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**Annalia Dubrensia**

by F. A. Hyett  
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## ANNALIA DUBRENSIA.

By F. A. HYETT.

*Read at Gloucester, 16th July, 1888.*

THE little book bearing this title, is much prized by English bibliophiles. It has, however, a special interest for the inhabitants of this county. Not only is it one of our rarest Gloucestershire books, but it relates to a local gathering which, more than two centuries ago, had a national reputation. The book is a collection of verses in praise of one Robert Dover, and certain sports and games which he had established or revived at the very beginning of the 17th century, and which were held in Whitsun week on a hill in the parish of Weston-sub-Edge, and which, with the exception of a temporary suspension during the Commonwealth, were continued annually at the same place for about 250 years. OF these games I have not been able to find any very full account. There is a very quaint notice of them in Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, which seems to have been the source from which almost all later writers on the subject have drawn.

It has often been quoted before, but as it is brief, and is, as far as I know, the only description which has any kind of claim to authenticity, I will give it in full :—

“The said *games* were begun, and continued at a certain time in the Year for 40 Years by one *Rob. Dover* an Attorney, of *Barton on the Heath*, in *Warwickshire*, son of *Joh. Dover* of *Norfolk*, who being full of activity, and of a generous, free, and public Spirit, did, with leave from *K. Jam. I.*, select a place on *Cotswold Hills*, in *Gloucestershire*, whereon those Games should be acted. *Endymion Porter*, Esq. ;<sup>1</sup> a Native of that County, and

<sup>1</sup> Endymion Porter's interest in those games may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that he was born in the parish of Aston-sub-Edge, which adjoins the parish in which Dover's Hill is situated. A fine portrait of him, by Vandyke, is in Thirlestane House, Cheltenham.

a Servant of that King, a Person also of a most generous Spirit, did, to encourage *Dover*, give him some of the King's old Cloaths, with a Hat and Feather and Ruff, purposely to grace him, and consequently the Solemnity. *Dover* was constantly there in Person well mounted and accoutred, and was the chief Director and Manager of those Games frequented by the Nobility and Gentry (some of whom came 60 Miles to see them) even till the rascally Rebellion was began by the Presbyterians, which gave a stop to their Proceedings, and spoiled all that was generous or ingenious elsewhere. The Verses in the said Book called *Annalia Dubrensia* were composed by several Poets, some of which were then the chiefest of the Nation, as *Mich. Drayton*, Esq.; *Thos. Randolph* of Cambridge, *Ben Johnson*, *Owen Feltham*, Gent., *Capt. Joh. Mennes*, *Shakerley Marmion*, Gent., *Tho. Heywood*, Gent. &c. Others of lesser note were *Joh. Trussel*, Gent. who continued *Sam Daniels'* History of England, *Joh. Monson*, Esq.; *Feryman Rutter*, of *Oriel Coll.*, *Will. Basse*, of *Moreton*, near *Thame* in *Oxfordshire*, sometime a Retainer to the *Lord Wenman*, of *Thame Parke*, *Will. Denny*, Esqre.; &c. Before the said Book of *Annalia Dubrensia* is a Cut representing the Games and Sports, as Men playing at Cudgels, Wrestling, Leaping, pitching the Bar, throwing the Iron Hammar, handling the Pyke, leaping over the heads of Men kneeling, standing upon their hands, &c. Also the dancing of Women, Men hunting and coursing the Hare with Hounds and Greyhounds &c., with a Castle built of boards on a hillock, with Guns therein firing, and the Picture of the great Director, *Capt. Dover* on Horseback, riding from place to place."

In *Notes and Queries*, Vol IX., 3rd series, p. 80, is an extract from a MS. History of Broadway, then (1866) in the possession of Sir Thos. E. Winnington, which contained an account of the sports practised on the Cotswold Hills, on Thursday and Friday of Whitsun holiday week. It is there stated that "the Sports were football, skittles, quoits, shovel board, cudgell, and single stick; bull baiting, cock-fighting, bowling, wrestling, leaping, dancing, pitching the bar, horse racing, ringing of bells, jumping in sacks, &c."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If this history could be examined, we might obtain some more information. Does anyone know if it is in existence?

In an article in the Cornhill Magazine, Vol. XXXVII., pages 710-720, headed "Captain Dover's Cotswold Games," and signed "E.W.G.," it is stated that at the opening of the games, "A yellow flag was unfurled on the battlements of the portable castle, and a bugle was blown to summon the quality. Captain Dover himself rode out on his palfrey to survey the scene, wearing a yellow favour in his hunting cap;" but whence E.W.G. obtained this information he does not tell us.

These games are not mentioned by Atkyns or Fosbrooke, and only briefly noticed by Bigland and Rudge. Rudder (pp. 23, 24, 25) devotes a little more space to them, and quotes at length from one of the poems in the *Annalia*, but gives little original information. There is, however, one point he alludes to deserving mention.

"On the Coteswolds," he says (page 23) "is a customary annual meeting at Whitsuntide, vulgarly called an Ale or Whitsun-ale," and then, after describing how these sports were conducted, he proceeds to say that "all these figures handsomely represented in *basso-relievo*, stand in the north wall of the nave of Cirencester Church, which vouches sufficiently for the antiquity of the custom." A writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LXII., p. 714, considers that Rudder is here guilty of a great anachronism, as "the Cotswold Games were only the freaks of a Warwickshire attorney in the reign of James I., and ended with the civil wars, whereas the figures at Cirencester are a century older, co-æval with the rebuilding of the nave between 1504 and 1522; and tradition says they represent a Whitsun ale. They may be nothing more than the grotesques common on all gothic churches." In justice to Rudder, it must be pointed out that although his language is ambiguous, it may mean that the figures in question represent any Whitsun-ale and not the particular gathering known as Dover's games. Engravings of these sculptures will be found in Carter's *Ancient Sculpture and Painting*, Vol. II., p. 9, and they have been described by Mr. Francis Douce, who thinks the tradition that they represent a Whitsun-ale probable, but adds that they may be intended to represent characters in the old mysteries or moralities, or they may be altogether emblematical.

There is no mention of the Games, as might be expected, in *Clement Barksdale's "Nympha Libethris or the Cotswold Muse"* (1651), but the following couplet occurs in the verses prefixed to that work.

"If your Muse hither makes her oft resorts,  
She'll be as much lov'd as were Dover's Sports."

And in *Bromes Jovial Crew* (1651), "Dover's Olimpicke on the Cotswold Games" are referred to as "merriments."

I cannot fix with certainty the date at which these games were commenced. Grosart shares the opinion expressed by Hone in his preface to *Stubbs' Sports and Pastimes* that they were revived but not instituted by Dover, and from our general knowledge of the times this is not improbable. It may well be that a Whitsun-ale had been held somewhere in the neighbourhood for many years before heroic Dover's day, and that when he came from his native county of Norfolk and settled at Stanway, finding it falling into disrepute through the hostility of the growing spirit of Puritanism, he rescued it from extinction, and rehabilitated it under the name of Olympic Games. But however this may be, and it is but conjecture, the argument by which Grosart seeks to establish that this gathering existed before the days of Dover will not bear examination. His contention is based on the following lines by Heywood, printed between in 1546-56 :—

"He fometh like a bore, the beast should seem bolde,  
For he is as fierce as a lyon of Cotswolde";

"The lyon of Cotswolde," says Grosart, "having been one of the sportive assumptions by the youth in games involving mirth fast and furious." Now "as brave as a Cotswold lion" is an old Gloucestershire proverb, meaning as brave as a Cotswold sheep, and I believe those lines of Heywood's but embody this proverb, and have no sort of an allusion to Dover's games.

According to Wood, as we have seen, the games were begun in the reign of James I., and continued for forty years by one Rob. Dover. The *Winnington MS.* and Warton, in his notes on the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, also assign their commencement to the same reign. But, Hunter, in his *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*,

thinks they were established in the reign of Elizabeth, apparently calculating forty years back from the date of the publication of the *Annalia*. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 67, page 827, it is stated that these games were instituted by Robert Dover about the year 1600, but no authority is given.

The familiar quotation from the *Merry Wives of Windsor* has been thought by some to afford grounds for fixing the date in question.

Slender says to Page :

“How does your fallow grey hound, Sir ?  
I heard say he was outrun on Cotsale.”

As the passage is not found in the first 4to edition of the play, pub. in 1602, nor in the 1619 reprint, but first appears in the 1622 fol., it has been argued, E.W.G. tells us, that the Cotswold games were established between 1619 and 1622. This is not a convincing argument, but, I think, we may reasonably infer that it was between 1602 and 1622 that these games became sufficiently famous to be worthy of mention by Shakespeare.

It is rather amusing to find that not only has this allusion to Master Page's fallow greyhound been used to fix the date of the establishment of Dover's games, by reference to the date of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, but it has been used by Shakesperian critics to fix the date at which that play was written, by reference to the institution of Dover's games.

But though the actual date at which these sports were commenced cannot be proved, I think we may be satisfied that they were either founded, or more probably revived, by Dover very soon after James I. came to the throne. I should say between 1603 and 1610.

According to the Winnington MS. “They were carried on with great spirit in the reigns of Charles I., Charles II., and William and Mary.” In the time of the Georges, however, they appear to have deteriorated in character. Mr. Graves, of Mickleton, in the *Spiritual Quixote*, pub. circa 1770, makes Wildgoose deliver his first harangue at Dover's games, and thus describes the scene :

“They now approached the place of rendezvous where the revel was held, which was a large plain on the Cotswold-hills. Their ears were saluted with a confused noise of drums, trumpets, and whistle pipes ; not those martial sounds, however, which are heard in the field of battle, but such as those harmless instruments emit, with which children amuse themselves in a country fair. There was a great number of swains in their holiday clothes, with their belts and silk handkerchiefs ; and nymphs in straw hats and tawdry ribbands, flaunting, ogling, and coquetting, in their rustic way, with as much alacrity, as any of the gay flutterers in the Mall.

A ring was formed about the wrestlers and cudgel players, by the substantial farmers on their long tailed steeds, and two or three forlorn coaches sauntering about with their vapourish possessors ; who crept from their neighbouring seats—to contemplate the humours of these awkward rustics.” And while Wildgoose and his friend were refreshing themselves a “proclamation was made that a holland shift, which was adorned with ribbands, and displayed upon a pole, was going to be run for, and six young women began to exhibit themselves before the whole assembly, in a dress hardly reconcilable to the rules of decency.”

Nor do they appear to have improved in 1797, for a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (October of that year) speaking of the institution of the Cotswold games of which, he says, “a faint imitation is continued to the present time,” and from its founder still retains the name of Dover's Meeting. He adds, “It is usually attended by a vast concourse of people ; and the athletic manœuvres, manly exercises, and rural diversions, are still practised, though not countenanced by persons of such rank and consequence as Justice Shallow, Knight of the shire and custos rotulorum.”

In the present century these games seem to have sunk still lower in reputation, until they degenerated into nothing but scenes of riot and disorder, and Dover's Hill was enclosed in 1853-4 in order to put an end to what was demoralising the neighbourhood. It is erroneously stated in the Winnington MS. that the enclosure took place in the reign of George III.

Of Robert Dover little is known beyond what has already been stated in connection with his establishment of the Cotswold games. All who have sketched his biography state that he was born about 1575. Mr. Vyvyan gives the date of his death as 1652, but Mr. Grosart, who appears to have seen a certified extract from a parish register, gives it as June 6th, 1641, and that date is also given in the Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XV., page 381.

That he was genial and kind-hearted may be gathered from many of the verses in his honour, especially from the following couplet :—

“ Whilst Dover (that his knowledge not Employ's  
T' increase his neighbors Quarrels, but their joyes ;)”

to which a foot note is added that “ He was bred an Attorney, who never try'd but two causes, always made up the difference.” And Caulfield, in his *Memoirs of Remarkable Persons*, 1794, p. 168, notes, that when Dover wore the King's clothes, it was observed that “ he appeared with more dignity in his carriage and deportment than was ever seen in James I.”

I would refer those who wish for a more elaborate notice of these sports and their popular founder to the article in the *Cornhill*, to which I have already alluded, and to the interesting prefaces to the two modern reprints of the *Annalia Dubrensia*, of which I shall have something to say presently.

I will now pass to the book itself, which is the more immediate subject of this paper.

The original edition of the *Annalia Dubrensia* appeared in 1636. It is a small 4to, of the size known among printers as a “Pot” 4to, from the water-mark of a vase or pot often found on the paper of that particular size. It contains 36 leaves, comprising a frontispiece, a title, and 68 pages of letterpress, unnumbered, but signed A 2–K. The signatures on the first few pages are somewhat irregular. Considering the title as page 1, the first page signed is p. 3, and it bears the signature A 2. Page 5 is signed B, and the signatures then proceed regularly on a system which is, I believe, unusual. The first three out of each four consecutive

leaves are signed with the same letter, the fourth being always blank. Thus, after p. 4, the foot lettering runs B, B 2, B 3, blank ; c, c 2, c 3, blank, &c., &c., and the book ends on the back of the leaf signed κ, the letter ς being, as usual, omitted. Lowndes' collation is inaccurate, and appears to have been taken from a reprint, of which I shall have occasion to speak later.

The frontispiece is a wood-cut, which has been already described in the extract from Anthony Wood :—

The Title is as follows :—

A N N A L I A

Dubrensia

Vpon the yeerely celebration of

Mr. Robert Dovers Olimpick

Games vpon *Cotswold Hills*

*Written by*

Michael Drayton. Esq.  
 John Trussel, Gent.  
 William Dyrham. Oxon,  
 William Denny Esq.  
 Thomas Randall. Cant.  
 Ben: Johnson.  
 John Dover. Gent,  
 Owen Feltham. Gent,  
 Francis Izod. Gent,  
 Nicholas Wallington. Ox.  
 John Ballard. Oxon.  
 Timothy Ogle. Gent.  
 William Ambrose. Oxon.  
 William Bellas. Gent.  
 Thomas Cole. Oxon.  
 William Basse. Gent.  
 Captaine Menese.

John Trvssell. Gent.  
 William Cole. Gent.  
 Ferriman Rvtter. Oxon.  
 John Stratford. Gent.  
 Thomas Sanford. Gent.  
 Robert Griffin. Gent.  
 Iohn Cole. Gent.  
 Robert Dvrham. Oxon.  
 A. Sirinx Oxon.  
 Iohn Monson. Esq.  
 Walton Poole. Gent.  
 Richard Wells. Oxon.  
 William Forth. Esq.  
 Shack: Marmyon. Gent.  
 RN.  
 Thomas Heywood. Gent.

London,

Printed by *Robert Raworth*, for *Mathewe Walbancke*, 1636.

From a MS. insertion on the title of the Grenville copy of the *Annalia* in the British Museum (which, by the way, contains Robert Dover's autograph) it appears that the verses by "R. N." were by Robert Newburgh.

The publisher, Mat. Walbancke published many of the Civil War Tracts which appeared a few years later. Robert Raworth, the printer, seems to have belonged to a family of printers, or at least he had namesakes in the trade, whose reputation appears to have differed. For in Sir John Lamb's List of Printers, licensed by the Star Chamber, in July, 1637, I find the following entry: "21. John Raworth is said to be an honest man and may come in instead of his father Richard Raworth yat is an Arrant Knave."

But to return to the book. After the title comes a letter to Robert Dover from his publisher, Mat. Walbancke (pp. A 2, back and front). The rest of the book (pp. B-K) consists of 34 poems, acrostics and anagrams, 33 by those whose names appear on the title, and one by Robert Dover himself, headed "A Congratulatory Poem to My Poeticall and learned Noble Friends, Compilers of this Booke." This poem (on p. I 3 back and following pages) is inserted between those by R. N. and Thomas Heywood.

This book was reprinted some years later, and so well was the original imitated that even experts cannot always tell the reprint from the original. There are, however, certain marked discrepancies by which the reprint may be known. The chief of these are (1) The substitution in it of a copper-plate for a wood-cut frontispiece; (2) the addition of two lines on p. A 2 back, and (3) the addition of an anonymous poem after Heywood's, necessitating an extra leaf. This poem ends on the page which, if signed, would be K 2 front.

(1) The copper-plate may be readily distinguished from the wood-cut frontispiece, though it is, perhaps, as accurate a copy as the difference of process would admit. Most of the shading (*i.e.* smoke from the guns, the spaces between the figures seated at the table, dress of the middle dancing woman, the under side of Dover's hat, &c.) is a black mass in the original, and effected by

fine lines in the copy. The doors of the two outside tents are in the original shaded with a few thick horizontal lines, and in the reprint with many fine perpendicular lines—of the three horses on which men are seen riding, in the wood-cut, the first is white and the second black, and in the copper-plate these colours are reversed. The labarynth, as it has been called, or conventional scroll, on the right of the picture, is in the wood-cut formed by one thick line, and in the copper-plate by two fine lines. There are other minor differences, but I think I have given enough to guide even the tyro book-buyer. Those who have a knowledge of engraving would know the two apart without any of the above hints.

(2) The additional words on A 2, back, which I have alluded to are as follows: "Dr. Dover thought it his duty to perpetuate the Memory of that good man his grandfather." They occur after Mat. Walbank's epistle, and they probably imply that the reprint was the work of Dr. Dover.

(3) About the anonymous poem, ending with the line :

"Sung by a Poet that conceals his name."

many mistakes have been made. It has been copied in MS. into a copy of the original edition in the British Museum, and is alluded in the *Cornhill*, 1873, by "E.W.G.," as a unique copy of verses in Dover's honour, and the writer of the article on Robert Dover in the Dictionary of National Biography appears also to think that it has never been printed. Mr. Vyvyan conjectures that it may be by the hand of Dr. Dover himself. Thanks to a MS. note in a copy of the reprint at Chestal,<sup>1</sup> which, through the kindness of Mr. Phelps, I have been allowed to inspect, I have been able to ascertain its authorship. It is by no less a person than Will D'Avenant, and is to be found at p. 236 of the 1673 edition of his works, and there is a curious variation in the reading as it there occurs. In the *Annalia*, verse 4, is as follows:—

"Here you Alcados, whose sterne faces looke  
Worse than your Pris'ner's that's deny'd his Booke;  
Than Pilat painted like a scalded Cooke."

The last line of this verse in D'Avenant's works runs as follows:—

"Than Pilat painted like Sir Edward Cook."

<sup>1</sup> There is a MS. note to the same effect in the Bodleian copy.

The allusion to Alcados may refer to Sir Edward Coke's well known aversion to Spaniards, and, possibly, an incident at the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh was in D'Avenant's mind when he penned this line. At that trial, "the weakness of the evidence," says Sir James Stephen, "was made up for by the rancorous ferocity of Coke, who reviled and insulted Raleigh in a manner never imitated, so far as I know, before or since in any English court of justice, except, perhaps, in those in which Jefferies presided. Addressing Raleigh, Coke said, "Thou hast a Spanish heart, and thyself art a spider of hell."

Besides these three important ones, there are several minor differences, of which I will only notice two (1), a very slight difference in the arrangement of the words of lines three and four of the title, and (2) a different apportionment of the number of lines of Mat. Walbancke's letter on pages A 2 front and back. With these exceptions, the reprint follows the original line for line. The type is of the same character in both, and, generally, of the same size, but it is cleaner cut in the reprint and more regularly arranged, and the intervals between the words are longer, hence the length of the lines is longer throughout. All of the reprints which I have seen are larger than any of the originals, but as all of the latter have been mercilessly treated by the binder, it is impossible to say for certain that they were printed on smaller paper. The greater length of lines in the reprint, however, rather points to this.<sup>1</sup> Some clerical and orthographical errors in the original have been corrected in the reprint: *e.g.* an "e" omitted at the end of "Fame" (E back), and an "l" from "publique" (E front) have been supplied in the reprint; "Shepherds" in the original is spelt "Shepheards" in the reprint (I 3 front), but three different spellings of the word on pp. (C 4) back and (D) front in the original are faithfully reproduced in the reprint, as are variations of spelling in many other places; and "glories," "revived," and "pretty" (on pp. D 2 front, and D 4 front) in the original are mis-spelt, "Clories," "Vevived," and "petty," in the reprint.

<sup>1</sup> The largest originals I have seen measure respectively  $6\frac{3}{8}$ " by  $5\frac{1}{4}$ " and  $6\frac{7}{8}$ " by  $5\frac{3}{8}$ ", and the largest reprint measures  $7\frac{1}{4}$ " by  $6\frac{3}{8}$ ".

It is quite impossible, I fear, to fix within narrow limits the date at which this reprint was published. I have searched in vain for an entry respecting it at Stationers' Hall. Grosart is obviously wrong in assigning 1794 as the date of its publication. He has evidently jumped to a conclusion from seeing this date on the copy of the frontispiece by Caulfield, about which I shall have occasion to say something directly. The only kind of clue we have as to the time of its appearance is in the two lines added after Mat. Walbancke's epistle. If the surmises are correct, that Dr. Dover, who wrote these lines, was a certain John Dover, of Gray's Inn, who was born in 1644, and that he was perpetuating the memory of that good man, his grandfather, by reprinting the verses written in his honour, the reprint must have appeared in his life time. On this hypothesis Mr. Vyvyan assigns 1680 as about the date of its publication, adding that Dr. Dover died in 1682, aged 38 years. I think Mr. Vyvyan has misread the Dover pedigree, which he has copied from some MS. notes of the late Sir Thomas Phillipps. All that this pedigree says is that this John, of Gray's Inn, was aged 38, and unmarried in 1682. I find in the Dictionary of National Biography that this John, who was 38 in 1682, lived to be 81, and died in 1725. Hence all we can say is that the reprint must have appeared between say 1664 (when John attained 20 years) and 1725, when he died—and this only on the assumption that in John we have got hold of the right grandson. I have a strong impression, however, that it was much nearer the latter than the former date, as the paper, printing and general style are much more those of an 18th than of a 17th century book.

Purchasers of this little book have, however, a much greater difficulty to contend with than in distinguishing the original edition from the reprint, or the wood-cut from the copper-plate, and that is in distinguishing the copper-plate from the wonderfully accurate copy by Caulfield, which appeared in his *Memoirs of Remarkable Persons* in 1794. It is generally called the Counterfeit Copper-plate, but I do not think it was intended to be used for purposes of deception, as it bears the words "Published by Herbert and Caulfield 1794," immediately under the engraving.

I have seen it, however, with all the margin cut off close to the edge of picture, inlaid, and inserted in copies wanting the frontispiece, and then without very close inspection it is difficult to detect it from the original plate. I looked at the two, side by side, for a long time before I observed any difference. In almost all cases the number and length of lines in each patch of shading is the same. There are, however, certain minute differences. Of these, the most obvious and the easiest to bear in mind, is that in the original all of the three men on horseback have something, either a whip or a sword, in their hands, while in the counterfeit the two last have nothing. Under the near forefoot of Dover's horse are two tufts of grass in the original and only one in the counterfeit; and between the hand of the man standing on his head and the square enclosing the labyrinth there are three blades or tufts of grass in the original, and none in the counterfeit. The size of the original plate is 6ins. by 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins, and that of the counterfeit 6ins. by 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ ins., while the letters of the words "Cotswold Games" at the head of the plate are in the former  $\frac{1}{5}$  of an inch high and the latter  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch.

The book is decidedly rare, especially with the wood-cut frontispiece, but not as rare as has been supposed by some. E.W.G. calls it one of the rarest books of the period, and Grosart says he knew of only three copies besides his own.

I have examined eight copies of the original edition and eight of Dr. Dover's reprint, and I know of the existence of four others, whether originals or reprints I cannot say. Of these sixteen copies, four only have the wood-cut, eight have the original, and two the counterfeit copper-plate and in two the frontispiece is wanting.

Davis, in his "Second Journey round the Library of a Bibliomaniac," 1825, gives the prices which this book had realised:—Steeven, £1 2s.; Townley, (reprint) £3 3s.; Sanders (1818), £13 2s. 6d.; Bindley (1818), £12 12s.; Nassau, 1824 (reprint), £2 11s. 6d.; and it was priced in Thorpe's catalogue at £8 8s. Grosart says the reprint had once fetched £12 10s.; and Vyvyan, with some of the above prices, quotes £7 7s. as the cost of one of the originals.

A copy of the original edition is very rarely in the market, and I cannot say what price it would now command. The reprints

(Dr. Dover's) may be sometimes picked up at prices varying from 3 to 5 guineas according to condition.

The book has been twice reprinted, quite recently ; first by the Rev. A. B. Grosart in 1877, and, secondly, by Mr. E. R. Vyvyan in 1878.

Only 50 copies of Mr. Grosart's reprints were issued to subscribers. The frontispiece (a wood-cut) is a rough copy of the original wood-cut, and was cut at the instance of Sir William Chambers for the "Book of Days," where it will be found at p. 712 of Vol. I.

Mr. Vyvyan's reprint is, I believe, out of print, but copies are just now often in the market, although only 100 were printed. The frontispiece (although only a lithograph) is a far more satisfactory production than that in the Grosart edition, and gives a really good idea of the original.

There is much interesting information in the Prefaces to both of the modern reprints, not only about the book and the games but also about its authors. I am indebted to the writers of both Prefaces for much direct and indirect assistance.

If we look at this little book with the eye of a Literary Critic rather than (as we have been doing) with that of Bibliomaniac, I fear we must put in a lower class.

John Ballard, of Oxford, wrote :

"The Cotswold sports are taske and subject fitt  
The highest raptures of a Heaven borne witt."

But, alas, in the verses before us, the traces of Heaven-born wit are as rare as angels' visits. Most of these verses it would be rank flattery to call poetry, and many of them may with justice be designated as doggerel.

The praises of Dover are grotesquely extravagant, and the name Olympic, given to his games, offered a wide field for the indulgence in those classical similies and illusions that were so much the fashion among the poets of that day. A few samples taken almost at random will suffice to show their character. We are told by Robert Griffin that

"On Cotswold-hills there meets  
A greater troop of gallants than Rome's streets  
Ere saw in Pompey's triumphs."

According to Randall (whose verses, by the way, have, in places, some real poetic feeling in them) :

“The Nemæan and the Isthmian pastimes still,  
Though dead in Greece, survive on Cotswold Hill.”

Thos. Cole says :

“Cotswold that barren was and rough before  
Is Tempe now become, Cotswold no more.”

From Ben Jonson we should expect better things, but disappointment is in store for us. His ten lines are free from the affectations of his associates, but they are also free from any tittle of claim to rank as poetry. The first two lines :

“I cannot bring my muse to dropp Vies  
Twixt Cotswold and the Olympic exercise.”

are difficult either to scan or to understand. “Dropt Vies” is, I presume, equivalent to “draw comparisons,” but I know of no instance where Vies is used as a noun by any other writer, nor is it to be found in any of our older dictionaries. E.W.G. sees no difficulty, if, he says, we take “Musë” as a dissyllable and “Vie” to be a noun—a method by which many difficulties could be removed. A writer in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, Vol. IX., page 115, suggests with more audacity than success, what he is pleased to call an “emendation” of Ben Jonson’s “Epigram.”

“The Cotswold with the Olimpic vies  
In manly games and goodly exercise.”

The first line halts almost as much as that for which it is substituted, and the meaning of the couplet is exactly the reverse of that intended by Ben Jonson. Grosart very properly ridicules this suggestion, but his own is not much more happy, viz.: that “vies” is to be read as a dissyllable.

For my own part I expect, that either by a slip of the poet’s pen, or the printer’s hand, a word has been altered or left out.

My last quotation shall be from Izod :

“Achilles name had bin interr’d with him (Brave Dover)  
Had not queint Homer’s muse, so queintly nam’d it over  
And thou pēchance (sweet Sir) shouldst’ have out-liv’d thy fame  
Hadst thou not chanc’d to find these trumpets for the same.”

a truth that we shall all endorse, for had it not been for the little book which is the subject of this paper, the Olympic games on Dover’s Hill, which were once so highly popular and so widely known would have been long ago forgotten.