

To accomplish this moral purpose is his chief aim in the work, — not "wreaths of bays, nor name of Poet, no, nor meed." "But why seem I these doubts to cast?" he continues, as though not more than half convinced himself, and he concludes with declaring that if any cull evil instead of good from his pages "the fault is theirs, not mine, they must confess." The address "To the Reader" betrays the same uneasiness, and the author beseeches those who read to "take these works as fragrant flowers," warning them at the same time that the spider may convert the essence of flowers into poison. The same idea seems to have been in his mind when he wrote the motto for the title-page :

"With skill, heede, and judgement, this worke must be read,
For else to the Reader it standes in small stead."

Golding was endowed with a considerable degree of real literary ability. The "fourteener" is not a measure calculated to impress favorably a modern ear, but there are many passages in the *Metamorphoses* of which the spirited movement and the author's enthusiastic identification of himself with his subject make the reader forget that the work is not original composition. On the other hand it is inevitable in so long a piece of translation that there should be passages which are suggestive of hack-work; occasionally the metre is halting and awkward, the rhyme forced, and the translation devoid of charm. We may accept as just Meres' assignment to Golding of a position among those who "for their learned translations are of good note among us." Warton's estimate needs no modification: "His style is poetical and spirited, and his versification clear: his manner ornamental and diffuse yet with a sufficient observance of the original."¹ Mr. Sidney Lee says that "it is full of life throughout, and at time reaches a high poetic level."² The *Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice* is an unusually successful piece of translation, in which the author's happy rendering of the lyrics is equalled by his skill in preserving the simple effectiveness of the pathetic and tragic passages. We may agree with War-

¹ *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, ed. Hazlitt, iv. 283.

² *Dict. Nat. Biog.*