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# **De Carmine Pastoralis (1684)**

René Rapin

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent students of criticism have usually placed Rapin in the School of Sense. In fact Rapin clearly denominates himself a member of that school. In the introduction to his major critical work, Reflexions sur la Poetique d'Aristote (1674), he states that his essay "is nothing else, but Nature put in Method, and good Sense reduced to Principles" (Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie, London, 1731, II, 131). And in a few passages as early as "A Treatise de Carmine Pastoral" (1659), he seems to imply that he is being guided in part at least by the criterion of "good Sense." For example, after citing several writers to prove that "brevity" is one of the "graces" of pastoral poetry, he concludes, "I could heap up a great many more things to this purpose, but I see no need of such a trouble, since no man can rationally doubt of the goodness of my Observation" (p.41).

The basic criterion, nevertheless, which Rapin uses in the "Treatise" is the authority of the Ancients--the poems of Theocritus and Virgil and the criticism of Aristotle and Horace. Because of his constant references to the Ancients, one is likely to conclude that he (like Boileau and Pope) must have thought they and Nature (good sense) were the same. In a number of passages, however, Rapin depends solely on the Ancients. Two examples will suffice to illustrate his absolutism. At the beginning of "The Second Part," when he is inquiring "into the nature of Pastoral," he admits:

And this must needs be a hard Task, since I have no guide, neither Aristotle nor Horace to direct me.... And I am of opinion that none can treat well and clearly of any kind of Poetry if he hath no helps from these two (p. 16).

In "The Third Part," when he begins to "lay down" his Rules for writing Pastorals," he declares:

iiYet in this difficulty I will follow Aristotle's Example, who being to lay down Rules concerning Epicks, propos'd Homer as a Pattern, from whom he deduc'd the whole Art; So I will gather from Theocritus and Virgil, those Fathers of Pastoral, what I shall deliver on this account (p. 52).

These passages represent the apogee of the neoclassical criticism of pastoral poetry. No other critic who wrote on the pastoral depends so completely on the authority of the classical critics and poets. As a matter of fact, Rapin himself is not so absolute later. In the section of the Réflexions on the pastoral, he merely states that the best models are Theocritus and Virgil. In short, one may say that in the "Treatise" the influence of the Ancients is dominant; in the Réflexions, "good Sense."

Reduced to its simplest terms, Rapin's theory is Virgilian. When deducing his theory from the works of Theocritus and Virgil, his preference is almost without exception for Virgil. Finding Virgil's eclogues refined and elegant, Rapin, with a suggestion from Donatus (p. 10 and p. 14), concludes that the pastoral "belongs properly to the Golden Age" (p. 37)--"that blessed time, when Sincerity and Innocence, Peace, Ease, and Plenty inhabited the Plains" (p. 5). Here, then, is the immediate source of the Golden Age eclogue, which, being transferred to England and popularised by Pope, flourished until the time of Dr. Johnson and Joseph Warton.

In France the most prominent opponent to the theory formulated by Rapin is Fontenelle. In his "Discours sur la Nature de l'Eglogue" (1688) Fontenelle, with studied and impertinent disregard for the Ancients and for "ceux qui professent cette espèce de religion que l'on s'est faite d'adorer l'antiquité," expressly states that the basic criterion by which he worked was "les lumières naturelles de la raison" (OEuvres, Paris, 1790, V, 36). It is careless and incorrect to imply that Rapin's and Fontenelle's theories of pastoral poetry are similar, as Pope, Joseph Warton, and many other critics and scholars haveiii done. Judged by basic critical principles, method, or content there is a distinct difference between Rapin and Fontenelle. Rapin is primarily a neoclassicist in his "Treatise"; Fontenelle, a rationalist in his "Discours." It is this opposition, then, of neoclassicism and rationalism, that constitutes the basic issue of pastoral criticism in England during the Restoration and the early part of the eighteenth century.

When Fontenelle's "Discours" was translated in 1695, the first phrase

of it quoted above was translated as "those Pedants who profess a kind of Religion which consists of worshipping the Ancients" (p. 294). Fontenelle's phrase more nearly than that of the English translator describes Rapin. Though Rapin's erudition was great, he escaped the quagmire of pedantry. He refers most frequently to the scholiasts and editors in "The First Part" (which is so trivial that one wonders why he ever troubled to accumulate so much insignificant material), but after quoting them he does not hesitate to call their ideas "pedantical" (p. 24) and to refer to their statements as grammarian's "prattle" (p. 11). And, though at times it seems that his curiosity and industry impaired his judgment, Rapin does draw significant ideas from such scholars and critics as Quintilian, Vives, Scaliger, Donatus, Vossius, Servius, Minturno, Heinsius, and Salmasius.

Rapin's most prominent disciple in England is Pope. Actually, Pope presents no significant idea on this subject that is foreign to Rapin, and much of the language--terminology and set phrases--of Pope's "Discourse" comes directly from Rapin's "Treatise" and from the section on the pastoral in the Reflections. Contrary to his own statement that he "reconciled" some points on which the critics disagree and in spite of the fact that he quotes Fontenelle, Pope in his "Discourse" is a neoclassicist almost as thoroughgoing as Rapin. ivThe ideas which he says he took from Fontenelle are either unimportant or may be found in Rapin. Pope ends his "Discourse" by drawing a general conclusion concerning his Pastorals: "But after all, if they have any merit, it is to be attributed to some good old authors, whose works as I had leisure to study, so I have not wanted care to imitate." This statement is diametrically opposed to the basic ideas and methods of Fontenelle, but in full accord with and no doubt directly indebted to those of Rapin.

The same year, 1717, that Pope 'imitated' Rapin's "Treatise," Thomas Purney made a direct attack on Rapin's neoclassic procedure. In the "Preface" to his own Pastorals he expresses his disapproval of Rapin's method, evidently with the second passage from Rapin quoted above in mind:

Rapine's Discourse is counted the best on this Poem, for 'tis the longest. You will easily excuse my not mentioning all his Defects and Errors

in this Preface. I shall only say then, that instead of looking into the true Nature of the Pastoral Poem, and then judging whether Theocritus or any of his Followers have brought it to it's utmost Perfection or not. Rapine takes it for granted that Theocritus and Virgil are infallible; and aim's at nothing beyond showing the Rules which he thinks they observ'd. Facetious Head! (Works, Oxford, 1933, pp. 51-52. The Peroy Reprints, No. XII)

The influence of Rapin on the development of the pastoral, nevertheless, was salutary. Finding the genre vitiated with wit, extravagance, and artificiality, he attempted to strip it of these Renaissance excrescences and restore it to its pristine purity by direct reference to the Ancients--Virgil, in particular. Though Rapin does not have the psychological insight into the esthetic principles of the genre equal to that recently exhibited by William Empson or even to that expressed by Fontenelle, he does understand the intrinsic appeal of the pastoral which has enabled it to survive, and often to flourish, through the centuries in painting, music, and poetry. Perhaps his most explicit expression of this appreciation is made while he is discussing Horace's statement that the muses love the country:

And to speak from the very bottome of my heart... methinks he is much more happy in a Wood, that at ease contemplates this universe, as his own, and in it, the Sun and Stars, the pleasing Meadows, shady Groves, green Banks, stately Trees, flowing Springs, and the wanton windings of a River, fit objects for quiet innocence, than he that with Fire and Sword disturbs the World, and measures his possessions by the wast that lyes about him (p. 4).

René Rapin (1621-1687), in spite of his duties as a Jesuit priest and disputes with the Jansenists, became one of the most widely read men of his time and carried on the celebrated discussions about the Ancients with Maimbourg and Vavas seur. His chef-d'oeuvre without contradiction is Hortorum libri IV. Like Virgil, Spenser, Pope, and many aspiring lesser poets, he began his literary career by writing pastorals, Eclogae Sacrae (1659), to which is prefixed in Latin the original of "A Treatise de Carmine Pastoralis."

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1



A

# TREATISE

de CARMINE PASTORALI

Written by RAPIN.

## *The First Part.*

TO be as short as possible in my discourse upon the present Subject, I shall not touch upon the Excellency of *Poetry* in general; nor repeat those high *Encomiums*, (as that tis the most divine of all human Arts, and the like) which *Plato* in his *Jone*, *Aristotele* in his *Poetica*, and other Learned men have copiously insisted on: And this I do that I might more closely and briefly pursue my present design, which, no doubt will not please every man; for since I treat of that part of *Poetry*, which (to use *Quintilian's* words,) by reason of its Clownishness, is affraid of the Court and City; some may imagine that I follow *Nichocaris* his humor, who would paint only the most ugly and deform'd, and those too in the meanest and most frightful dress, that real, or fancy'd Poverty could put them in.

2For some think that to be a Sheapard is in it self mean, base, and sordid; And this I think is the first thing that the graver and soberer sort will be ready to object.

But if we consider how honorable that employment is, our Objectors from that Topick will be easily answer'd, for as *Heroick* Poems owe their dignity to the Quality of *Heroes*, so *Pastorals* to that of *Sheapards*.

Now to manifest this, I shall not rely on the authority of the *Fabulous*, and *Heroick* Ages, tho, in the former, a God fed Sheep in *Thessaly*, and in the latter, *Hercules* the Prince of *Heroes*, (as *Paterculus* stiles him) graz'd on mount *Aventine*: These Examples, tis true, are not

convinceing, yet they sufficiently shew that the employment of a Sheapard was sometime look'd upon to be such, as in those Fabulous times was not alltogether unbecomeing the *Dignity* of a *Heroe*, or the *Divinity* of a *God*: which consideration if it cannot be of force enough to procure excellence, yet certainly it may secure it from the imputation of baseness, since it was sometime lookt upon as fit for the greatest in Earth or Heaven.

But not to insist on the authority of *Poets*, *Sacred Writt* tells us that *Jacob* and *Esau*, two great men, were Sheapards; And *Amos*, one of the Royal Family, asserts the same of himself, for *He was among the Sheapards of Tecua*, following that employment: The like by Gods own appointment prepared *Moses* for a Scepter, as *Philo* intimates in his life, when He tells us, *that a Sheapards Art is a suitable preparation to a Kingdome*; the same He mentions in the Life of *Joseph*, affirming that the care a Sheapard hath over his Cattle, very much resembles that which a King hath over his Subjects: The same *Basil* in his Homily de *S. Mamm. Martyre* hath concerning *David*, who was taken from following the Ews great with young ones to feed *Israel*, for He says that the Art of feeding and governing are very near akin, and even Sisters: And upon this account I suppose twas, that Kings amongst the *Greeks* reckoned the name of Sheapard one of their greatest titles, for, if we believe *Varro*, amongst the Antients, the best and bravest was still a Sheapard: Every body knows that the *Romans* the worthiest and greatest Nation in the World sprang from *Sheapards*: The Augury of the Twelve Vulturs plac't a Scepter in *Romulus*'s hand which held a Crook before; and at that time, as *Ovid* says,

*His own small Flock each Senator did keep.*

*Lucretius* mentions an extraordinary happiness, and as it were Divinity in a *Sheaperd*'s life,

*Thro Sheapards ease, and their Divine retreats.*

And this is the reason, I suppose, why the solitude of the Country, the shady Groves, and security of that happy Quiet was so grateful to the Muses, for thus *Horace* represents them,

4

*The Muses that the Country Love.*

Which Observation was first made by *Mnasalce* the *Sicyonian* in his Epigram upon *Venus*

*The Rural Muse upon the Mountains feeds.*

For sometimes the Country is so raveshing and delightful, that twill raise Wit and Spirit even in the dullest Clod, And in truth, amongst so many heats of Lust and Ambition which usually fire our Citys, I cannot see what retreat, what comfort is left for a chaste and sober Muse.

And to speak from the very bottome of my heart, (not to mention the integrity and innocence of Sheapards upon which so many have insisted, and so copiously declaimed) methinks he is much more happy in a Wood, that at ease contemplates this universe, as his own, and in it, the Sun and Stars, the pleasing Meadows, shady Groves, green Banks, stately Trees, flowing Springs, and the wanton windings of a River, fit objects for quiet innocence, than he that with Fire and Sword disturbs the World, and measures his possessions by the wast that lys about him: *Augustus* in the remotest East fights for peace, but how tedious were his Voyages? how troublesome his Marches? how great his disquiets? what fears and hopes distracted his designs? whilst *Tityrus* contented with a little, happy in the enjoyment of his Love, and at ease under his spreading Beech.

*Taught Trees to sound his Amaryllis name.*

5 On the one side *Meliboeus* is forc't to leave his Country, and *Antony* on the other; the one a Sheapard, the other a great man, in the Common-Wealth; how disagreeable was the Event? the Sheapard could endure himself; and sit down contentedly under his misfortunes, whilst lost *Antony*, unable to hold out, and quitting all hopes both for himself and his Queen, became his own barbarous Executioner: Than which sad and deplorable fall I cannot imagine what could be worse, for certainly nothing is so miserable as a Wretch made so from a flowrishing & happy man; by which tis evident how much we ought to prefer before the gaity of a great and shining State, that Idol of the Crowd, the lowly simplicity of a Sheapards Life: for what is that but a perfect image of the state of Innocence, of that golden Age, that blessed time, when Sincerity and Innocence, Peace, Ease, and Plenty inhabited the Plains?

### Take the Poets description

*Here Lowly Innocence makes a sure retreat,  
A harmless Life, and ignorant of deceit,  
and free from fears with various sweet's encrease,  
And all's or'e spread with the soft wings of Peace:  
Here Oxen low, here Grots, and purling Streams,  
And Spreading shades invite to easy dreams.*

And thus Horace,

*Happy the man beyond pretence  
Such was the state of Innocence, &c.*

6 And from this head I think the dignity of *Bucolicks* is sufficiently cleared, for as much as the Golden Age is to be preferred before the *Heroick*, so much *Pastorals* must excell *Heroick* Poems: yet this is so to be understood, that if we look upon the majesty and loftiness of *Heroick* Poems, it must be confest that they justly claim the preheminance; but if the unaffected neatness, elegant, graceful smartness of the expression, or the polite dress of a Poem be considered, then they fall short of *Pastorals*: for this sort flows with Sweet, Elegant, neat and pleasing fancies; as is too evident to every one that hath tasted the sweeter muses, to need a farther explication: for tis not probable that *Asinius Pollio*, *Cinna*, *Varius*, *Cornelius Gallus*, men of the neatest Wit, and that lived in the most polite Age, or that *Augustus Cæsar* the Prince of the *Roman* elegance, as well as of the common Wealth, should be so extreemly taken with *Virgils Bucolicks*, or that *Virgil* himself a man of such singular prudence, and so correct a judgment, should dedicate his *Eclogues* to those great Persons; unless he had known that there is somewhat more then ordinary Elegance in those sort of Composures, which the wise perceive, tho far above the understanding of the Crowd: nay if *Ludovicus Vives*, a very learned man, and admired for politer studies may be believed, there is somewhat more sublime and excellent in those *Pastorals*, than the Common 7 sort of Grammarians imagine: This I shall dis-course of in an other place, and now inquire into the Antiquity of *Pastorals*.

*The Antiquity of Pastorals.*

Since *Linus*, *Orpheus*, and *Eumolpus* were famous for their Poems, before the *Trojan* wars; those are certainly mistaken, who date Poetry from that time; I rather incline to their opinion who make it as old as the World it self; which Assertion as it ought to be understood of Poetry in general, so especially of *Pastoral*, which, as *Scaliger* delivers, was the most antient kind of Poetry, and resulting from the most antient way of Liveing: *Singing first began amongst Sheapards as they fed their Flocks, either by the impulse of nature, or in imitation of the notes of Birds, or the whispering of Trees.*

For since the first men were either *Sheapards* or *Ploughmen*, and *Sheapards*, as may be gathered out of *Thucydides* and *Varro*, were before the others, they were the first that either invited by their leisure, or (which *Lucretius* thinks more probable) in imitation of Birds, began a tune.

*Thro all the Woods they heard the pleasing noise  
Of chirping Birds, and try'd to frame their voice,  
And Imitate, thus Birds instructed man,  
And taught them Songs before their Art began.*

In short, tis so certain that Verses first began in the Country that the thing is in it self evident, and this *Tibullus* very plainly signifies,

8

*First weary at his Plough the labouring Hind  
In certain feet his rustick words did bind:  
His dry reed first he tun'd at sacred feasts  
To thanks the bounteous Gods, and cheer his Guests.*

*In certain feet* according to *Bern Cylenius* of *Verona* his interpretation in set measures: for *Censorinus* tells us, that the antient Songs were loose and not ty'd up to any strict numbers, and afterwards by certain laws and acknowledged rules were confin'd to such and such measures: for this is the method of Nature in all her works, from imperfect and rude beginnings things take their first rise, and afterwards by fit and apposite additions are polish't, and brought to perfection: such were the Verses which heretofore the *Italian* Sheapards and Plough-men, as *Virgil* says, sported amongst themselves.

*Italian Plough-men sprung from antient Troy  
Did sport unpolish't Rhymes----*

*Lucretius* in his Fifth Book *de Natura Rerum*, says, that Sheapards were first taught by the rushing of soft Breezes amongst the Canes to blow their Reeds, and so by degrees to put their Songs in tune.

*For Whilst soft Evening Gales blew or'e the Plains  
And shook the sounding Reeds, they taught the Swains,  
And thus the Pipe was fram'd, and tuneful Reed,  
And whilst the Flocks did then securely feed,  
The harmless Sheapards tun'd their Pipes to Love,  
And Amaryllis name fill'd every Grove.*

9

From all which tis very plain that *Poetry* began in those days, when Sheapards took up their employment: to this agrees *Donatus* in his Life of *Virgil*, and *Pontanus* in his Fifth Book of Stars, as appears by these Verses.

*Here underneath a shade by purling Springs  
The Sheapards Dance, whilst sweet Amyntas sings;  
Thus first the new found Pipe was tun'd to Love,  
And Plough-men taught their Sweet hearts to the Grove,*

Thus the *Fescennine* jests when they sang harvest-home, and then too the Grape gatherers and Reapers Songs began, an elegant example of which we have in the Tenth *Idyllium* of *Theocritus*.

From this birth, as it were, of *Poetry*, Verse began to grow up to greater matters; For from the common discourse of *Plough-men* and *Sheapards*, first *Comedy*, that Mistress of a private Life, next *Tragedy*, and then *Epick Poetry* which is lofty and *Heroical* arose, This *Maximus Tyrius* confirms in his Twenty first dissertation, where he tells us that *Plough-men* just coming from their work, and scarce cleansed from the filth of their employment, did use to flurt out some sudden and *extempore* Catches; and from this beginning Plays were produc'd and the Stage erected: Thus 10 much concerning the *Antiquity*, next of the *Original* of this sort.

About this Learned men cannot agree, for who was the first Author, is not sufficiently understood; *Donatus*, tis true, tells us tis proper to the Golden Age, and therefore must needs be the product of that happy time: but who was the Author, where, what time it was first invented hath been a great Controversy, and not yet sufficiently determined: *Epicharmus* one of *Pythagoras* his School, in his



alkyoni mentions one *Diomus* a *Sicilian*, who, if we believe *Athænæus* was the first that wrote *Pastorals*: those that fed Cattle had a peculiar kind of Poetry, call'd *Bucolicks*, of which *Dotimus* a *Sicilian* was inventer:

*Diodorus Siculus*en tois mythologoumenois, seems to make *Daphnis* the son of *Mercury* and a certain *Nymph*, to be the Author; and agreeable to this, *Theon* an old scholiast on *Theocritus*, in his notes upon the first *Idyllium* mentioning *Daphnis*, adds, he was the author of *Bucolicks*, and *Theocritus* himself calls him the *Muses Darling*: and to this Opinion of *Diodorus Siculus* *Polydore Virgil* readily assents.

But *Mnaseas* of *Patara* in a discourse of his concerning *Europa*, speaks thus of a Son of *Pan* the God of Sheapards: *Panis Filium Bubulcum à quo & Bucolice canere*: Now Whether *Mnaseas* by that *Bubulcum*, means only a *Herds-man*, or one skilled in *Bucolicks*, is uncertain; but if *Valla's*<sup>11</sup> judgment be good, tis to be taken of the latter: yet *Ælian* was of another mind, for he boldly affirms that *Stesichorus* called *Himeræus* was the first, and in the same place adds, that *Daphnis* the Son of *Mercury* was the first Subject of *Bucolicks*.

Some ascribe the Honor to *Bacchus* the President of the *Nymphs*, *Satyrs*, and the other Country Gods, perhaps because he delighted in the Country; and others attribute it to *Apollo* called *Nomius* the God of Sheapards, and that he invented it then when he served *Admetus* in *Thessaly*, and fed his Herds: For, tis likely, he to recreate himself, and pass away his time, applied his mind to such Songs as were best suitable to his present condition: Many think we owe it to *Pan* the God of Sheapards, not a few to *Diana* that extreemly delighted in solitude and Woods; and some say *Mercury* himself: of all which whilst *Grammarians* prattle, according to their usual custome they egregiously trifle; they suffer themselves to be put upon by Fables, and resign their judgment up to foolish pretentions, but things and solid truth is that we seek after.

As about the Author, so concerning the place of its Birth there is a great dispute, some say *Sparta*, others *Peloponesus*, but most are for *Sicily*.

*Valla the Placentine*, a curious searcher into Antiquity, thinks this sort of Poetry first appear'd amongst the *Lacedemonians*, for when the *Persians* had wasted almost all *Greece*, the *Spartans* say<sup>12</sup> that they for fear of the *Barbarians* fled into Caves and lurking holes; and

that the Country Youth then began to apply themselves in Songs to *Diana Caryatis*, together with the Maids, who midst their Songs offered Flowers to the Goddess: which custome containing somewhat of Religion was in those places a long time very scrupulously observed.

*Diomedes* the Grammarian, in his treatise of *Measures*, declares *Sicily* to be the Place: for thus he says, the *Sicilian* Sheapards in time of a great *Pestilence*, began to invent new Ceremonies to appease incensed *Diana*, whom afterward, for affording her help, and stopping the Plague they called *Lyên*: i.e. the *Freer* from their Miserys. This grew into custom, and the Sheapards used to meet in Companies, to sing their deliverer *Diana's* praise, and these afterwards passing into *Italy* were there named *Bucoliastæ*.

*Pomponius Sabinus* tells the story thus: When the Hymns the Virgins us'd to sing in the Country to *Diana* were left off, because, by reason of the present Wars, the Maidens were forc't to keep close within the Towns; the Shepherds met, and sang these kind of Songs, which are now call'd *Bucolicks*, to *Diana*; to whom they could not give the usual worship by reason of the Wars: But *Donatus* says, that this kind of Verses was first sung to *Diana* by *Orestes*, when he wandred about *Italy*; after he fled from *Scythia Taurica*, and had 13 taken away the Image of the Goddess and hid it in a bundle of sticks, whence she receiv'd the name of *Fascelina*, or *Phacelideapo* tou phakelou At whose Altar, the very same *Orestes* was afterward expiated by his Sister *Iphigenia*: But how can any one rely on such Fables, when the inconsiderable Authors that propose them disagree so much amongst themselves?

Some are of Opinion that the Shepherds, were wont in solem and set Songs about the Fields and Towns to celebrate the Goddess *Pales*; and beg her to bless their flocks and fields with a plenteous encrease and that from hence the name, and composure of *Bucolicks* continued.

Other prying ingenious Men make other conjectures, as to this mazing Controversy thus *Vossius* delivers himself; *The Antients cannot be reconcil'd, but I rather incline to their opinion who think Bucolicks were invented either by the Sicilians or Peloponesians, for both those use the Dorick dialect, and all the Greek Bucolicks are writ in that:*

As for my self I think, that what *Horace* says of *Elegies* may be apply'd to the present Subject.

*But who soft Elegies was the first that wrote  
Grammarians doubt, and cannot end the doubt:*

For I find nothing certain about this matter, since neither *Valla* a diligent inquirer after, and a good judge in such things, nor any of the late writers produce any thing upon which I can safely rely; yet what beginning this kind of Poetry 14 had, I think I can pretty well conjecture: for 'tis likely that first Shepherds us'd Songs to recreate themselves in their leisure hours whilst they fed their Sheep; and that each man, as his wit served, accommodated his Songs to his present Circumstances: to this Solitude invited, and the extream leisure that attends that employment absolutely requir'd it: For as their retirement gave them leisure, and Solitude a fit place for Meditation, Meditation and Invention produc'd a Verse; which is nothing else but a Speech fit to be sung, and so Songs began: Thus *Hesiod* was made a Poet, for he acknowledges himself that he receiv'd his inspiration;

*Whilst under Helicon he fed his Lambs.*

for either the leisure or fancy of Shepherds seems to have a natural aptitude to Verse.

And indeed I cannot but agree with *Lucretius* that accurate Searcher into Nature, who delivers that from that state of Innocence the Golden Age, Pastorals continued down to his time, for after he had in his fifth book describ'd that most happy age, he adds,

*For then the Rural Muses reign'd.*

From whence 'tis very plain, that as *Donatus* himself observ'd, Pastorals were the invention of the simplicity and innocence of that Golden age, if there was ever any such, or certainly of that time which succeeded the beginning of the World: For tho the Golden Age must be acknowledg'd to be only in the fabulous times, yet 'tis certain that the Manners of the first Men were so plain and simple, that we may easily derive both the innocent employment of Shepherds, and Pastorals from them.

## *The Second PART.*

NOW let us inquire into the nature of *Pastoral*, in what its excellencies consist, and how it must be made to be exact: And this must needs be a hard Task, since I have no guide, neither *Aristotle* nor *Horace* to direct me; for both they, whatever was the matter, speak not one word of this sort of Verse. And I am of opinion that none can treat well and clearly of any kind of *Poetry* if he hath no helps from these two: But since they lay down some general Notions of *Poetry* which may be useful in the present case, I shall follow their steps as close as possible I can.

Not only *Aristotle* but *Horace* too hath defin'd that *Poetry* in general is Imitation; I mention only these two, for tho *Plato* in his Second Book *de Rep.* and in his *Timæus* delivers the same thing, I shall not make use of his Authority at all: Now as *Comedy* according to *Aristotle* is the Image and Representation of a gentiel and City Life, so is *Pastoral Poetry* of a County and Sheapards Life; for since *Poetry* in general is Imitation; its several *Species* must likewise Imitate, take *Aristotles* own words *Cap.* 1. *pasai tynchanousin ousa mimêseis*; And these *Species* are 17 differenc't either by the subject matter, when the things to be imitated are quite different, or when the manner in which you imitate, or the mode of imitation is so: *en trisi dê tautais diaphorais hê mimêsis estin, en hois kai ha, kai hôs*: Thus tho of *Epick Poetry* and *Tragedy* the Subject is the same, and some great illustrious Action is to be imitated by both, yet since one by representation, and the other by plain narration imitates, each makes a different *Species* of imitation. And *Comedy* and *Tragedy*, tho they agree in this, that both represent, yet because the Matter is different, and *Tragedy* must represent some brave action, and *Comedy* a humor; these Two sorts of imitation are *Specifically different*. And upon the same account, since *Pastoral* chooses the manners of Sheapards for its imitation, it takes from its matter a peculiar difference, by which it is distinguish'd frō all others.

But here *Benius* in his comments upon *Aristotle* hath started a considerable query: which is this; Whether *Aristotle*, when he reckons up the different *Species* of *Poetry* *Cap.* 1. doth include *Pastoral*, or no? And about this I find learn'd men cannot at all agree: which certainly *Benius* should have determin'd, or not rais'd: some refer it to that