

A1 The Word of Deniall, and the Letter of Fifty

Notes. This couplet, attributed to Raleigh, is commonly collected with a corresponding couplet on Raleigh himself (see “*The Disease of the stomach, and the Terme of Disgrace*”). Although the author of the latter is named in this manuscript copy as “Dr Noel”, other copies identify Raleigh’s adversary as “Mr Noel”. Given that “Dr Noel” can only refer to Dr. Alexander Nowell or Noel, Dean of St. Paul’s and aged in his nineties by the time of his death in 1602, “Mr Noel” seems a more probable attribution. “Mr Noel” can be identified as Henry Noel, a Gentleman Pensioner (i.e. a member of a band of socially elite bodyguards for the sovereign) who died in 1597. Noel was described by John Harington as “one of the greatest gallants” at Elizabeth’s court and mixed in the same social circles as Raleigh from at least the late 1570s. It is possible that this verse exchange dates from this early period and was meant to tease or amuse their mutual friends rather than intended as a genuine criticism (May, “*Companion Poems*” 261, 272; Raleigh, *Poems* 150).

“On Dr Noell”

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Makes the name of the man that will never be thrifty.

Source. Folger MS V.a.103, fol. 68r

Other known sources. Manningham 161; Raleigh, *Poems* 28; Bodleian MS Douce f.5, fol. 31r; Bodleian MS Malone 19, p. 53; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 117, fol. 271v; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 148, fol. 1r; BL MS Harley 5353, fol. 83r; Nottingham MS Portland PW V 37, p. 140; Houghton MS Eng 686, fol. 17v; Rosenbach MS 1083/16, p. 195

A1

¹ *The Word of Deniall...Fifty*: i.e. “No” and “L”—the Roman numeral for the number fifty—creating “Noel”.
