THE

DEFENCE OF POESIE,

BY

Sir PHILIP SIDNEY Knight,

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