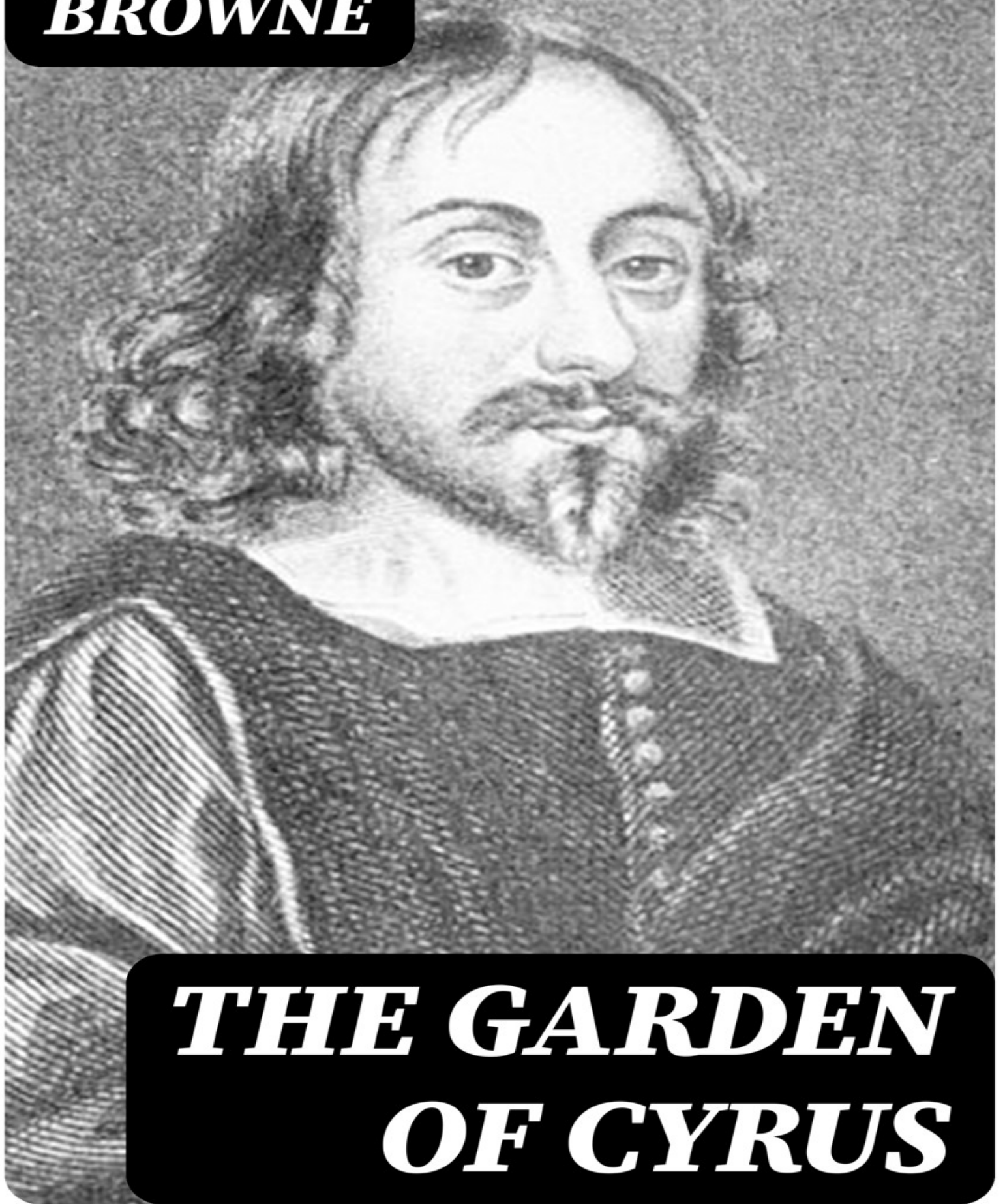


***THOMAS
BROWNE***



***THE GARDEN
OF CYRUS***

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Thomas Browne

The Garden of Cyrus

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Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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Dedicatory Epistle

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To my Worthy and Honoured Friend Nicholas Bacon Of Gillingham Esquire.

Had I not observed that Purblind men have discoursed well of sight, and some without issue, excellently of Generation; I that was never master of any considerable garden, had not attempted this Subject. But the Earth is the Garden of Nature, and each fruitfull Countrey a Paradise. Dioscorides made most of his Observations in his march about with Antonius; and Theophrastus raised his generalities chiefly from the field.

Beside we write no Herball, nor can this Volume deceive you, who have handled the massiest thereof: who know that three Folio's are yet too little, and how new Herbals fly from America upon us, from persevering Enquirers, and old in those singularities, we expect such Descriptions. Wherein England is now so exact, that it yeelds not to other Countreys.

We pretend not to multiply vegetable divisions by Quincuncial and Reticulate plants; or erect a new Phytology. The Field of knowledge hath been so traced, it is hard to spring any thing new. Of old things we write something new, If truth may receive addition, or envy will have any thing new; since the Ancients knew the late Anatomick discoveries, and Hippocrates the Circulation.

You have been so long out of trite learning, that 'tis hard to finde a subject proper for you; and if you have met with a Sheet upon this, we have missed our intention. In this

multiplicity of writing, bye and barren Themes are best fitted for invention; Subjects so often discoursed confine the Imagination, and fix our conceptions unto the notions of fore-writers. Beside, such Discourses allow excursions, and venially admit of collaterall truths, though at some distance from their principals. Wherein if we sometimes take wide liberty, we are not single, but erre by great example.

He that will illustrate the excellency of this order, may easily fail upon so spruce a Subject, wherein we have not affrighted the common Reader with any other Diagramms, then of it self; and have industriously declined illustrations from rare and unknown plants.

Your discerning judgement so well acquainted with that study, will expect herein no mathematicall truths, as well understanding how few generalities and U finita's there are in nature. How Scaliger hath found exceptions in most Universals of Aristotle and Theophrastus. How Botanicall Maximes must have fair allowance, and are tolerably currant, if not intolerably over-ballanced by exceptions.

You have wisely ordered your vegetable delights, beyond the reach of exception. The Turks who passt their dayes in Gardens here, will have Gardens also hereafter, and delighting in Flowers on earth, must have Lilies and Roses in Heaven. In Garden Delights 'tis not easie to hold a Mediocrity; that insinuating pleasure is seldome without some extremity. The Antients venially delighted in flourishing Gardens; Many were Florists that knew not the true use of a Flower; and in Plinies dayes none had directly treated of that Subject. Some commendably affected Plantations of venemous Vegetables, some confined their

delights unto single plants, and Cato seemed to dote upon Cabbage; While the Ingenuous delight of Tulipists, stands saluted with hard language, even by their own Professors.

That in this Garden Discourse, we range into extraneous things, and many parts of Art and Nature, we follow herein the example of old and new Plantations, wherein noble spirits contented not themselves with Trees, but by the attendance of Aviaries, Fish Ponds, and all variety of Animals, they made their gardens the Epitome of the earth, and some resemblance of the secular shows of old.

That we conjoyn these parts of different Subjects, or that this should succeed the other; Your judgement will admit without impute of incongruity; Since the delightfull World comes after death, and Paradise succeeds the Grave. Since the verdant state of things is the Symbole of the Resurrection, and to flourish in the state of Glory, we must first be sown in corruption. Beside the antient practise of Noble Persons, to conclude in Garden-Graves, and Urnes themselves of old, to be wrapt up in flowers and garlands.

Nullum sine venia placuisse eloquium, is more sensibly understood by Writers, then by Readers; nor well apprehended by either, till works have hanged out like Apelles his Pictures; wherein even common eyes will finde something for emendation.

To wish all Readers of your abilities, were unreasonably to multiply the number of Scholars beyond the temper of these times. But unto this ill-judging age, we charitably desire a portion of your equity, judgement, candour, and ingenuity; wherein you are so rich, as not to lose by diffusion. And being a flourishing branch of that Noble