

in Ireland to teach his children and serve him in his house as amanuensis. The Civil War ruined his prospects, but after 1641 he acquired Latin and Greek, and took to translating. At the Restoration fortune became kinder, and he was made Master of the Revels in Ireland for a year or two; but before the Great Fire of 1666, by which he suffered, was a printer and publisher—apparently prosperous—in London. He produced a series of handsome folios on China, Japan, Africa, America, Britannia (Part I.), &c., with maps and fine illustrations by Hollar. His principal poetic achievements were translations of Virgil in heroic verse, and of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; also a rhyming paraphrase of Æsop, and some imitations of his own. Of these also magnificent folio editions were issued with engravings by Hollar and others. A play and three epic or narrative poems by him seem never to have been printed. Pope tells us he read Homer in this form with joy when a schoolboy. Ogilby's verses are utterly unpoetic, but they scan tolerably, and are perhaps hardly bad enough to justify the place that has been assigned him in the very lowest depths of the poetical inferno. As poor poetasters have been more leniently judged.

Thus Ogilby renders the *Odyssey's* picture (Book vi.) of the island king's daughter Nausicaa and her companions, on their washing expedition a sort of 'Caledonian washing' to the river by the shore, just before the shipwrecked Ulysses presents himself to them:

When to the pleasant Fountain they drew near
Where they might wash all seasons of the year,
Where cleansing streams like purest Crystal spout;
There they alight and sweating Mules take out,
And on the Margents of the purling Flood
Drove to sweet Grass; their Chariot next unload,
And foul Wheels throw into the Crystall Spring,
Which in full Troughs they trample in a ring,
Each the Buck plying with a labring Foot,
All clear from Spots, discolouring Stains and Smut,
They spread them forth in order near the Shore,
Where they small Stones and Gravel 'spy most store,
Themselves then bath'd, perfum'd, and neatly deckt
To Dinner went, where sitting they expect,
Until the Sun whiten their Weeds and dry.
When feasted well, they lay their Chaplets by,
To play at Ball. Amidst her virgin train
The Princess first warbled a pleasant Strain.

Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (1611–60), the translator of Rabelais, was a man of somewhat remarkable accomplishments and not a little curious learning, but eminently conceited and eccentric, if not on some points hopelessly crazed. He traces the genealogy of his family up to Adam, from whom he was the 153rd in descent, and by the mother's side he ascends to Eve. The first of the family who settled in Scotland was one Nonnoster, married to Diosa (daughter of Alcihiades), who took his farewell of Greece and arrived at Cromarty, or *Portus Salutis*, in 389 B.C. The

preposterous succession of fabulous personages, if not expressly and deliberately invented, seems to have come from the same sources as the fictitious lists of old Celtic Scottish kings. Sir Thomas, having studied at King's College, Aberdeen, and travelled in France, Spain, and Italy, continued strenuously to support the court and oppose the Covenant. He was knighted by Charles I. in 1641, and even after he succeeded to his father also Sir Thomas, in the same year, was much plagued by creditors—for Sir Thomas the elder had recklessly and hopelessly embarrassed the family property, and, probably on that account, had been violently seized and imprisoned 'within ane upper chamber [chamber] callit the Inner Dortour' by his undutiful sons. The second Sir Thomas accompanied Charles II. into England, and was taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester (1651). He is said to have died of an inordinate and unrestrainable fit of joyful laughter on hearing of the Restoration.

It is often said that the heaven-born translator must be a spiritual brother and compeer of his original, that it needs a profound humourist to render another profound humourist, and that Urquhart was the northern Rabelais. Had we nothing but the translation of Rabelais to judge by, we might have been unable to dispute this so far as Urquhart is concerned. But he left us other works, and in none of them is there a single gleam of real humour, but abundance of the very contrary. Fantastical they are, eccentric, quaint, sometimes clever, copious, apt in vocables, and pointedly satirical; but usually merely verbose, magniloquent, pretentious, and tedious, save where the author's vanity and perverse foolishness make us laugh at him rather than with him. In truth, he is precisely one of the types Rabelais most constantly makes fun of—Rabelais, Cervantes, and all the humourists—an inaccurate pedant, full of ill-digested learning, whose conceit, vanity, and vaingloriousness lay him open to incessant ridicule and satire, and rise to the level of sheer hallucination. No doubt Urquhart had some points in common with the creator of Gargantua and Pantagruel—hatred of the conventional, contempt for ascetic ideals, an

antipathy for mythical genealogies and exhaustive lists of nearly synonymous words, and a prodigious command of language, especially of out-of-the-way words, very familiar and very unfamiliar slang, archaisms, and neoterisms, not to speak of a free exercise of the privilege of coining. But the copiousness in Urquhart's case is not from spontaneous suggestion; it is rather the outcome of the laborious or quasi-scientific imagination, and a painful dependence on the synonyms of Cotgrave's Dictionary, which he discharges at the reader in sheaves and armfuls. He makes odd mistakes, wholly missing the meaning of his original, and trying very wild shots. He constantly takes extraordinary liberties with the text—abridges, alters, and greatly expands. Thus, in a famous