

1750

Selected pages from The praise of folly. Tr. from the best Latin edition of Erasmus, by W. Kennet ... Illus. with fifty curious cuts, by the celebrated Hans Holbeine. To which is prefixed, the author's epistle to Sir Thomas More. And the life of the author, by Thomas Brown

Desiderius d. Erasmus

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THE
PRAISE
OF
FOLLY
ERASMUS



ERASMVS.



T H E
P R A I S E
O F
F O L L Y.

Translated from the best Latin Edition of

ERASMUS,

By W. KENNET, late Lord Bishop of
PETERBOROUGH.

Illustrated with Fifty curious Cuts,

BY THE

Celebrated *HANS HOLBEIN E.*

To which is prefixed,

The Author's Epistle to Sir THOMAS MORE.

AND

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

By THOMAS BROWN.

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by J. BARKER, near the Pit-Door, in
Russell-Court, Drury-Lane.

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Folly

59



ERASMUS

IN

PRAISE of FOLLY.

*An Oration of feigned matter, spoken by Folly, in
her own person.*

HOW slightly soever I am esteemed in the common vogue of the world, (for I well know how disingenuously Folly is decried, even by those who are themselves the greatest fools) yet it is from my influence alone, that the whole universe receives her ferment of mirth and jollity: of which this may be urged as a convincing argument, in that as soon as I appeared to speak before this numerous assembly, all their countenances were gilded over with a lively sparkling pleasantness: you soon welcomed me with so encouraging a look, you spurred me on with so chearful a hum, that truly, in all appearance, you seem now flushed with a good dose of reviving nectar, when as just before you sat drowsy and melancholly, as if you were lately come out of some hermit's cell. But as it is usual, that as soon as the sun peeps from her eastern bed, and draws

B back

from a tapster or tinker, yet highly value themselves upon their birth and parentage. One fetches his pedigree from Æneas, another from Brute, a third from king Arthur: they hang up their ancestors worm eaten pictures as records of antiquity, and keep a long list of their predeceffors, with an account of all their offices and titles, while they themselves are but transcripts of their forefathers' dumb statues, and degenerate even into those very beasts which they carry in their coat of arms as en-figns of their nobility: and yet by a strong presumption of their birth and quality, they live not only the most pleasant and unconcerned themselves, but there are not wanting others too who cry up these brutes almost equal to the gods. But why should I dwell upon one or too instances of Folly, when there are so many of like nature? conceitdnefs and self-love making many by strength of Fancy believe themselves happy, when otherwise they are really wretched and despicable. Thus the most ape-faced, ugliest fellow in the whole town, shall think himself a mirror of beauty; another shall be so proud of his parts, that if he can but mark out a triangle with a pair of compaffes, he thinks he has mastered all the difficulties of geometry, and could outdo Euclid himself. A third shall admire himself for a ravishing musician, though he have no more skill in the handling of any instrument than a pig playing on the organs; and another

that



The Ideot

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