

SIR WILLIAM PETTY.  
1623-1687.

He was born in 1623. About 15 years of age went to Normandy trading with a little stock of merchandise and so maintained himself while studying. On his return to England was in Royal Navy for a time. In 1643 went abroad again and remained for three years in France and the Netherlands. In 1647 Petty obtained patent for the invention of double writing, or in other words of a copying machine. In 1648 occurred his first publication "Advice for the Advancement of some particular parts of Learning". Some year deputy Prof. of Anatomy in Oxford and gave instructions in Anatomy and Chemistry. 1649 Dr. of physic and Fellow of Brasenose College. 1650 succeeded in restoring to life a woman who had been hanged. 1651 Prof. of Anatomy in Oxford and also Prof. of Music at Gresham College. 1652 physician to the Army in Ireland and in 1654 he made a survey of the lands granted to the soldiers in Ireland by which he gained 9000 pounds which he invested profitably. He thus ultimately became the owner of about 50,000 acres of land in Ireland. Set up iron works, opened lead mines and marble quarries; established a pilchard fishery and commenced a trade in timber. In 1663 attracted much attention by the invention of a double-bottomed ship. One of the first members of the Royal Society. Died 1687. Petty was a man of remarkable versatility, ingenuity and resource. Evelyn declared he had "never known such another genius", and said of him, "if I were a Prince I would make him my second councillor at least." A.C.B.