sonnet. This, of course, prevents any monotony of sound that would have resulted if "confounds" and "founde" were used alone. The first sonnet in his "Essayes" rhymes "fame" with "fame;" the twentieth stanza of "Phoenix" rhymes "content" with "intent," but as a whole James diligently and meticulously followed his own treatise.

1 Westcott, pp. 15 and 18.
The second rule concerning the rhyming of lines is that the rhyme must always be on the last long syllable in the line. James's words are

That ye rhyme ay to the himest lang syllabe, (with accent) in the line, suppose it be not the himest syllabe in the lyne, as bakbyte zou and out flyte zou. It rymes in byte and flyte, because of the lenth of the syllabe, and accent being there, and not in gou, howbeit it be the himest syllabe of ather of the lynis.

James was a master of the use of long and short syllables, and his rhyming syllable almost invariably falls on the last long or accented syllable in the line.

The third rule given in the "Reulis" is that the last word of the line should not be longer than two syllables. The King says:

Za man be war likewayis (except necessitie compell yow) with Rymin in Termis, quhilk is to say, that your first or himest word in the lyne, exceed not twa or thrie syllabes at the maist, woing thrie als seindill as ye can. ¹

This he followed rather carefully. Practically every line of his poems ends with words of one syllable. There are some few lines with two, but words of more than two are rare in his verses. An exception occurs in "A Dreams on His Mistris My Ladie Glissames,"

line 79:

They hade although imperfectlie.

The objection given to the use of long words at the ends of lines was "the lenth thair of eatis vp in the pronouncing euen the vther

¹ Arber, p. 57.
syllables, ---and therefore spilis the flowing of that lyne." But in his translation of "L'Vranie" we find exceptions to this rule.

Here we discover such lines as

And whiles I had the storye of Fraunce elected,
Which to the Muses I should have directed." 1

and

I am said she, that learned Vranie,
That to the Starres transports humanitie. 2

Other line-endings showing exceptions are "imprented," rhyming with "represented," "iniquitie" with "to be," "eternise" with "Artemiss," and "transported" with "exhorted." "A Paraphrastical Translation ov't of the Poete Lucane" reveals "prouyded" and "deuyded" as line-endings. But James carefully selected words with the accent on the next to the last syllable, thus preventing the lack of euphony he feared.

In the second chapter of the "Reulis" the King is concerned with syllabification. The chapter is introduced with a generalization on the kind of syllables, "some short, some lang, and some indifferent. Be indifferent I meane, they quhilk are ether lang or short, according as ze place them." 3

The first direction given is that beginning with a short syllable the lines should consist of alternating long and short syllables. "The forms of placing syllabes in verse, is this:

1 Arber, p. 23.
2 Ibid, p. 25.
3 Ibid, p. 28.
That your first syllable in the line be short, the second long, the third short, the fourth long, the fyft short, the sith long, and so furth to the end of the line." ¹ James was consistent in his use of this type of syllabification in his own verses. Some syllables, naturally long, have been placed before a word of equal length, and the accent can easily be shifted to the second syllable for the sake of the sound. We have an example of this in the eleventh sonnet of the "Amatorica" in the first words of the lines:

Then will that little sponde and flaming eye
Bleaze bravelie forth and sparkling all abroad.²

Another case of shifted accent will be noticed in "A Sonnet on Mr. Adamsons Paraphrase of Job:"

God did his gifts in him so wise lie well.³

In "An Epitaph on Sir Philip Sidney" we find

Whose in, you wise lie all your arts did well,⁴

and again in "An Epitaph on John Shaw"

Though to his friends it be a griefe the same.⁵

In the third sonnet that James wrote on the subject of the surprize

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¹ Arber p. 58.
² Westcott, p. 6.
³ Ibid., p. 28.
⁴ Ibid., p. 29.
⁵ Ibid., p. 30.
attack on him by the Earl of Bothwell is the line,

Cummes ever justice at the barre to stand.¹

We find the following irregular line in his sonnet to Bacchus:

Are of thee, the great Alexandre craved.²

Line 50 of "An Epithalamion upon the Marquess of Huntly's Marriage" begins irregularly:

Woven of our haires, with pearls thereat, which we in
fishes founde.³

An accented syllable begins "The Beginning of His Majesties Jurnei
to Denmarke; Never Ended:"

True is that saying that us'd of olde amonge philosophes
wise.⁴

The King was most definite regarding the number of feet
to be used in a line of verse. He insisted that every line contain
an even number of feet. "Always tak heid that the number of sour
fete in every lyne be euin, and nocht odde: as four, six, aucht,
or ten: and nocht thrie, fyve, seuin, or nyne, except it be in
broken verse, quhillkis are out of reul and daylie inuentit be
dywre Poeties."⁵

At first this appears a bit astonishing since it would
seem that James completely ignored his own rule. Of the entire

¹ Westcott, p. 34.
² Ibid., p. 37.
³ Ibid., p. 49.
⁴ Ibid., p. 52.
⁵ Arber, pp. 58, 59.
collection of poems known to have been written by James, more than
half are sonnets containing pentameter lines; several long poems
also contain lines of five feet; several others are composed of
lines of seven feet. But investigation reveals that the word "fute"
is used synonymously with the word "syllable." In the "Reulis" James
gives these two lines as the exemplification of his rule:

Into the Sea then Lucifer upsprang.

This line has ten syllables, but only five feet, of course.

Another puzzling statement from the "Reulis" is cleared
up by the knowledge of this fact. "Ze man tak heid lykewayis, that
zour langest lynis excsied nochtte fourtene fete, and that zour
shortest be nocht within four,e."1 To this there are no exceptions
in James's poems. The sonnets, the fragments, and most of the
longer poems contain lines of ten syllables or "fete." There are
four poems made up of fourteen syllables to a line; several vary
their number some lines having eight, some six, and some four
feet. One poem contains lines of twelve syllables, and one a
combination of twelve and fourteen syllables to the line. Not one
consists of lines shorter than four or longer than fourteen
syllables.

The King cautioned prospective poets to avoid using lines
composed of monosyllabic words. "Ze auctht likewise be war with oft
composing zour hailli lynis of monosyllabis only,----because the

1 Arber, p. 60.
maiest part of thame are indifferent, and may be in short or lang
place as ze like.¹ Most of the lines in James's verses are composed
with words of one, two, and three syllables. Occasionally a line of
monosyllabic words is found. In "A Dreame on His Mistris My Ladie
Glamis," line 283 is composed of one-syllable words:

Then am I gladd of such a guessse.

 Likewise in line 37 of "A Satire Against Women" we find:

In short as foules by kinde in aire doe flee.

In "Song I" there are four lines in the first stanza in which all
but two words are monosyllables:

The seas are now the berr
Which makes us distant Farr
That we may some winne narr
God graunte us grace.

The reason given by the King for this rule is as follows:

The cause then, quhy one baill lynse sucht nocht to be
composit of monosyllabes only, is, that they being for the
maiest part indifferent nather the second, himnest, nor
Sectionum, will be longer nor the other lang fete in the same
lyne. Thereforze ze man place a word composit of dyuors
syllabes, and not indifferent, aster in the second, himnest,
or Sectionum, or in all thrie.²

Chapter three of the "Reulis" deals with the use and
selection of suitable words. The King believed that it was abso-
lutely esceental that only words necessary to express the meaning
of the poet should be used. He says: "First, that in quhatsunseuer
ze put in verse, ze put in na wordis—bot that they be all necessare,

¹ Arber, p. 60.
² Ibid., p. 60, 61.
as ze could be constraintit to use them, in case ze were speiking the same purpose in prose. And theirfore that your words appeare to have cum out willingly, and by nature, and not to have bene throwin out constrainedly, be compulsion." James, possessed of a large vocabulary which was the result of his high degree of learning, did not find it necessary to use unsuitable words to fill out his lines. He was skilled in the mechanical phases of verse-making, and from his wide range of knowledge he quite easily selected words that suited his thought. James was an intellectual, not a poetic genius. A fine and discriminating taste in literature was augmented by unusual experience in the study of languages. He had also a discerning sense of fitness which increased his aptitude in versification.

The King cautioned against the use of names of people or places because of the difficulty encountered in accents and syllables. He advises

That ze eschew to insert in zour verse, a lang rable of mennis names, or names of towns, or sic vther names. Because it is hard to mek many lang names all placit together, to flow weill. Theirfore quhen that fallis out in zour purpose, ze sall ather put bot two or thrie of them in ouerie lyne, mixing vther wordis amang them."1

An examination of his verses shows that names were used freely but rarely frequently enough to injure the meter. The names given in his verses are most often those of the Greek and Roman mythological characters, and these he changed about using sometimes the Greek and

1 Arbor, p. 62.
sometimes the Roman name, so that the word used might fit most naturally with the line of verse.

That the type of subject must guide the selection of suitable words was a fact that King James recognized. He said: "Gif zour purpose be of tragical materis. To use lamentable wordis, with some heich, as rauisht in admiratiou." An Epitaph on John Shaw," written shortly after this hero was killed in the defense of the King who was attacked by the Earl of Bothwell, is probably a suitable example of such a subject.

A vertuous life procures a happie death
And raires to loftie skies there noble name
Then blest is he who looseth thus his breathe
Though to his friends it be a griefe the same.
This may be saide of thy immortal fame
Who here repose closed in honours laire
For as of trewe and noble race thou came
So honestie and trueth was all thy cairo
Thy kinn was honoured by thy vertues raire
Thy place of creditt did thy friends defend.
Then noble mindes aspire and doe not spaire
With such a life to conquise such an end
But here my inward greafe does make me staye
I minde with deeds, and not with wordes to paye. 2

James recommended alliteration although he did not use as much of it as Montgomerie. "Let all zour verse be Literall, se far as may be, quhatsumeuer kynde they be of, bot speciallie Tumbling verse for flyting. Be Literall I meanes, that the maist part of zour lyne, sail rynne vpon a letter, as this tumbling lyne rynnis

1 Arber, p. 63.

2 Westcott, p. 30.
upon Pi

"Fething fude for to feid it fast furth of the Farie."¹

In the twelfth sonnet of the "Amatoria" the first line reads

O women's witt that wavres with the winde,
and in "A Complaint of his Mistresss Absence from Court" we find
alliteration in line 9:

Inflamm'd with following fortunes fickle bait.

In "A Sonnet on the Moneth of May" are these alliterative lines:

Haill mirthfull May the moneth full of joye
Haill mother milde of hartsum herbes and fliuore
Haill frosier faire of everie sportes and toys
And of Aurora dewes and sumer shoures
Haill friend to Phoebus and his glancing houre
Haill sister scheine to Nature breeding all
Who by the reine that cloudie skies out pournis
And Tittans heste, reformes the faded fall
In weeful winter by the frostie gale
Of saed Saturnus tirrar of the trees——²

We have other examples of the alliteration used by the
King in a few other poems, the best of which is "A Sonnet on
Mr. Adamsons Paraphrase of Job," which begins

In wandering wealth through burbling brookes and begas
Of tripping troupes and flocks on fertilli grounde——³

"Tumbling" verse was a type that was quite popular with
the people of that day. This name was given as an antonym of
"flowing" since the lines in tumbling verse are very irregular,
observing no scheme of accented and unaccented syllables. In the

1 Arbar, p. 63.
2 Westcott, p. 32.
3 Ibid., p. 25.
"Reulia" we find this explanation:

Be men observe that this "Tumbling" verse flowis not on that fassoun, as vtheris dois. For all vtheris keipis the reule quhilk I gane before. To wit, the firs fute short the second lang, and sa furth. quhair as thir hes twa short, and ane lang through all the lyne, quhen they keip ordour: albeit the maist pairt of them be out of ordour, and keipis na kynde nor reule of Flowing, and for that cause are callit Tumbling verse: except the short lynis of aucht in the hinder end of the verse, the quhilk flowis as vther verses dois.\(^1\)

and

For flyting, or In vectiues, use this kynde of verse following, callit "Rouncefallia" or "Tumbling" verse:

In the hinder end of haeruest vpon Alhellow on, Quhen our gude nichbors rydis (now gif I reid richt).\(^2\)

James discusses what he callis "thrie speciall ornamentalis of verse," comparisons, epithets, and proverbs. He warns his readers that it is essential that the comparisons be suited to the subject, "that nather they be ouer bas, gif zour suUect be heich, for then scould zour suUect comparison disgrace your Comparison \(\text{subject}\), nather zour Comparison be heich quhen zour suUect is basse, for then sall zour Comparison \(\text{subject}\) disgrace zour suUect Comparison.\(^3\)

James uses "Comparison," or the simile, in his own verses. Frequently he calls upon his knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology in comparing some person to the ancient gods. In "A Satire Against Woemen" consisting of ten stanzas, each with six lines, forty of these

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1 Arber, p. 63-64.
2 Ibid., p. 68.
3 Ibid., p. 64.
lines are made up of comparisons. The first and second stanzas follow:

As falcons are by nature faire of flight
Of kinde as sparhalks far excelle in speeds
As marlions have in springing greatest might
As goshaalks are of nature given to greede
As marshes of kinde are given to sing
And lawrocks after candlemasse to spring.

As piottes steals what ever they can heare
Of kinde as corbies followes carions wilde
As jess will conterfitt what sounde they heare
As gleds of nature kills not oft the wylde
As crowes and kase will clatter when they playe
As hens of nature keckells when they lays.\footnote{1}

In using the mythological terms in referring to the sun, moon, or star, James instructs his readers to use their various names instead of repeating just one. "As gif ze call the Sunne "Titan," at a tymc, to call him "Phoebus" or "Apollo" the vther tymc, and siclyke the Mone, and vther Planettis.\footnote{2} Thus the various classical words are used interchangeably, according to the way they fit in with the meter. Some lines on Ticho Brahe show his free use of Latin and Greek terms:

\begin{quote}
What foolish Phaëton did presume in pride
Yea more what great Apollo takes in hand
Who does the course of glistring Phoebus guide
Thou does performe that rules eache firie brand
Then greater art thou then Apollo cleare
As thy Uranias eldest fostre deare.\footnote{3}
\end{quote}

The epithet is also used rather frequently throughout the King's poetry. He says in defining the epithet: "It is to descriue brieflie,\footnote{4} an pessant, the naturall of suerice thing ze speik of, be adding the proper adjectieuo vnto it."\footnote{4} In the first sonnet of the

1 Westcott, p. 19-20.  
4 Arber, p. 64.  
2 Arber, p. 66.  
5 Westcott, p. 27.
"Amatoris," lines 6, 13, and 14, we find the expressions "chaste Diana," "hatefull Juno," "contrarious Zephyre." In the second sonnet are the expressions "cruell Cupide," and "ruthless rage." Lines 6 and 8 speak of "envenomed darte" and "hoolit harte." In the third sonnet in this group, which is entitled "To the Queene," the expressions "stormie seas," "burning flam," and "heavie harte" are used in lines 2, 3, and 13. Another sonnet, the fourth of the group, abounds in such epithets as "earthlie Juno," "gratious Queene," "wise Minerve," "Cytherea faire." There are, of course, scores of such expressions in the poetry of James which it would be impractical to enumerate.

The third "ornament" mentioned in the "Reulis" and the one least used by the King is the proverb, which, according to the author, must be suited to the subject also. Several examples of James's use of the proverb will suffice to show that he did follow his own precept. The first line of "An Epitaph of John Shaw" is, "A vertuous life procures a happie deathe." These proverbs that follow are lines from "An admonition to the Master poet to be war of great bragging hereafter, lest he not onlie slander him self; but also the whole professoure of that art."

Line 3 is

The mouse did holpe the lion on a daye,

and line 9,

A friend is eye best known in tymes of neede.
Line 100 of the same poem says:

Fool's counsell whiles will help the wise I trow,

and lines 102, 110, and 111 are

Great happe hath he whome others parils gaines,
The proverbe sayes that mends is for misdeed,
Creake not again no forder then the creed.

The King insisted that the translations of poetry be as nearly like the original as possible. He says:

Especially, translating any thing out of other language, quhilk doing, ze not onely essay not zour swin ingyne of Inuention, but be the same means, ze are bound, as to a stak, to follow that buikis phrasis, quhilk ze translate.1

There follow the first four lines of "L'Vranie" of Du Bartas, which poem was translated by James:

Je n'estoy point encor en l'Auril de mon age, Qu'vn defir d'affranchir mon renom du tressas, Chagrin, me faisit perdre et repos, et repas, Par le breuo proiect de maint acauant courage.2

All of Du Bartas's works were translated during the life time of James by Joshua Sylvester, and were published in 1621. Here follows Sylvester's translation, which we may compare with that of the King:

Scarce had the April of mine age begun, When brave desire t'imortalize my Name Did make me (oft) Rest and repast to shun, In curious proiect of son learned Prome.3

1 Arber, p. 66.
2 Ibid., p. 23.
3 Sylvester, p. 525.
Next follow the same four lines translated by James, which reveal that he was careful in this kind of work:

Sarces was I yet in springtyme of my years,
When greening great for fame above my peers
Did make me lose my wonted cheer and rest,
Essaying learned works with curious breast.

Another group of lines written and translated by the same men show this exactness:

Mais comme un pelerin, qui sur le tard, rencontre
Un fourchu carrefour, douteux, s'arrete court:
Et d'esprit, non des pieds, de c'a de la discourt,
Par les divers chemins, que la Lune luy monstre.

But, as a Pilgrim, that full late doth light
Upon a crosse-way, stops in sodain doubt;
And, 'mid the sundry Lanes to finde the right,
More with his Wit than with his feet doth Scout.

Sylvester's translation.

But as the Pilgrim, who for lack of light,
Cum on the parting of two wayes at night,
He stays assone, and in his mynde doeth cast
What way to take while Moonlight yet doth last.

James's translation.

The King translated a small portion of Du Bartas's "La Sepmaine ou Creation du Monde." In spite of the fact that James

1 Arber, p. 23.
2 Ibid., p. 22.
3 Sylvester, p. 525.
4 Arber, p. 23.
chose lines of fourteen syllables when the original is of shorter lines, the translation is very faithful to the original. An examination of a few lines, from both original and translation reveals James's exactness in both phrase and meaning.

C'est longue largueur, coste hauteur profonde,
C'est infini fini, ce grande monde sans monde,
Ce lourd (di-je) Chaos, qui dans soi mutins,
Ce vid en un moment dans le rien d'un rien,
Etoit le corps fecond d'ou la celeste essence
Et les quatre Elemens devoyent prendre naissance.¹

This largeness and this breadth so long,/this highness so profounde,
This bounded infinite, the masse/confused of all this rounde;
This Chaos lourde, I saye, which in/it selfe suche
uproares wroght,
And sawe it in one moment borne/in nothing made of
noght,
The brooddie bodie was whereof/the essence pure divine,
And fours contending brethren ought/there birth to borrow
sines.²

In spite of the tone of finallity found in James's treatise, and his belief that he himself may become a poet, there is in his writings something of humility and modesty. In the preface to his translation of Du Bartas's "L'Vranie" we discover something of this spirit when he says:

But sen (alas) God, by nature hathe refused me the like lofty and quick ingyne, and that my dull Muse, age, and Fortune, had refused me the lyke, skill and learning, I

¹ Westcott, p. 111.
² Ibid., p. 54.
was constrained to have refuge to the second, which was, to doe what lay in me, to set forth his praise, sen I could not mirite the lyke my self.¹

And in the preface to "Exercises at vacant houres" he writes:

And in case thou finde aswel in this work, as in my Lepanto following, many incorrect errors: both in the dytement and orthography, ¹ must pray thee to accept this my reasonable excuse, which is this. Thou considerst, I doubt not, that upon the one part, I composed these things in my verie young and tender yeares: wherein nature, (except shee were a monster) can admit no perfeccion.²

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¹ Arber, p. 20
² Ibid., p. 4.
CONCLUSION

King James was essentially a Renaissance poet, his scholarly interests and training giving him a thorough acquaintance with Latin and Greek poets and scholars. An orderly mind, an inventive ability, and some literary faculty characterize his poems; real imagination is lacking. The long loosely constructed sentences obscure the thought quite frequently. Clever phrases combine with daintily flowing lines to make his verse pleasing to the ear, but an aptness for phraseology and rhyme and meter could not furnish the divine fire for which the royal poet so longed.

His poems are chiefly of interest because the author was a king. The influence upon the style and form of poetry which James no doubt had was due chiefly to his exalted position rather than to unusual ability as a poet.
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