Werk

Titel: Elizabethan Popular Books and Ballads noticed by E. D., a Puritan, in 1572

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Elizabethan Popular Books and Ballads noticed by E. D., a Puritan, in 1572.

Dr. Furnivall, in his edition of «Laneham's Letter», p. XIV, refers to a rather important list of books and tales, which he reproduced from the «Bibliographical Account» by J. P. Collier, the great forger, whose statements should *never* be accepted without verification.

The passage in which this list occurs deserves to be reprinted in full, in order that we should not be reduced to the necessity of referring to a doubtful authority, and of quoting at second hand.

The list «is nearly as singular and interesting an enumeration as that of Capt. Cox's library in Laneham's Letter from Kenilworth, printed three years later, although the former has never been noticed, on account of the rarity of E. D.'s strange little volume».

Perhaps E. D.'s mention of the «tales of Robin Goodfellow» is as important as any. E. D. seems to imply that they even existed in print at this early date.

The title of the book is as follows: «A briefe and necessary Instruction, Verye needefull to bee knowen of all Housholders, Whereby they maye the better teach and instruct their Families in such points of Christian Religion as is most meete. Not onely of them throughly to be understood, but also requisite to be learned by hart of all suche as shall be admitted unto the Lordes Supper. 1572».

The Preface, which fills about half of the little octave volume, is signed: «From my Chamber. the 22. of Aprill 1572. Thyne in the Lord. E. D.».

Only the first three pages of this Preface concern us here:

To the Christian Reader.

It shall not be necessary for me (most loving brethren) to shewe anye causes for mine own excuse why I have attempted the setting forth of this little *Catechisme*, as though I had rashly adventured above that was meete, to set forth any thing to be so common by my private advise: Or as though I had presumed above mine abilitye to become so general a teacher, having my self so meane understanding. For in these daies in which there is so great licentiousnes of printyng bookes, as in deede it maketh us all the worse, who can blame it that hath any taste or saver of goodnes, be it never so simple, if it had no other fruite, yet this is great and plentyfull, that in reading it we shoulde keepe our eyes from much godles and childish vanitie, that hath now blotted so many papers. We see it all, and we mourne for griefe, so many as in spirite and truth do love the Lord. What multitude of bookes, full of synne and abominations, have nowe