

Wherefore good Reader yeeld thy furtherance
 To mend the things that yet are out of square,
 Thou hast a help thy purpose to aduance,
 And meane to ease thy greatest peece of care,
 And he that hath done this for thy welfare,
 Upon thy freendely fauor and regard,
 May chaunce to trauell further afterward.

Finis.

It is difficult for us to reconcile the facts that Golding was an ardent Puritan and that he was also the translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The compromising nature of his task seems to have troubled him somewhat, for the long introductory epistle to Leicester, in the main an analysis and moral interpretation of Ovid, is also an attempted justification of the translator's work. After declaring in the self-lauding fashion of the time that as a result of his labour he expects "with eternal fame above the stars to mount" he proceeds to unfold the hidden significance of Ovid's tales throughout each of the fifteen books:

"As for example in the tales of Daphne turn'd to Bay
 A mirror of virginity appear unto us may."

Let no man marvel that he ascribes to the one and only God what the ancients ascribed to many. He is strongly inclined to agree with those who hold that the ancients "took their first occasion of these things from Holy Writ," and he draws an elaborate parallel between the account of creation as given in *Genesis* and that given by Ovid. To justify "the vices in this present work, in lively colours penn'd" gives the author greater trouble, and he offers the unconvincing and conventional defense which contemporary playwrights were offering to Golding's co-religionists:

"For sure these fables are not put in writing to th'intent
 To further or allure to vice: but rather this is meant,
 That men beholding what they be when vice doth
 reign instead
 Of virtue, should not let their lewd affections have
 the head."