

A Select Collection of Old English Plays, Vol. VI

Robert Dodsley

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FOURTH EDITION, NOW FIRST CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED, REVISED AND ENLARGED WITH THE NOTES OF ALL THE COMMENTATORS, AND NEW NOTES

BY

W. CAREW HAZLITT.

1874-1876

CONTENTS

The Conflict of Conscience
The rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune
The three Ladies of London
The three Ladies and three Lords of London
A Knack to know a Knave

FIVE PLAYS.

[These five dramas were originally edited for the Roxburghe Club in 1851 by Mr J. Payne Collier, and are now incorporated with the present Collection precisely as they stand in the Roxburghe Club volume, with Mr Collier's kind permission, his general introduction included. The only difference is that the notes, instead of occurring at the end of each Play, are placed at the foot of the page.]

[MR COLLIER'S GENERAL INTRODUCTION.]

Four of the five ensuing Plays belong to a peculiar class of our early dramatic performances never yet especially noticed, nor sufficiently illustrated.

Many specimens have of late years been printed, and reprinted, of Miracle-plays, of Moral-plays, and of productions written in the most matured period of our dramatic literature; but little or nothing has been done to afford information respecting a species of stage-representation which constitutes a link between Moral-plays on the one hand, and Tragedy and Comedy on the other, as Tragedy and Comedy existed at the period when Shakespeare and his contemporaries were writers for various theatres in the metropolis. This deficiency it has been our main object to supply.

The four pieces to which we refer are neither plays which enforce a moral lesson by means of abstract impersonations only, nor are they dramas which profess to consist merely of scenes drawn from life, represented by real characters: they may be said to form a class by themselves, where characters both abstract and individual are employed in the same performance. The most remarkable drama of this intermediate kind, and the only one to which particular attention has been directed in modern times, is called "The Tragical Comedy of Appius and Virginia," which originally came out in 1575, and is reprinted in the [former and

present] edition of "Dodsley's Old Plays" from the sole existing copy.[1] In it an important historical event is commemorated, and the hero, heroine, and some other principal agents are known characters; but they are mixed up with allegorical abstractions, and the representatives of moral qualities, while the Vice of the older stage is introduced, for the sake of diversifying the representation, and amusing popular audiences. The plot of this production has no religious application, and it was not written with any avowed moral purpose. In this respect, as well as in some other peculiarities, it is unlike the drama which stands first in the following sheets. Still, the general character is the same in both: in both we have a mixture of fact and fable, of reality and allegory, of individuality and abstraction, with the addition, in the latter case, of the enforcement of a lesson, for the instruction of those to whom it was addressed.

"The Conflict of Conscience," by Nathaniel Woodes, "Minister in Norwich," was originally printed in 1581, 4to, and it is reprinted in our volume from a copy in the possession of the Editor, which has the advantage of a Prologue. This introductory address is wanting in the exemplar in the British Museum; but it unquestionably belonged to the piece, because it also precedes a third copy, in the library of the Duke of Devonshire. We know not that this drama was ever republished, but the Registers of the Company of Stationers contain an entry by John Charlwood, dated 15th June 1587, of "a ballad of Mr Fraunces, an Italian, a doctor of law, who denied the Lord Jesus,"[2] which, as will be seen presently, probably refers to the same story, and, though called "a ballad," may possibly have been a reprint of "The Conflict of Conscience." The names borne by the different characters are all stated upon the title-page, with such a distribution of the parts as would enable six actors to represent the piece; and looking merely at this list, which we have exactly copied, it does not appear in what way the performance bears even a remote resemblance to tragedy or comedy. The names read like an enumeration of such personages as were ordinarily introduced into the Moral-plays of an earlier period--indeed, one of them seems to be derived from the still more ancient form of Miracle-plays, frequently represented with the assistance of the clergy. We allude to Satan, who opens the body of the drama by a long speech (so long that we can hardly understand how a popular audience endured it) but does not afterwards take part in the action, excepting through the agency of such characters as Hypocrisy, Tyranny, and Avarice, who may be supposed to be his instruments, and under his influence and direction.

Nevertheless, a real and, as he may be considered, an historical, personage is represented in various scenes of the play, and is, in truth, its hero, although the author, for reasons assigned in the Prologue, objected to the insertion of his name in the text. These reasons, however, did not apply to the title-page, where the apostacy of Francis Spira, or Spiera, is announced as the main subject, and of whom an account may be found in Sleidan's "Vingt-neuf Livres d'Histoire" (liv. xxi. edit. Geneva, 1563). Spiera was an Italian lawyer, who abandoned the Protestant for the Roman Catholic faith, and in remorse and despair committed suicide about thirty years anterior to the date when "The Conflict of Conscience" came from the press. How long this event had occurred before Nathaniel Woodes wrote his drama upon the story, we have no means of knowing; but the object of the author unquestionably was to forward and fix the Reformation, and we may conclude, perhaps, that an incident of the kind would not be brought upon the stage until some years after Elizabeth had been seated on the throne, and until what was called "the new faith" was firmly settled in

the belief, and in the affections, of the great majority of the nation. We apprehend, therefore, that "The Conflict of Conscience" was not written until about 1570.

It is the introduction of this real person, under the covert name of Philologus, that constitutes the chief distinction between the drama we have reprinted and Moral-plays, which, though still sometimes exhibited, were falling into desuetude. As most persons are aware, they consisted, in their first and simplest form, entirely of allegorical or representative characters, although, as audiences became accustomed to such abstractions, attempts were from time to time made to give, even to such imaginary impersonations, individual peculiarities and interests. Besides the hero of "The Conflict of Conscience," his friends Eusebius and Theologus may also have been intended for real personages; and Gisbertus and Paphinitius were, possibly, the true names of the sons of Francis Spiera.

It will be seen that the drama is divided into six acts; but the last act consists of no more than a short speech by a Nuntius, who comes forward, as it should seem, to give a false representation of an historical fact--so early did a dramatist feel himself warranted in deviating from received statements, if it better answered his purpose not to adhere to them. In the instance before us, Nathaniel Woodes thought fit to alter the catastrophe, for the sake of the moral lesson he wished to enforce; and he, therefore, represented that Spiera had not committed suicide, and had, to the great joy of his friends, before death been re-converted to the religion he had so weakly abandoned. It will be observed, also, that the divisions of acts and scenes are very irregularly made towards the conclusion of the performance. From one passage we learn that no less than thirty weeks are supposed to elapse between the exit of Philologus, and his death as announced on the next page.

Nearly the whole of the piece is written in the ordinary seven-line stanza, with here and there the insertion of a couplet, more, no doubt, for convenience than for variety. The author seems to have very little consulted the wishes and tastes of a popular assembly; for, independently of the wearisome introduction, the interlocutions are sometimes carried to the extreme of tediousness, and the comic scenes are few, and failures. Perhaps, if any exception can be made, it is in favour of the interview between Hypocrisy, Tyranny, and Avarice, where the first, in consistency with his character, succeeds somewhat humorously in imposing upon both his companions. The long address of Caconos and his subsequent dialogue with Hypocrisy, Tyranny, and Avarice, is recommended to notice as an ancient and accurate specimen of our northern dialect. The long passage, where Caconos describes his knowledge of his port by its illuminations, has been imitated by other authors, and, very likely, was not new in this drama.

What we have to state regarding the text of this play applies strictly to all the others. We have given, as far as modern typography would allow, faithful representations of the original copies, with the close observation of spelling and other peculiarities. If, for the sake of mere intelligibility, we have rarely added a word or even a letter, we have always inserted it between brackets; and for the settlement of difficulties, and the illustration of obscure customs and allusions, we refer to the notes which succeed each play. We might have subjoined them at the foot of the page, but we thought they would be considered by many a needless interruption; while, if we had reserved the whole for the end

of our volume, their bulk, and the numerous paginal references might have produced confusion and delay. We judged it best, therefore, to follow each separate production by the separate notes applicable to it; and the reader will thus have, as far as our knowledge extends, the ready means of required explanation, which we have endeavoured to compress into the smallest compass. We ought to add, that the only liberty we have taken is with the old and ill-regulated punctuation[3] which it was often necessary to alter, that the sense of the author might be understood and appreciated.

The production which stands second in this volume may also be looked upon, in another sense, as intermediate with reference to stage-performances. It has for title "The rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune," and was probably designed by its unknown author for a court-show. The earliest information we possess regarding it establishes that it was represented before Queen Elizabeth between Christmas 1581 and February 1582. The following is the entry regarding it in the Accounts of the office of the Revels of that date:--

"A Historic of Love and Fortune, shewed before her Majestie at Wyndesor, on the sondaie at night next before new yeares daie. Enacted by the Earle of Derbies servautes. For which newe provision was made of one Citty and one Battlement of Canvas, iij Ells of sarcenet, a [bolt] of canvas, and viij paire of gloves, with sondrey other furniture in this office."[4]

There exists in the same records a memorandum respecting "The play of Fortune" ten years earlier,[5] but the terms employed are so general, that we do not feel warranted in considering it "The rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune" which we have reprinted: the "History of Love and Fortune," mentioned in the preceding quotation from the Revels' Accounts, was no doubt the drama under consideration; and we see that, besides sarcenet and gloves, the new properties (as they were then, and still are, called) necessary for the performance were a city and a battlement to be composed of, or represented on, canvas. We may perhaps conclude that the piece was not written long before it was acted at Windsor; but it did not come from the press until 1589, and the sole copy of it is preserved in the library of the Earl of Ellesmere, who, in his known spirit of liberal encouragement, long since permitted the Editor to make a transcript of it. We have met with no entry of its publication in the Registers of the Stationers' Company.

It will be observed that the foundation of the piece depends upon a contest for superiority between Venus and Fortune, and that the first act (for the drama is regularly divided into acts, though the scenes are not distinguished) is a species of induction to the rest. It is the more remarkable, because it contains some early specimens of dramatic blank-verse, although it may be questioned whether the piece was ever exhibited at a public theatre.

We discover no trace of it in "Henslowe's Diary,"[6] nor in any other authority, printed or manuscript, relating to plays exhibited before public audiences in the reign of Elizabeth; but it is nevertheless clear that it was "played before the Queen's most excellent Majesty" (as the title-page states) by the retainers of the Earl of Derby, a company of actors at that date engaged in public performances; and it was then, and afterwards, usual for the Master of the Revels to select dramas for performance at court, that were favourites with persons who were in the habit of frequenting the houses generally employed, or purposely

erected, for dramatic representations. If "The rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune" were ever acted at a public theatre, the several shows in the first act, of Troilus and Cressida, of Alexander, of Dido, of Pompey and Caesar, and of Hero and Leander, would of course have been attractive.

It is not necessary to enter at all into the plot, which was composed to evince alternately the power of Venus and of Fortune in influencing the lives of a pair of faithful lovers: the man, with some singularity, being called Hermione, and the woman Fidelia. They are successively placed by the two goddesses in situations of distress and difficulty, from which they are ultimately released; and in the end Venus and Fortune are reconciled, and join in promoting the happiness of the couple they had exposed to such trials. The serious business is relieved by some attempts at comedy by a clownish servant, called Lentulo, and in the third act a song is introduced for greater variety, which, as was not unusual at a later period of our stage history, seems to have been left to the choice of the performer. The prayer for the Queen, at the conclusion of the drama, put into the mouth of Fortune, was a relic of a more ancient practice, and perhaps affords further proof, if it were wanted, that it was represented before Elizabeth.[7] It appears not unlikely that, if "The rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune" had been chosen by the Master of the Revels for representation at court on account of its popularity, the fact of its having been acted by a particular company at a known theatre would have been stated upon the title-page, as a testimony to its merits, and as an incentive to its purchasers.

We need not hesitate in stating that the third and fourth dramas in the present volume were "publicly played," and the title-page of one of them states the fact. Moreover, they were the authorship of a most distinguished individual, perhaps only second to Tarlton as an actor, and decidedly his superior as an author. Nothing that has come down to us leads us to suppose, that Tarlton had much beyond his lavish extemporal wit and broad drollery to recommend him; for although various productions were attributed to him, such as are extant do not warrant an opinion that, as a writer, he had much originality.[8] The reverse is the case with Robert Wilson, whose initials are on the title-pages of "The three Ladies of London," and of "The three Lords and three Ladies of London," and who, besides his well-attested talents as a public performer, was indisputably a dramatist of great ability. He, too, was famous for his extreme readiness of reply, when suddenly called upon; but we cannot help suspecting that some confusion has arisen between the Robert Wilson, the writer of the two dramas above-named (as well as of "The Cobbler's Prophecy," 1594, a production of a similar character), and the Robert Wilson who is mentioned in "Henslowe's Diary," and whom Meres, as late as 1598, calls "our worthy Wilson," adding that he was "for learning and extemporal wit, without compare or compeer." [9] The younger Robert Wilson was, perhaps, the son of the elder; but without here entering into the evidence on the point (with which we were not formerly so well-acquainted), we may state our persuasion generally, that the Robert Wilson who was appointed one of the leaders of one of Queen Elizabeth's two companies of players in 1583,[10] was not the same Robert Wilson who was a joint-author, with Munday, Drayton, and Hathway, in the drama on the story of Sir John Oldcastle, imputed to Shakespeare on the authority of some copies printed in 1600.

There are two old editions of "The three Ladies of London," one of them printed in 1584, the text of which we have followed, and the other in 1592, the various readings of which we have noted. Both of them have the

initials R.W. on the title-page as those of the writer; but some doubt has been thrown upon the question of authorship, because, at the end of the piece, in both impressions, we read "Finis. Paul Bucke." The fact, however, no doubt is that Paul Bucke who, it has been recently ascertained, was an actor,[11] subscribed the transcript, which about 1584 he had procured for Roger Ward the printer, in order to authenticate it: hence the connection of his name with the production, in the performance of which he may also have had a share, and he may thus have had access to the prompter's book. The Paul Bucke, who in 1578 was the author of a "prayer for Sir Humphrey Gilbert," was in all probability the same individual.[12]

The second edition of 1592 would seem, from the many variations, to have been printed from a different manuscript to that used for the edition of 1584, and in some respects it was an improvement. Still, as we have stated, the name of Paul Bucke is at the termination of both; and it is a somewhat remarkable indication of the care displayed in bringing out the second edition, that whereas in the first edition an event is spoken of as having occurred in the reign of Queen Mary, "not much more than twenty-six years" before, in the second edition printed seven or eight years afterwards, the figures 26 are altered to 33. Such proofs of attention to comparative trifles were unusual in the reprints of old plays; and it may be doubted whether in this instance it would have been afforded, had not "The three Ladies of London" continued such a favourite with the town as to occasion its frequent repetition at the public theatre. A piece of evidence to show the popularity of the drama long after its original publication is to be found in Edward Guilpin's "Skialetheia, or a Shadowe of Truth," 8vo, 1598, where it is thus distinctly alluded to--

"The world's so bad that vertue's over-awde,
And forst, poore soule, to become vices bawde;
Like the old morall of the comedie,
Where Conscience favours Lucar's harlotry."

These lines are contained in the first satire of this very curious and interesting work, and the readers of the drama will at once be aware of their application.[13]

"The three Ladies of London" recommended itself to our notice for the present volume, on account of the peculiarity of its construction: Guilpin, we see, speaks of it as "the old moral of the comedy," and this, in truth, is the exact description of it. It is neither entirely a "moral," nor entirely a "comedy," but a mixture of both, differing from the drama that stands first in our volume, because the real characters introduced are not known or historical personages. Most of the *dramatis personae* are indisputably allegorical or representative, the embodiments of certain virtues and vices; but individuals are also employed, such as Gerontus a Jew, and Mercadore a merchant, besides a Judge who is called upon to determine a dispute between them. This portion of the piece may be said to belong to a more advanced period of our stage, and distinguishes it, as far as we are aware, from anything of the kind known anterior to the date when the production first came from the press. The name Gerontus can hardly fail to bring to mind that of the hero of the old ballad of "Gernutus, the Jew of Venice;"[14] but there is a remarkable difference between the two persons: in the play before us Gerontus is represented in a very favourable light, as an upright Jew, only anxious to obtain his own property by fair means, while his antagonist, a Christian merchant, endeavours to defeat the

claim by fraud, perjury, and apostacy. So far the drama of "The three Ladies of London" contradicts the position, founded mainly upon Marlowe's Barabas[15] and Shakespeare's Shylock, that our early dramatists eagerly availed themselves of popular prejudices against the conscientious adherents to the old dispensation.

The construction of "The three Ladies of London" in other respects will speak for itself, but we may be allowed to give Wilson credit for the acuteness and political subtlety he evinces in several of his scenes; for the severity of many of his touches of satire; for his amusing illustrations of manners; for his exposure of the tricks of foreign merchants, and for the humour and drollery which he has thrown into his principal comic personage. The name of this character is Simplicity, who is the fool or clown of the performance, and who, in conformity with the practice, not only of our earlier but sometimes of our later stage, makes several amusing appeals to the audience. We may pretty safely conclude, although we are without any hint of the kind, that this arduous part was sustained by the author himself.

The original copy of this production, to which we have resorted, is among the Garrick Plays: we recollect to have met with no other copy of the edition of the year 1584; but at least three of the later impression have come under our notice: one is in the library of the Duke of Devonshire, another in that of the Earl of Ellesmere, and a third at Oxford. Of all these we have more or less availed ourselves in our reprint.

The fourth play in the ensuing pages, "The three Lords and three Ladies of London," is connected in subject with the third, and, as stated already, is by the same author, who placed his initials, R.W., upon the title-page. The reprint is made from a copy in the possession of the Editor, compared with two others of the same date which in no respect vary: it may be right to mention this fact, because, as all who have been in the habit of examining the productions of our early stage are aware, important alterations and corrections were sometimes introduced while the sheets were going through the press. Our title-page, including the wood-cut, may be considered a facsimile. It will be seen that it was printed in 1590, and it was probably written by Robert Wilson about two years before, as a sort of second part to his "Three Ladies of London," which had met with such decided success. That success was perhaps in some degree revived by the frequent performance of "The three Lords and three Ladies of London," and the consequence seems to have been the publication of the new edition of the former in 1592.

The author called his new effort "The pleasant and stately Moral of the three Lords and three Ladies of London," and it bears, in all its essential features, a strong resemblance to the species of drama known as a Moral or Moral-play. This resemblance is even more close and striking than that of "The three Ladies of London;" for such important characters as Gerontus and Mercadore are wanting, and as far as the *_dramatis personae_* are concerned, there is little to take it out of the class of earlier dramatic representations, but the characters of Nemo and the Constable, the latter being so unimportant that Wilson did not include him in the list of "the Actor's names" which immediately follows the title. Had the piece, however, made a still more remote approach to comedy, and had it possessed fewer of the mixed features belonging to its predecessor, we should unhesitatingly have reprinted it as a necessary sequel.

Towards the conclusion of the drama, as well indeed as in the introductory stanzas, the allusions to the Armada and to the empty vaults of the Spaniards are so distinct and obvious, that we cannot place the composition of it earlier than 1588; but it must have remained in manuscript for about two years, since it was not published until after July 1590, the following entry in the Stationers' Registers bearing date the 31st of that month:--

"Richard Jones. Entered for his copie, under thandes of doctor Wood and the wardens, a comedie of the plesant and statelie morrall of the Three lordes of London." [16]

Richard Jones, as will be seen from the imprint, was the publisher of the work; but the clerk who made the memorandum in the books blundered respecting the name, and, besides terming it "a comedy" as well as "a pleasant and stately moral," he omitted that portion of the title which immediately connects it with "The three Ladies of London." That connection is avowed in the Prologue (usually called a "Preface") which was spoken by "a Lady, very richly attired, representing London;" and it is evident that the author had every reason for making the fact prominent, inasmuch as it was his interest to prove the relationship between his new offspring and a drama that had for some years been established in public approbation. London, speaking in the poet's name, therefore, says--

"My former fruits were lovely Ladies three;
Now of three Lords to talk is London's glee:
Whose deeds I wish may to your liking frame,
For London bids you welcome to the same."

Although, in its plot and general character, "The three Lords and three Ladies of London" is not so far advanced towards genuine comedy, the representation of life and manners, as its first part, "The three Ladies of London," in style and composition it makes a much nearer approach to what soon afterwards became the language of the stage, such as we find it in the works of Shakespeare, and of some of his most gifted contemporaries. Wilson, doubtless, saw the necessity, in 1588, of adopting some of those improvements of versification in which Marlowe had led the way; he therefore laid aside (excepting in a few comic scenes) his heavy, lumbering, and monotonous fourteen-syllable lines (sometimes carried to a greater length for the sake of variety) and not only usually employed ten-syllable lines, but introduced speeches of blank verse. His drama opens with this then uncommon form, and he avails himself of it afterwards, interspersing also prose in such situations as did not seem to require measured speech. This of itself was at that time a bold undertaking; for Marlowe had only just before 1588, when "The three Lords and three Ladies of London" must have been written, commenced weaning audiences at our public theatres from what, in the Prologue to his "Tamburlaine the Great," he ridicules as the "jigging veins of rhiming motherwits." [17] Robert Wilson is, on this account, to be regarded with singular respect, and his works to be read with peculiar interest. It is not easy to settle the question of precedence, but, as far as our knowledge at present extends, he seems entitled to be considered the second writer of blank verse for dramas intended for popular audiences. This is a point of view in which his productions have never yet been contemplated, and it renders the play we have reprinted, illustrating as it does so important and striking a change, especially worthy of notice and republication.

Something has been already said respecting the characters who figure in this representation, and we may add that although Simplicity, who here performs even a more prominent and important part than in "The three Ladies of London," must be reckoned the impersonation of a quality, and the representative of a class, so much individuality is given to him, particularly in his capacity of a ballad-singer, that it is impossible not to take a strong interest in all that he says, and in the incidents in which he is engaged. Richard Tarlton, the famous comedian, died on 3d Sept. 1588, rather more than a month after the entry of "The three Lords and three Ladies of London" at Stationers' Hall; and in this play it will be seen that Simplicity produces his "picture" before the audience, and gives a minute account of his habits, appearance, and employments. It is clear, therefore, as Tarlton is spoken of as dead, that this part of the drama must have been written, and introduced, subsequent to the memorandum in the Stationers' Registers. This of itself is a curious circumstance, and it serves to show with what promptitude our old dramatists availed themselves of any temporary matter that could give attraction and popularity to their plays.

As we have supposed Wilson himself to have acted Simplicity in "The three Ladies of London," we may perhaps conclude that he sustained the same character in "The three Lords and three Ladies of London." The part was an excellent one for the display of comic humour and clownish drollery, and the enumeration of the old ballads he sings and sells needs no illustration here, where, in fact, it would be out of place. The familiar manner in which Simplicity at times addresses the audience, for the sake of raising a laugh, is even more unlicensed in this play than in its predecessor, and we never before saw the words "To the audience" introduced, by way of stage-direction to the performer, that he might appeal to the spectators.[18]

The copy of this play most employed in the ensuing pages is the property of the Editor, but he has had an opportunity of comparing it with another in the library of the Duke of Devonshire.

The connection between the productions of our ancient and more modern stage, such as it existed at the close of the reign of Elizabeth, is even more slightly evidenced by the drama which conies last in our volume, the main features of which bear only a distant resemblance to our drama, while it was still under the trammels of allegorical impersonation. Nevertheless, the likeness is to be traced without difficulty; and when we find such a character as Honesty most prominently engaged from the beginning to the end of the performance (to say nothing of the introduction of the representative of the principle of evil in two passages), the mind is carried back to a period of our theatrical history when such characters were alone employed on our stage. Honesty has no necessary connection with the plot, nor with its development, beyond the exposure by his means of fraud, flattery, and hypocrisy: he bears no relation, however distant, to any of the parties engaged in the performance, and seems to have been designed by the unknown author as a sort of running commentator and bitter satirist upon the vices and follies of mankind. On the other hand, the chief characters among the *dramatis personae* are real and historical, and King Edgar and Bishop Dunstan, with Ethenwald and Alfrida, may be said to figure prominently throughout. The Knight, the Squire, and the Farmer, who make their appearance further on, are clearly embodiments of the several classes of society to which they appertain. Thus, although the "Knack to know a Knave" makes a nearer approach to comedy than any of the four dramas which precede it, it still by no means entirely

discards the use of personages of a description which, many years earlier, engrossed our stage. Characters and scenes of life and manners are blended with others supported only by conventional impersonations, in which the dialogue is not intended to advance the plot, but merely to enforce a lesson of morality, probity, or discretion.

It is not always easy to guess at the full meaning of the author in various scenes he introduces, but some of them were obviously inserted for the purpose of exciting the laughter of the audience, and of giving an opportunity of display to a favourite low comedian. One of the actors is expressly mentioned on the title-page, where "Kemp's applauded merriments of the men of Gotham, in receiving the King into Gotham" are made prominent; but unless much were left to the extemporaneous invention of the performer, or unless much has been omitted in the printed copy, which was inserted by the author in his manuscript, it is difficult at this time of day to discover in what the wit, if not the drollery, consisted. As this portion of the play has come down to us, it seems to be composed of mere ignorant and blundering buffoonery, unworthy of a comedian, who undoubtedly afterwards sustained important humorous characters in the plays of Shakespeare. Who was the Bailiff of Hexham, and why he was brought forward on his deathbed near the opening of the drama, we are unable to explain, unless the author's object were that the spectators, when the Bailiff was ultimately carried away by the devil, should have ocular proof of the condign punishment which followed his principles as explained to his sons, and his practices as avowed by himself.

We can establish, almost to a day, when the "Knack to know a Knave" was first represented, for we find it thus entered in "Henslowe's Diary:" it is in an account relating to the performances of the company acting under the name of Lord Strange, at the Rose Theatre, from 19th Feb. 1591-2 to the 22d June 1592--

R[ecieve]d at Jeronimo, the 9 of June 1592 xxviiij's.
Rd at a Knack to know a Knave, 1592, 1 day iij'li. xij's.
Rd at Harry the VI, the 12 June 1592 xxxiiij's.

Here, therefore, we find (reforming the uncouth spelling of the old manager) that the play under consideration was acted, for the first day,[19] between the 9th and 12th June 1592, and that Henslowe's share of the receipts amounted to 3l. 12s. 0d. It was acted again on 15th and 22d June, when the account ends. William Kemp was at this time a member of the company in the prosperity of which Henslowe was interested, and had not yet joined the association acting under the sanction of the Lord Chamberlain, to which, in 1592, Shakespeare had for some years belonged. "Ed. Allen and his Company," spoken of on the title-page to the printed copy of "A Knack to know a Knave" as those by whom it had been "played," were the actors of Lord Strange.[20]

With regard to the date when the "Knack to know a Knave" was printed, we are in possession of pretty distinct evidence that it came out in the early part of 1594, the year stated on the title-page. The imprint also informs us that Richard Jones, then carrying on business at the Rose and Crown near Holborn Bridge, was the typographer; and we meet with the following entry at Stationers' Hall, preparatory to the publication, with his name prefixed to it.

"vij'o Januarij [1593-4]

"Rich. Jones. Entred for his Copie &c. A comedie entituled a Knack to knowe a Knaue, newlye sett fourth, as it hath sundrye tymes ben plaid by Ned Allen and his Companie, with Kemps applauded Merymentes of the men of Goteham."[21]

The sum paid to the clerk who kept the register was, as usual, sixpence; and from the terms above employed, which nearly follow those of the title-page, we may feel pretty sure that the copy taken to Stationers' Hall was a printed one, and not, as seems to have been generally the case, a manuscript.

There is no doubt that the drama was extremely popular both on and off the stage; and although it is now one of the scarcest of our old plays, it must have been a profitable speculation to the publisher. In order that the various parties interested might more effectually avail themselves of the favour with which it had been received, a sort of counterpart was written to it, and acted for the first time on 22d October 1594, by the players of the Queen and of the Earl of Sussex (then performing together), under the title of "A Knack to know an Honest Man." This drama, though inferior in every respect, appears by "Henslowe's Diary" (for he was also interested in the receipts of these united associations) to have had a long and advantageous run.[22] It was not published until 1596, and it was previously entered on the Stationers' books by Cuthbert Burby. In the same year was printed by Valentine Simmes a work, the title of which was evidently borrowed from the proverbial expression "a knack to knowe a knave," which possibly had its origin in the great popularity of the drama we have reprinted. This work was by M.B., and was called "The Triall of true Friendship; or a perfect mirror to discerne a trustie friend from a flattering Parasite--Otherwise a _Knack to know a Knave_ from an honest man." One principal purpose of the play under consideration was to expose the flattery of the parasite Perin, who endeavoured to impose upon King Edgar, but was detected by Honesty. It seems not unlikely that Honesty was the character sustained by Edward Alleyn, but we have no knowledge of the distribution of any of the parts, beyond the fact that Kemp played a chief blunderer in the comic scene; whether that was the Miller, the Cobbler, or the Smith may, perhaps, admit of dispute.

The story of the serious portion of the play was doubtless derived from an old ballad, inserted by Thomas Deloney in his "Garland of Good Will" (probably written by him), where it is entitled "A Song of King Edgar, showing how he was deceived of his Love." As it is reprinted in all the editions of "Evans's Old Ballads," and has been the subject of two plays in comparatively modern times,[23] it is not necessary here to give any detail of the plot, which also, in several incidents, strongly resembles parts of Robert Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay," which, like the "Knack to know a Knave," was printed in 1594.[24]

The Editor was, some years ago, permitted to make a transcript of this rare play from a copy in the library of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, that in the British Museum being very defective in several places, and the missing pages having been supplied by very delusive manuscript. The Rev. Alexander Dyce also possesses a perfect exemplar, which was extremely useful for the purpose of collation.

THE CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE

EDITION.

An excellent new Comedie, Intituled: The Conflict of Conscience.
Contayninge, A most lamentable example of the dolefull desperation of a
miserable world-linge termed by the name of Philologus, _who_ forsooke
the trueth of Gods Gospel, for feare of the losse of lyfe & worldly
goods. Compiled, by Nathaniell Woodes, Minister, in Norwich.

The Actors names, deuided into six partes, most conuenient for such as
be disposed, either to shew this Comedie in priuate houses, or
otherwise.

PROLOGUE, |
MATHETES, | _For one_.
CONSCIENCE, |
PAPHINITIUS, |

SATAN, |
TYRANNY, |
SPIRIT, | _For one_.
HORROR, |
EUSEBIUS, |

AVARICE, |
SUGGESTION, | _For one_.
GISBERTUS, |
NUNTIUS, |

HYPOCRISY, | _For one_.
THEOLOGUS, |

CARDINAL, | _For one_.
CACON, <

PHILOLOGUS, _For one_.

At London Printed by Richarde Bradocke dwellinge in Aldermanburie,
a little aboute the Conduict. Anno. 1581. 4. Black-letter.

THE PROLOGUE

When whirling winds which blow with blust'ring blast,
Shall cease their course, and not the air move,
But still unstirred it doth stand, it chanceth at the last
To be infect, the truth hereof even day by day we prove;
For deep within the caves of earth of force it doth behove,
Sith that no winds do come thereto, the air out to beat,
By standing still the closed air doth breed infections great.

The stream or flood, which runneth up and down,
Is far more sweet than is the standing brook:
If long unworn you leave a cloak or gown,
Moths will it mar, unless you thereto look:

Again, if that upon a shelf you place or set a book,
And suffer it there still to stand, the worms will soon it eat:
A knife likewise, in sheath laid up, the rust will mar and fret.

The good road-horse, if still at rack he stand,
To resty jade will soon transformed be:
If long untill'd you leave a fertile land,
From streck and weed no place will be left free.
By these examples and such like approve then well may we,
That idleness more evils doth bring into the mind of man,
Than labour great in longer time again expel out can.

Which thing our Author marking well, when wearied was his mind
From reading grave and ancient works, yet loth his time to lose,
Bethought himself, to ease his heart, some recreance to find,
And as he mused in his mind, immediately arose
A strange example done of late, which might, as he suppose,
Stir up their minds to godliness, which should it see or hear,
And therefore humbly doth you pray to give attentive ear.

The argument or ground, whereon our Author chiefly stayed,
Is (sure) a history strange and true, to many men well known,
Of one through love of worldly wealth and fear of death dismay'd,
Because he would his life and goods have kept still as his own,
From state of grace wherein he stood was almost overthrown;
So that he had no power at all in heart firm faith to have,
Till at the last God chang'd his mind his mercies for to crave.

And here our Author thought it meet the true name to omit,
And at this time imagine him PHILOLOGUS to be;
First, for because a Comedy will hardly him permit
The vices of one private man to touch particularly:
Again, now shall it stir them more, who shall it hear or see;
For if this worldling had been nam'd, we would straight deem in mind,
That all by him then spoken were, ourselves we would not find.

But sith PHILOLOGUS is nought else but one that loves to talk,
And common[25] of the word of God, but hath no further care,
According as it teacheth them in God's fear for to walk,
If that we practise this indeed, PHILOLOGI we are,
And so by his deserved fault we may in time beware:
Now if, as Author first it meant, you hear it with this gain,
In good behalf he will esteem that he bestowed his pain.

And for because we see by proof, that men do soon forget
Those things for which to call them by no name at all they know,
Our Author, for to help short wits, did think it very meet
Some name for this his Comedy in preface for to show.
Now names to natures must agree, as every man do know,
A fitter name he could in mind no where excogitate,
Than THE CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE the same to nominate.

A cruel Conflict certainly, where Conscience takes the foil,
And is constrained by the flesh to yield to deadly sin,
Whereby the grace and love of God from him his sin doeth spoil,
Then (wretch accur'd) small power hath repentance to begin.
This history here example shows of one fast wrapp'd therein,
As in discourse before your eyes shall plainly proved be;
Yet (at the last) God him restor'd, even of his mercy free.

And though the history of itself be too-too dolorous,
And would constrain a man with tears of blood his cheeks to wet,
Yet to refresh the minds of them that be the auditors,
Our Author intermixed hath, in places fit and meet,
Some honest mirth, yet always 'ware decorum to exceed.
But list, I hear the players prest in presence forth to come:
I therefore cease, and take my leave: my message I have done.

[_Exit_.

THE CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE.

ACT I., SCENE 1.

SATAN.

High time it is for me to stir about,
And do my best my kingdom to maintain,
For why I see of enemies a rout,
Which all my laws and statutes do disdain;
Against my state do fight and strive amain:
Whom in time if I do not dissipate,
I shall repent it, when it is too late.
My mortal foe, the carpenter's poor son,
Against my children--the Pharisees I mean--
Upbraiding them, did use this comparison,
As in the story of his life may be seen.
There was a man which had a vineyard green,
Who, letting it to husbandmen unkind,
Instead of fruit unthankfulness did find.
So that his servants firstly they did beat.
His son likewise they afterward did kill:
And hereupon that man, in fury great,
Did soldiers send these husbandmen to spill;
Their town to burn he did them also will:
But out alas, alas, for woe I cry,
To use the same far juster cause have I.
For where the kingdom of this world is mine,
And his on whom I will the same bestow,
As prince hereof I did myself assign:
My darling dear, whose faithful love I know,[26]
Shall never fail from me, but daily flow.
But who that is, perhaps some man may doubt;
I will therefore in brief portract and paint him out.
The mortal man by nature's rule is bound
That child to favour more than all the rest,
Which to himself in face is likest found;
So that he shall with all his goods be blest:
Even so do I esteem and like him best,
Which doth most near my dealings imitate,
And doth pursue God's laws with deadly hate.
As therefore I, when once in angel's state
I was, did think myself with God as mate to be,
So doth my son himself now elevate

Above man's nature in rule and dignity.
So that *_in terris Deus sum_*, saith he:
In earth I am a God, with sins for to dispense,
And for rewards I will forgive each manner of offence.
I said to Eve: tush, tush, thou shalt not die,
But rather shalt as God know everything;
My son likewise, to maintain idolatry,
Saith: tush, what hurt can carved idols bring?
Despise this law of God, the heavenly King,
And set them in the church for men thereon to look:
An idol doth much good: it is a layman's book.
Nembroth,[27] that tyrant, fearing God's hand,
By me was persuaded to build up high Babel,
Whereby he presumed God's wrath to withstand:
So hath my boy devised very well
Many pretty toys to keep men's soul from hell,
Live they never so evil here and wickedly,
As masses, trentals, pardons, and scala coeli.
I egged on Pharaoh, of Egypt the king,
The Israelites to kill, so soon as they were born:
My darling likewise doth the selfsame thing,
And therefore causes kings and princes to be sworn,
That with might and main they shall keep up his horn,
And shall destroy with fire, axe, and sword,
Such as against him shall speak but one word.
And even as I was somewhat too slow,
So that notwithstanding the Israelites did augment;
So (for lack of murdering) God's people do grow,
And daily increase at this time present;
Which my son shall feel incontinent.
Yet another practice, this evil to withstand,
He learned of me, which now he takes in hand.
For when as Moses I might not destroy,
Because that he was of the Lord appointed
To bring the people from thralldom to joy,
I did not cease, whilst I had invented,
Another means to have him prevented;
By accompting himself the son of Pharaoh,
To make him loth Egypt to forego.
The same advice I also attempted
Against the Son of God, when he was incarnate;
Hoping thereby to have him relented,
And for promotion-sake himself to prostrate
Before my feet, when I did demonstrate
The whole world unto him and all the glory,
As it is recorded in Matthew's history.
So hath the Pope, who is my darling dear,
My eldest boy, in whom I do delight,
Lest he should fall, which thing he greatly fear,
Out of his seat of honour, pomp and might,
Hath got to him, on his behalf to fight,
Two champions stout, of which the one is Avarice,
The other is called Tyrannical Practice.
For, as I said, although I claim by right
The kingdom of this earthly world so round,
And in my stead to rule with force and might
I have assigned the Pope, whose match I nowhere found,
His heart with love to me so much abound;
Yet divers men of late, of malice most unkind,

Do study, to displace my son, some wayward means to find.
Wherefore I marvel much what cause of let there is,
That hitherto they have not their office put in ure.
I will go see: for why I fear that somewhat is amiss;
If not, to range abroad the world I will them straight procure:
But needs they must have one to help, men's hearts for to allure
Unto their train: who that should be, I cannot yet espy.
No meeter match I can find out than is Hypocrisy;
Who can full well in time and place dissemble either part.
No man shall easily perceive with which side he doth bear;
But when once favour he hath got, and credit in man's heart,
He will not slack in mine affairs: I do him nothing fear.
But time doth run too fast away for me to tarry here;
For[28] none will be enamoured of my shape, I do know,
I will therefore mine imps send out from hell their shapes to show.

[_Exit_.

ACT I, SCENE 2.

MATHETES, PHILOLOGUS.

[MATHETES.]

My mind doth thirst, dear friend Philologus,
Of former talk to make a final end:
And where before we 'gan for to discuss
The cause why God doth such afflictions send
Into his Church, you would some more time spend
In the same cause, that thereby you might learn
Betwixt the wrath and love of God a right for to discern.

PHILOLOGUS.

With right good-will to your request herein I do consent,
As well because, as I perceive, you take therein delight,
As also for because it is most chiefly pertinent
Unto mine office to instruct and teach each Christian wight
True godliness, and show to them the path that leadeth right
Unto God's kingdom, where we shall inherit our salvation,
Given unto us from God by Christ our true propitiation.
But that a better-ordered course herein we may observe,
And may directly to the first apply that which ensue,
To speak that hath been said before, I will a time reserve,
And so proceed from whence we left by course and order due
Unto the end. At first, therefore, you did lament and rue
The misery of these our days, and great calamity,
Which those sustain who dare gainsay the Romish hypocrisy.

MATHETES.

I have just cause, as hath each Christian heart,
To wail and weep, to shed out tears of blood,
When as I call to mind the torments and the smart,
Which those have borne, who honest be and good,
For nought else, but because their errors they withstood:
Yet joyed I much to see how patiently
They bore the cross of Christ with constancy.

PHILOLOGUS.

So many of us as into one body be
Incorporate, whereof Christ is the lively head,
As members of our bodies which we see
With joints of love together be conjoined,
And must needs suffer, unless that they be dead,
Some part of grief in mind, which other feel
In body, though not so much by a great deal.
Wherefore by this it is most apparent,
That those two into one body are not united,
Of the which the one doth suffer, the other doth torment,
And in the wounds of his brother is delighted:
Now which is Christ's body may easily be decided;
For the lamb is devoured of the wolf alway,
Not the wolf of the lamb, as Chrysostom doth say.
Again, of unrighteous Cain murdered was Abel,
By whom the Church of God was figured:
Isaac likewise was persecuted of Ishmael,
As in the Book of Genesis is mentioned:
Israel of Pharaoh was also terrified:
David the saint was afflicted by his son,
And put from his kingdom--I mean by Absalom.
Elias the Thisbite, for fear of Jezebel
Did fly to Horeb, and hid him in a cave:
Michas the prophet, as the story doth tell,
Did hardly his life from Baal's priests save:
Jeremy of that sauce tasted have:
So did Esay, Daniel, and the children three,
And thousands more, which in stories we may see.

MATHETES.

In the New Testament we may also read,
That our Saviour Christ, even in his infancy,
Of Herod the king might stand in great dread,
Who sought to destroy him, such was his insolency:
Afterward of the Pharisees he did with constancy
Suffer shameful death: his apostles also
For testimony of the truth did their crosses undergo.

PHILOLOGUS.

James, under Herod, was headed with the sword:
The rest of the apostles did suffer much turmoil.
Good Paul was murdered by Nero his word:
Domitian devised a barrel full of oil,
The body of John the Evangelist to boil,
The Pope at this instant sundry torments procure,
For such as by God's holy word will endure.
By these former stories two things we may learn
And profitably record in our remembrance:
The first is God's Church from the devil's to discern:
The second to mark what manifest resistance
The truth of God hath, and what encumbrance
It bringeth upon them that will it profess;
Wherefore they must arm themselves to suffer distress.

MATHETES.

It is no new thing, I do now perceive,
That Christ's Church do suffer tribulation;
But that the same cross I might better receive,

I request you to show me for my consolation,
What is the cause, by your estimation,
That God doth suffer his people to be in thrall,
Yet help them, so soon as they to him call?

PHILOLOGUS.

The chiefest thing which might us cause or move,
With constant minds Christ's cross for to sustain,
Is to conceive of heaven a faithful love;
Whereto we may not come, as Paul doth prove it plain,
Unless with Christ we suffer, that with him we may reign:
Again, sith that it is our heavenly Father's will
By worldly woes our carnal lusts to kill.
Moreover, we do use to loathe that thing we always have,
And do delight the more in that which mostly we do want:
Affliction urgeth us also more earnestly to crave,
And when we once relieved be, true faith in us it plant,
So that to call in each distress on God we will not faint:
For trouble brings forth patience, from patience doth ensue
Experience, from experience hope, of health the anchor true.
Again, ofttimes God doth provide affliction for our gain,
As Job, who after loss of goods had twice so much therefor.
Sometime affliction is a means to honour to attain,
As you may see, if Joseph's life you set your eyes before:
Continually it doth us warn from sinning any more,
When as we see the judgments just which God, our heavenly King,
Upon offenders here in earth for their offences bring.
Sometime God doth it us to prove, if constant we will be;
As he did unto Abraham: sometime his whole intent
Is to declare His heavenly might; as in John we may see,
When the disciples did ask Christ why God the blindness sent
Unto that man that was born blind? to whom incontinent
Christ said: Neither for parents' sins, nor for his own offence,
Was he born blind, but that God might show his magnificence.

MATHETES.

This is the sum of all your talk, if that I guess aright,
That God doth punish his elect to keep their faith in ure,
Or lest that, if continual ease and rest enjoy they might,
God to forget through haughtiness frail nature should procure;
Or else by feeling punishment our sins for to abjure;
Or else to prove our constancy; or lastly, that we may
Be instruments, in whom his might God may abroad display.
Now must I needs confess to you my former ignorance,
Which knew no cause at all, why God should trouble his elect,
But thought afflictions all to be rewards for our offence,
And to proceed from wrathful judge did always it suspect;
As do the common sort of men, who will straightway direct,
And point their fingers at such men as God doth chastise here,
Esteeming them by just desert their punishment to bear.

PHILOLOGUS.

Such is the nature of mankind, himself to justify,
And to condemn all other men, whereas we ought of right
Accuse ourselves especial, and God to magnify,
Who in his mercy doth us spare, whereas he also might,
Sith that we do the selfsame things, with like plagues us requite:
Which thing our Saviour Christ doth teach, as testifieth Luke,
The thirteenth chapter, where he doth vainglorious men rebuke.

But for this time let this suffice: now let us homeward go,
And further talk in private place, if need be, we will have.

MATHETES.

With right good-will I will attend on you your house unto,
Or else go you with me to mine, the longer journey save;
For it is now high dinner-time: my stomach meat doth crave.

PHILOLOGUS.

I am soon bidden to my friend: come on; let us depart.

MATHETES.

Go you before, and I will come behind with all my heart.

[_Exeunt_.

ACT II., SCENE 1.

HYPOCRISY.

God speed you all that be of God's belief:
The mighty Jehovah protect you from ill.
I beseech the living God, that he would give
To each of you present a hearty good-will
With flesh to contend, your lust for to kill,
That, by the aid of spiritual assistance,
You may subdue your carnal concupiscence.
God grant you all, for his mercy's sake,
The light of his word to your heart's joy.
I humbly beseech him a confusion to make
Of erroneous sects which might you annoy:
Earnestly requiring each one to employ
His whole endeavour God's word to maintain,
And from strange doctrine your hearts to refrain.
Grant, Lord, I pray thee, such preachers to be
In thy congregation, thy people to learn,
As may, for conscience' sake and of mere sincerity,
Being able 'twixt corn and cockle to discern,
Apply their study to replenish the bern;
That is thy Church, by their doctrines increase,
And make many heirs of thine eternal peace. Amen. Amen.
But soft, let me see who doth me aspect.
First, sluggish Saturn of nature so cold,
Being placed in Tauro, my beams do reject,
And Luna in Cancro in sextile he behold.
I will the effect hereafter unfold:
Now Jupiter the gentle, of temperature mean,
Poor Mercury the turncoat, he forsook clean.
Now murdering Mars retrograde in Libra,
With amiable tryne apply to my beam;
And splendent Sol the ruler of the day,
After his eclipse to Jupiter will lean:
The goddess of pleasure (dame Venus, I mean)
To me her poor servant seem friendly to be:
So also doth Luna, otherwise called Phoebe.
But now I speak mischievously, I would say, in a mystery;

Wherefore, to interpret it, I hold it best done,
For here be a good sort, I believe, in this company,
That know not my meaning, as this man for one.
What! blush not at it; you are not alone:
Here is another that know not my mind,
Nor he in my words great favour can find.
The planet Mercurius is neither hot nor cold,
Neither good, nor yet very bad of his own nature,
But doth alter his quality with them, which do hold
Any friendly aspect to him: even so I assure
We Mercurialists, I mean hypocrites, cannot long endure
In one condition, but do alter our mind
To theirs that talk with us, thereby friendship to find.
The little cameleon, by nature, can change
Herself to that colour to which she behold:
Why should it then to any seem strange,
That we do thus alter? why are we controll'd,
Sith only the rule of nature we hold?
We seek to please all men, yet most do us hate,
And we are rewarded for friendship debate.
Saturnus is envious; how then can he love
Adulation or Hypocrisy, to him most contrary?
The Jovists, being good, do look high above,
And do not regard the rest of the company.
Now Mars, being retrograde, foretelleth misery
To tyrannical practice to happen eftsoon,
As shall be apparent before all be done.
Which Tyranny with flattery is easily pacified;
Whereas Tom Tell-troth shall feel of his sword;
So that with such men is fully verified
That old-said saw, and common byword,
Obsequium amicos--by flatteries friends are prepared,
But _veritas odium parit_, as commonly is seen:
For speaking the truth many hated have been.
By Sol understand Popish principality,
With whom full highly I am entertained,
But being eclipsed shall show forth his quality;
Then shall Hypocrisy be utterly disdained,
Whose wretched exile, though greatly complained,
And wept for of many, shall be without hope,
That in such pomp shall ever be Pope.
By Venus the riotous, by Luna the variable,
Betwixt whom and Mercury no variance can fall,
For they, which in words be most unstable,
Would be thought faithful, and the riotous liberal:
So that Hypocrisy their doings cloak shall.
But whist! not a word, for yonder come some:
While I know what they are, I will be dumb.

[_Step aside_.

ACT II, SCENE 2.

TYRANNY, AVARICE.

[TYRANNY.]

Put me before, for I will shift for one,
 [_Push_ AVARICE _backward_.
So long as strength remaineth in this arm:
And pluck up thy heart, thou faint-hearted mome:
As long as I live thou shalt take no harm.
Such as control us, I will their tongues charm
By fire or sword, or other like torment,
So that ever they did it, they shall it repent.
Hast thou forgotten what Satan did say, [HYP. Ambo.[29]]
That the k[nave] Hypocrisy our doings should hide,
So that under his cloak our parts we should play,
And of the rude people should never be spied?
Or if the worst should hap or betide,
That I by Tyranny should both you defend
Against such as mischief to you should pretend.

AVARICE.

Indeed, such words our Belsire did speak, [HYP. Tut, Father Jotsam!]
Which, being remembered, doth make my heart glad;
But yet one thing my courage doth break,
And when I think of it, it makes me full sad:
I mean the evil luck which Hypocrisy had,
When he was expelled out of this land;
For then with me the matter evil did stand.
For I by him so shadowed was from light,

[HYP. A little k[nave] to hide so great a lubber.]

That almost no man could me out espy;
But he being gone, to every man's sight
I was apparent: each man did descry
My pilling and polling; so that glad was I
From my nature to cease, a thing most marvellous,
And live in secret, the time was so dangerous.

[HYP. He feareth nothing: he thinketh the hangman is dead.]

TYRANNY.

Tush! Avarice, thou fearest a thing that is vain,
For by me alone both you shall be stayed;
And, if thou mark well, thou shalt perceive plain
That if I, Tyranny, my part had well played,

[HYP. He can play two parts, the fool and the k[nave].]

And from killing of heretics my hand had not stayed,
They had never growen to such a great rout,
Neither should have been able to have banish'd him out.
But _sero sapiunt Phryges_; at length I will take heed,

[HYP. A popish policy!]

And with blood enough this evil will prevent;
For if I hear of any that in word or in deed--
Yea, if it be possible to know their intent,
If I can prove that in thought they it meant

[HYP. Anti-Christian charity.]

To impair our estates--no prayer shall serve,
But will pay them their hire, as each one deserve.

AVARICE.

The fish once taken, and 'scaped from bait,
Will ever hereafter beware of the hook:
Such as use hunting will spy the hare straight,
Though other discern her not, yet on her shall look.
Again, the learned can read in a book,
Though the unskilful, seeing equal with them,
Cannot discern an F from an M.
So those which have tasted the fruit that we bear,
And find it so sour, will not us implant.

TYRANNY.

Tush! Avarice, I warrant thee, thou need'st not fear:

[HYP. _Utilitas facit esse Deos_.]

In the clergy, I know, no friends we shall want,
Which for hope of gain the truth will recant,
And give themselves wholly to set out Hypocrisy,
Being egg'd on with Avarice, and defended by Tyranny.

AVARICE.

Well may the clergy on our side hold,
For they by us no small gain did reap;
But all the temporalty, I dare be bold
To venture in wager of gold a good heap,
At our preferments will mourn, wail, and weep.

[HYP. This is sharp arguments.]

TYRANNY.

Though indeed no just cause of joy they can find,
Yet for fear of my sword they will alter their mind,
But I marvel much where Hypocrisy is:
Methink it is long since from us he did go.

AVARICE.

I doubt that of his purpose he miss,
And therefore hath hanged himself for woe. [HYP. Pray for yourself.]
How say'st thou, Tyranny, dost not think so?
In faith, if I thought that he might be spared,

[HYP. Your kind heart shall cost me a couple of rushes.]

And we have our purpose, beshrew me, if I cared.

TYRANNY.

Saw you ever the like of this doubting dolt?

[HYP. Not I the like of such a cutthroat colt.]

It grieves me to hear how faint-hearted he is. [_Aside_.]
A little would cause me to kill thee, thou ass-colt.
See, see, for woe he is like for to piss:
To give an attempt what a fellow were this?
But this is the good that cometh of Covetousness:

He liveth always in fear to lose his riches.
Again, mark how he regardeth the death of his friend:
So he hath his purpose, he cares for no more:
A perfect pattern of a covetous mind,
Which neither esteemeth his friend nor his foe,
But rather, Avarice, might I have said so,
Who, if he were gone, myself could defend,
Where thou by his absence wert soon at an end.

[_Exeunt_.

ACT II., SCENE 3.

HYPOCRISY.

O loving Father and merciful God!
We through our sins thy punishment deserve,
And have provoked to beat with thy rod
Us stubborn children, which from thee do swerve.
We loathed thy word, but now we shall sterve;
For Hypocrisy is placed again in this land,
And thy true gospel as exile doth stand.
This is thy just judgment for our offence,
Who having the light in darkness did stray,
But now, if thou wouldest of thy fatherly benevolence
Thy purposed judgments in wrath for to stay,
The part of the prodigal son we would play;
And with bitter tears before thee would fall,
And in true repentance for mercy would call.
In our prosperity we would not regard
The words of the preachers, who threat'ned the same,
But flattering ourselves, thought thou wouldest have spared
Us in thy mercy, and never us blame:
But so much provoked thee by blaspheming thy name,
Indeed to deny that in words we maintain,
That from thy justice thou could'st not refrain.
So that Romish Pharaoh, a tyrant most cruel,
Hath brought us again into captivity,
And instead of the pure flood of thy gospel,
Hath poisoned our souls with devilish Hypocrisy,
Unable to maintain it, but by murdering Tyranny;
Seeking rather the fleece than the health of the sheep,
Which are appointed for him for to keep.

[_Re-enter_ AVAR. _and_ TYR.]

TYRANNY.

Lo, Avarice, hark what a traitor is here,

[HYP. [aside.] He speaketh to you, Syra.]

Against our holy Father this language to use!
I might have heard more, if I would him forbear,
But for grief my ears burn to hear him abuse
His tongue in this manner: wherefore no excuse
Shall purchase favour, but that with all speed
By sword I will render to him his due meed.

Wherefore, thou miscreant, while thou hast time,
Pray to the saints thy spokesman to be,
That at God's hand from this thy great crime
By their intercession thou may be set free.

AVARICE.

Nay, hearest thou, Tyranny? be ruled by me:
First cut off his head, and then let him pray,
So shall he be sure us not to bewray.

HYPOCRISY.

O wicked Tyranny! thou imp of the devil,
Too joyful tidings to thee have I brought,
For now thou art emboldened to practise all evil.

TYRANNY.

Marry, thou shalt not give me thy service for nought,
But for thy pains to please thee I thought.

HYPOCRISY.

Thou art nothing so ready to do any good,
As thou art to shed poor innocents' blood.

AVARICE.

Nay, Tyranny, suffer this rascal to prate,

[HYP. [_aside_.] On your face, sir.]

Till some man come by, and then he is gone.
Then wilt thou repent it, when it is too late:
Despatch him, therefore, while we are alone.

HYPOCRISY.

Well may the covetous be likened to a drone,
Which of the bee's labours will spoil and waste make,
And yet to get honey no labour will take.
The covetous likewise from poor men extort,
Their gains to increase they only do seek;
And so they may have it, of them a great sort
What means they use for it they care not a leek:
Yet will these misers scarce once a week
Have one good meal at their own table:
So by Avarice to help themselves they are unable.
Avarice to a fire may well compared be,
To the which the more you add, the more still it crave:
So likewise the covetous mind we do see,
Though riches abound, do wish still more to have
And to be short, your reverences to save,
To a filthy swine such misers are comparable,
Which, while[30] they be dead, are nothing profitable.

AVARICE.

Nay, farewell, Tyranny: I came hither too soon,
I perceive already I am too well known.
I were not best in their claws for to come,
Unless I were willing to be clean overthrown.

TYRANNY.

By the preaching of God's word all this mischief is grown,

Which if Hypocrisy might happily expel,
All we in safety and pleasure might dwell.
Stay, therefore, while from Hypocrisy we hear.

AVARICE.

Despatch then this merchant,[31] lest our counsel he tell.

HYPOCRISY.

I am content for God's cause this cross for to bear.

TYRANNY.

It is best killing him now his mind is set well.

HYPOCRISY.

Your scoffing and mocking God seeth each deal.

TYRANNY.

Yea, dost thou persist us still thus to check?
Thy speech I will hinder by cutting off thy neck.

HYPOCRISY.

Nay, hold thy hand, Cadby, thou hast kill'd me enough.
What! never the sooner for a merry word.
I meant not good earnest, to your maship I vow.
I did but jest, and spake but in bord:
Therefore of friendship put up again thy sword.

TYRANNY.

Nay, caitiff, presume not that thou shalt go scot-free;
Therefore, hold still, and I will soon despatch thee.

HYPOCRISY.

What! I pray thee, Tyranny, know first who I am.
Ye purblinded fools, do your lips blind your eyes?
Why, I was in place long before you came;
But you could not see the wood for the trees.
But, in faith, father Avarice, I will pay you your fees,
For the great good-will which you to me bear,
And in time will requite it again, do not fear.

AVARICE.

Content yourself, good Master Hypocrisy:
The words which I spake, I spake unaware.

TYRANNY.

Hold thy hand, Hypocrisy, I pray thee heartily:
So like a madman with thy friends do not fare.

HYPOCRISY.

For neither of you both a pin do I care:
Go, shake your ears both, like slaves as you be,
And look not in your need to be holpen of me.

TYRANNY.

What, Master Hypocrisy, will you take snuff so soon?
Marry, then you had need to be kept very warm.

AVARICE.

I swear to your mastership, by the man in the moon,
That to your person I intended no harm.

HYPOCRISY.

But that I am weary, I would both your tongues charm.
See how to my face they do me deride [_Aside_];
I will not therefore in your companies abide.

AVARICE.

Why, Master Hypocrisy, what would you that I do?
For my offence of mercy I you pray.

HYPOCRISY.

With thee I am at one; but of that merchant too
I look for some amends, or else I will away.

TYRANNY.

The presumptuous fool's part herein thou dost play.
What! of thy master dost thou look for obeisance?
I will not once entreat thee: if thou wilt, get thee hence.

HYPOCRISY.

Nimia familiaritas parit contemptum,
The old proverb by me is verified,
By too much familiarity contemned be some:
Even so at this present to me it betide.
For of long time Hypocrisy hath ruled as guide,
While now, of later days, through heretics' resistance,
I retained Tyranny to yield me assistance;
But through overmuch levity he thinks himself checkmate
With me his good patron, Master Hypocrisy.

TYRANNY.

List, I pray thee, Avarice, how this rascal can prate,
And with me Tyranny doth challenge equality;
Where he of himself hath neither strength nor hability;
But thou to him riches, and I strength, do give,
So that I must be his master, though it doth him grieve.

AVARICE.

Two dogs oftentimes one bone would fain catch,
But yet the third do them both deceive.
Even so Hypocrisy for the pre-eminence doth snatch,
Which Tyranny gapes for, ye may perceive:
But I must obtain it; for of me they retain
All kind of riches, their states to maintain,
To yield to me, therefore, they must be both fain. [_Aside_].

HYPOCRISY.

Was Judas Christ's master, because he bare the purse?
Nay, rather of all he was least regarded,
Have not men of honour stewards to disburse
All such sums of money wherewith they be charged?
Yet above their master their honour is not enlarged:
Even so thee, Avarice, my steward I account,
To pay that whereto my charges amount.
And to thee, Tyranny, this one word I object:
Whether was Joab or David the king?
When Joab was glad his ease to reject,

The Ammonites in Rabah to confusion to bring,
When David with Bathsheba at home was sleeping,
Was not Joab, his servant, in warfare to fight?
And so art thou mine, mine enemies to quite.

TYRANNY.

Nay, then, at the whole God give you good night,
Shall Tyranny to Hypocrisy in any point yield?

HYPOCRISY.

With this one word I will vanquish thee quite,
That thou shalt be glad to give me the field.
The end to be preferred all learned men wield:
Sith therefore Hypocrisy of Tyranny is end,
I must have the preferment for which I contend.

[AVA. Indeed you say troth.]

TYRANNY.

I will make you both grant that I am the chief,
Or else with my sword your sides I will pierce.

HYPOCRISY.

That were sharp reasoning indeed, with a mischief!

AVARICE.

I will yield him my right, if that he be so fierce.

HYPOCRISY.

The nature of hypocrites herein we rehearse;
Which, being convinced by the text of God's word,
The end of their spouting is fire and sword.
But if you will needs be chief, God speed well the plough:
I will be none that shall follow your train;
For if I should, I know well enough
That to fly the country we all should be fain:
Then were my labour done but in vain.
You know not so much as I do, Tyranny,
Therefore, I advise you, be ruled by me.

TYRANNY.

Inter amicos omnia sunt communia, they say:
Among friends there is reckoned no property,
But that the one hath of his own, th' other may
Have the use of the same at his own liberty,
Even so among us it is of a surety;
For what the one hath of his own proper right,
It is thine to use by day or by night.

AVARICE.

Indeed you say truth, the end is worth all;

[HYP. He hath learned logeres.[32]]

Such things as to get the end are referred,
And by this reason to you I prove shall,
That I before Hypocrisy must be preferred:
The conclusion of my reason is this[33] inferred;
Sith Hypocrisy was invented to augment private gain,

I am the end of Hypocrisy: this is plain.

HYPOCRISY.

Actum est de amicitia, the bargain is despatched,
And we two in friendship are united as one.

AVARICE.

In the same knot with you let me also be matched,
And of money, I warrant you, you shall want none.

HYPOCRISY.

I agree; what say you? shall he be one?

TYRANNY.

I judge him needful in our company to be,
And therefore, for my part, he is welcome to me.

[HYP. Friendship for gain.]

Let us now speedily on our business attend,
And labour each one to bring it about.

HYPOCRISY.

That is already by me brought to end,
So that of your preferment you need not to doubt;
And my coming hither was to find you out,
That at my elbow you might be in readiness,
To help, if need were, in this weighty business.
To tell you the story it were but too tedious,
How the Pope and I together have devised,
Firstly to inveigle the people religious,
For greediness of gain who will be soon pressed:
And, for fear lest hereafter they should be despised,
Of their own freewill will maintain Hypocrisy,
So that Avarice alone shall conquer the clergy.
Now, of the chiefest of his carnal cardinals
He doth appoint certain, and give them authority
To ride abroad in their pontificals,
To see if with Avarice they may win the laity;
If not, then to threaten them with open Tyranny:
Whereby doubt not but many will forsake
The truth of the gospel, and our parties take.

TYRANNY.

This device is praiseworthy: how say'st thou, Avarice?

AVARICE.

I like it well, if it were put in ure,
Yet little gain to me shall this whole practice,
More than I had before-time, procure.

HYPOCRISY.

The legates are ready to ride, I am sure;
Wherefore we had need to make no small delay:
They stay for my coming alone, I dare say.
Howbeit the laity would greatly mislike,
If they should know all our purpose and intent;
Yea, and perhaps some means they would seek
Our foresaid business in time to prevent.

TYRANNY.

Will you then be ruled by my arbitrament?
Lest the people should suddenly dissolve tranquillity,
For the legate's defence, let him use me Tyranny.

HYPOCRISY.

Herein your counsel is not much unwise,
Save that in one thing we had need to beware:
Lest you be known, we will you disguise,
And some grave apparel for you will prepare;
But your name, Tyranny, I fear all will mar:
Let me alone, and I will invent
A name to your nature, which shall be convenient.
Zeal shall your name be: how like you by that?
And therefore in office you must deal zealously.

TYRANNY.

Let me alone, I will pay them home pat:
Though they call me Zeal, they shall feel me Tyranny. [Aside_.

HYPOCRISY.

Lo, here is a garment: come, dress you handsomely.
Ay, marry (quoth he), I like this very well:
Now to the devil's grace you me seem to give counsel.
Now must I apply all my invention,
That I may devise Avarice to hide.
Thy name shall be called Careful Provision,
And every man for his household may lawfully provide:
Thus shalt thou go cloaked, and never be spied.

AVARICE.

Thy counsel, Hypocrisy, I very well allow,
And will recompense thee, if ever I know how.

TYRANNY.

Now on a boon^[34] voyage let us depart,
For I [am] well loth any time to delay.

HYPOCRISY.

Nay, yet in sign of a merry heart,
Let us sing before we go away.

AVARICE.

I am content; begin, I you pray;
But to sing the treble, we must needs have one.

HYPOCRISY.

If you say so, let it even alone.

[Exeunt_.

ACT III, SCENE 1.

PHILOLOGUS.

Too true, alas, too true, I say, was our divination,
The which Mathetes did foresee, when last we were in place;
For now indeed we feel the smart and horrible vexation,
Which Romish power unto us did threaten and menace.
Wherefore great need we have to call to God alway for grace;
For feeble flesh is far too weak those pains to undergo,
The which all they that fear the Lord are now appointed to.
The legate from the Pope of Rome is come into our coasts,
Who doth the saints of God each where with tyranny oppress,
And in the same most gloriously himself he vaunt and boast:
The more one mourneth unto him he pitieth the less.
Out of his cruel tyranny the Lord of heaven me bless;
For hitherto in blessed state my whole life I have spent,
With health of body, wealth in goods, and mind alway content.
Besides, of friends I have great store, who do me firmly love:
A faithful wife and children fair, of woods and pasture store,
And divers other things which I have got for my behoof,
Which now to be deprived of would grieve my heart full sore.
And if I come once in their claws. I shall get out no more,
Unless I will renounce my faith, and so their mind fulfil;
Which if I do, without all doubt my soul for aye I spill.
For sith I have received once the first-fruits of my faith,
And have begun to run the course that leadeth to salvation,
If in the midst thereof I stay or cease, the Scripture saith
It booteth not that I began with so good preparation;
But rather maketh much the more unto my condemnation:
For he alone shall have the palm which to the end doth run,
And he which plucks his hand from plough, in heaven shall never come.
Those labourers which hired were in vineyard for to moil,
And had their penny for their pain, they tarried all while night;
For if they ceased had, when sun their flesh with heat did broil,
And had departed from their work, they should have lost by right
Their wages-penny: I likewise shall be deprived quite
Of that same crown, the which I have in faith long looked for.
But for this time I will depart: I dare here stay no more.

[_Exit_.

ACT III., SCENE 2.

HYPOCRISY.

Ha, ha, ha! marry, now the game begins.
Hypocrisy throughout this realm is had in admiration,
And by my means both Avarice and Tyranny crept in,
Who in short space will make men run the way to desolation.
What did I say? my tongue did trip--I should say, consolation--
For now, forsooth, the clergy must into my bosom creep,
Or else they know not by what means themselves alive to keep.
On the other side the laity, be they either rich or poor--
If rich, then Avarice strangle them, because they will not lose
Their worldly wealth: or else we have one subtle practice more;
That is, that Sensual Suggestion their outward man shall pose,
Who can full finely in each cause his mind to them disclose.
But if that neither of these twain can to my train them win,[35]
Then at his cue to play his part doth Tyranny begin.
As for the poor knaves, such a one as this is,

We do not esteem him, but make short ado.
If he will not come on, we do him not miss,
But to the pot he is sure to go:
Tyranny deals with him and no mo.
But I marvel what doth him from hence so long stay,
Sooner named, sooner come, as common proverbs say.

[S[t]ep aside_.

ACT III., SCENE 3.

TYRANNY, AVARICE, HYPOCRISY.

[TYRANNY.]

By his wounds, I fear not, but it is cock sure[36] now.

[HYP. He hath a goodly grace in swearing.]

Under the legate's seal, in office I am placed:
Therefore whoso resist me, I will make him to bow.
Who can make Tyranny now be disgraced?

[HYP. He is graceless already.]

With a head of brass I will not be outfaced,
But will execute mine office with extreme cruelty,
So that all men shall know me to be plain Tyranny.

AVARICE.

Nay, Master Zeal, be ruled by me:
To such as resist such rigour you may show.

TYRANNY.

Zeal? nay, no Zeal; my name is Tyranny:
Neither am I ashamed who doth my name know,
For in my dealings the same I will show,

[HYP. He is Kit Careless.]

None dare reprove me, of that I am sure,
So long as authority on my side endure.
But to thy words a while I will list;
Therefore in brief say on what you will.

AVARICE.

I would have you show rigour to such as resist,
And such as be obstinate spare not to kill;
But those that be willing your hests to fulfil,

[HYP. Hark the practice of spiteful Sumnors.]

If they offend, and not of obstinacy,
For money excuse them, though they use villany,
Thus shall you perform your office aright,
For favour or money to spare the offendent.

TYRANNY.

So may I also, of malice or spite,
Or rancour of mind,[37] punish the innocent.
But I will be ruled by thine arbitrament,
And will favour such as will my hand grease.
The devil is a good fellow, if one can him please:[38]

[HYP. And you are one of his sons, methink, by your head.]

But to follow our business great pains we do take;
On an hasty message we were fit to be sent.

HYPOCRISY [_Aside_].

When I lie a-dying, I will you messengers make:
You ply you so fast, you are too-too diligent.
Whoop how, Master Zeal, whither are ye bent?

AVARICE.

Hark! methought one hallooed, and called you by name.

TYRANNY.

I would it were Hypocrisy.

AVARICE.

It is the very same.

What, Master Hypocrisy, for you I have sought
This hour or two, but could you not find.

HYPOCRISY.

That is no marvel, it is not for nought,
For I am but little, and you two are blind;
Neither have you eyes to see with behind:
Yet may the learned note herein a mystery,
That neither Tyranny nor Avarice can find out Hypocrisy.
But what earnest business have you in charge,
That with so great speed must presently be finished?

TYRANNY.

Marry, see here.

HYPOCRISY.

What is it?

TYRANNY.

A commission large
From my Lord Legate himself authorised,
The effect whereof must presently be practised.

HYPOCRISY.

What is the tenure,[39] pray you let me know?

TYRANNY.

Avarice hath read it, not I; let him show.

AVARICE.

He hath firstly in charge to make inquisition,
Whether altars be re-edified, whether chalice and book,
Vestments for mass, sacraments, and procession,
Be prepared again: if not, he must look,

And find out such fellows as these cannot brook,
And to my Lord Legate such merchants present,
That for their offence they may have condign punishment.
If any we take tardy, Tyranny them threat,
That for their negligence he will them present;
And I desirous some money to get,
If ought they will give me, their evil will prevent;
Yea, sometime of purpose such shifts we invent.

HYPOCRISY.

Peace, yonder comes one; methink it is a priest,
By his gown, cap, and tippet made of a list.

ACT III., SCENE 4.

CACONOS, HYPOCRISY, TYRANNY, AVARICE.

[CACONOS.]

In[40] gude feth, sir, this newis de gar me lope,
Ay is as light as ay me wend, gif that yo wol me troth,
Far new agen within awer loud installed is the Pope,
Whese legat with authority tharawawt awr country goth,
And charge before him far te com us priests end lemen hath,
Far te spay awt, gif that he mea, these new-sprang arataics,
Whilk de disturb aur hally Kirk, laik a sart of saysmatics.
Awr gilden Gods ar brought ayen intea awr kirks ilkwhare,
That unte tham awr parishioner ma offer thar gude-will.
For hally mass in ilk place new thea autars de prepare,
Hally water, pax, cross, banner, censer and candill,
Cream, crismatory, hally bread, the rest omit ay will,
Whilt hally fathers did invent fre awd antiquity,
Be new received inte awr kirks with great solemnity.
Bay these though lemen been apprest, the clargy all het gean,
Far te awr sents theis affer yifts all whilk we sall receive:
Awr hally mass, thaw thea bay dere, thea de it but in vain,
Far thaw ther frends frea Purgatory te help thea dea believe,
Yet af ther hope, gif need rewhayre,[41] it wawd theam all deceive.
Sea wawd awr pilgrimage, reliques, trentals, and pardons,
Whilk far awr geyn inte awr Kirk ar braught in far the nonce.
Far well a nere what war awr tenths and taythes that gro in fild,
What gif we han of glebed loud ene plawwark bay the year,
Awr affring deas de vara laytell ar nething te us yield:
Awr beadroll geanes, awr chrisom clothes de laytle mend awr fare
Gif awt af this we pea far vale, we laytle mare can spare.
Sawl-masses, diriges, monethmayndes and buryings,
AlsowInday, kirkinges, banasking and weddings.
The sacraments, gif we mowt sell, war better than thea all;
Far gif the Jews gave thratty pence te hang Chraist on a tree,
Gude Christian folk thrayse thratty pence wawd count a price but small;
Sea that te eat him with their teeth delaivered he mawght be.
New of this thing delaiverance ne man can make but we,
Se that the market in this punt we priests sawd han at will,
And with the money we sowd yet awr pooches we sowd fill.

HYPOCRISY.

I will go and salute him: good morrow, Sir John.[42]

CACON.

Naw, bay may priest-hade, God give ye ten far ene.

HYPOCRISY.

Do you, Master Parson, in this parish sing?

CACON.

Yai, sir, that ay de, gif yowl give me trothing.

TYRANNY.

I have a commission your house and church to seek,
To search if you any seditious books do keep.

CACON.

Whe ay? well a near, ay swear bay the Sacrament,
Ay had rather han a cup af nale than a Testament.

HYPOCRISY.

How can you without it your office discharge?

CACON.

It is the least thing ay car far, bay may charge;
Far se lang as thea han images wharon te luke,
What need thea be distructed awt af a buik?

HYPOCRISY.

Tush! that will modify them all well enou':
As well a dead image as a dumb idol, I make God avow.

CACON.

Yai, ay my sen bay experience thot con show;
Far in may portace the tongue ay de nat know,
Yet when ay see the great gilded letter,
Ay ken it sea well, as nea man ken better.
As far example: on the day of Chraist's nativity,
Ay see a bab in a manger and two beasts standing by:
The service whilk to Newyear's-day is assaign'd
Bay the paicture of the circumcission ay faynd:
The service, whilk on Twalfth-day mun be done,
Ay seeke bay the mark of the three kings of Cologne.
Bay the devil tenting Chraist ay find whadragesima:
Bay Chraist on the cross ay serch out gude-fraiday.
Pasch for his mark hath the Resurrection:
Ayenst Hally-Thursday is pented Chraist's ascension:
Thus in mayn own buke ay is a gude clerk;
But gif the sents war gone, the cat had eat my mark.
Se the sandry mairacles, whilk ilk sent have done,
Bay the pictures on the walls sal appear to them soon,
Bay the whilk thea ar learned in every distress,
What sent thea mun prea te far succour, doubtless:
Sea that all lepers to Sylvester must prea,
That he wawd frae tham ther disease take away.
Laykwais, thea that han the falling saickness,
Te be eased therfre thea mun prea to Sent Cornelis:
In contagious air, as in plague or pestilence,
Te hally Sent-Ruke[43] thea mun call far assistance.
Fra paril of drawing Sent Carp keep the mariners:
Fra dayng in warfare Sent George guard the soldiers:

Sent Job heal the poor, the ague Sent German:
For te ease the toothache call te Sent Appolline[44].
Gif that a woman be barren and childless,
Te help her herein she must prea te Sent Nicholas.
Far wemen in travail call to Sent Magdalen;
Far lawliness of mind call to Sent Katherine,
Sent Loy save your horse, Sent Anthony your swine.

TYRANNY.

What! this parson seemeth cunning to be,
And, as far as I see, in a good uniformity.
Yea, he is well read in that Golden Legend.

CACON.

Bay may troth, in reading any other ne taym do I spend,
Far that, ay ken, bay general caunsel is canonised,
And bay the hely Pope himself is authorised:
That buke farther is wholly permitted,
Wharas the Baible in part is prohibited.
And therefore, gif it be lawful to utter my conscience,
Before the New Testament ays give it credence.

HYPOCRISY.

I allow his judgment before Ambrose and Austin,
And for Hypocrisy a more convenient chaplain.

AVARICE.

It grieveth me much that no fault we can spy,
For now of some bribe disappointed am I;
Yet happily he may tell us of some heretics.

TYRANNY.

Is there, Mast. Parson, in your parish no schismatics?

CACON.

Yai, mara, is ther a vara busybody,
Whe will jest with me and call me fule and noddy,
And sets his lads te spout Latin ayenst me,
But ay spose then with _Deparfundis Clam aui_:
And oftentimes he wil reason with me of the Sacarment,
And say he can prove bay the New Testament
That Chraist's body is in heaven placed;
But ays not believe him, ay woll not be awt-faced.
He says besayd that the Pope is Antichraist,
Fugered of John bay the seven-headed beast,
And all awre religion is but mon's invention,
And with God's ward is at utter dissension;
And a plaguy deal mare of sayk layk talk,
That ay dar not far may narse bay his yate walk,
But ay wawd he wer brunt, that ay mawght be whaiet.[45]

TYRANNY.

He must have a cooler; his tongue runs at riot.

AVARICE.

What is his name, Sir John, canst thou tell us?

CACON.

Yai, sir, that ay ken: he is cleped Phaillelegoos.

TYRANNY.

Wilt thou go show his house, where he dwell?

CACON.

Yai, or els ay wawd may sawl war in hell.
Te de him a pleasure ay wawd gang a whole year,
Gif it war but te make him a fadock[46] te bear.

TYRANNY.

Go with us, Avarice, and bear us company.

AVARICE.

Nay, if you go hence, I will not here tarry.

HYPOCRISY.

Away, sirs: in your business in a corner do not lurk,
That my Lord Legate, when he comes, may have work.

TYRANNY.

Come on: let us go together, Sir John.

CACON.

Ay sall follow after. God boy, you good gentleman.

HYPOCRISY [_Aside_.]

Farewell three false knaves as between this and London!

TYRANNY.

What say'st thou?

HYPOCRISY.

As honest men as the three Kings of Cologne.

[_Exeunt_ TYR. AVA. CACON.]

This gear goes round, if that we had a fiddle:
Nay, I must sing too, _heigh, dery, dery, dery_.
I can do but laugh, my heart is so merry:
I will be minstrel myself, _heigh, didle, didle, didle_;
But lay there a straw I began to be weary.
But hark; I hear a trampling of feet.
It is my Lord Legate; I will him go meet.

ACT IV., SCENE I.

CAR[DINAL]. HYP. AVA. TYR. PHILO.

[CARDINAL.]

Go to, Master Zeal,[47] bring forth that heretic,
Which doth thus disturb our religion catholic.

HYPOCRISY.

Room for my lord's grace! what! no manner reverence,
But cap on head, Hodge, and that in a lord's presence?

CARDINAL.

What, Master Hypocrisy, I have stayed for you long.

HYPOCRISY [_Aside_].

You were best crowd in, and play us among.

CARDINAL.

Where have you been from me so long absent?
I appointed to have been here three hours ago,
In my consistory to have sat in judgment
Of that wretched schismatic that doth trouble us so.

HYPOCRISY.

What, have you caught but one, and no mo?
In faith, father Avarice, you have plied your chaps well.

AVARICE.

I must needs confess that I am paid for my travail.

TYRANNY.

Room for the prisoner! what, room on each hand,
Or I shall make some out of the way for to stand.
Lo, here, my lord, is that seditious schismatic,
That we have laid wait for, an arrant heretic.

[_Enter_ PHILOLOGUS.]

CARDINAL.

Sit down, Master Hypocrisy, to yield me assistance.

HYPOCRISY.

I thank your lordship for your courteous benevolence.
I will be the noddy--I should say the notary,
To write before my Lord Legate, which is commissary.

CARDINAL.

Ah, sirrah! be you he that doth thus disturb
The whole estate of our faith catholic?
Art thou so expert in God's laws and word,
That no man may learn thee, thou arrant heretic?
But this is the nature of every schismatic:
Be his errors never so false doctrine,
He will say by God's word he dare it examine.

PHILOLOGUS.

With humble submission to your authority,
I pardon crave, if ought amiss I say;
For being thus set in peril and extremity,
To me unacquainted, my tongue soon trip may:
Wherefore excuse me, I do your lordship pray,
And I will answer to every demand,
According to my conscience, God's word being my warrant.

CARDINAL.

To begin therefore orderly: how say'st thou, Philologus,
Have I authority to call thee me before?
Or, to be short, I will object it thus:
Whether hath the Pope, which is Peter's successor,

Than all other bishops preheminance more?
If not, then it follow that neither he,
Nor I which am his legate, to accompts may call thee.

PHILOLOGUS.

The question is perilous for me to determine,
Chiefly when the party is judge in the cause;
Yet, if the whole course of Scripture ye examine,
And will be tried by God's holy laws,
Small help shall you find to defend the same cause,
But the contrary may be proved manifestly,
As I in short words will prove to you briefly.
The surest ground, whereon your Pope doth stand,
Is of Peter's being at Rome a strong imagination,
And the same Peter, you do understand,
Of all the disciples had the gubernation,
Surmising both without good approbation,
Unless you will by the name of Babylon,
From whence Peter wrote, is understood Rome.
As indeed divers of your writers have affirmed,
Reciting Jerome, Austin, Primatius, and Ambrose,
Who by their several writings have confirmed
That Rome is New Babylon: I may it not glose.
But it were better for you they were dumb, I suppose,
For they labour to prove Rome by that acception
The whore of Babylon, spoke of in the Revelation.
But grant that Peter in Rome settled was,
Yet that he was chief it remains you to prove;
For in my judgment it is a plain case,
That if any amongst them to rule it did behove,
He should be the chief, whom Christ most did love;
To whom he bequeathed his mother most dear,
To whom in revelation Christ did also appear.
I mean John Evangelist (by birth) cousin-german
To our Saviour Christ, as stories do us tell:
From whose succession if that you should claim
Superiority, you should mend your cause well,
For then of some likelihood of truth it should smell,
Where none so often as Peter was reprov'd,
Nor from steadfast faith so oftentimes removed.
But grant all were true herein you do feign,
Mark one proper lesson of a Greek orator:
As a good child of his father's wealth is inheritor,
So of his father's virtues he must be possessor.
Now Peter follows Christ, and all worldly goods forsakes;
But the Pope leaveth Christ, and himself to glory takes.
And to be short, Christ himself refused to be a king,
And the servant above the master may not be;
Which being both true, it is a strange thing,
How the Pope can receive this pomp and dignity,
And yet profess himself Christ's servant to be.
Christ will be no king, the Pope will be more:
The Pope is Christ's master, not his servant, therefore.

CARDINAL.

Ah, thou arrant heretic! I will thee remember.
I am glad I know so much as I do:
I have weighed thy reasons, and have found them so slender,
That I think them not worthy to be answered [to].^[48]

How say you, Master Hypocrisy?

HYPOCRISY.

I also think so;

But let him go forward and utter his conscience,
And we will a while longer hear him with patience.

CARDINAL.

Say on, thou heretic: of the holy Sacrament;
Of the body and blood of Christ, what is thine opinion?

PHILOLOGUS.

I have not yet finished my former argument.

CARDINAL.

Say on, as I bid thee: thou art a stout minion.

PHILOLOGUS.

I shall then gladly: it is a sign of union,
The which should remain us Christians among,
That one should love another all our life long.
For as the bread is of many cornels compounded,
And the wine from the juice of many grapes do descend,
So we, which into Christ our Rock are ingrounded,
As into one temple, should cease to contend,
Lest by our contention the Church we offend.
This was not the least cause, among many more,
Which are now omitted, that this Sacrament was given for.
The chiefest cause why this Sacrament was ordained,
Was the infirmity of our outward man;
Whereas salvation to all men was proclaimed,
That with true faith apprehend the same can,
By the death of Jesus Christ, that immaculate Lamb;
That the same might the rather of all men be believed,
To the word to add a Sacrament it Christ nothing grieved.
And as we the sooner believe that thing true,
For the trial whereof more witnesses we find,
So by the means of the Sacrament many grew
Believing creatures, where before they were blind;
For our senses some savour of our faith now do find,
Because in the Sacrament there is this analogy,
That Christ feeds our souls, as the bread doth our body.

CARDINAL.

Ah, thou foul heretic! is there bread in the Sacrament?
Where is Christ's body, then, which he did us give?

PHILOLOGUS.

I know to the faithful receiver it is there present,
But yet the bread remaineth still, I steadfastly believe.

CARDINAL.

To hear these his errors it doth me greatly grieve:
But that we may shortly to some issue come,
In what sense said Christ, *„Hoc est corpus meum“*?

PHILOLOGUS.

Even in the same sense that he said before:
„Vos estis sal terrae, Vos estis lux mundi,

Ego sum ostium_, and a hundred such more,
If time would permit to allege them severally;
But that I may the simple sort edify,
You ask me in what sense these words I verify,
Where Christ of the bread said, "This is my body."
For answer herein I ask you this question:
Were Christ's disciples into salt transformed
When he said, "Ye are the salt of the earth every one,"
Or when the light of the world he them affirmed?
Or himself to be a door when he confirmed?
Or to be a vine, did his body then change?
If not then, why now? this to me seemeth strange.

CARDINAL.

Why, dost thou doubt of Christ his omnipotency,
But what so he willeth doth so come to pass?

PHILOLOGUS.

God keep me and all men from such a frenzy,
As to think anything Christ's power to surpass,
When his will to his power joined was;
But where his will wanteth, his power is ineffectual:
As Christ can be no liar, God cannot be mortal.
Set down therefore some proof of his will
That he would be made bread, and then I recant.

CARDINAL.

This caitiff mine ears with wind he doth fill:
His words both truth and reason doth want.
Christ's word is his will; this must thou needs grant.

PHILOLOGUS.

He spake the word likewise, when he said, "I am the door,"
Was his body transformed into timber therefore?

CARDINAL.

Nay, if thou beest obstinate, I will say no more.
Have him hence to prison, and keep him full sure:
I will make him set by my friendship more store.
But hearest thou, Zeal? go first and procure
Some kind of new torment which he may not endure.

TYRANNY.

I am here in readiness to do your commandment,
And will return hither again incontinent.

HYPOCRISY.

At thy return bring hither Sensual Suggestion,
That, if need be, he may us assist,
Lest that both I and Careful Provision
The zeal of Philologus may not fully resist;
But he in his obstinacy doth still persist:
To put him to death would accuse us of tyranny;
But if we could win him, he should do us much honesty.

TYRANNY.

I hear you, and will fulfil your words speedily.
[_Exit_ TYRANNY.]

HYPOCRISY.

Good Master Philologus, I pity your case,
To see you so foolish yourself to undo:
I durst yet promise to purchase you grace,
If you would, at length, your errors forego.
Therefore, I pray you, be not your own foe.

PHILOLOGUS.

Call you those errors which the gospel defends?
I know not, then, whence true d[o]ctrine descends.

CARDINAL.

Nay, Master Hypocrisy, you spend time in vain
To reason with him: he will not be removed.

AVARICE.

Had I so much to live by, as he hath certain,
I would not lose that which I so well loved.

CARDINAL.

He stands in his reputation: he will not be reproved;
And that is the cause that he is so obstinate:
[_To Phil_.] But I shall well enough thy courage abate.

PHILOLOGUS.

I humbly beseech you of Christian charity,
You seek not of purpose my blood for to spill;
For if I have displeased your authority,
In reasonable causes redress it I will:
But in this respect I fear I should kill
My soul for ever, if against my conscience
I should to the Pope's laws acknowledge obedience.

HYPOCRISY.

Cease from those words, if your safety you love:
As though no man had a soul more than you.
Such nips, perchance, my lord's patience will move;
Then would you please him, if that you wist how.
But if you will be ruled by my honesty, I vow
I will do the best herein that I can,
Because you seem to be a good gentleman.

AVARICE.

Were it not better for you to live at ease,
And spend that merrily which earst you have got,
Than by your own folly yourself to disease,
And bring you to trouble, which other men seek not?

HYPOCRISY.

In faith, Philologus, your zeal is too hot,
Which will not be quenched, but with your heart-blood;
If I were so zealous, I would think myself wood.

CARDINAL.

Tush! it will not be: he thinks we do but jest.
Wherefore, that some trial of my mind he may have,
That Careful Provision should go I think best
Into the town, and there assistance crave,
His house for to enter, and his goods for me save:

Lest when his wife know that they be confiscate,
Into other men's keeping the same she doth dissipate.

HYPOCRISY.

You speak very wisely in my simple judgment:
Therefore you were best to send him away.

CARDINAL.

Go to, Careful Provision, depart incontinent,
And fulfil the words which I to you say.

AVARICE.

Of pardon herein I do your lordship pray.
You doubt not, I trust, of my willing mind,
Which herein is most ready, you always shall find:
For who is more ready by fraud to purloin
Other men's goods than I am each where?
But lest some man at me should chance to foine,
And kill me at once, I greatly do fear.
I had rather persuade him his folly to forbear.

CARDINAL.

Prove then, if thou canst do him any good:
He shall not say that we seek his blood.

AVARICE.

Ah, Master Philologus! you see your own case,
That both life and goods are in my lord's will:
Therefore you were best to sue for some grace,
And be content his words to fulfil.
If you neglect this, hence straightway I will,
And all your goods I will sure confiscate:
Then will you repent it, when it is too late.

PHILOLOGUS.

My case indeed I see most miserable,
As was Susanna betwixt two evils placed;
Either to consent to sin most abominable,
Or else in the world's sight to be utterly disgraced;
But as she her chastity at that time embraced,
So will I now spiritual whoredom resist,
And keep me a true virgin to my loving spouse Christ.

AVARICE.

Wilt thou then neglect the provision of thy household?
Thou art therefore worse than an infidel is.

PHILOLOGUS.

That you abuse God's word, to say I dare be bold,
And the saying of Paul you interpret amiss.

CARDINAL.

I never saw the like heretic that this is.
Away, Careful Provision, about your business.

AVARICE.

Sith there is no remedy, I am here in readiness.

[Exit_ AVARICE.

PHILOLOGUS.

I beseech your lordship, even from the heart-root,
That you would vouchsafe, for my contentation,
To approve unto me by God's holy book
Some one of the questions of our disputation:
For I will hear you with heart's delectation,
Because I would gladly to your doctrine consent,
If that I could so my conscience content.
But my conscience crieth out, and bids me take heed
To love my Lord God above all earthly gain;
Whereby all this while I stand in great dread,
That if I should God's statutes disdain,
In wretched state then I should remain.
Thus crieth my conscience to me continually,
Which if you can stay, I will yield to you gladly.

CARDINAL.

I can say no more than I have done already.
Thou heardest that I called thee heretic and fool:
If thou wilt not consent to me, and that speedily,
With a new master thou shalt go to school.

HYPOCRISY.

Thou hast no more wit, I see, than this stool,
Far unfit to dispute and reason with my lord:
He can subdue thee with fire and sword quite with one word.

TYRANNY.[49]

Come follow apace, Sensual Suggestion,
Or else I will leave you to come all alone.

SUGGESTION.

You go in haste, you make expedition:
Nay, if you run so fast, I will none.
This little journey will make me to groan.
I use not to trouble myself in this wise,
And now to begin I do not advise.

TYRANNY.

Have I not plied me, which am come again so soon,
And yet have finished such sundry business?
I have caused many pretty toys to be done,
So that now I have each thing in readiness.

CARDINAL.

What, Master Zeal, you are praiseworthy, doubtless.
Art thou prepared this gentleman to receive?
He will roast a fagot, or else he me deceive.

TYRANNY.

In simple manner I will him entertain,
Yet must he take it all in good part;
And though his diet be small, he may not disdain,
Nor yet contemn the kindness of my heart:
For though I lack instruments to put him to smart,
Yet shall he abide in a hellish black dungeon:
As for blocks, stocks, and irons, I warrant him want none.

HYPOCRISY.

Well, farewell Philologus, you hear of your lodging.

I would yet do you good, if that I wist how.

CARDINAL.

Let him go, Hypocrisy; stand not all day dodging:
You have done too much for him, I make God avow.

HYPOCRISY.

Stay; for Suggestion doth come yonder now.
Come on, lazy lubber, you make but small haste:
Had you stayed a while longer, your coming had been waste.

SUGGESTION.

You know of myself I am not very quick,
Because that my body I do so much tender;
For Sensual Suggestion will quickly be sick,
If that his own ease he should not remember.
Thus one cause of my tarriance to you I do render:
Another I had as I came by the way,
Which did me the longer from your company stay.

HYPOCRISY.

What was that, Suggestion? I pray thee to us utter,
For I am with child, till that I do it hear.

SUGGESTION.

A certain gentlewoman did murmur and mutter,
And for grief of mind her hair she did tear:
She will at last kill herself, I greatly do fear.

HYPOCRISY.

What is the cause why this grief she did take?

SUGGESTION.

Because her husband her company did forsake.
Her children also about her did stand,
Sobbing and sighing, and made lamentation,
Knocking their breasts, and wringing their hand,
Saying they are brought to utter desolation
By the means of their father's wilful protestation;
Whose goods, they say, are already confiscate,
Because he doth the Pope's laws violate.
And indeed I saw Avarice standing at the door,
And a company of ruffians assisting him there.

PHILOLOGUS.

Alas, alas! this pincheth my heart full sore.
Mine evils he doth declare, mine own woe I do hear,
Wherefore from tears I cannot forbear.

HYPOCRISY.

Ha, ha! doth this touch you, Master Philologus?
You need not have had it, being rul'd by us.

SUGGESTION.

Why, what is he thus, Master Hypocrisy,
That taketh such sorrow at the words which I spake?

HYPOCRISY.

One that is taken and convinced of heresy,[50]

And, I fear me much, will burn at a stake:
Yet to reclaim him much pains would I take,
And have done already, howbeit in vain.
I would crave thine assistance, were it not to thy pain.

SUGGESTION.

I will do the best herein that I can:
Yet go thou with me to help at a need.
[_To Phil_] With all my heart, God save you, good gentleman,
To see your great sorrow my heart doth wellnigh bleed.
But what is the cause of your trouble and dread?
Disdain not to me your secret to tell:
A wise man sometime of a fool may take counsel.

PHILOLOGUS.

Mine estate, alas! is now most lamentable,
For I am but dead, whichever side I take:
Neither to determine herein am I able,
With good advice mine election to make,
The worse to refuse, and the best for to take:
My spirit covets the one; but alas! since your presence,
My flesh leads my spirit therefro by violence.
For at this time, I being in great extremity,
Either my Lord God in heart to reject,
Or else to be oppressed by the legat's authority,
And in this world to be counted an abject,
My lands, wife, and children also to neglect:
This later part to take my spirit is in readiness,
But my flesh doth subdue my spirit doubtless.

SUGGESTION.

Your estate, perhaps, seemeth to you dangerous,
The rather because you have not been used
To incur beforetime such troubles perilous,
But to your power such evils have refused:
Howbeit, of two evils the least must be choosed:
Now which is the least evil, we will shortly examine,
That which part to take yourself may determine.
On the right hand, you say, you see God's just judgment,
His wrath and displeasure on you for to fall,
And instead of the joys of heaven ever permanent,
You see for your stipend the torments infernal.

PHILOLOGUS.

That is it indeed which I fear most of all;
For Christ said: fear not them which the body can annoy,
But fear him which the body and soul can destroy.

SUGGESTION.

Well, let that lie aside awhile as it is,
And on the other side make the like inquisition:
If on the left side you fall, then shall you not miss
But to bring your body to utter perdition;
For at man's hand, you know, there is no remission.
Beside, your children fatherless, your wife desolate,
Your goods and possessions to other men confiscate.

PHILOLOGUS.

Saint Paul to the Romans hath this worthy sentence:

I accompt the afflictions of this world transitory,
Be they never so many, in full equivalence
Cannot countervail those heavenly glory,
Which we shall have through Christ his propitiatory.
I also accompt the rebukes of our Saviour
Greater gains to me than this house full of treasure.

SUGGESTION.

You have spoken reasonably; but yet, as they say,
One bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;
So you, now enjoying these worldly joys, may
Esteem the other as light as a rush:
Thus may you 'scape this perilous push.

PHILOLOGUS.

Yea, but my salvation to me is most certain;
Neither doubt I that I shall suffer this in vain.

SUGGESTION.

Is your death meritorious, then, in God's sight,
That you are so sure to attain to salvation?

PHILOLOGUS.

I do not think so; but my faith is full pight
In the mercies of God, by Christ's mediation;
By whom I am sure of my preservation.

SUGGESTION.

Then to the faithful no hurt can accrue,
But what so he worketh, good end shall ensue.

PHILOLOGUS.

Our Saviour Christ did say to the tempter,
When he did persuade him from the pinnacle to fall,
And said, he might safely that danger adventure,
Because that God's angels from hurt him save shall:
See that thy Lord God thou tempt not at all.
So I, though persuaded of my sins' free remission,
May not commit sin upon this presumption.

CARDINAL.

What, have you not yet done your foolish tattling
With that froward heretic! I will then away:
If you will tarry to hear all his prattling,
He would surely keep you most part of the day.
It is now high dinner-time, my stomach doth say;
And I will not lose one meal of my diet,
Though thereon did hang an hundred men's quiet.

SUGGESTION.

By your lordship's patience, one word with him more,
And then, if he will not, I give him to Tyranny.

HYPOCRISY.

I never saw my lord so patient before,
To suffe[r] one to speak for himself so quietly;
But you were not best to trust to his courtesy:
It is evil waking of a dog that doth sleep.
While you have his friendship, you were best it to keep.

CARDINAL.

I promise thee, Philologus, by my vowed chastity,
If thou wilt be ruled by thy friends that be here,
Thou shalt abound in wealth and prosperity,
And in the country chief rule thou shalt bear,
And a hundred pounds more thou shalt have in the year.
If thou wilt this courtesy refuse,
Thou shalt die incontinent: the one of these choose.

SUGGESTION.

Well, sith it is no time for us to debate
In formal^[51] manner what is in my mind,
I will at once to thee straight demonstrate
Those worldly joys which here thou shalt find.
And for because thou art partly blind,
In this respect look through this mirror,
And thou shalt behold an unspeakable pleasure.
[Shows him a mirror.]

PHILOLOGUS.

O peerless pleasures, O joys unspeakable,
O worldly wealth, O palaces gorgeous,
O fair children, O wife most amiable;
O pleasant pastime, O pomp so glorious,
O delicate diet, O life lascivious;
O dolorous death which would me betray,
And my felicity from me take away!
I am fully resolved without further demur^[52]
In these delights to take my whole solace;
And what pain soever hereby I incur,
Whether heaven or hell, whether God's wrath or grace,
This glass of delight I will ever embrace.
But one thing most chiefly doth trouble me here:
My neighbours inconstant will tempt me, I fear.

HYPOCRISY.

He that will seek each man to content
Shall prove himself at last most unwise.
Yourself to save harmless think it sufficient,
And weight not the people's clamorous outcries.
Yet their mouths to stop I can soon devise:
Say that the reading of the works of St Self-love
And Doctor Ambition did your errors remove.
And hark in thine^[53] ear, delay no more time:
The sooner the better in end you will say.
[Aside.] We have now caught him as bird is in lime.^[54]

TYRANNY.

Come on, sirs; have ye done? I would fain away.

HYPOCRISY.

Go even when you will, we do you not stay.
Philologus hath drunk such a draught of hypocrisy,
That he minds not to die yet; he will master this malady.

CARDINAL.

Come on, Master Philologus: are you grown to a stay?
I am glad to hear that you become tractable.

PHILOLOGUS.

If it please your lordship, I say even what you say,
And confess your religion to be most allowable.
Neither will I gainsay your customs laudable:
My former follies I utterly renounce;
That myself was an heretic, I do here pronounce.

CARDINAL.

Nay, Master Philologus, go with me to my palace,
And I shall set down the form of recantation,
Which you shall read on Sunday next in open place.
This done, you shall satisfy our expectation,
And shall be set free from all molestation:
Into the bosom of the Church we will you take,
And some high officer therein will you make.

PHILOLOGUS.

I must first request your lordship's favour,
That I may go home my wife for to see,
And I will attend on you within this hour.

CARDINAL.

Nay, I may not suffer you alone to go free,
Unless one of these your surety will be.

SUGGESTION.

I, Sensual Suggestion, for him will undertake.

CARDINAL.

Very well, take him to you: your prisoner I him make.
Come you, Master Hypocrisy, and bear me company,
Or else I am sure no meat I should eat;
And go before, Zeal, to see each thing ready,
That, when we once come, we stay not for meat.

HYPOCRISY.

With small suit hereto you shall me intreat.

[_Exit_ TYRANNY.

CARDINAL.

Farewell, Philologus, and make small delay:
Perhaps of our dinners for you I will stay.

[_Exeunt_ CARDINAL _and_ HYPOCRISY.

SUGGESTION.

Had not you been a wise man, yourself to have lost,
And brought your whole family to wretched estate!
Where now of your blessedness yourself you may boast,
And of all the country accompt yourself fortunate.

PHILOLOGUS.

Such was the wit of my foolish pate.
But what do we stay so long in this place?
I shall not be well, whilst I am with my Lord's grace.

[_Exeunt_.

ACT IV. SCENE 4.

SPIRIT, PHILOLOGUS, SUGGESTION.

[SPIRIT.]

Philologus, Philologus, Philologus, I say,
In time take heed, go not too far, look well thy steps unto:
Let not suggestion of thy flesh thy conscience thee betray,
Who doth conduct thee in the path that leadeth to all woe.
Weigh well this warning given from God, before thou further go,
And sell not everlasting joy for pleasures temporal,
From which thou soon shalt go, or they from thee bereaved shall.

PHILOLOGUS.

Alas! what voice is this I hear, so dolefully to sound
Into mine ears, and warneth me in time yet to beware?
Why, have not I the pleasant path of worldly pleasures found?
To walk therein for my delight no man shall me debar.

SUGGESTION.

Look in this glass, Philologus: for nought else do thou care.
What dost thou see within the same? is not the coast all clear?

PHILOLOGUS.

Nought else but pleasure, pomp and wealth herein to me appear.

SUGGESTION.

Give me thy hand: I will be guide, and lead thee in the way.
What, dost thou shrink, Philologus, where I dare go before?

SPIRIT.

Yea, shrink so still, Philologus; in time turn back, I say:
In Sensual Suggestion's steps see that thou tread no more;
And though the frailty of the flesh hath made thee fall full sore,
And to deny with outward lips thy Lord and God most dear,
The same to 'stablish with consent of conscience stand in fear.
Thou art yet free, Philologus; all torments thou may'st 'scape,
Only the pleasures of the world thou shalt awhile forbear.
Renounce thy crime, and sue for grace, and do not captivate
Thy conscience unto mortal sin: the yoke of Christ do bear.
Shut up these words within thy breast, which sound so in thine ear:
The outward man hath caused thee this enterprise to take;
Beware lest wickedness of spirit the same do perfect make.

PHILOLOGUS.

My heart doth tremble for distress; my conscience pricks me sore,
And bids me cease that course in time, which I would gladly run.
The wrath of God, it doth me tell, doth stand my face before:
Wherefore I hold it best to cease that race I have begun.

SUGGESTION.

These are but fancies certainly; for this way thou shalt shun
All worldly woes: look in thy glass and tell me what it show.
Thou wilt not credit other men before thyself, I trow.

PHILOLOGUS.

O gladsome glass, O mirror bright, O crystal clear as sun,
The joys cannot be uttered which herein I behold!
Wherefore I will not thee forsake, what evil soever come.

SPIRIT.

If needs thou wilt thyself undo, say not but thou art told.

PHILOLOGUS.

Hap what hap will, I will not lose these pleasures manifold.
Wherefore conduct me once again: here, take me by the hand.

SUGGESTION.

That Sensual Suggestion doth lead him, understand.

ACT IV., SCENE 5.[55]

CONSCIENCE, PHILOLOGUS, SUGGESTION.

[CONSCIENCE.]

Alas, alas! thou woful wight, what fury doth thee move
So willingly to cast thyself into consuming fire?
What Circe hath bewitched thee thy worldly wealth to love
More than the blessed state of Soul, this one thing I desire?
Weigh well the cause with sincere heart, thy conscience thee require,
And sell not everlasting joys for pleasures temporal.[56]
Resist Suggestion of the flesh, who seeks thee for to spoil;
From which thou soon shalt go, or they from thee bereaved shall,
And take from thee, which God elect, true everlasting soil.
See where confusion doth attend to catch thee in his snare,
Whose hands, if that thou goest on still, thou shalt no way eschew.

PHILOLOGUS.

What wight art thou, which for my health dost take such earnest care?

CONSCIENCE.

Thy crazed conscience, which foresee the plagues and torments due,
Which from just Judge, whom thou denyest, shall by and by ensue.

SUGGESTION.

Thou hast good trial of the faith which I to thee do bear:
Commit thy safety to my charge; there is no danger near.

CONSCIENCE.

Such is the blindness of the flesh, that it may not descry
Or see the perils which the soul is ready to incur;
And much the less our own estates we can ourselves espy,
Because Suggestion in our hearts such, fancies often stir:
Whereby to worldly vanities we cleave as fast as burr,
Esteeming them with heavenly joys in goodness comparable,
Yet be they mostly very pricks to sin abominable.
For proof we need no further go than to this present man,
Who by the blessing of the Lord of riches having store,
When with his heart to fancy them this worldling once began,
And had this glass of vanities espied his eyes before,
He God forsook, whereas he ought have loved him the more;

And chooseth rather with his goods to be thrown down to hell,
Than by refusing of the same with God in heaven to dwell.

SUGGESTION.

Nay, hark, Philologus, how thy Conscience can teach,
And would detain thee with glosings untrue:
But hearest thou, Conscience, thou mayest long enough preach,
Ere words, from whence reason or truth none ensue,
Shall make Philologus to bid me adieu.
What, shall there no rich man dwell in God's kingdom?
Where, then, is Abraham, Job, and David become?

CONSCIENCE.

I speak not largely of all them which have this worldly wealth,
For why I know that riches are the creatures of the Lord;
Which of themselves are good each one, as Solomon us telleth,
And are appointed to do good withal by God's own word;
But when they let us from the Lord, then ought they be abhorr'd:
Which caused Christ himself to say, that with much lesser pain
Should camel pass through needle's eye, than rich men heaven obtain.
Hereby rich men Christ did not mean each one which wealth enjoy,
But those which fast'ned have their love upon this worldly dust;
Wherefore another cries and saith, O death, how great annoy
Dost thou procure unto that man, which in his goods doth trust.
That thou dost this, Philologus, thou needs acknowledge must;
Whereby each one may easily see, thou takest more delight
In mundane joys, than thou esteemest to be with angels bright.

PHILOLOGUS.

This toucheth the quick: I feel the wound, which if thou canst not cure,
As maimed in limbs I must retire; I can no further go.

SUGGESTION.

This is the grief which Conscience takes against thee, I am sure,
Because thou usest those delights which Conscience may not do;
And therefore he persuadeth thee to leave the same also,
As did the fox which, caught in snare and scap'd with loss of tail,
To cut off theirs, as burthenous, did all the rest counsel.

CONSCIENCE.

Indeed I cannot use those fond and foolish vanities,
In which the outward part of man doth take so great delight:
No, neither would I, though to me were given that liberty,
But rather would consume them all to nought, if that I might;
For if I should delight therein, it were as good a sight,
As if a man of perfect age should ride upon a stick,
Or play with compters in the street, which pastime children like.
But all my joys in heaven remains, whereas I long to be;
And so wouldst thou, if that on Christ thy faith full fast'ned were:
For that affection was in Paul the apostle, we may see,
The first to the Philippians doth witness herein bear.
His words be these: O would to God dissolved that I were,
And were with Christ: another place his mind in those words tell;
We are but strangers all from God, while in this world we dwell.
Now, mark how far from his request dissenting in thy mind,
He wish'd for death, but more than hell thou dost the same detest.

SUGGESTION.

The cause why Paul did loath his life may easily be assign'd,

Because the Jews in every place did seek him to molest:
But those which in this world obtain security and rest,
Do take delight to live therein; yea, nature doth endue
Each living creature with a fear, lest death should them accrue.
Yea, the same Paul at Antioch dissembled to be dead,
While they were gone who sought his life with stones for to destroy.
Elias for to save his life to Horeb likewise fled,
So did King David flee, when Saul did seek him to annoy:
Yea, Christ himself, whom in our deeds to follow we may joy,
Did secretly convey himself from Jews so full of hate,
When they thought from the top of hill him to precipitate.
Wherefore it is no sin at all a man for to defend,
And keep himself from death, so long as nature gives him leave.

CONSCIENCE.

The same whom you recited have conceived a further end,
Than to themselves to live alone, as each man may perceive;
For when that Paul had run his course, he did at last receive
With heart's consent the final death which was him put unto.
So when Christ had performed his work, he did death undergo:
And would to God, thou wouldest do that, which these men were content;
For they despised worldly pomp; their flesh they did subdue;
And brought it under, that to spirit it mostly did consent:
Whereby they, seeking God to please, did bid the world adieu,
Wife, children and possessions forsaking; for they knew
That everlasting treasures were appointed them at last,
The which they thirsting did from them all worldly pleasures cast.
But thou, O wretch, dost life prolong, not that thou wouldest God's name,
As duty binds us all to do, most chiefly glorify,
But rather by thy living still wilt God's renown defame,
And more and more dishonour him: this is thy drift, I spy.

PHILOLOGUS.

I mean to live in worldly joys; I can it not deny.

CONSCIENCE.

What are those joys, which thou dost mean, but pleasures strange from God?
By using of the which thou shalt provoke his heavy rod.

SUGGESTION.

Tush! knowest thou what, Philologus, be wise thyself unto,
And listen not to those fond words which Conscience to thee tell.
For thy defence I will allege one worthy lesson mo,
Unto the which I am right sure he cannot answer well:
When David by vain trust in men of war from God sore fell,
And was appointed of three plagues the easiest for to choose,
He said: God's mercy easier is to get than man's, as I suppose.
Again, he sayeth among the Psalms: it better is to trust
In God, than that our confidence we settle should in man.
Wherefore to this which I now say of force consent thou must;
That when two evils, before us placed, no way avoid we can,
Into the hand of God to fall by choice is lawful then,
Because that God is merciful, when man no mercy show.
Thus have I pleaded in this cause sufficiently, I trow.

CONSCIENCE.

How can you say you trust in God whenas you him forsake,
And of the wicked Mammon here do make your feigned friend?
No, no; these words which you recite against you mostly make,

For thus he thinks in his distress: God cannot me defend,
And therefore by Suggestion frail to man's help he hath lean'd.
Mark who say truth, of him or me, and do him best believe.

PHILOLOGUS.

I like thy words, but that to lose these joys it would me grieve.

CONSCIENCE.

And where Suggestion telleth thee, that God in mercies flow,
Yet is he just sins to correct, and true in that he speak;
Wherefore he sayeth: whoso my name before men shall not know,
I shall not know him, when as judge I shall sit in my seat.
This if you call to mind, it will your proud presumption break.
Again he sayeth, whoso his life or goods will seek to save,
Shall lose them all; but who for Christ will lose them, gain shall have.

SUGGESTION.

What, did not Peter Christ deny, yet mercy did obtain,
Where, if he had not, of the Jews he should have tasted death?

PHILOLOGUS.

Even so shall I in tract of time with bitter tears complain.

SUGGESTION.

Yea, time enough, though thou deferr'st until thy latest breath.

CONSCIENCE.

So sayeth Suggestion unto thee; but Conscience it denyeth,
And in the end what so I say for truth thou shalt espy,
And that most false which Conscience shall in secret heart deny.

PHILOLOGUS.

Ah, wretched man! what shall I do? which do so plainly see
My flesh and spirit to contend, and that in no small thing,
But as concerning the event of extreme misery;
Which either study to avoid, or else upon me bring:
And which of them I should best trust, it is a doubtful thing.
My Conscience speaketh truth, methink; but yet because I fear
By his advice to suffer death, I do his words forbear.
And therefore pacify thyself, and do not so torment
Thyself in vain: I must seek some means for to eschew
These griping griefs, which unto me I see now imminent;
And therefore will no longer stay, but bid thee now adieu.

CONSCIENCE.

O, stay, I say, Philologus, or else thou wilt it rue!

PHILOLOGUS.

It is lost labour that thou dost: I will be at a point,
And to enjoy these worldly joys I jeopard will a joint.

[_Exit_ PHILOLOGUS _and_ SUGGESTION.

CONSCIENCE.

O cursed creature, O frail flesh, O meat for worms, O dust,
O blather puffed full of wind, O vainer than these all!
What cause hast thou in thine own wit to have so great a trust,
Which of thyself canst not espy the evils which on thee fall?
The blindness of the outward man Philologus show shall,

At his return unless I can at last make him relent;
For why the Lord him to correct in furious wrath is bent.

[_Exit_ CONSCIENCIA.

ACT V., SCENE 3.

HYPOCRISY.

Such chopping cheer as we have made, the like hath not been seen.
And who so pleasant with my lord as is Philologus?
His recantation he hath made, and is despatched clean
Of all the griefs which unto him did seem so dangerous:
Which thing, you know, was brought to pass especially by us,
So that Hypocrisy hath done that which Satan did intend,
That men for worldly wealth should cease the gospel to defend.
What shall become of foolish goose, I mean Philologus,
In actual manner to your eyes shall represented be;
For though as now he seems to be in state most glorious,
He shall not long continue so, each one of you shall see.
But needs I must be packing hence: my fellows stay for me.
Shake hands, before we do depart; you shall see me no more;
And though Hypocrisy go away, of hypocrites here is good store.

[_Exit_ HYPOCRISY.

ACT V., SCENE 4.

PHILOLOGUS, GISBERTUS, PAPHINITIUS.

[PHILOLOGUS.]

Come on, my children dear, to me, and let us talk awhile
Of worldly goods, which I have got, and of my pleasant state
Which fortune hath installed me, who on me cheerly smile,
So that unto the top of wheel she doth me elevate.
I have escaped all mishaps of which my Conscience did prate,
And where before I ruled was, as is the common sort,
Now as a judge within this land I bear a ruler's port.

GISBERTUS.

Indeed, good father, we have cause to praise your gravity,
Who did both save yourself from woe, and us from begging state;
Where if you had persevered still, as we did fear greatly,
Your good from us your children should to legate be confiscate:
Our glorious pomps, then, should we have been glad for to abate.

PAPHINITIUS.

But now not only that you had for us, but also have
Such offices, whereby more gains you year by year shall save.

PHILOLOGUS.

I was at point once very near to have been quite forlorn,
Had not Suggestion of the flesh from folly me reclaimed,
And set this glass of worldly joys my sight and eyes before,

The sight whereof did cause all things of me to be disdain'd.
I thought I had felicity when it I had obtained;
And to say truth, I do not care what to my soul betide,
So long as this prosperity and wealth by me abide.
But let us homeward go again, some pastime there to make:
My whole delight in sport and games of pleasure I repose.

[_Enter_ HORROR.]

HORROR.

Nay, stay thy journey here awhile: I do thee prisoner take.
I shall abate thy pleasures soon--yea, too soon, thou wilt suppose.

PHILOLOGUS.

What is thy name? whence comest thou? wherefore? to me disclose--

HORROR.

My name is call'd Confusion and Horror of the mind,
And to correct impenitents of God I am assign'd,
And for because thou dost despise God's mercy and his grace,
And wouldst no admonition take by them that did thee warn,
Neither when Conscience counselled thee, thou wouldst his words embrace,
Who would have had thee unto God obedience true to learn;
Nor couldst between Suggestion's craft and Conscience' truth discern:
Behold, therefore, thou shalt of me another lesson hear,
Which (will thou, nill thou,) with torment of Conscience thou shalt bear.
And where thou hast extinguished the Holy Spirit of God,
And made him weary with thy sins, which daily thou hast done,
He will no longer in thy soul and spirit make abode,
But with the graces, which he gave to thee, now is he gone:
So that to Godward by Christ's death rejoicing thou hast none.
The peace of Conscience faded is; instead whereof I bring
The spirit of Satan, blasphemy, confusion and cursing.
The glass likewise of vanities, which is thine only joy,
I will transform into the glass of deadly desperation,
By looking in the which thou shalt conceive a great annoy.
Thus have I caught thee in thy pride, and brought thee to damnation;
So that thou art a pattern true of God's just indignation:
Whereby each man may warned be the like sins to eschew,
Lest the same torments they incur, which in thee they shall view.

PHILOLOGUS.

O painful pain of deep disdain, O griping grief of hell!
O horror huge, O soul suppress'd, and slain with desperation!
O heap of sins, the sum whereof no man can number well!
O death, O furious flames of hell, my just recompensation!
O wretched wight, O creature curs'd, O child of condemnation!
O angry God and merciless, most fearful to behold!
O Christ, thou art no Lamb to me, but Lion fierce and bold!

GISBERTUS.

Alas, dear father! what doth move and cause you to lament?

PHILOLOGUS.

My sins, alas! which in this glass appear innumerable,
For which I shall no pardon get; for God is fully bent
In fury for to punish me with pains intolerable.
Neither to call to him for grace or pardon am I able.
My sin is unto death; I feel Christ's death doth me no good,

Neither for my behoof did Christ shed his most precious blood.

PAPHINITIUS.

Alas, dear father! alas! I say, what sudden change is this?

PHILOLOGUS.

I am condemned into hell these torments to sustain.

GISBERTUS.

O, say not so, my father dear; God's mercy mighty is.

PHILOLOGUS.

The sentence of the righteous Judge cannot be call'd again,
Who hath already judged me to everlasting pain.

O that my body buried were, that it at rest might be,
Though soul were put in Judas' place, or Cain's extremity.

GISBERTUS.

O brother! haste you to the town, and tell Theologus,
What sudden plague and punishment my father hath befell.

PAPHINITIUS.

I run in haste, and will request him for to come with us.

GISBERTUS.

O father! rest yourself in God, and all thing shall be well.

PHILOLOGUS.

Ah, dreadful name! which when I hear to sigh it me compel.
God is against me, I perceive; he is none of my God,
Unless in this, that he will beat and plague me with his rod.
And though his mercy doth surpass the sins of all the world,
Yet shall it not once profit me, or pardon mine offence:
I am refused utterly, I quite from God am whurl'd.
My name within the Book of Life had never residence;
Christ prayed not, Christ suffered not, my sins to recompense,
But only for the Lord's elect, of which sort I am none.
I feel his justice towards me; his mercy all is gone.
And to be short, within short space my final end shall be:
Then shall my soul incur the pains of utter desolation,
And I shall be a precedent most horrible to see
To God's elect, that they may see the price of abjuration.

GISBERTUS.

To hear my father's doleful complaints it bringeth perturbation
Unto my soul; but yonder comes that good Theologus--
O welcome, sir! and welcome you, good Master Eusebius.

ACT V., SCENE 5.

THEO. PHIL. EUSE. GIS. PAPHI.

[THEOLOGUS.]

God save you, good Philologus; how do you, by God's grace?

PHILOLOGUS.

You welcome are, but I, alas! vile wretch, am here evil found.

EUSEBIUS.

What is the chiefest cause, tell us, of this your dolorous case?

PHILOLOGUS.

O, would my soul were sunk in hell, so body were in ground:
That angry God now hath his will, who sought me to confound.

THEOLOGUS.

O, say not so, Philologus, for God is gracious,
And to forgive the penitent his mercy is plenteous.
Do you not know that all the earth with mercy doth abound,
And though the sins of all the world upon one man were laid,
If he one only spark of grace or mercy once had found,
His wickedness could not him harm: wherefore be not dismay'd.
Christ's death alone for all your sins a perfect ransom paid:
God doth not covet sinner's death, but rather that he may
By living still bewail his sins, and so them put away.
Consider Peter, who three times his master did deny;
Yea, with an oath; and that although Christ did him warning give,
With whom before-time he had lived so long familiarly,
Of whom so many benefits of love he did receive;
Yet when once Peter his own fault did at the last perceive,
And did bewail his former crime with salt and bitter tears,
Christ by and by did pardon him, the gospel witness bears.
The thief likewise and murderer, which never had done good,
But had in mischief spent his days, yea, during all his life,
With latest breath when he his sins and wickedness withstood,
And with iniquities of flesh his spirit was at strife,
Thorough that one motion of his heart and power of true belief,
He was received into grace, and all his sins defaced,
Christ saying, Soon in paradise with me thou shalt be placed.
The hand of God is not abridged, but still he is of might
To pardon them that call to him unfeignedly for grace.
Again, it is God's property to pardon sinners quite:
Pray therefore with thy heart to God here in this open place,
And from the very root of heart bewail to him thy case,
And, I assure thee, God will on thee his mercy show
Through Jesus Christ, who is with him our advocate, you know.

PHILOLOGUS.

I have no faith: the words you speak my heart doth not believe.
I must confess that I for sin am justly thrown to hell.

EUSEBIUS.

His monstrous incredulity my very heart doth grieve.
Ah, dear Philologus! I have known by face and visage well
A sort of men, which have been vex'd with devils and spirits fell,
In far worse state than you are yet, brought into desperation,
Yet in the end have been reclaimed by godly exhortation.
Such are the mercies of the Lord, he will throw down to hell,
And yet call back again from thence, as holy David writes.
What should then let you trust in God? I pray you to us tell,
Sith to forgive and do us good it chiefly him delights?
What, would not you that of your sins he should you clean acquite?
How can he once deny to you one thing you do request,
Which hath already given to you his best-beloved Christ?
Lift up your heart in hope, therefore; awhile be of good cheer,

And make access unto his seat of grace by earnest prayer,
And God will surely you relieve with grace, stand not in fear.

PHILOLOGUS.

I do believe that out from God proceed these comforts fair:
So do the devils, yet of their health they alway do despair.
They are not written unto me, for I would fain attain
The mercy and the love of God, but he doth me disdain.
How would you have that man to live, which hath no mouth to eat?
No more can I live in my soul, which have no faith at all:
And where you say that Peter did of Christ soon pardon get,
Who in the selfsame sin with me from God did greatly fall,
Why I cannot obtain the same, to you I open shall:
God had respect to him always, and did him^[57] firmly love,
But I, alas! am reprobate; God doth my soul reprove.
Moreover, I will say with tongue, whatso you will require:
My heart, I feel, with blasphemy and cursing is replete.

THEOLOGUS.

Then pray with us, as Christ us taught, we do you all desire.

PHILOLOGUS.

To pray with lips unto your God you shall me soon entreat:
My spirit to Satan is in thrall; I can it not thence get.

EUSEBIUS.

God shall renew your spirit again; pray only as you can,
And to assist you in the same we pray each Christian man.

PHILOLOGUS.

O God, which dwellest in the heavens, and art our Father dear,
Thy holy name throughout the world be ever sanctified,
The kingdom of thy word and Spirit upon us rule might bear,
Thy will in earth as by thy saints in heaven be ratified;
Our daily bread, we thee beseech, O Lord, for us provide;
Our sins remit, Lord, unto us, as we each man forgive:
Let not temptation us assail; in all evil us relieve. Amen.

THEOLOGUS.

The Lord be praised, who hath at length thy spirit mollified.
These are not tokens unto us of your reprobation:
You mourn with tears, and sue for grace; wherefore be certified,
That God in mercy giveth ear unto your supplication.
Wherefore despair not thou at all of thy soul's preservation,
And say not with a desperate heart, that God against thee is:
He will no doubt, these pains once past, receive you into bliss.

PHILOLOGUS.

No, no, my friends, you only hear and see the outward part,
Which, though you think they have done well, it booteth not at all.
My lips have spoke the words indeed; but yet I feel my heart
With cursing is replenished, with rancour, spite and gall:
Neither do I your Lord and God in heart my Father call,
But rather seek his holy name for to blaspheme and curse.
My state, therefore, doth not amend, but wax still worse and worse.
I am secluded clean from grace, my heart is hardened quite;
Wherefore you do your labour lose, and spend your breath in vain.

EUSEBIUS.

O, say not so, Philologus, but let your heart be pight
Upon the mercies of the Lord, and I you ascertain[58]
Remission of your former sins you shall at last obtain.
God hath it said (who cannot lie): at whatsoever time
A sinner shall from heart repent, I will remit his crime.

PHILOLOGUS.

You cannot say so much to me, as herein I do know,
That by the mercies of the Lord all sins are done away,
And unto them that have true faith abundantly it flow;
But whence do this true faith proceed to us, I do you pray?
It is the only gift of God, from him it comes alway;
I would, therefore, he would vouchsafe one spark of faith to plant
Within my breast: then of his grace I know I should not want.
But it as easily may be done, as you may with one spoon
At once take up the water clean, which in the seas abide;
And at one draught then drink it up: this shall ye do as soon,
As to my breast of true belief one sparkle shall betide.
Tush! you which are in prosperous state, and my pains have not tried,
Do think it but an easy thing a sinner to repent
Him of his sins, and by true faith damnation to prevent.
The healthful need not physic's art, and ye, which are all hale,
Can give good counsel to the sick their sickness to eschew;
But here, alas! confusion and hell doth me assail,
And that all grace from me is reft, I find it to be true.
My heart is steel, so that no faith can from the same ensue.
I can conceive no hope at all of pardon or of grace,
But out, alas! Confusion is alway before my face.
And certainly, even at this[59] time, I do most plainly see
The devils to be about me round, which make great preparation,
And keep a stir here in this place which only is for me:
Neither do I conceive these things by vain imagination,
But even as truly as mine eyes behold your shape and fashion.
Wherefore, desired Death, despatch; my body bring to rest,
Though that my soul in furious flames of fire be suppress'd.

THEOLOGUS.

Your mind corrupted doth present to you this false illusion;
But turn awhile unto the spirit of truth in your distress,
And it shall cast out from your eyes all horror and confusion,
And of this your affliction it will you soon redress.

EUSEBIUS.

We have good hope, Philologus, of your salvation, doubtless.

PHILOLOGUS.

What your hope is concerning me, I utterly contemn:
My Conscience, which for thousands stand, as guilty me condemn.

EUSEBIUS.

When did this horror first you take? what, think you, is the cause?

PHILOLOGUS.

Even shortly after I did make mine open abjuration,
For that I did prefer my goods before God's holy laws.
Therefore in wrath he did me send this horrible vexation,
And hath me wounded in the soul with grievous tribulation,
That I may be a president, in whom all men may view
Those torments which to them, that will forsake the Lord, are due.

THEOLOGUS.

Yet let me boldly ask one thing of you without offence:
What was your former faith in Christ, which you before did hold?
For it is said of holy Paul, in these same words in sense:
It cannot be that utterly in faith he should be cold,
Whoso he be, which perfectly true faith in heart once hold.
Wherefore rehearse in short discourse the sum of your belief,
In those points chiefly, which for health of soul are thought most chief.

PHILOLOGUS.

I did believe in heart that Christ was that true sacrifice,
Which did appease the Father's wrath, and that by him alone
We were made just and sanctified: I did believe, likewise,
That without him heaven to attain sufficient means were none.
But to reknowledge this again alas! all grace was gone:
I never loved him again with right and sincere heart,
Neither was thankful for the same, as was each good man's part.
But rather took the faith of Christ for liberty to sin,
And did abuse his graces great to further carnal lust.
What wickedness I did commit, I cared not a pin;
For that [60] Christ discharged had my ransom, I did trust:
Wherefore the Lord doth now correct the same with torments just.
My sons, my sons, I speak to you: my counsel ponder well,
And practise that in deeds which I in words shall to you tell.
I speak not this, that I would ought the gospel derogate,
Which is most true in every part, I must it needs confess;
But this I say, that of vain faith alone you should not prate,
But also by your holy life you should your faith express:
Believe me, sirs, for by good proof these things I do express.
Peruse the writing of St James, and first of Peter too,
Which all God's people holiness of life exhort unto.
By sundry reasons--as for, first, because we strangers are;
Again, sin from the flesh proceed, but we are of the spirit;
The third, because the flesh alway against the spirit do war;
The fourth, that we may stop the mouths of such as would backbite;
The fifth, that other by our lives to God reduce we might:
Again, they sing a pleasant song, which sing in deed and word,
But where evil life ensue good words, there is a foul discord.
But I, alas! most wretched wight, whereas I did presume
That I had got a perfect faith, did holy life disdain:
And though I did to other preach good life, I did consume,
My life in wickedness and sin, in sport and pleasures vain.
No, neither did I once contend from them flesh to refrain.
Behold, therefore, the judgments just of God doth me annoy,
Not for amendment of my life, but me for to destroy.

EUSEBIUS.

We do not altogether like of this your exhortation.
Whereas you warn us not to trust so much unto our faith,
But that good works we should prepare unto our preservation:
There are two kinds of righteousness, as Paul to Romans saith;
The one dependeth of good works, the other hangs of faith.
The former, which the world allows, God counts it least of twain,
As by good proof it shall to you in words be proved plain,
For Socrates and Cato both did purchase great renown,
And Aristides, surnamed Just, this righteousness fulfilled,
Wherefore he was as justest man expell'd his native town;
Yet are their souls with infidels in hell for ever spilled,

Because they sought not righteousness that way that God them willed.
The other righteousness comes from faith, which God regards alone,
And makes us seem immaculate before his heavenly throne.
Wherefore there is no cause you should send us to outward act,
As to the anchor or refuge of our preservation.

THEOLOGUS.

The meaning of Philologus is not here so exact,
As do his words make it to seem by your allegation.
He doth not mean between good works and faith to make relation,
As though works were equivalent salvation to attain,
As is true faith; but what he meant, I will set down more plain.
He did exhort the young men here by him for to beware,
Lest, as he did, so they, abuse God's gospel pure,
And without good advice usurp of faith the gift so rare:
Whereby they think, whatso they do, themselves from torments free,
And by this proud presumption God's anger should procure:
And where they boast and vaunt themselves good faithful men to be,
Yet in their lives they do deny their faith in each degree.
Wherefore he saith, as Peter said: see that you do make known
Your own election by your works. Again St James doth say,
Show me thy faith, and by my works my faith shall thee be shown.
And whereupon his own offence he doth to them bewray,
Whereas he did vaingloriously upon a dead faith stay;
Which for the inward righteousness he alway did suspect,
And hereupon all godliness of life he did neglect.

PHILOLOGUS.

That was the meaning of my words, however I them spake:
The truth, alas! vile wretch, my soul and Conscience too true feel.

THEOLOGUS.

What, do you not, Philologus, with us no comfort take,
When all these things so godlily to you I do reveal.
Especially sith that yourself in them are seen so well?
Some hope unto us of your health and safety yet is left:
We do not think that all God's grace from you is wholly reft.

PHILOLOGUS.

Alas! what comfort can betide unto a damned wretch?
Whatso I hear, see, feel, taste, speak, is turned all to woe.

EUSEBIUS.

Ah, dear Philologus! think not that ought can God's grace outreach.
Consider David which did sin in lust and murder too;
Yet was he pardoned of his sins, and so shalt thou also.

PHILOLOGUS.

King David always was elect, but I am reprobate,
And therefore I can find small ease by weighing his estate.
He also prayed unto God which I shall never do:
His prayer was that God would not his spirit take away;
But it is gone from me long since, and shall be given no mo.
But what became of Cain, of Cam, of Saul, I do you pray?
Of Judas, and Barehu?--these must my Conscience slay--
Of Julian Apostate, with other of that crew?
The same torments must I abide, which these men did ensue.

THEOLOGUS.

Alas! my friend, take in good part the chastisement of the Lord,
Who doth correct you in this world, that in the life to come
He might you save, for of the like the Scripture bears record.

PHILOLOGUS.

That is not God's intent with me, though it be so with some,
Who after body's punishment have into favour come:
But I, alas! in spirit and soul these grievous torments bear:
God hath condemned my conscience to perpetual grief and fear.
I would most gladly choose to live a thousand thousand year.
In all the torments and the grief that damned souls sustain;
So that at length I might have ease, it would me greatly cheer:
But I, alas! shall in this life in torments still remain,
While God's just anger upon me shall be revealed plain,
And I example made to all of God's just indignation.
O, that my body were at rest, and soul in condemnation!

EUSEBIUS.

I pray you, answer me herein: where you by deep despair
Say you are worse here in this life, than if you were in hell;
And for because to have death come you alway make your prayer,
As though your soul and body both in torments great did dwell,
If that a man should give to you a sword, I pray you tell,
Would you destroy yourself therewith, as do the desperate,
Which hang or kill, or into floods themselves precipitate?

PHILOLOGUS.

Give me a sword; then shall you know what is in mine intent.

EUSEBIUS.

Not so, my friend; I only ask what herein were your will?

PHILOLOGUS.

I cannot, neither will I tell, whereto I would be bent.

THEOLOGUS.

These words do nothing edify, but rather fancies fill,
Which we would gladly, if we could, endeavour for to kill.
Wherefore I once again request, together let us pray,
And so we will leave you to God, and send you hence away.

PHILOLOGUS.

I cannot pray; my spirit is dead, no faith in me remain.

THEOLOGUS.

Do as you can; no more than might we can ask at your hand.

PHILOLOGUS,

My prayer[61] turned is to sin; for God doth it disdain.

EUSEBIUS.

It is the Falsehood of the Spirit, which do your health withstand,
That teach you this: wherefore in time reject his filthy band.

THEOLOGUS.

Come, kneel by me, and let us pray the Lord of Heaven unto.

PHILOLOGUS.

With as good will as did the devil out of the deaf man go. [_Aside_.

O God, which dwellest in the heavens, &c.
Tush! sirs, you do your labours lose: see, where Belzabub doth come,
And doth invite me to a feast: you therefore speak in vain.
Yea, if you ask ought more of me, in answer I will be dumb:
I will not waste my tongue for nought; as soon shall one small grain
Of mustard-seed fill all the world, as I true faith attain.

THEOLOGUS.

We will no longer stay you now, but let you hence depart.

EUSEBIUS.

Yet will we pray continually that God would you convert.

THEOLOGUS.

Gisbertus and Paphinitius, conduct him to his place;
But see he have good company: let him not be alone.

AMBO.

We shall so do: God us assist with his most holy grace!

GISBERTUS.

Come, father, do you not think good that we from hence be gone?

PHILOLOGUS.

Let go my hands at liberty: assistance I crave none.
O, that I had a sword awhile! I should soon eased be.

AMBO.

Alas! dear father, what do you?

EUSEBIUS.

His will we may now see.

[_Exeunt_ Philologus, Gisbertus, Paphinitius.

THEOLOGUS.

O glorious God, how wonderful those judgments are of thine:
Thou dost behold the secret heart; nought doth thy eyes beguile.
O, what occasion is us given to fear thy might divine,
And from our hearts to hate and loathe iniquities so vile,
Lest for the same thou in thy wrath dost grace from us exile.
The outward man doth thee not please, nor yet the mind alone,
But thou requirest both of us, or else regardest none.

EUSEBIUS.

Here may the worldlings have a glass, their states for to behold,
And learn in time for to escape the judgments of the Lord;
Whilst they by flattering of themselves, of faith both dead and cold,
Do sell their souls to wickedness, of all good men abhorr'd:
But godliness doth not depend in knowing of the word;
But in fulfilling of the same, as in this man we see,
Who though he did to others preach, his life did not agree.

THEOLOGUS.

Again, Philologus witnesseth which is the truth of Christ,
For that consenting to the Pope he did the Lord abjure,
Whereby he teach the wavering faith on which side to persist:
And those which have the truth of God, that still they may endure.
The tyrants which delight in blood he likewise doth assure,

In whose affairs they spend their time--but let us homeward go.

EUSEBIUS.

I am content that after meat we may resort him to.

[_Exeunt_ THEOLOGUS _and_ EUSEBIUS.

ACT VI. SCENE LAST.

NUNTIUS.

O joyful news which I report, and bring into your ears!
Philologus, that would have hanged himself with cord,
Is now converted unto God with many bitter tears:
By godly counsel he was won, all praise be to the Lord.
His errors all he did renounce, his blasphemies he abhorr'd,
And being converted left his life, exhorting foe and friend,
That do profess the faith of Christ, to be constant to the end.
Full thirty weeks in woful wise afflicted he had been,
All which long time he took no food, but forc'd against his will
Even with a spoon to pour some broth his teeth between:
And though they sought by force this wise to feed him still,
He always strove with all his might the same on ground to spill;
So that no sustenance he receiv'd, no sleep could he attain,
And now the Lord in mercy great hath eas'd him of his pain.

THE RARE TRIUMPHS OF LOVE AND FORTUNE.

EDITION.

_The Rare Triumphes of Love and Fortune, Plaide before the Queenes most
excellent Maiestie: wherin are manye fine Conceites with great delight.
At London, Printed by E.A. for Edward White, and are to be solde at the
little North doore of S. Paules Church at the signe of the Gunne_. 1589.
4 deg.. Black letter.

THE RARE TRIUMPHS OF LOVE AND FORTUNE.

THE FIRST ACT.

Enter MERCURY: _then riseth a Fury: then enter the assembly
of the gods_, JUPITER _with_ JUNO, APOLLO _with_ MINERVA, MARS
and SATURN, _after_ VULCAN _with_ VENUS: _the Fury sets debate
amongst them, and after_ JUPITER speaks as followeth_.

JUPITER.

Ye gods and goddesses, whence springs this strife of late?
Who are the authors of this mutiny?
Or whence hath sprung this civil discord here.
Which on the sudden struck us in this fear?
If gods that reign in skies do fall at war,
No marvel, then, though mortal men do jar.
But now I see the cause: thou Fury fell,
Bred in the dungeon of the deepest hell,
Who causeth thee to show thyself in light?
And what thy message is, I charge thee tell upright?

TISIPHONE.

O Jupiter, thou dreadful king of gods, and men the father high,
To whose command the heavens, the earth, and lowest hell obey,
Tisiphone, the daughter of eternal night,
Bred in the bottom of the deepest pit of hell,
Brought up in blood, and cherish'd with scrawling snakes,
Tormenting therewithal the damned souls of them
Here upon earth, that careless live of thy commandment;
I am the same--
I am the same whom both my loathsome sisters hate,
Whom hell itself complains to keep within her race,
Whom every fearful soul detesteth with a curse,
Whom earth and seas defy, heavens loathing to behold;
I am the same--
I am the same sent from thy brother Pluto now,
Thy brother Pluto, king of hell and golden mines;
Sent unto thee and these thy fellow-gods I am,
From him to thee, from him by me, to tell thee to thy face
He hath been lately rubb'd, and touch'd perhaps too near;
Which he ne can or will put up without revenge,
If thou or any god the quarrel dare defend.
And this it is--
Thy daughter Venus, thy proud daughter Venus here,
Blabs it abroad, and beareth all the world in hand,[62]
She must be thought the only goddess in the world,
Exalting and suppressing whom she likes best,
Defacing altogether Lady Fortune's grace;
Breaking her altars[63] down, dishonouring her name,
Whose government thyself, thyself dost know.
How say'st thou? dost thou not?--
Her father, therefore, thy brother Pluto, sends
By me, the messenger of discord and debate,
Commanding or desiring--choose thou whether of both--
Her honour still entire[64] she may maintain;
Else on thy daughter Venus, that lascivious dame,
Himself will wreak his high despite on her.

JUPITER.

Depart, foul fiend, unto thy loathsome cell,
Where thou lamenting makes continual moan!
Go tell my brother, were it not for him,
Thou shouldst have rued thy bold presumption.
Say thou thy message hath been largely heard,
And bid him send his daughter Fortune, now,
Whilst we are here, the matter may have end.
Despatch.

TISIPHONE.

I go--

Give place, thou air; open, thou earth; gape, hollow hell, below;
And unto all that live and breathe I wish a world of woe.

[_Exit_ TISIPHONE.]

JUPITER.

Ye powers divine, be reconcil'd again;
Depart from discord and extreme debate:
Within your breasts let love and peace remain,
A perfect pattern of your heavenly state,
Whilome ago[65] to hell condemning hate.
Thus, when the higher powers is in one,[66]
Men upon earth will fly contention.

MERCURY.

Great god and father mine, your care and fear
Of us, and eke of all the world beside,
That restless rolls in his continual sphere,
Whereby all things in perfect course abide,
As one arrays[67] another forth to slide:
And this example may prevail for all,
To work our wills according to your call.
And I dare say, presuming on the rest,
The poison of this rancour is suppress'd.

VULCAN.

How ye agree, my masters, I cannot tell;
[_To Venus_.] But, were we a-bed, we two could agree well.

JUPITER.

Gramercy, Mercury; I know thy will
Is ever prest to further my desire:
In sign whereof, to quiet all things well,
And to suppress betimes the secret fire,
That I perceive would break and mount up higher:
This to prevent, content ye here to stay,
To mark awhile what for themselves they say.
And, Venus, here I charge thee on my grace,
Not that I found thee heretofore untrue,
But for thine adversary is not yet in place,
Thou tell uprightly whence your quarrel grew;
What words betwixt you thereof did ensue.
Say, lovely daughter; tell us flat thy mind:
They shall be blamed on whom the fault we find.

VENUS.

O thou, that governest everything, that gods and men attempt,
And with thy fearful thunderbolt their doings dost prevent,
What hath thy daughter so deserved? what doth she, silly dame,
Before ye thus to be abused with undeserved blame?
Surely, but that my[68] duty commands me now to speak,
For such a trifling cause this way my wrath I would not wreak.
But she--no marvel though she seek my seat thus to stain,
When otherways she cannot tell advantage how to gain.
But thence this hot despite: *_Hinc illae lacrimae_*,
Because, I say, she could not prove herself of power with me.
For, all you godheads know, she pains but such as pleasure knew:
She never grieves the groaning mind, where gladness never grew.

She never overthrows but at the top of joy;
For they that never tasted bliss mislike not their annoy.
But I torment the mind that never felt relief;
I plague the wretch that never thought on comfort in his grief,
That never had the hope of any happy chance,
That never once so much as deem'd I would his state advance.
Think, then, which of us both are of the greater power:
Once in his life, or not at all, to grant a light'ning hour?
I need not stand to make rehearsal here at all,
For gods and ghosts, yea, men and beasts, unto my power are thrall.
I dare appeal to you, if I should look awry--
Say, father, with your leave, in heaven who dares my word deny?
And if I please to smile, who will not laugh outright?
Whereby my great omnipotence is known to every wight.
I make the noble love the bastard in degree;
I tame and temper all the tongues that rail and scoff at me.
What bird, what beast, what worm, but feeleth my delight?
What lives or draweth breath, but[69] I can pleasure or despite?
Yet divers things there be that Fortune cannot tame;
As are the riches of the mind, or else an honest name,
Or a contented heart, still free from Fortune's power:
But such as climb, before they crawl, must drink the sweet with sour.
Thyself, O Jupiter, didst grant sometimes to me,
Of all things here beneath the moon I should the ruler be:
Thou say'st I did deserve the honour of that praise;
Thyself didst once devise whereby my glory first to raise.
Is this my sovereignty? is this so glorious?
Is this becoming thy renown, to quit thy daughter thus?

JUPITER.

Fear not, fair Venus, neither be dismay'd;
Repose thee on the warrant of my word.
What I have promis'd, doubt not to be performed;
The spareless destinies my will afford:
Let this defend thee, like a trusty sword.
But Lady Fortune cometh, now I see.
Welcome, fair dame; what is thy will with me?

[_Enter_ FORTUNE.]

FORTUNE.

Ye sacred powers divine, how should I now begin,
Or which way should I couch my words, your favours for to win?
I may pour out my plaint, but thou may'st it redress.
My father humbly prayeth you to give me leave to speak,
And pardon him that in his wrath he did your quietness break.
I cannot but confess, dread gods, I am not she,
That seeks with Venus to compare in her supremacy.
I am not of that power, yet am I of some might,
Which she (usurping) challengeth to keep me from my right.
I grant she may do much with her alluring smiles,
But soon your godheads can perceive her words be full of wiles.
What be the tragedies, the terrors, that she makes?
Let's see the mighty monarchs, the kingdoms that she shakes.
Poor soul, she soundly lives with wanton sug'red joys,
Triumphing in her own delight upon her foolish toys.
Sometimes she flattereth it in pleasure mix'd with pain,
Like to a fair sunshine day overcast with clouds of rain.
But should I reckon up what things I can confound,

What is it then, or what hath been, or shall for aye be found?
Is not the wonder of the world a work that soon decays?
Therefore, ye see all earthly things are wearing out always;
As brittle as the glass, unconstant like the mind,
As fickle as the whirling wheel, as wavering as the wind.
Lo, such I am that overthrows the highest-reared tower,
That changeth and supplanteth[70] realms in twinkling of an hour,
And send them hasty smart whom I devise to spoil,
Not threat'ning or forewarning them, but at a smile.
Where joy doth most abound, there I do sorrow place,
And them I chiefly persecute that pleasure did embrace.
What greater grief can fall to man in all his life,
Than after sweet to taste the sour, in peace to be at strife?
It is a biting thought that fretteth on the heart,
To say, the time was when I joy'd, though now oppress'd with smart.
If ever mighty king did 'scape untouch'd of me,
If ever year, or month, or day, or if an hour might be,
Wherein I have not us'd to practise some exchange,
Perhaps for this authority I might be thought to range
Too far beyond my right; but even the very stars,
The heavens, the planets, and the seas, bear witness of my scars.

VENUS.

No more of that, good dame; you run too far at roam:
I'll take the pains to keep you short, and call you nearer home.
I pray you, what's your might, when all are well belov'd?

FORTUNE.

The sweetest lovers in distress the sharper storms have prov'd.

VENUS.

Perhaps for want of wealth; but if their riches slack?

FORTUNE.

They are the very instrument, whereby I work their woe.

VENUS.

What, if their friends abound, then can they never lack?

FORTUNE.

The dearest friends are scattered, when Fortune turns her toe.

VENUS.

If they be noble born, or of a princely blood?

FORTUNE.

When Fortune frowns, that may procure more harm than do them good.

VENUS.

But wise men evermore upon a rock are set.

FORTUNE.

Yet can they not escape a scourge, for Fortune hath a net.

JUPITER.

I will not in, till things be well discern'd:
Affection shall not mar a lawful cause.
By examples this may best be learn'd,
In elder ages led within your laws.

Therefore, a while hereof I mean to pause;
And bring in, Mercury, in open view
The ghosts of them that Love and Fortune slew.

MERCURY.

Thy word my will--
Thou triple-headed Cerberus, give place;
And I command thee, Charon, with thy ferryboat
Transport the souls of such as may report
Fortune and Love, and not in open sort.
Let them appear to us in silent show,
To manifest a truth that we must know.

[Strikes with his rod three times_.

VULCAN.

Are ye mad, my masters? what a stir have we here.
Lord, have mercy upon us! must the devil appear?
Come away, wife; when I pray thee, come away.
Down on your knees, my masters, and pray.

[Music_.

Enter the show of Troilus and Cressida.

MERCURY.

Behold, how Troilus and Cressida
Cries out on Love, that framed their decay.

VULCAN.

That was like the old wife, when her ale would not come,
Thrust a firebrand in the grout, and scratch'd her bum.

[Music_.

Enter the[71] show of Alexander.

MERCURY.

Alexander the Great, that all the world subdu'd,
Curseth fell Fortune, that did him delude.

VULCAN.

'Tis an honest, grim sire at his first coming out, believe me;
And ye had stood in the wind, ye might have smelt me.

[Music_.

Enter the show of Queen Dido.

MERCURY.

Queen Dido, that Aeneas could not move,
Stabbed herself, and yielded unto Love.

VULCAN.

The more fool she, and she were my own brother?
If my wife would not love me, must not I love another?

[Music_.

Enter the show of Pompey and Caesar.

MERCURY.
Pompey and Caesar, the wonders of their time,
By froward Fortune spoiled in their prime.

VULCAN.
They were served well enough, why could not they be content
With a roach and a red herring in the holy time of Lent?

[_Music_.

Enter the show of Leander and Hero.

MERCURY.
[Hero and] Leander presents them very loth,
That felt the force of Love and Fortune both.

FORTUNE.
Upon him I my sovereignty did show.

VENUS.
And think you, dame, my power she did not know?

FORTUNE.
But it was I that dashed their delight.

VENUS.
After that I had proved my open might.

VULCAN.
What a scolding is here! shall it even thus be?
You look like an honest man in the parish; I pray you, make them agree.

JUPITER.
Content ye both: I'll hear no more of this.
And, Mercury, surcease; call out no more.
I have bethought me how to work their wish,
As you have often prov'd it heretofore.
Here in this land, within that princely bower,
There is a Prince beloved of his love,
On whom I mean your sovereignties to prove.
Venus, for that th[e]y love thy sweet delight,
Thou shalt endeavour to increase their joy:
And, Fortune, thou to manifest thy might,
Their pleasures and their pastimes shalt[72] destroy,
Overthwarting them with news of fresh annoy;
And she that most can please them or despite,
I will confirm to be of greatest might.

VENUS.
Your godhead hath devis'd, as I desire,
And I am gladly therewithal content.

FORTUNE.
And I am prest to do as you require;
Now shall you see the proof of my intent.

[JUPITER.]
Take up your places here to work your will:

When you have done, the rest I shall fulfil.

VULCAN.

They are set sunning like a crow in a gutter. What, are they gone?
And you will be quiet, sirs, they will make you good sport with their
scolding anon.

Are not these a sort of good, mannerly gods to get them thus away?
I must take the pains to overtake them, for I see they will not stay.

[_Exeunt omnes_.

The end of the first Act.

THE SECOND ACT.

Enter HERMIONE _and_ FIDELIA.

HERMIONE.

Why then, my dear, what is the greatest prize in love?

FIDELIA.

Absence of other griefs, the greatest that loving hearts can prove.

HERMIONE.

But absence cannot minish love, or make it less in ought.

FIDELIA.

Yet nevertheless it leaves a doubt within the other's thought.

HERMIONE.

And what is that?--

FIDELIA.

Lest change of air should change the absent mind.

HERMIONE.

That fault is proper but to them whom jealousy makes blind.

FIDELIA.

O, pardon it, for that the cause from whence it springs is such.

HERMIONE.

From whence is that?

FIDELIA.

My mother says, from loving over-much.

HERMIONE.

Your author I will not admit; that rests us^[73] it to prove.

FIDELIA.

Be sure it is, that jealousy proceeds of fervent love.

HERMIONE.

Can that be fervent love, wherein suspicion leads the mind?

FIDELIA.

Most fervent love, where so much love doth make the fancy blind.

HERMIONE.

But faithful love can never be, wherein suspect doth dwell.

FIDELIA.

The faithful lovers do suspect, because they love so well.

HERMIONE.

My dear Fidelity, as I think, thy love is such to me,
So fervent, faithful and unstain'd, as purer none can be,
Admit occasions fall out, then, that I must part from thee,
Tell me, wilt thou mean space suspect inconstancy in me?

FIDELIA.

If so I do, impute it to the force of lovers' laws,
That oftentimes are touch'd with fear, whereas there is no cause.

[ARMENIO _listening_.

ARMENIO.

What have I heard? what do mine eyes behold?
Dishonour to the house from whence I came!
Unshamefast girl, forgetful, all too bold:
And thou, false traitor, author of the same.
Sufferest not, for guerdon of thy due,
The king my father's gracious countenance,
But must thou climb, ungrateful and untrue,
These steps at first thine honour to advance?
Hath Fortune promised so much hope at first,
To make thy conquest of a prince's child?
And should I stand to question, how thou durst
To leave to think she might be so beguil'd?
But words may not suffice to wreak this wrong,
Hid under cloak of over-hardy^[74] love.
Thou^[75] upstart fondling, and forborne too long,
To give such cause thy prince's ire to move.

FIDELIA.

Nay, my good brother, take it not so what:
The fault is mine, and I will bear the blame.
And to return you an answer, well I wot
How to defend the honour of my name.
But for my love, I am resolved in this,
However you account of his defaults,
With vowed affection wholly to be his,
As one in whom I spy more special parts,
Than fall in fondlings of the baser kind.
To have a word not squaring with the place,
But measure men by their unstained minds,
Let fortune be to virtue no disgrace;
For fortune, when and where it likes her majesty,
With clouds can cover birth and highest degree.

ARMENIO.

What, dame, and are you shameless in your shame?
No, mistress, no: it will not be let past;

But, wilful wench, this new-attempted game,
Ere it be won, will ask another cast.
And, lady, cloak his virtues as you will,
He'll be but as I said, a fondling still.

HERMIONE.

Erst had I thought, my lord, a man so wise as you,
Son to a prince, scholar to him that depth of learning knew,
Among many lessons one,[76] this rule could wisely find,
To have the government of wrath and rancour of your mind.
What high offence is given unto your father's grace?
I take it nothing needful here to reason of the case:
But stand he less content, or pleased herewithal,
My lord, that thus you should mislike the cause is very small.
The unremoved love I bear my lady here,
Whose countenance my comfort is, that holds my love as dear,
Commands me to digest such hard and bitter words,
As not with credit of your state your honour here affords.
Else, prince, persuade thyself, my mind were not so base
To pocket, but for such respects, so hard and foul disgrace.
And this,[77] lady--Hermione, for ought that men do know,
By birth may be as nobly born as Prince Armenio.

ARMENIO.

Traitor, thou shalt not joy that proud comparison.

FIDELIA.

My good Hermione, come hence; let him alone.

ARMENIO.

Nay, dame; it likes me not that you should go.

HERMIONE.

Whether thou wilt, Armenio, she shall, though thou say no.

ARMENIO.

What, shall she, villain?

FIDELIA.

Help, help! alas!

Enter PHIZANTIES [the prince], a LORD, and
PENULO [a parasite].

PHIZANTIES.

What stir is here? what means this broil begun?
Give me to know th'occasion of this strife?
How falls it out? Armenio, my son,
Hath wound receiv'd by stroke of naked knife.
Say to me straight, what one hath done this deed?
His blows are big that makes a prince to bleed.

FIDELIA.

My sovereign father, pardon his offence,[78]
Whose grief of mind is greater than his wound.
My rightful quarrel yields me safe defence,
And here they stand that guilty must be found.

ARMENIO.

Traitor, O king, unto your majesty,
Whose proud attempt doth touch your grace so near,
As what may be the greatest villainy
Upon recital shall be opened here.
My sister and your far unworthy child,
Forgetting love and fear of gods and thee,
And honour of her name, is thus beguil'd
To love this gentleman, whom here you see--
Hermione, whom for a jewel of some price
Old Hermet gave^[79] your highness long ago.
And for I gave rebuke to her^[80] device,
In gallant thought he would not take it so;
But, as it seems, to do my body good--
I thank him--deign'd himself to let me blood.

PHIZANTIES.

Hermione, and hast thou done this deed?
And couldst thou shrine such treason in thy thought?
Armenio, jest not with thy hurt: take heed.
And thou, fond girl, whose stained blood hath wrought,
How hath mine age and honour been abus'd,
My princely care, Hermione, of thee?
The fault so great it cannot be excus'd,
And you enforc'd the shame thereof to see.
But far we fear some farther ill may fall,
Through love and hate of one and of the other:
Her foolish love, I mean; and therewithal
The hot disdain and stomach of her brother.
Hermione, weigh what our pleasure is.
Whilome, thou knowest, we entertained^[81] thee willingly;
Now, seeing thou hast done so far amiss
To reach above thy reach unorderedly,
In milder words, because we love thee well,
Lo, we discharge thee of our princely court:
Thou mayest no longer with Fidelia dwell,
Forbidden to her presence to resort.
Behold my 'ward,^[82] that am no bitter judge,
And wend thy way, where'er thou likest to go:
This only way I take to end the grudge,
And stop the love that each to other owe.
Among such haps as might my mind content,
Whereof the gracious gods have given me store,
I count this one, if thus I might prevent
The furthest outrage of the swelling sore.

HERMIONE.

Alas! now have I lived too long, I see,
Confounded so to yield to fortune's will:
My sovereign prince offended thus with me,
And I adjudg'd to death, though living still.
Ah, my good lord! whom I have honoured long,
Long may your highness joy this highest place:
Thyself the root and cause of mine own wrong.
But must I leave to view my lady's face,
And, banish'd from my prince's royal court,
Wander,^[83] as erst the unhappy Oedipus,
Whose pain my foes will make their chiefest sport--
My most unhappy chance will have it thus.

ARMENIO.

No force forsooth: unpitied might he die,
That to his sovereign means such villainy.

HERMIONE.

Such villainy! who ever meant more good?

ARMENIO.

The venom of thy villainy withstood.

HERMIONE.

Armenio, I forbear thee here for reverence;
Yet, by my prince's leave, in my defence
I may allege I lov'd thy sister here;
Which love though I am like to buy full dear;
Yet is her love more precious than the price.
But since hard hap prevents our late device,
Long live my lord, long live my lady's grace:
God send them friends as loyal in my place;
And, trust me, then their fortune shall be such,
As not thy love shall ever prove so much.

PHIZANTIES.

Hermione, give me thy hand: adieu:
Think this is done t'avoid a further ill,
And double mischief that might else ensue.
For my sake cease to love Fidelity still:
Unequal love is enemy to rest.
She is too young to love thee as she should--
And thou, Hermione, canst conceive the rest.
My meaning is, she loves not as we would.
Time may afford to both your hearts' desires
New choice to cool these newly-kindled fires.

FIDELIA.

Never, alas! never will be the day,
That I shall leave to love Hermione.
Sooner shall nature's course quite altered be,
Than I shall leave, dear knight, to honour thee.
Good father, let him stay, who, if he part,
'Gainst law is like to steal away my heart.

ARMENIO.

May it please your grace to keep the body here,
It's like enough the heart will hover^[84] near.

HERMIONE.

My lord, laugh not oppressed souls to scorn.
Losers, they say, may easily be forborne.

PHIZANTIES.

Forbear these words; and thou, Fidelity,
These misbeseeming foolish fashions stay.
Let it suffice that thou shalt live in court,
Where, if among the jolly brave resort
Of sundry knights of noble personage,
Worthy thy love for gifts and parentage,
Thou shalt espy one^[85] such as we do like,
Our favours shall not be too far to seek.

FIDELIA.

Ah, my Hermione!

HERMIONE.

Sweet lady mine, farewell.[86]

Farewell, the courteous't dame that on earth do dwell.

ARMENIO.

Sir, now you are packing, let me know your walk,
For I have that may not be past without some talk:
Nor stands it with mine honour to let thee bear it clear,
But I will make thee know Armenio's blood is dear.

HERMIONE.

My lord, I make no challenge with offence;
But first I will prepare for my defence.

ARMENIO.

So, sir, you are aforehand: keep you so,
And reckon of Armenio for thy vowed foe.
Go, wend thy ways obscurer than the night,
And Fortune for revenge plague thee with spite.

[_Exit_.

HERMIONE.

Farewell, my cruel foe; not thou nor Fortune may
Add more unto the miseries that I have felt to-day;
Nor but by safe return[87] unto this happy place,
Can gods or Fortune make amends in this distressed case.
Then cease, Hermione, to utter speech of this;
Words not suffice this endless woe, but death, i-wis:
And part thou from the place a dead and liveless man,
Robb'd of thy senses and thy joy, since first this stir began.

PENULO.

Ah, good my lord, my good lord Hermione!

HERMIONE.

I am, indeed, as thou dost say, Hermione;
For that I am Hermione, I am
The unhappiest wight that ever hither came.

PENULO.

Ah, my good lord! would God, poor Penulo
Might any way but mitigate this woe.
And pleaseth it your honour to command
My service, or the help of head or hand,
Penulo, my worthy lord, would prove as just,
As he whom best your honour likes to trust.
Say what it is, wherein my secrecy
May aid your lordship in this extremity?

HERMIONE.

Penulo, since thou so friendly here dost proffer me
The uttermost of aid that lies in thee,
I do remember that which, brought to pass,
Would make me half so happy as I was.

PENULO.

Say it, my lord, and constantly I vow it,
It shall go hard, but Penulo will do it.

HERMIONE.

Gramercy, gentle friend: then, thus it is:--
The lady of my life Fidelity is;
Of whom I am, I know, belov'd no less
Than she of me, my gracious mistress,
Sever'd by Fortune and our cruel foe,
My lord her brother, Prince Armenio.
Now could'st thou, Penulo, thyself behave
On trust to bring my lady to the cave,
Where whilome (lovers) we were wont to meet,
In secret sort each other for to greet.
She wots it well, and every corner knows,
And every uncouth[88] step that thither goes:
For what is not sharpsighted lovers see?
This is the sum of my desire to thee.
Accomplish this, and, this in silence done,
My happiness will be again begun.

PENULO.

My lord, I see whereunto this talk doth tend:
I have this lesson at my finger-end.
No more ado; betake you to your flight:
We'll make a plaister for the sore ere night.
[_Aside_] But such an one as, if it be applied,
Shall do more grief than ease, when it is tried.

HERMIONE.

Penulo, I yield my life into thy hands.

PENULO.

Ye do, sir, as now the matter stands. [_Aside_.

HERMIONE.

Hold, Penulo, and I will look for thee.

PENULO.

You will not look for them that come with me. [_Aside_.

HERMIONE.

I will be gone, and live to see my dear.
[_Exit_.

PENULO.

Do so, sir, and perchance be never the near.
This is a step that first we use to climb:
We that, forsooth, take hold on every time.
Men of all hours, whose credit such as spites,
In heat forsooth hath call'd us parasites.
But let them spite, and we will bite as fast.
But, Penulo, thou spendest words in waste.
A fool, Hermione, that for hurting thee
On[89] slender trust will give a knave his fee.
[_Exit_.

Strike up FORTUNE'S _triumphs with drums and trumpets_.

FORTUNE.

Behold what Fortune, if she list, can do,
High mistress of the rolling wheel of chance,
To overturn, and who can do thereto,
Or graciously, when please her, to advance.
Lo, lordings, this is Fortune's impery,
And in her pleasure to be changing still:
Herein consisteth Fortune's sovereignty;
That Fortune can on earth do what she will.
When men have builded on the surest grounds,
Their strong devices Fortune's power confounds.

Enter VENUS.

VENUS.

Not all in haste; you do not so intend:
You have begun, but I must make an end.

THE THIRD ACT.

Enter BOMELIO _solus, like an_ HERMIT.

BOMELIO.

He that hath lost his hope, and yet desires to live,
He that is overwhelm'd with woe, and yet would counsel give;
He that delights to sigh, to walk abroad alone,
To drive away the weary time with his lamenting moan;
He that in his distress despaireth of relief,
Let him begin to tell his tale, to rip up all his grief,
And if that wretched man can more than I recite
Of fickle Fortune's froward check and her continual spite,
Of her inconstant change, of her discourtesy,
I will be partner with that man to live in misery.
When first my flow'ring years began to bud their prime,
Even in the April of mine age and May-month of my time;
When, like the tender kid new-weaned from the teat,
In every pleasant springing mead I took my choice of meat;
When simple youth devis'd to length[en] his delight,
Even then, not dreaming I on her, she poured out her spite:
Even then she took her key, and tuned[90] all her strings
To sing my woe: list, lordings, now my tragedy begins.
Behold me, wretched man, that serv'd his prince with pain,
That in the honour of his praise esteem'd my greatest gain:
Behold me, wretched man, that for his public weal
Refused not with thousand foes in bloody wars to deal:
Behold me, wretched man, whose travail, pain, and toil
Was ever prest to save my friends from force of foreign spoil;
And see my just reward, look on my recompense:
Behold by this for labours past what guerdon cometh thence!
Not by my fiercest foes in doubtful fight with us,
But by my fawning friend[91] I was confounded thus.
One word of his despite in question call'd my name;
Two words of his untrusty tongue brought me to open shame.
Then was I banished the city, court and town;

Then every hand that held me up began to pull me down.
O, that the righteous gods should ever grant the power,
That smoothest sands and greenest bogs should soonest me devour.
Yet that I might descry the better their device,
Here have I liv'd almost five years, disguis'd in secret wise:
And now somewhat it is, but what I cannot tell,
Provokes me forward more than wont to leave my darksome cell,
And in my crooked age, instead of mirth and joy,
With broken sighs in doleful tunes to sing of mine annoy.

[_Song_.

Go walk the path of plaint, go wander, wretched, now
In uncouth ways, blind corners fit for such a wretch as thou.
There feed upon thy woe; fresh[92] thoughts shall be thy fare,
Musing shall be thy waiting-maid, thy carver shall be care;
Thy dainty dish shall be of fretting melancholy,
And broken sobs with hollow sighs thy savoury sauce shall be.
But further ere I walk, my servant I will send
Into the town to buy such things as now he can intend.

What, Lentulo! [_To_ LENTULO _within_.

LENTULO.
Anon, forsooth.

BOMELIO.
What, Lentulo, come forth.

LENTULO.
Anon, forsooth.

BOMELIO.
Why, when? I say!

LENTULO.
Anon, forsooth.

BOMELIO.
You naughty lout; come out, sir knave, come away.

LENTULO.
Will you not give one leave to pull down his points? what, an a should
his breeches beray?

[_Enter_ LENTULO.]

BOMELIO.
Get you to the market, and buy such things as needful are for us.

LENTULO.
Such things as needful are for us! and what are those, I pray?
First, there is needful for us a pot of porridge, for I had none this
many a day;
And then, there are needful for us a feather-bed, for I lie on a
bottle of hay;
And then there is most needful for us a pretty proper wench for to
laugh and play.

BOMELIO.

Go, buy us some victuals, and hie thee home.

[Exit_.

LENTULO.

Now, farewell, master mine, good gentle master mome.

Have you seen such a logger-headed fool, to say:

Go, go, good Lentulo, to buy my victuals so, and give me money?--no!

But for the name's sake, swounds, I were as good serve a master
of clouts.

He'll do nothing all day long but sit on his arse, as my mother did
when she made pouts:

And then a' looks a' this fashion, and thus and thus again; and then,
what do ye?

By my troth, I stand even thus at him, and laugh at his simplismity.

Hath the best manners in the world to bid a man fall to his meat,

And then I say: I thank you forsooth, master, and I could tell
what to eat.

We two, look you--that's I and he--can lie a-bed a whole night and a day,

And we eat, and we had it: it vattens a man; look on my cheeks, else,
are they not fall'n away?

Well, I must jog to the town, and I'll tell you what shift I make there.

Marry, ye shall promise me not to steal it away.

When I come to a rich man's gate, I make a low leg, and then
I knock there;

And then I begin to cry in at the keyhole, that I may be sure they
shall hear:

God save my good master and my good mistress, a poor boy, a piece of
bread and meat for God's sake!

Enter PENULO.

Heigh! merrily trick'd! am I not a knave for the nonce,

That can despatch two errands at once?

I have both told her even as I should do,

And told my young master to meet with him too.

Now he, like a gentleman, for the valour of his mind

Hath sworn by his honour not to stay long behind.

The desire of revenge pricketh him forward so,

That I am sure he'll not let but to go,

And that with all haste possible he may.

Then, tantara-tara, we shall have good play.

I like such a knave so can tickle them all,

To set noblemen at brabble and brawl.

LENTULO.

Save you, sir, young master, and you be a gentleman?

PENULO.

Whoreson peasant, seest thou not what I am?

LENTULO.

Troth, sir, I see you have a good doublet and a pair of hose;

But now-a-days there is so many goes

So like gentlemen, that such a poor fellow as I

Know not how a gentleman from a knave to spy.

PENULO.

Thou may'st perceive I am no such companion:[93]

I am a gentleman, a courtier, and a merry frank franion.[94]

LENTULO.

Then, thou merry companion, thou whoreson frank franion,
Why hast thou abused the law?
What, good skipjack, in faith with thwick-thwack your bones I will claw.
Come about, sir knave.

PENULO.

Cot's my passion, what a merry mate have we here?

LENTULO.

Give me your hand, sir: faith, I was bold to brush the dust out
of your gear.
Pray, sir, tell me: they say in the country 'tis a common guise,
That gentlemen now-a-days cannot see with both eyes.

PENULO.

It's a lie, knave: I know[95] few gentlemen blind.

LENTULO.

No, sir? what will you lay, and I can find
One with a wet finger[96], that is stark blind?

PENULO.

It may be so, but I think thou canst not.

LENTULO.

Will you lay? do wager on it.

PENULO.

What should I lay?

Thou hast no money, I am sure, to pay.

LENTULO.

No, faith, sir; but I'll tell you what our wager shall be;
Because I am not able to lay any money,
I'll lay three round raps on the ribs with my cudgel here.

PENULO.

Soft, let me look first if there be no blind man near.
Content, i'faith: that bargain shall stand.

LENTULO.

Then, sir, I must be so bold as to search your purse out of hand.

PENULO.

My purse, sir? wherefore?

LENTULO.

By my troth, sir, no more but to try,
If you be not as blind a gentleman in the purse as I.

PENULO.

I use not to carry my money in a purse.

LENTULO.

All in a pocket? well, never a whit the worse;
I must search your pocket.

PENULO.

What, if it be elsewhere?

LENTULO.

Wheresoever it is, I must seek out this gear,
I'll not lose my wager, that's certain.
Very well, sir; will you put me to pain?

PENULO.

Have I never a weapon?--I'll look--I pray thee, be content.

LENTULO.

You shall have your wager, sir, as it was meant.

PENULO.

Hold thy hands, good fellow: I'll do anything for thee.
I perceive a wise man of a fool overtaken may be.

LENTULO.

Thou blind gentleman! unless it be for my commodiosity,
I'll teach thee to be blind, and go so bravely.

PENULO.

I'll do anything for thee, if thou strike me no more,
Because I perceive thou art almost as poor
As myself am, and yet there is somewhat in thee:
I'll prefer thee to a service in the Court presently.

LENTULO.

Ha! wilt thou do so?

PENULO.

That I will.

LENTULO.

Wilt thou do so, indeed?
Swear to me by thy ten commandments in thy creed.

PENULO.

I do so.

LENTULO.

Troth, then, we are friends: say nothing, I pray,
And you shall see me prove a rank runaway.
Why, when a man may be a courtier, and live at ease,
Should a' not leave his old master to please?
Sirrah blind gentleman, we two blind gentlemen, and [you] do
as thou promis'd here,
Perhaps I may be as good to thee as two pots of beer.
I'll go with thee, i'faith; gaw, let's be gone.

PENULO.

Soft; tarry a while: I'll go with thee anon.

Enter ARMENIO.

ARMENIO.

How thinkest thou, Penulo, am I not provided now?

LENTULO.

I warrant, sir, a' shall have a cold pull of you,
And a' begin to make another brawl.

ARMENIO.

Farewell, when thou wilt; I trust I shall
Meet with him: am I not almost at the tree?

PENULO.

That same is it, sir.

LENTULO.

Sirrah, what's he?

PENULO.

What car'st thou I come, go thou with me.
Why, I shall have but an ill-favoured courtier of ye.

LENTULO.

Now, for a runaway, God send us good chance.
Then, maids, at your marriage I mean me to dance.

[Exit_.

ARMENIO.

Now serves the time to wreak me of my foe--
My bastard foe--that to dishonour me
In privy corners seeks to shame me so,
That my discredit might his credit be.
And hath my father from his tender youth
Vouchsaf'd to bring thee up? did I therefore
Believe so earnestly thy perjurd truth,
Advancing still thine honour evermore,
That, not contented with a common wrack,
Thou shouldst intend the ruin of us all;
And when thou seemd'st afraid to turn thy back,
To make a glory of our greater fall?
Before thou triumph in thy treachery,
Before thou 'scape untouched for thy sin,
Let never Fates nor Fortune favour me,
But wretched let me live and die therein.
Few words shall serve, my deeds shall prove it now
That, ere I sleep, I mean to meet with you.

[Exit_.

Enter FIDELIA.

FIDELIA.

Behold the shifts that faithful love can make;
See what I dare adventure for thy sake.
In case extreme make virtue of a need,
But hence the grief which maketh my heart to bleed.
My love and life, wherever that thou be,
I am in dole constrain'd to follow thee:
Hence sprung the hell of my tormented mind,
The fear of some misfortune yet behind.
If thou escape the peril of distress,
My fear and care is twenty times more less.
No reason 'tis that I should live in joy,
When thou art wrapt in fetters of annoy;

Nor to that end I swear to be thy wife,
To live in peace with thee and state of life;
But as to dwell at ease in pleasure's lap,
Even so to bear some part of thy mishap,
And so to draw in equal portion still
Of both our fortunes, either good or ill.
And sith the lots of our unconstant fate
Have turn'd our former bliss to wretched state,
I am content to tread the woful dance,
That sounds the measure of our hapless chance.
I'll wait thy coming; long thou wilt not stay:
High Jove defend and keep thee in the way!

Enter BOMELIO.

BOMELIO.

Now weary lay thee down, thy fortune to fulfil:
Go, yield thee captive to thy care, to save thy life or spill.
The pleasures of the field, the prospect of delight,
The blooming trees, the chirping birds, are grievous to thy sight.
The hollow, craggy rock, the shrieking owl to see,
To hear the noise of serpent's hiss, that is thy harmony.
For as unto the sick all pleasure is in vain,
So mirth unto the wounded mind increaseth but his pain.
But, heavens! what do I see? thou nymph or lady fair,
Or else thou goddess of the grove, what mak'st thee to repair
To this unhaunted place, thy presence here unfit?

FIDELIA.

Ancient father, let it not offend thee any whit,
To find me here alone. I am no goddess, I,
But a mortal maid, subject to misery.
And better that I might lament my heavy moan,
I secret came abroad to recreate myself awhile alone.

BOMELIO.

Take comfort, daughter mine, for thou hast found him then,
That is of others all that live the most accursed'st man.
O, I have heard it said, our sorrows are the less,
If in our anguish we may find a partner in distress.

FIDELIA.

O father! but my grief relieved cannot be:
My hope is fled, my help in vain, my hurt my death must be.
Yet not the common death of life that here is led,
But such a death as ever kills, and yet is never dead.

BOMELIO.

Fair maid, I have been well acquainted with that fit:
Sometime injured with the like, I learn to comfort it.
Come, rest thee here with me, with[in] this hollow cave;
There will I reckon up at large the horrors that I have.

FIDELIA.

I thank you, father; but I must needs walk another way.

BOMELIO.

Nay, gentle damsel, be content a while with me to stay.

FIDELIA.
The longer that I stay with you, the greater is my grief.

BOMELIO.
The longer that you stay with me, the sooner is relief.

FIDELIA.
I am provided other ways; good father, let me go.

BOMELIO.
To him that off'reth thee no wrong, be not uncourteous so.

FIDELIA.
Perhaps another time I'll come, and visit thee.

BOMELIO.
Both then and now, if so you please, you shall right welcome be.

[_Enter_ ARMENIO.

ARMENIO.
Shall she be welcome unto thee, old wretch, indeed?
I'll welcome both of you: come, maid, away with speed.

FIDELIA.
O brother!

ARMENIO.
Brother! Peace!

FIDELIA.
Good father, help me now.

BOMELIO.
Have I no weapons, wretch that I am? Well, youth, I'll meet with you.

ARMENIO.
Must you be gone? is this your meeting-place?
Come, get you home; and pack you, sir, apace.
Were't not for reverence of thine age, I swear,
Thou should'st accurse the time I met thee here.
But, i'faith, sister, my father shall welcome you.

BOMELIO.
Go tell thine errand, if thou canst.

FIDELIA.
Hermione, adieu;
Ten times adieu: farewell for ever now.

ARMENIO.
I thank thee. Fortune, that thou didst this deed allow.
[_Exeunt_.

BOMELIO.
Thou heaven and earth, and ye eternal lamps
That restless keep his course in order due;
Thou, Phoebe bright, that scatterest the damps
Of darksome night, I make my plaints to you.

And thou, Alecto, hearken to my call;
Let fall a serpent from thy snaky hair;
Tisiphone, be swift to plague them all,
That make a pastime of my care and fear!
And thou, O Jove, that by thy great foresight
Rulest the earth and reign'st above the skies;
That wreak'st the wrongs of them that master right
Against the wretches that thy name despise.
And Rhadamanth, thou judge of hateful hell,
Where damned ghosts continual moaning make,
Send forth a fury that may further well
The just revenge that here I undertake.
Henceforth accursed be thou evermore,
Accursed all thou tak'st in hand to do,
The time, the day, accursed be the hour,
The earth, the air, and all that 'long thereto!
Dole and despair henceforth be thy delight,
Wrapped now in present and woes to come,
To wail the day and weep the weary night;
And from this time henceforth I strike thee dumb.
Think'st thou I knew thee not? Yes, well, i-wis,
And that thy sister, daughter to my prince.
Now brag abroad what thou hast got by this:
So live thou dumb: that be thy recompense;
And when thy ghost forsakes thy body quite,
Vengeance I wish upon thy soul to light.

Enter HERMIONE.

HERMIONE.
Good even, good father: pardon my rudeness here.

BOMELIO.
O joy and grief! I will dissemble yet my cheer. [_Aside_.

HERMIONE.
Good sir, methought I heard you speak of one right now,
Daughter unto a prince: that made me bold to trouble you.

BOMELIO.
I spake of such an one indeed.

HERMIONE.
Why, do you know her name?

BOMELIO.
Fidelia. Why do you ask? What, do you know the same?

HERMIONE.
Yea, father, that I do: I know, and knew her well.
But did you wish those plagues to light on her, I pray you tell?

BOMELIO.
On her! the gods forbid; but on that wretched wight
Her brother, that from hence right now perforce convey'd her quite.

HERMIONE.
Alas! what do I hear? Good father, tell me true,
Hath she been here?

BOMELIO.
She was.

HERMIONE.
She was! Where is she now?

BOMELIO.
Gone back again.

HERMIONE.
Gone back! With whom?

BOMELIO.
Her brother.

HERMIONE.
Her brother! How?

BOMELIO.
He secret watched here; and when she should have stay'd
Awhile with me, he rushed out and her from hence convey'd.

HERMIONE.
Confounded in my grief! And can it suffred be?
And shall he make a brag at home of his despite to me?
First let me die a thousand deaths; draw, run and meet with him.

BOMELIO.
Tarry, my son; it is in vain: they are now^[97] at home, I ween.
Let him alone; he will not make great reck'ning of his gain.

HERMIONE.
Wretch that thou art for lingering! everlasting shall be thy pain;
Continual thy complaint, aye-during still thy woe,
Why mad'st thou not more haste to come, and first of all to know?

BOMELIO.
Content thyself, my son; torment not so thy mind:
Assuage the sorrows of thy heart, in hope some help to find.

HERMIONE.
Some help! O father, no; all help comes too late.
I am the man of all alive^[98] the most unfortunate.

BOMELIO.
I^[99] see thy loyalty, I see thy faithful love,
Else never durst thou this attempt adventured to prove.
Take comfort thereby, my son.

HERMIONE.
I am the man, I say,
That Love and Fortune once advanc'd, but now have cast away.
The joy, the sweet delight, the rest I had before,
Fell to my lot that now the loss, my plague, might be the more.
O Fortune! froward dame, wilt thou be never sure?
Most constant in inconstancy I see thou wilt endure.

BOMELIO.

Accuse not Fortune, son, but blame thy love therefor;
For I perceive thou art in love, and then[ce] thy trouble is more.

HERMIONE.

Father, if this be love: to lead a life in thrall,
To think the rankest poison sweet, to feed on honey-gall;
To be at war and peace, to be in joy and grief,
Then farthest from the hope of help, where nearest is relief;
To live and die, to freeze and sweat, to melt and not to move;
If it be this to live in love, father, I am in love.

BOMELIO.

Why did you not possess your lady then at home?

HERMIONE.

At home! where is it, sir? alas! for I have none.
Brought up I know not how, and born I know not where,
When I was in my childhood given unto my prince, then here,
Of[100] whom I cannot tell, wherefore I little know.
But now cast out to seek my fate, unhappy where I go.
Then dare I not be seen; here must I not abide.
Did ever more calamities unto a man betide?

BOMELIO.

My heart will burst, if I forbear amidst this misery.
Behold, thy father thou hast found, my son Hermione!
Thy father thou hast found, thy father--I am he.

HERMIONE.

But is it possible my father you should be?

BOMELIO.

Even from my first exile here have I liv'd forlorn,
And once I gave thee to my prince, for thou wast noble-born;
And now he gives me thee, and welcome home again!

HERMIONE.

This is my recompense for all my former pain.
Dear father, glad I am to find you here alive:
By your example I may learn with froward chance to strive.

BOMELIO.

Come, son, content thee now within a cave to dwell.
I will provide for thy redress, and all things shall be well.
A darksome den must be thy lofty lodging now.

HERMIONE.

Father, I am well content to take such part as you.
Here is a breathing-fit[101] after hard mischance.
O gracious Venus! once vouchsafe thy servants to advance.

Strike up a noise of viols: VENUS' _triumph_.

[_Enter_ VENUS.]

VENUS.

Behold what Love can work for their delight
That put affiance in her deity.
Though heaven and earth against them bend their might,

Yet in the end theirs is the victory:
I will in them, and they triumph in me.
Let Fortune frown, I will uphold their state,
Yea, seem they never so unfortunate.

FORTUNE.

Brag not too much: what, think'st thou I have done?
Nay, soft, not yet: my sport is not begun.

[_Music, Music_.

THE FOURTH ACT.

Enter PENULO _and_ LENTULO.

PENULO.

Come away with thy basket, thou loggerheaded jack.
I think thy basket be cloven to thy back.

LENTULO.

My back and my basket; look, dost thou not see,
When my basket is on my back, then my back is under me?
And, O this basket, wott'st thou wherefore I keep it so close?
For all the love of my heart within this basket goes.

PENULO.

Thy love, with a wanion![102] are you in love, sir, then,
with your leave?

LENTULO.

What an ass art thou: couldst thou not all this time perceive,
That I never sleep but when I am not awake,
And I eat and I eat till my belly would ache?
And I fall away like a gammon of bacon.
Am I not in love when I am in this tacon?[103]
Call'st thou this the court? would I had ne'er come thither
To be caught in Cupido. I faint, I faint! O, gather me, gather me!

[_Pretends to swoon_.

PENULO.

Come up, and be hang'd. Alack, poor Lentulo! [_Aside_.
Tell me with whom thou art in love so.

LENTULO.

You kill me, and you make me tell her name. No, no.
O terrible torments, that trounce in my toe!
Love, my masters, is a parlous matter! how it runs out of my nose!
It's now in my back, now in my belly; O, now in the bottom of my hose.

PENULO.

The pestilence! there, what is she, my boy?
I'll make her love thee again, be she never so coy.

LENTULO.

Wilt thou so? O gods of love! that word plucks up my heart,

I'll tell thee, sirrah--even as we two at the court-gate did wait,
Did'st thou not mark a goodly lady, O lady, lady![104]
Why should not I as well as he, my dear lady?
Did'st thou not see her come in with a golden lock?
She had a fine gown on her back, and a passing nether-stock.

PENULO.

Well, sir, proceed: I remember her very well.
It's the Duke's daughter the sot means, I can tell. [Aside_.

LENTULO.

Now, sirrah, there was a little dappard[105] ass with her,
that went before:
When I saw him, I came in sneaking more and more.
To have heard them talk; ah! crouching on is good;
For when he had talk['d] awhile, I had come in with, ay forsooth, no
forsooth, that I would,
And she would have look'd upon me: then more 'quaintance we should have.

PENULO.

An excellent device. Ah, sirrah! you are an excellent knave.

LENTULO.

Tu autem, tu[106] autem: I have it in me. But, sirrah, wott'st thou
what now?

As God juggle me, when I came near them, I tell thee true,
The same squall[107] did nothing but thus: I know what's what;
And I ran before him, and did thus too.

[Strikes_ PENULO.

PENULO.

A pox upon you, what meant you by that?

LENTULO.

What mean I? marry, sir, he meant to give her a box on the ear, if she
spake to me,
And I meant to give him another box on the ear, sir, he should see.

PENULO.

You should have bestow'd it where you meant it, then.
Must you strike me, and mean other men?

LENTULO.

'Twas nothing, fellow, but for 'sample's sake.

PENULO.

Well, sir, I am content this once it to take.
But, sirrah, you must know that squall is the duke's son,
That now by mischance is stroken stark dumb,
In fetching home his sister, that ran away from hence.

LENTULO.

Is she then a runaway? O passing wench!
I thought as much; now, good Lord, to see
That she and I now akin should be.
O cuckally[108] luck! O heavy chance, O!
I runaway, she runaway: go together, go!

PENULO.

But all the court laments, and sore weeps for it.

LENTULO.

All the court? thou liest: the Court-gate weeps not a whit.

Enter BOMELIO, _like a counterfeit Physician_.

BOMELIO.

Bien[109] venu, chi diue ve mi nou intendite signeur, no.

I have a piece of work in hand now, that all the world must not know.

LENTULO.

Cock's nowns, the devil! a-God's name, what's he?

PENULO.

Some Spaniard or foreign stranger he seems to be.

BOMELIO.

Dio vou salvi, signore, e voutre gratio pavero mouchato.

LENTULO.

I have no pleasure in thee: I pray thee, get thee gone.

PENULO.

What would you, sir?

BOMELIO.

Monsieur, par ma foy, am one have the grand knowledge in the skience
of fiskick.

Can make dem hole have been all life sick;

Can make to seco see, and te dumb speak;

Can make te lame go, and be ne'er so weak.

PENULO.

Can you so, sir? what countryman are you, I pray?

BOMELIO.

E be Italian, Neapolitan: e come a Venice[110] a toder day.

LENTULO.

And you can speak any pedlar's French,[111] tell me what I say.

BOMELIO.

Ne point entende, signior.

LENTULO.

You are an ass. I can spose him, I.

BOMELIO.

Monsieur, parle petit: e heard now hereby,

Dere be a nobel man dumb, dat made me stay:

If me no help him, me carry no head away.

PENULO.

Will you venture your head to help him, indeed?

Well, sir, I'll tell the Duke with all possible speed.

Tarry me[112] here: I'll return by and by.

Excellent luck! it falls out happily.

Exit.

LENTULO.

Will you venture your head, sirrah, blockhead you?

BOMELIO.

You be de ass-head, me can tell dat's true.

LENTULO.

Swounds! O, but that I am in love, thou shouldst know
What 'twere to move my vengeance so!

BOMELIO.

Come heter, sirrah; me speak with you: me can tell
You are de runaway from your ma'ter; ah, very well.

LENTULO.

You gods and devils eke, what do you mean to do?
Shall I be known a runaway, for and to shame me too?
I a runaway, sirrah? go with your uplandish, go:
I am no runaway, I would you should know.

BOMELIO.

You no runaway from your ma'ter in de wood,
When he send you to market? Ah, no point good!

LENTULO.

O furies fell, and hags of hell, with all that therein be!
What, do ye mean to shame me clean, and tell him then of me?
Hear you, sirrah: you are no devil; mass, and I wist you were,
I would lamback[113] the devil out of you, for all your gear.

BOMELIO.

Diavolo? ah, fie! me no diavolo, me very fury.
Let-a me see your basket: what meat you buy?

LENTULO.

Look in my basket! O villain, rascal, tarry, stay!
Hath opened it? out alas! my love is quite flown away.
My love is gone, my love is gone out of the basket there,
Prepare therefore to kill thyself: farewell, my friends so dear.

BOMELIO.

Ah, vat-a you do, man?

LENTULO.

Uplandish, hence away.

BOMELIO.

Vat-a you do, man? no point yourself to slay.
Come de be hang-a.[114]

LENTULO.

Alas! O my neck, alas!
O frying-pan of my head! uplandish, now, cham worse than ever was.
Adieu! farewell, farewell, my love.

BOMELIO.

Your love? if you be in love, den do as I bid do,
And you shall 've[115] your love away wit' you, too.

LENTULO.

Uplandish, O my friend! if thou do so for me,
Hold here my hand: thy fellow, friend, and partner will I be.

BOMELIO.

Go you ten, and get-a me some fine, fine, fine colosse,
And wit' te marigol' leaf all-to mus your nose.

LENTULO.

Ah, my nose, my nose! O God, is my nose in my hand?
Uplandish, leave your signs; without them I can understand.

BOMELIO.

And come a me heter wit' a gold ring in your mouth fast:
E make de lady go wit' you weter list at last.

LENTULO.

O, let me 'brace thy cursed corpse! O, now I live again!
I will go get apparel straight, although be to my pain.
'Tis th'apparel, a marigol', and a ring.

BOMELIO.

Noting else, and you tem bring.

LENTULO.

Bring them? yes, I warrant thee, I'll bring them by and by.
Now, goodman Venus, lend thy hand, and lady Vulcan high.

[_Exit_.

BOMELIO.

A good beginning. I am not descri'd:
They know not me, but I know them too well.
Disguised thus their counsels may be tri'd,
And I may safe return unto my cell;
Where I have left my solitary son,
'Twixt hope and fear, in doubt and danger too,
Till I return to tell him what is done,
Which for his sake I have devis'd to do.
Eternal gods, that know my true intent,
And how unjustly wronged I have been,
Vouchsafe all secret dangers to prevent,
And further me, as yet you do begin.
Sufficeth you my travail heretofore,
My hunger, cold, and all my former pain.
Here make an end, and plague me now no more:
Contented, then, at rest I will remain.
But hark! some comes: dissemble, then, again.

Enter the DUKE, _his_ Son, _and_ PENULO.

PENULO.

My lord, yon is the man whom I have told to you.[116]

DUKE.

My friend, I am inform'd that by thy worthy skill
In physic, thou art able to recover at thy will
The strangest cures that be: if this be true indeed,
As grant the gods it may, I pray thee then with speed

Provide for our relief: recover this my son,
Unto his speech, whom here thou seest before us to be dumb.

BOMELIO.

You no take care for dat, me nobel prince;
Me make him speak again, or me ne'er come hence.

DUKE.

Thrice welcome, then, to us: despatch it out of hand,
And thou shalt bless the time that e'er thou cam'st unto our land.

BOMELIO.

Let-a me see him. You hear me?
Ah, dat vel: turn heter; no like it truly.

PENULO.

By the mass, this physic is an excellent art;
It picks such a deal of gold out of every part. [Aside_.

BOMELIO.

Vell, vell; me now see vat this matter mean.
Nobel prince, dis ting be done by mashic clean.
'Tis true dat me tell, me perceive it plain:
No natural 'pediment, but cunshering certain.

DUKE.

O double, treble woe! my son, how cometh this?
He saith by magic it is wrought, unnatural it is.
Dost thou remember aught, that so it should appear,
Or can'st thou any reason make it should be true we hear?
What means he by these signs? can any one express?

PENULO.

If you give me leave, sir, to say as I guess,
Methinks he should mean there was some old man,
That threatened to be revenged on him then.
'Tis so you may see: he confirms it again.

DUKE.

Condemned be that man to everlasting pain,
Perpetual his annoy, continual his unrest!
O, that I had him here to plague as I thought best!
But, learned sir, is there no way, is there no remedy?
Can there be found out no device the charm to mollify?
Good sir, if anything, whatever that it be,
Let spare no cost, my will is such, I will allow it thee.

BOMELIO.

Indeed, and by my trot', dar is o' thing,
But me am vera let' de same to bring;
Yit wit'out dat me am seaver,[117] me tell,
Your son again be never more well.

DUKE.

Good father, tell it me: whatever should befall,
Mine be the danger, mine the loss, you shall be pleased for all.
In any case, express it then.

BOMELIO.

Fait', then me will.
If you no have your son be so dumb still.
You mus' get-a de grand enemy dat he now have,
And in de tenderest part his dearest blood crave:
Derwit' mus' you wash his tongue-a string.
Noting but dat will his speech bring.

DUKE.
The dearest blood in the tenderest part
Of his great enemy? O, grief to my heart!
Will nothing else cure his disease?

BOMELIO.
Noting, by my trot'; but do as you please.

DUKE.
My son, my wretched son! and whom dost thou suppose
Thy greatest enemy amongst thy father's foes?
It is Hermione: 'tis he, and none but he.
He hath now proved himself, indeed, thy greatest enemy.
Where lives the wretch? That he were ta'en, and we revenged be?

PENULO.
And must his dearest blood, in his tenderest part,
Help him in his speech? that's an excellent art.
But what part is that, my masters, now about a man
That is the tenderest? guess it, and you can.
I can tell what part a woman thinks tenderest to be,
And there is dear blood in it--but _benedicite_.
And do you think, sir, there is none but he,
That can be thought his greatest enemy?
I have heard it said, there is no hate
Like to a brother or sister's, if they fall at debate.
I will not say, but you may think it as well as I,
If you mark since her coming home his sister's cruelty,
And the continual rancour she beareth unto him.

BOMELIO.
Is te maid his sister? be Got, den, he say tim.
Bin mine fait' and trot', ser, 'tis true dat he say:
His sister be his greatest enemy to-day.

DUKE.
And must I kill my daughter to help my son to speech?
I'll never do it.

PENULO.
See how a doth beseech!--
I would all our daggers were of his quality,
They should not brawl with a man, then, so for his money.

BOMELIO.
You kill your daughter! fie, no point so.
Her dearest blood in tenderest part me will show:
'Tis in her paps, her dugs, for der be de tenderest part,
And de blood de dearest; it comes from de heart.
So she be prick'd a little under de breast,
And wash his tongue-a, he speak wit' de best.

DUKE.

This thing is somewhat easier, if she consent thereto;
If not, I can enforce and make her it to do.
Penulo, despatch, and to my marshal bear
This signet for a token that he send her to us here.

PENULO.

I will, my lord.

[_Exit_.

DUKE.

He that hath felt the zeal, the tender love and care:
The fear, the grief that parents dear unto their children bear,
He may, and only he, conceive mine, inward woe,
Distracted thus 'twixt two extremes that hale me to and fro.
Sometime mistrusting that, and then misliking this--
Have parents such a cause of joy, or is it such a bliss
To see the offspring of their seed in health before them now?
O, little know they what mishap awaits the death for you.
But, son, my dearest son, recomfort thou thy mind;
Fight against fortune and thy fates, when they be most unkind.
And since I understand what may recover thee,
Make sure account of it, myself will do it presently.
But, sir, I pray you, lest my daughter should by fear
Or fright^[118] of it be sore abash'd, be always ready here
To stench her wound, when you see good.

BOMELIO.

Awe, awe, she lose but little blood:
Two or tree ounces sha' be de very most.
Yonder she come, is no she?

DUKE.

The same is she.

[_Enter_ FIDELIA _with_ PENULO.

FIDELIA.

Father, they say you sent for me.

DUKE.

Yea, daughter, I did so;
And mark what I shall say to thee, the cause thereof to show.
Thou seest thy brother here?

FIDELIA.

In name, but not in kind.

DUKE.

Well, hold thy peace, I say, and let me tell my mind.
Thy brother here, I say, thou seest him stricken dumb,
And, as this learned man declares by magic it is done.
But yet there is a way--one thing--he telleth me,
That will restore him to his speech that resteth inwardly;
Which, though I might command, yet I intreat to know,
Be not so stubborn or unkind thy furtherance to show.

FIDELIA.

Noble father, you cannot say, but hitherto I have

Been most obedient to your will in all things that you crave;
But herein pardon me, if this I do deny:
I never can be made to grant help to mine enemy,
My deadly enemy, worse than my mortal foe,
And such an one is he to me, for I have found him so;
That laboured evermore to cross me with despite,
But I am glad I may so well his courtesy requite.

PENULO.

A right woman--either love like an angel,
Or hate like a devil--in extremes so to dwell. [Aside_.

DUKE.

But, daughter, I command, and I thy father, too.

FIDELIA.

And I, your daughter, anything that lawful is to do.

DUKE.

Is it not right and lawful both to help thy brother's woe?

FIDELIA.

It's neither right nor lawful, sir, to help my deadly foe.

DUKE.

If he have been thy foe, he may become thy friend.

FIDELIA.

And when I see that come to pass, I may some succour send.

DUKE.

But wherefore shouldst thou be so cruel unto him?

FIDELIA.

Because unto my dearest friend so spiteful he hath been.

DUKE.

Nay, stubborn girl, but then I will constrain thee, I.
Lay hold on her: myself will then, sith she doth it deny.

FIDELIA.

Assist me, righteous gods, in this extremity.

BOMELIO. [To DUKE, aside_.]

Ah, pardon-a, pardon-a: please you, let me a while wit' her alone,
And me warrant me make her consent to you anon;
Else me give her a powder with a little drink,
Whish make her sleep; and den, when she noting tink,
Wit' de sharp rasher, me prick her by and by,
And stop it again, and she no feel why.
Please you begone, and let us two alone here.
Me make her consent, you no point fear.

DUKE.

Do it, Master Doctor, and I am bound to you for aye.
Ungracious girl, that dost deny the father to obey.
Look to her, sir, and send me word when thou hast done the deed.

[Exeunt.

BOMELIO.

Awe, awe; i'fait', i'fait', me make her bleed.

FIDELIA.

O wretched girl! what hope remains behind?
What comfort can recomfort now thy mind?
Forsaken thus of father and of friend,
Why seek'st thou not to bring thy life to end?
Can greater woes befall unto thy share?
Come, gentleman, despatch, and do not spare:
If it be so his pleasure and thy will,
I am content my dearest blood to spill.
Defer not then: hold, take thine aim at me,
And strike me through; for I desire to die.

BOMELIO.

The heavens forbid, fair maiden; no, not I:
I am thy friend, I am no enemy.
Fear not, stand up: it is only for thy sake
That I this toil and travail undertake.
Thy love, my son, is at my cave with me,
Safe and in health, long looking there for thee.
Trust to my words, fair maid, for I am he,
That overtook thee in the wood last day;
And till thy coming, Hermione, I say,
Is in my cave--

FIDELIA.

What joyful words be these!
And is Hermione your son? do, then, as you shall please.
Behold me ready, prest to follow any way:
Good father, do not thus delude a simple maid, I pray.
I trust unto your words: my life is in your power,
And till I see Hermione, each minute is an hour.

BOMELIO.

Daughter, dismay no whit; but trust to me;
What I have said performed thou shalt see.
I have dissembled with thy father here,
The better that I might with thee confer.
And since thou art so faithful to thy love,
As I may well report I did thee prove,
Let us be gone now closely as we may.

FIDELIA.

Yea, my good father, even when you will, I pray.
Thrice-blessed be the hour I met with you!
My father now and brother both adieu:
Unkind to her, most kind that you should be,
I leave them all, my dear, to come to thee.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter HERMIONE, _with books under his arm_.

HERMIONE.

O gods! that deepest griefs are felt in closest smart;
That in the smiling countenance may lurk the wounded heart,

I see the noble mind can counterfeit a bliss,
When overwhelmed with a care his soul perplexed is.
It is for dastard knights, that stretch on feather beds,
Despairing in adversity so low to hang their heads.
The better born, the more his magnanimity:
The fiercer fight, the deeper wound, the more undaunted he.
So I perceive it now; I well perceive it here:
What I myself could not, I learn by thee, my father dear.
He that in golden age, I mean his lusty youth,
Was thought to spend in pleasure's lap without regard of ruth;
He that had lost his time as bravely as the best,
Only devising how to make his joys surmount the rest:
Not in that wanton youth, not in that pleasant mate,
Could Fortune with her fickleness his wonted mind abate.
He rather challengeth to do her very worst,
And makes a semblance of delight, although indeed accurs'd.
My father thereupon devised how he might
Revenge and wreak himself on her, that wrought him such despite:
And therefore, I perceive, he strangely useth it,
Enchanting and transforming that his fancy did not fit.
As I may see by these his vile blasphemous books;
My soul abhors as often as mine eye upon them looks.
What gain can countervail the danger that they bring,
For man to sell his soul to sin, is't not a grievous thing?
To captivate his mind, and all the gifts therein,
To that which is of others all the most ungracious sin;
Which so entangleth them that thereunto apply,
As at the last forsaketh them in their extremity.
Such is this art, such is the study of this skill,
This supernatural device, this magic, such it will.
In ransacking his cave these books I lighted on,
And with his leave I'll be so bold, while he abroad is gone,
To burn them all; for best that serveth for this stuff.
I doubt not but at his return to please him well enough.
And, gentlemen, I pray, and so desire I shall,
You would abhor this study, for it will confound you all.

[_Exit_.

[_Enter_ LENTULO _with a ring in his mouth, a marigold in his hand,
a fair suit of apparel on his back; after he hath a while made
dumb-show_, PENULO _cometh, running in with two or three other_.

PENULO.

Run, for the love of God! search, villains, out of hand:
Run, I say, rascals: look about ye; how, do you stand?
The Duke's daughter is gone again, and all the court is in an uproar.
A pox on such a physician; he shall counsel her no more.

SERJEANT.

See you, Master Penulo, who is that yonder so brave?

PENULO.

Cock's blood, you villain! what do you here, you slave?
Swounds! hath robb'd the Duke of a suit of apparel,
Why speak you not, sirrah? yea, will you not tell?
Lay him on, my masters: spare him not, I say.
Speak you by signs? One of you pull the ring away.

SERJEANT.

Cock's blood, my finger! a bites as pestilence[119] there.

LENTULO.

What mean you, my masters; what mean ye here?

PENULO.

Have you found your tongue, sir! O, very well.
I pray you, sir, where had you this suit of apparel?

LENTULO.

This 'parel? what, and I stole it: what's that to thee?

PENULO.

Marry, sir, no more but that hang'd you shall be.

LENTULO.

Then, all the world shall see there is somewhat in me.
When I am hang'd, O, I shall swing lustily.
Mass, I shall do him great credit that hangs me.
But if I may be hanged by an attorney,
I will desire thee the place to supply.

PENULO.

Yes, marry will I, for courtesy sake.
Come on your way, sir: the pains I will take
To bring you before the Duke, that he may see,
What a proper man in his apparel you be.

LENTULO.

Wilt thou, faith? mass, I thank thee heartily;
But I must talk a little with our uplandish here,
And then I'll go with thee, faith, anywhere.

PENULO.

Uplandish, you rascal! where is he now?
He's gone, and stole away the Duke's daughter with him too.

LENTULO.

O my heart! what do you say?

PENULO.

Marry, that together they be both run away.

LENTULO.

Nay, then, have after ye; behind I'll not stay.

PENULO.

What! no such haste with you, sir, I pray.

LENTULO.

And is my lady gone and fled? O, take me up, for I am dead.
Farewell, my marigold; O villain, caitiff, he!
By bones and stones, and all the moons, I will avenged be.

PENULO.

You shall be revenged, sir, that shall you presently.
Away, away with him to the Duke by and by.

LENTULO.

I can go by myself, and you will let me alone.
Now as I walk, alas! I make to me my moan.
When I in prison strong, poor soul, shall live and die,
Then will I make my loving song upon mine own pigsny.

PENULO.

Away with him, sirs: why do ye tarry?

LENTULO.

And thou wert in my case, thou wouldst not be so hasty.
[_Exit in custody of _SERJEANT.]

PENULO.

Fie upon it! what a stir have we here?
Never was nobleman's house in such fear.
Such hurrying and stirring, such running every way;
Such howling, such crying, such accursing the day.
That ever the villain could counterfeit so,
[And] when we least thought of it, away with her to go.
But the world is so full of knavery now,
That we know not whom to trust, I may say to you.
If my wife fall sick, as she may, I'll make a condition,
She shall never take counsel of an uplandish physician.
Hang them, knaves; But what a prating keep I,
When I should have been seven miles of mine errand; for why
I must go set all the country up in a watch,
If it be possible, this physician to catch.
[_Exit_ PENULO.[120]

[_Enter_ BOMELIO _and_ FIDELIA.]

BOMELIO.

Stay, daughter, stay: forbear thy posting haste.
Thou need'st not fear; all perils now are past.
Thanks to the gods that such success they gave,
Thus happily to bring us to my cave.

FIDELIA.

O father! still I fear mishap behind:
Suspect is natural unto our kind,
And perils that import a man's decay
Can never be eschewed too soon, they say.
Had I [but] sight of mine Hermione,
I care not then what did become of me.

BOMELIO.

I will herein accomplish thy desire,
So grant the gods the rest that I require.
Hermione! Hermione! my son, I say,
Come forth and see thy friends that for thee stay.

[_Enter_ HERMIONE.]

HERMIONE.

Welcome, my father; but ten times welcome thou,
The constant lady mine, that liveth now.

FIDELIA.

And lives Hermione? lives my Hermione?

What can be added more to my felicity?

HERMIONE.

Thy life, my life; such comfort dost thou give:
Happy my life, because I see thee live.

BOMELIO.

Whilst they record the sweetness of their bliss,
I will apply to further, as they wish,
Their^[121] sweet delight by magic's cunning so,
That happy they shall live in spite of foe.

HERMIONE.

How doubtful are the lets of loyal love!
Great be the dangers that true lovers prove;
But when the sun, after a shower of rain,
Breaks through the clouds and shows his might again,
More comfortable to [us] his glory then,
Because it was awhile withheld of men.
Peace after war is pleasanter, we find;
A joy deferr'd is sweeter to the mind:
So I----

FIDELIA.

It hath been said that, when Ulysses was
Ten years at Troy, and ten years more, alas!
Wandering abroad as chance and fortune led,
Penelope supposing him for dead:
But he, providing still for afterclaps,
When he had 'scap'd a thousand hard mishaps,
It did him good to reckon up at last
Unto his wife his travails he had pass'd,
And sweetly then recording his distress
To make the more account of happiness.
So I----

HERMIONE.

Then, as the turtle that hath found her mate
Forgets her former woes and wretched state,
Renewing now her drooping heart again,
Because her pleasure overcomes her pain;
The same of thy desired sight I make,
Whereon thy faith, thy heart and hand I take.

FIDELIA.

And so I swear to thee unfeignedly
To live thine own, and eke thine own to die.

Enter BOMELIO.

BOMELIO.

Gog's blood! villains! the devil is in the bed of straw! Wounds! I have
been robb'd, robb'd, robb'd! where be the thieves? My books, books! did
I not leave thee with my books? Where are my books? my books! where be
my books, villain? arrant villain!

HERMIONE.

O father! my dear father, hark.

BOMELIO.

Father, my dear father? Soul! give me my books. Let's have no more tarrying: the day begins to be dark; it rains: it begins with tempests. Thunder and lightning! fire and brimstone! And all my books are gone, and I cannot help myself, nor my friends. What a pestilence! who came there?

HERMIONE.

I'll tell you, father, if you please to hear.

BOMELIO.

What can'st thou tell me? tell me of a turd. What, and a' come? I conjure thee, foul spirit, down to hell! Ho, ho, ho! the devil, the devil! A-comes, a-comes, a-comes upon me, and I lack my books. Help! help! help! Lend me a sword, a sword! O, I am gone!

[He raves_.

FIDELIA.

Alas! how fell he to this madding mood?

HERMIONE.

The heavens and earth deny to do us good!

FIDELIA.

O father! my good father, look on me.

BOMELIO.

What meant I not to shut up the door, and take the keys with me, and put the books under the bed-straw? Out, you whore! a whore, a whore! Gog's blood! I'll dress you for a whore. I have a cause to curse whores as long as I live. Come away, come away! Give me my books, my books: give me, give me, give!

[Exit_.

FIDELIA.

Help, help me, good Hermione!

[Exit_.

HERMIONE.

I come. O[122] worlds of misery!
Confounded on the top of my delight;
The Fates and Fortune thus against me fight.

[Exit_.

[Enter_ VENUS _and_ FORTUNE.]

FORTUNE'S _triumph: sound trumpets, drums, cornets, and guns_.

FORTUNE.

See, madam, who can dash your bravery,
Even at the pitch of your felicity?
When you assure that they shall steadfast stand,
Even then my power I suddenly can show,
Transposing it, as it had never been so.
Herein I triumph, herein I delight.
Thus have I manifested now my might.
Here, ladies, learn to like of Venus' lure,
And me love--long your pleasures shall endure.

VENUS.

Now thou hast done even what thou canst, I see,
They shall be once again relieved by me.

[_Music, Music_.

THE FIFTH ACT.

Enter MERCURY.

MERCURY.

Ye goddesses of this eternity,
To whom of right belongs each earthly thing,
The king of gods salutes ye both by me;
And (I beseech you) mark the news I bring.
My father Jupiter, perceiving well
What hath herein been^[123] done by each of you,
And^[124] how ye still endeavour to excel,
Maintaining that whereon the quarrel grew--
That is, the government of this estate,
And unto whom the sovereignty shall fall--
Here, therefore, to conclude your long debate,
Lest your contention may be counted general,
Desires ye both, and so commands by me,
Ye stand to his conclusion of the cause.
How say you, therefore? will you now agree,
That malice may no longer right delude?

VENUS.

Brother Mercury, as I have never been
So obstinate, or bent so frowardly,
But that I could some time relent the ill--
A woman must a little have her will;
So am I now resolved for to do
Whatso my father shall entreat me to.

FORTUNE.

And all the world by me perceiveth well
Of course my fancy, favour,^[125] and my skill:
And when my cause a little course hath had,
I am well pleased, and no longer sad.

MERCURY.

Then thus our father Jupiter concludes,
To lay the stroke of your unceasing strife.
As heretofore betwixt these lovers twain
Ye have express'd your powers upon their life,
So now he wills you to withhold your hands.
Enough sufficeth to confirm your might;
And to conjoin ye both in friendly bands
Of faithful love, wherein the gods delight,
His pleasure is that, Lady Venus, you
Shall be content never to hinder them,
To whom Dame Fortune shall her^[126] friendship show,
Of wretched to procure them happy men.

Ne shall you, Fortune, once presume to take
The credit of the honour in your hand:
If Lady Venus do them quite forsake,
You shall not seem in their[127] defence to stand;
But whomsoever one of you prefer,
The other shall be subject unto her;
For thus hath Jupiter determined now.

VENUS.

I must and will subscribe my will to you.

FORTUNE.

And I most gladly thereof do allow.

VENUS.

Whom Fortune favours I will not despise.

FORTUNE.

Whom Love rejects by me shall never rise.

MERCURY.

To this conclusion do you both agree?

VENUS.

For my part.

FORTUNE.

And I, most willingly.

MERCURY.

Then let your union be confirmed again
By proper course, each one in his descent
Over mortal men and worldly things to reign
By interchange, as Jupiter hath meant.
And[128] friendly Fortune, let me entreat, alone--
Sith by your means these lovers hind'red were,
And now ye two are reconcil'd in one,
You grant the[m] grace their honour up to rear.

FORTUNE.[129]

Sweet Mercury, I give thee my consent.
I will forthwith advance them to renown:
And their destruction better to prevent,
They shall relieve them, that did throw them down.

MERCURY.[130]

And I my gracious favour will bestow
Upon them all, according to desert;
And I will help his frenzy ere I go.
That bedlam up and down he[re] plays[131] his part.

Enter BOMELIO _with_ HERMIONE _and_ FIDELIA,
with a cope and dagger.

BOMELIO.

Cot's[132] wounds! ye whore, I am not for your diet. Hang, rascal, make
a leg to me, [or,] by Gog's blood, I'll stab thee through. What the
devil, the devil, and all my books be gone! O most accursed man Bomelio!
Go hide thyself, go hide thyself! go hang thyself, go hang! I'll hang

the whore out of hand; and as for you, villain,--stand, rascal! stand!

FIDELIA.

Good father, hear me. Come, take a little rest:
Yea, my sweet father, come, sleep upon my breast.

BOMELIO.

Hark the whore! See what an impudent whore it is. Sleep, you whore?
I'll sleep with you anon, Gog's blood, you whore, I'll hang you up!
[He threatens her.]

FIDELIA.

Help, help, Hermione!

HERMIONE.

Good father, let her alone. Come, let us go.

[Enter MERCURY invisible.]

MERCURY.

Now with my music I'll recure his woe.
[Play.]

BOMELIO.

Hark, hark, my hearts! Pipes, fiddles! O brave! I shall have my books
again. Dance about. Robin Hood is a good knave. Come, Bess, let's go
sleep. Come, Bess; together, together.

MERCURY.

Now will I charm him, that he shall not wake,
Until he be relieved in this place.
Then take her blood, and cast it on this brake,
And therewithal besprinkle all his face,
And he shall be restored to his sense,
His health and memory, as heretofore.
Do this, for I must now depart from hence,
And so your sorrows shall increase no more.

HERMIONE.

Fidelia, what hast thou heard, my dear?
O comfortable words, were they but true!
If any god or goddess be so near,
Vouchsafe of pity on our pains to rue.
Delude not with a feigned fantasy
The wretched mind[s] of men in misery.

FIDELIA.

Alas! Hermione, let us not feed
And flatter ourselves with any[133] good surmise:
We are too much accursed so to speed,
Or any hope thereof for to devise.
Resolve yourself, dear friend, another way,
And let us never look for happy day.

[Enter PHIZANTIES, ARMENIO, PENULO, and LENTULO.]

PHIZANTIES.

When thirst of hot revenge inflameth high desire:
When malice kindleth so the minds of them that would aspire,

That to enlarge their names they reckon not his despite,
That overseeth all their work, their doings to requite:
Mark, then, what followeth, when princes ye provoke:
The deeper and the larger wound, when longest is the stroke!
And this hath moved me to leave my court awhile,
To be content in sweat of brows, in trouble, pain and toil,
To seek out wretches, them that have abus'd me so,
And to reward their villainy according, ere we go.

PENULO.

May it please your honour, it is excellent done.
Gog's blood! and I were a prince, and had such a noble son,
That should be so highly abused as he hath been,
Would I put it up? no; by his wounds, I would never lin,
Till I had made such a mingle-mangle upon their nose,
That their skin should serve to make me a doublet and a pair of hose.

LENTULO.

What, you would not? i'faith, you look not with the face:
When you have the skin, sir, what will you do with the case?
But, master prince, since you are come to this travailation,
I'll bring you to my old master's convocation,
Where he hides himself, when I ran away:
It's not far within these woods. How think you, sir, I pray?

PHIZANTIES.

Lead on the way, and I will follow thee.

LENTULO.

Why, then, come on, my valiant hearts, march on and follow me.
But I'll make this bargain first: hear you me what I say?
When I come home, you shall not let my master beat me for running away.

PHIZANTIES.

He shall not, I warrant thee.

LENTULO.

Why, then, my noble youths of oak, pluck up your hearts with me.
Will you come, sir I come on, i'faith: keep in order you thereby.
We shall find her i'faith, master prince, anon, I know,
And then I'll trounce him for running away with another man's wife,
I trow.

PENULO.

Stand, sir. Who lives a-sunning yonder? can you tell?

LENTULO.

It's a beggar with a rogue.

PHIZANTIES.

It is my daughter, I see full well.

HERMIONE.

Fidelia, be content: shrink not at all.

PHIZANTIES.

Strike not a stroke, my son.

PENULO.

For help I shall go run and call.

PHIZANTIES.

And art thou found, false traitor and untrue,
Traitor to him that dealt so well with thee?
Did I devise to stop that would ensue,
And found my cares such issue as I see?
I see I am abused too-too much,
And too much sufferance is cause of this abuse:
This high abuse of yours, as being such,
Affords no cloak nor colour of excuse.
O, where is thankfulness and love become?
Where is the fear of princes' wrath exil'd?
Even this is the unhappiness of some,
To be of them they trusted most beguil'd;
But sometime pardon breeds a second ill.
Thou shameless wench, and thou false-hearted knight,
By your unhappy deeds I learn this skill;
But yet I list not kill thee, as I might.
Her will I have, and keep her as I may.
On pain of death I charge thee, hence away!

HERMIONE.

O prince, this sentence hath his force and strength,
And dead I am that here appear to live;
For how, alas! can this my life have length
When she is hence, that life and sense doth give?
But since, alas! I must be only he,
Whom Fortune vows to make a common game,
Armenio, my foe, do this for me--
With my revenge to end my open shame.
To help thee to digest thine injury,
Appease thee with Hermione's tragedy.

FIDELIA.

Far be the thought of that accursed deed,
O sweet Hermione, my sweet Hermione!
Foul be his fall that makes thy body bleed,
O sweet Hermione, my sweet Hermione!
And, father, this I vow: forgive it me,
I will be sacrifice for this offence,
And or I will have my Hermione,
My chosen love, or never part from hence.
Him hath the destinies ordained mine,
Most worthy me, your daughter, every way;
Nor he to any will his choice resign--
No more my troubled thoughts will let me say.

PHIZANTIES.

What wilt thou, foolish girl and obstinate?
Say'st thou this treason is devis'd by fate?
That shall we try. Despatch her hence away.
Let's see who dares our princely will gainsay.

PENULO.

Sir, and you'll have us carry her, here be them come of the carriers.

LENTULO.

And you'll have us marry her, here be them come of the marriers.

PENULO.

Lord! I marvel to whose share this lady will fall:
I am sure my part in her will be least of all.

VENUS _and_ FORTUNE _show themselves, and speak to_
PHIZANTIES, _while_ HERMIONE _standeth in amaze_.

VENUS.

High time it is that now we did appear,
If we desire to end their misery.

FORTUNE.

Phizanties, stay, and unto us give ear.
What thou determin'st performed cannot be.

PHIZANTIES.

Dread goddess whatsoever of this place,
If I herein have disobeyed thy grace,
Of favour grant for to remit the same:
Let me not suffer undeserved blame.

VENUS.

Phizanties, stand up; be of good cheer.
None but thy friends are met together here--
Thy friends, though goddesses in other things--
Yet interchange an alteration brings.
And now, whereas you seek in what you can
To let your child to marry with this man,
Know that it is the pleasure of our will,
That they together be conjoined still.
For 'tis not so--he is not born so base
As you esteem, but of a noble race.
His father is the good Bomelio,
That sleepeth here oppress'd with woe,
Whom Phalaris thy father, on a false report,
In wrath and anger banished his court:
But this is he, to whom thou wishest oft good,
And this his son, born of a noble blood.
Think it no scorn to thee or thine hereafter
To have his son espoused to thy daughter.

PHIZANTIES.

Right gracious goddess, if this be true indeed,
As I believe, because from you it doth proceed,
Then pardon me, for had I known it so,
His son had never tasted of this woe.
Unwitting of his lineage till this time,
Not,[134] presumed, sprung of a noble line.
Put[135] hence, and please your deities, my grief,
Because my son is dumb without relief.

PENULO.

'faith, sirrah, thou and I may hold our peace, with their leave,
For none but wise men speak here, I perceive.

LENTULO.

In some respects so, in some respects not;
For a fool's bolt is soon enough shot.

FORTUNE.

Phizanties, fear no longer his distress;
The gracious gods provide for his redress.
The shedding of thy daughter's dearest blood
Shall both to him and to this man do good;
For let this fern be dipp'd in many a place,
And, as he sleepeth, cast it in his face,
And let his tongue be washed therewithal,
And both of them relieved see you shall.

PHIZANTIES.

How say you, daughter, will you grant thereto?

FIDELIA.

Most willing, sir, if you vouchsafe to do
But this request, which I most humbly pray--
Then I may be Hermione's for aye.

PHIZANTIES.

With all my heart: hereon I give my hand.

FIDELIA.

I take it, sir; and to your word I stand.
And for thy sake, Hermione, my dear,
See what I do, although it touch me near.
Now take thy fill, and for his madness prove.
[_Bares her breast_.]

HERMIONE.

O sweet and fearful sight, the sign of love!

LENTULO.

If it be any sweeter, masters, that runs from you so,
I pray you give me some of your blessings, ere you go.

ARMENIO.

I strive to speak, and glad to find my speech.
Forgive, Hermione, forgive me, I beseech.
And you, good sister; pardon, my friends, too;
Too rash in all I ventured to do.
See what proceedeth from unstable youth!
Shame to himself, and to his friends a cause of ruth.

HERMIONE.

Armenio, long hath my mind^[136] desired
To hear the proffer of this pleasant peace,
Which sith the gods do grant as we require,
Henceforth let rancour and contention cease,
And in our breast be knit for ever sure
The links of love, perpetual to endure.

BOMELIO [_waking_].

What have I heard? what is it that they say?
Amazed quite! confounded every way!
My son Hermione, I know that is the same!
And that's my prince: now comes grief and shame!

PHIZANTIES.

My Lord Bomelio, shun not; I know you now.
Forgive the fact my father did to you;
And what he did, impute it not to me.
Thy former place I will restore to thee.
In token of our faithful amity,
We will be joined in near affinity.

BOMELIO.

Long live Phizanties, long live in happy ease;
The gods be bless'd I live this day to see!
What please the one, shall never me displease:
Thrice happy now for all my misery.

PENULO.

Why then, sir, sith everything is come to so good an end,
I hope, my good master, you'll stand-by my good friend,
And give me but two or three thousand pound a year to live on.

LENTULO.

Much in my nock, Nichols:[137] you and I shall slave it anon.

ARMENIO.

Assure thee, Penulo, thou shalt not want as long as I live.

LENTULO.

Why then, master, mine old master, I pray you forgive
Your old runaway. 'Twas for fashion-sake: I'll do so no more.

BOMELIO.

Look you do not, sirrah, and then I pardon you therefore.

[_Enter_ VENUS _and_ FORTUNE.]

VENUS.

Thus everything united is by Love.
Now gods and men are reconcil'd again;
On whom, because I did my pleasure prove,
I will reward you for your former pain.
Receive the favours of our deity,
And sing the praise of Venus' sovereignty.

FORTUNE.

And for I play'd my part with Lady Love,
While each did strive for chief authority,
Your good deserts Dame Fortune so doth move
To give these signs of liberality.
Thus for amends of this your late unrest,
By Love and Fortune you shall all be blest.
And thus hereof this inward care I have,
That Wisdom ruleth Love, and Fortune both:
Though riches fail, and beauty seem to save,
Yet wisdom forward still unconquered go'th.
This, we beseech you, take friendly in worth;
And sith by Love and Fortune our troubles all do cease,
God save her majesty, that keeps us all in peace.
Now they and we do all triumph in joy,
And Love and Fortune are linked sure friends:
All grief is fled; for your annoy
Fortune and Love makes all amends.

Let us rejoice, then, in the same,
And sing high praises of their name.

FINIS.

THE THREE LADIES OF LONDON.

EDITION.

[_A right excellent and famous Comoedy called the Three Ladies of London. Wherein is Notable declared and set fourth, how by the meanes of Lucar, Loue and Conscience is so corrupted, that the one is married to Dissimulation, the other fraught with all abomination. A Perfect Patterne for All Estates to looke into, and a worke right worthie to be marked. Written by R.W. as it hath been publiquely played. At London, Printed by Roger Warde, dwelling neere Holburne Conduit, at the signs of the Talbot. 1584.[138] 4. Black letter_.]

THE PROLOGUE.

To sit on honour's seat it is a lofty reach:
To seek for praise by making brags oft times doth get a breach.
We list not ride the rolling racks that dims the crystal skies,
We mean to set no glimmering glance before your courteous eyes:
We search not Pluto's pensive pit, nor taste of Limbo lake;
We do not show of warlike fight, as sword and shield to shake:
We speak not of the powers divine, ne yet of furious sprites;
We do not seek high hills to climb, nor talk of love's delights.
We do not here present to you the thresher with his flail,
Ne do we here present to you the milkmaid with her pail:
We show not you of country toil, as hedger with his bill;
We do not bring the husbandman to lop and top with skill:
We play not here the gardener's part, to plant, to set and sow:
You marvel, then, what stuff[139] we have to furnish out our show.
Your patience yet we crave a while, till we have trimm'd our stall;
Then, young and old, come and behold our wares, and buy them all.
Then, if our wares shall seem to you well-woven, good and fine,
We hope we shall your custom have again another time.

THE THREE LADIES OF LONDON.

THE FIRST ACT.

Enter FAME, _sounding before_ LOVE _and_ CONSCIENCE.

LOVE.

Lady Conscience, what shall we say to our estates? to whom shall we complain?

Or how shall we abridge such fates as heapeth up our pain?

'Tis Lucre now that rules the rout: 'tis she is all in all:

'Tis she that holds her head so stout; in fine, 'tis she that works our fall.

O Conscience! I fear, I fear a day,
That we by her and Usury shall quite be cast away.

CONSCIENCE.

Indeed, I fear the worst, for every man doth sue,
And comes from countries strange and far of her to have a view.
Although they ought to seek true Love and Conscience clear;
But Love and Conscience few do like that lean on Lucre's chair.
Men ought be rul'd by us; we ought in them bear sway,
So should each neighbour live by other in good estate always.

LOVE.

For Lucre men come from Italy, Barbary, Turkey,
From Jewry; nay, the Pagan himself
Endangers his body to gape for her pelf.
They forsake mother, prince, country, religion, kiff and kin;
Nay, men care not what they forsake, so Lady Lucre they win;
That we poor ladies may sigh to see our states thus turned and tost,
And worse and worse is like to be, where Lucre rules the roost.

CONSCIENCE.

You say the truth, yet God, I trust, will not admit it so,
That Love and Conscience by Lucre's lust shall catch an overthrow.

FAME.

Good ladies, rest content, and you, no doubt, shall see
Them plagued with painful punishment for such their cruelty:
And if true Love and Conscience live from Lucre's lust lascivious,
Then Fame a triple crown will give, which lasteth aye victorious.

CONSCIENCE.

God grant that Conscience keep within the bounds of right,
And that vile Lucre do not haunt her heart with deadly spite.

LOVE.

And grant, O God, that Love be found in city, town, and country,
Which causeth wealth and peace abound, and pleaseth God Almighty.

FAME.

But, ladies, is't your pleasure to walk abroad a while,
And recreate yourselves with measure, your sorrows to beguile?

CONSCIENCE.

Pass on, good Fame; your steps do frame; on you we will attend,
And pray to God, that holds the rod, our states for to defend.

[_Exeunt_.

THE SECOND ACT.[140]

Enter DISSIMULATION, _having on a farmer's long coat
and a cap, and his poll and beard painted motley_.

DISSIMULATION.

Nay, no less than a farmer, a right honest man,
But my tongue cannot stay me to tell what I am:
Nay, who is it that knows me not by my party-colour'd head?
They may well think, that see me, my honesty is fled.
Tush! a fig for honesty: tut, let that go,
Sith men, women and children my name and doings do know.
My name is Dissimulation, and no base mind I bear,
For my outward effects my inward zeal do declare;
For men do dissemble with their wives, and their wives with them again,
So that in the hearts of them I always remain.
The child dissembles with his father, the sister with her^[141] brother,
The maiden with her mistress, and the young man with his lover.^[142]
There is dissimulation between neighbour and neighbour, friend and
friend, one with another,
Between the servant and his master, between brother and brother.
Then, why make you it strange that ever you knew me,
Seeing so how^[143] I range thoroughout every degree?
But I forget my business: I'll towards London as fast^[144] I can,
To get entertainment of one of the three ladies, like an honest man.

Enter SIMPLICITY _like a miller, all mealy,
with a wand in his hand_.

SIMPLICITY.

They say there is preferment in London to have:
Mass, and there be, I'll be passing and brave.
Why, I'll be no more a miller, because the maidens call me Dusty-poll;
One thumps me on the neck, and another strikes me on the nol:
And you see I am a handsome fellow: mark the comporknance^[145] of
my stature.
Faith, I'll go seek peradventures,^[146] and be a serving-creature.

DISSIMULATION.

Whither away, good fellow? I pray thee, declare.

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, I'll 'clare thee: to London; would thou didst go there.

DISSIMULATION.

What if I did? would it be better for thee?

SIMPLICITY.

Ay, marry should it, for I love honest company.

DISSIMULATION.

Agreed; there is a bargain; but what shall I call thee?

SIMPLICITY.

'Cause thou art an honest man, I'll tell thee: my name is Simplicity,

DISSIMULATION.

A name agreeing to thy nature [_Aside_]: but stay; here comes more
company.

Enter FRAUD _with a sword and buckler, like a ruffian_.

FRAUD.

Huff! once aloft, and I may hit in the right vein,
Where I may beguile easily without any great pain.
I will flaunt it and brave it after the lusty swash:[147]
I'll deceive thousands. What care I who lie in the lash?[148]

DISSIMULATION.

What, Fraud? well met. Whither travellest thou this way?

FRAUD.

To London, to get entertainment there, if I may,
Of the three ladies Lucre, Love, and Conscience.
I care not whom I serve--the devil, so I may get pence.[149]

SIMPLICITY.

O Fraud! I know thee for a deceitful knave:
And art thou gotten so bonfacion[150] and brave?
I knew thee, when thou dwelledst at a place called Gravesend,
And the guests knew thee too, because thou wast not their friend;
For when thou shouldst bring reckoning to the guests,
Thou wouldst put[151] twice so much, and swear it cost thy dame no less.
So thou didst deceive them and thy dame too;
And because they spied thy knavery, away thou didst go.
Then thou didst go into Hertfordshire, to a place called Ware,
And because horses stood at hay for a penny a night there,
So that thou couldst get nothing that kind of way,
Thou didst grease the horses' teeth, that they should not eat hay:
Then thou wouldst tell the rider his horse no hay would eat.
Then the man would say: Give him some other kind of meat.
Sir, shall I give him oats, vetches, pease, barley, or bread?
But whate'er thou gavest him, thou stolest three quarters,
when he was in bed.
And now thou art so proud with thy filching and cosening art!
But I think one day thou wilt not be proud of the rope and the cart.
Take a wise fellow's counsel, Fraud: leave thy cosening and filching.

FRAUD.

Thou whoreson rascal swad,[152] avaunt! I'll bang thee for thy brawling.
How darest thou defame a gentleman, that hath so large a living?

SIMPLICITY.

A goodly gentleman ostler! I think none of all you will believe him.

FRAUD.

What a clenchoop[153] drudge is this! I can forbear him no more.

[_Let_ FRAUD _make as though he would strike him,
but let_ DISSIMULATION _step between them_.

DISSIMULATION.

My good friend Fraud, refrain, and care not therefore.
'Tis Simplicity, that patch; he knoweth not good from bad,
And to stand in contention with him I would think you were mad.
But tell me, Fraud, tell me, hast thou been an ostler in thy days?

FRAUD.

Tut, I have proved an hundred such ways;
For when I could not thrive by all other trades,
I became a squire to wait upon jades.[154]
But then was then, and now is now; but let that pass:
I am, as thou seest me; what care I the devil what I was?

DISSIMULATION.

You say, you go to London: in faith, have with you then.

SIMPLICITY.

Nay, come and go with me, good, honest man;
For if thou go with him, he will teach thee all his knavery.
There is none will go with him that hath any honesty.
A bots[155] on thy motley beard! I know thee; thou art Dissimulation:
And hast thou got an honest man's coat to 'semble this fashion?
I'll tell thee what, thou wilt even 'semble and cog with thine
own father:
A couple of false knaves together, a thief and a broker.
Thou makes townfolks believe thou art an honest man: in the country
Thou dost nothing but cog, lie, and foist with Hypocrisy.
You shall be hanged together, and go along[156] together for me,
For if I should go, the folks would say, we were knaves all three.

Enter SIMONY _and_ USURY, _hand in hand_.

SIMONY.

Friend Usury, I think we are well near at our journey's end.
But knowest thou whom I have espied?

USURY.

No.

SIMONY.

Fraud, our great friend.

USURY.

And I see another, that is now come into my remembrance.

SIMONY.

Who is that?

USURY.

Marry, Master Davy Dissimulation, a good helper, and our old acquaintance.

SIMPLICITY.

Now all the cards in the stock are dealt about,
The four knaves in a cluster comes ruffling out.

SIMONY.

What, Fraud and Dissimulation! happily found out.
I marvel what piece of work you two go about.

FRAUD.

Faith, sir, we met by chance, and towards London are bent.

USURY.

And to London we hie: it is our chiefest intent,
To see if we can get entertainment of the Ladies or no.

DISSIMULATION.

And for the selfsame matter even thither we go.

SIMONY.

Then, we are luckily well-met; and, seeing we wish all for one thing,
I would we our wills and wishing might win.

SIMPLICITY.

Yes, they will be sure to win the devil and all,
Or else they'll make a man to spew out his gall.
O that vild[157] Usury! he lent my father a little money, and for
breaking one day
He took the fee-simple of his house and mill quite away:
And yet he borrowed not half a quarter as much as it cost;
But I think, if it had been a shilling, it had been lost.
So he kill'd my father with sorrow, and undoes me quite.
And you deal with him, sirs, you shall find him a knave full of spite.
And Simony--A-per-se-A-Simony--too, he is a knave for the nonce:
He loves to have twenty livings at once;
And if he let an honest man, as I am, to have one,
He'll let it so dear that he shall be undone.
And he seeks to get parsons' livings into his hand,
And puts in some odd dunce that to his payment will stand:
So, if the parsonage be worth forty or fifty pound a year,
He will give one twenty nobles to mumble service once a month there.

SIMONY _and_ USURY _both_.

What rascal is he, that speaketh by us such villainy?

DISSIMULATION.

Sirs, he was at us erewhile too; it is no matter: it is a simple soul,
called Simplicity.
But here come two of the ladies; therefore make ready.

Enter LOVE _and_ CONSCIENCE. FRAUD.

But which of us all shall first break the matter?

DISSIMULATION

Marry, let Simony do it, for he finely can flatter.

USURY.

Nay, sirs, because none of us shall have preheminance above other,
We will sing in fellowship together, like brother and brother.

SIMONY.

Of truth, agreed, my masters: let it be so.

SIMPLICITY.

Nay, and they sing, I'll sing too. [_Aside_.

The Song.

Good ladies, take pity and grant our desire.

CONSCIENCE' REPLY.

Speak boldly, and tell me what is't you require.

THEIR REPLY.

Your service, good ladies, is what we do crave.

HER REPLY.

We like not, nor list not such servants to have.

THEIR REPLY.

If you entertain us, we trusty will be;
But if you refrain us, then most unhappy.
We will come, we will run, we will bend at your beck,
We will ply, we will hie, for fear of your check.

HER REPLY.

You do feign, you do flatter: you do lie, you do prate:
You will steal, you will rob: you will kill in your hate.
I deny you, I defy you; then cease of your talking:
I refrain you, I disdain you; therefore, get you walking.

CONSCIENCE.

What, Fraud, Dissimulation, Usury, and Simony,
How dare you for shame presume so boldly,
As once to show yourselves before Love and Conscience,
Not yielding your lewd lives first to repentance?
Think you not, that God will plague you for your wicked practices,
If you intend not to amend your vild lives so amiss?[158]
Think you not, God knows your thoughts, words, and works,
And what secret mischiefs in the hearts of you lurks?
Then how dare you offend his heavenly majesty
With your dissembling deceit, your flattery, and your usury?

FRAUD.

Tut, sirs, seeing Lady Conscience is so scripulous,[159]
Let us not speak to her, for I see it is frivolous.
But what say you, Lady Love? Will you grant us favour.

LOVE.

I'll no such servants, so ill of behaviour,
Servants more fitter for Lucre than Love,
And happy are they which refrain for to prove,
Shameless, pitiless, graceless, and quite past honesty;
Then who of good conscience but will hate your company?

USURY.

Here is scripulous Conscience and nice Love indeed.
Tush! if they will not, others will: I know we shall speed.

SIMPLICITY.

But, lady, I stand still behind, for I am none of their company.

CONSCIENCE.

Why, what art thou? O, I know: thou art Simplicity.

SIMPLICITY.

I'faith, I am Simplicity, and would fain serve ye.

CONSCIENCE.

No: I may have no fools to dwell with me.

SIMPLICITY.

Why then, Lady Love, will you have me then?

LOVE.

Ay, Simplicity, thou shalt be my man.

SIMPLICITY.

But shall I be your good-man?

LOVE.

Ay, my good-man, indeed.

SIMPLICITY.

Ay, but I would be your good-man, and swap up a wedding with good speed.

LOVE.

No: Love may not marry in any case with Simplicity;

But if thou wilt serve me, I'll receive it willingly:

And if thou wilt not, what remedy?

SIMPLICITY.

Yes, I will serve ye: but will ye go into dinner, for I am hungry?

LOVE.

Come, Lady Conscience: pleaseth you to walk home from this company?

CONSCIENCE.

With right goodwill, for their sights pleaseth not me.

[_Exeunt_ LADY LOVE _and_ CONSCIENCE.]

SIMPLICITY.[160]

Fraud is the clubbish knave, and Usury the hard-hearted knave,

And Simony the diamon' dainty knave,

And Dissimulation the spiteful knave of spade.

Come there any mo knaves? come there any mo?

I see four knaves stand in a row.

[_Let_ FRAUD _run at him,[161] and let_ SIMPLICITY
run in, and come out again straight.

FRAUD.

Away, drudge! begone quickly.

SIMPLICITY.

I wous:[162] do thrust out my eyes with a lady.

[_Exit_ SIMPLICITY.]

USURY.

Did you ever see gentlemen so rated at before?

But it skills not: I hope one day to turn them both out of door.

SIMONY.

We were arrantly flouted, railed at, and scoff'd in our kind.

That same Conscience is a vild terror to man's mind.

Yet, faith, I care not, for I have borne many more than these,

When I was conversant with the clergy beyond the seas;

And he that will live in this world must not care what such say,

For they are blossoms blown down, not to be found after May.

FRAUD.

Faith, care that care will, for I care not a point.
I have shifted[163] hitherto, and whilst I live I will jeopard a joint;
And at my death I will leave my inheritor behind,
That shall be of the right stamp to follow my mind.
Therefore let them prate, till their hearts ache, and spit out
their evil:
She cannot quail me, if she came in likeness of the great devil.

DISSIMULATION.

Mass, Fraud, thou hast a doughty heart to make a hangman of,
For thou hast good skill to help men from the coff.
But we were arrantly flouted, yet I thought she had not known me;
But I perceive, though Dissimulation do disguise him, Conscience can see.
What though Conscience perceive it, all the world cannot beside,
Tush! there be a thousand places, where we ourselves may provide.
But look, sirs; here cometh a lusty lady towards us in haste;
But speak to her, if you will, that we may be all plac'd.

Enter LADY LUCRE.

USURY.

I pray thee do, for thou art the likeliest to speed.

DISSIMULATION.

Why then I'll tout with a stomach in hope of good speed.
Fair lady, all the gods of good fellowship kiss ye--would say bless ye--

LUCRE.

Thou art very pleasant, and full of thy rope-ripe--I would say rethoric.

DISSIMULATION.

Lady, you took me at the worst: I beseech you therefore
To pardon my boldness, offending no more.

LUCRE.

We do; the matter is not great, but what wouldest thou have?
How shall I call thee, and what is't thou dost crave?

DISSIMULATION.

I am called Dissimulation, and my earnest request
Is to crave entertainment for me and the rest,
Whose names are Fraud, Usury, and Simony,
Great carers for your health, wealth, and prosperity.

LUCRE.

Fraud, Dissimulation, Usury, and Simony,
Now truly I thank you for proffering your service to me;
You are all heartily welcome, and I will appoint straightway,
Where each one in his office in great honour shall stay.
But, Usury, didst thou never know my grandmother, the old Lady
Lucre of Venice?

USURY.

Yes, madam; I was servant unto her, and lived there in bliss.

LUCRE.

But why camest thou into England, seeing Venice is a city,
Where Usury by Lucre may live in great glory?

USURY.

I have often heard your good grandmother tell,
That she had in England a daughter, which her far did excel;
And that England was such a place for Lucre to bide,
As was not in Europe and the whole world beside.
Then, lusting greatly to see you and the country, she being dead,
I made haste to come over to serve you in her stead.

LUCRE.

Gramercy, Usury; and I doubt not but that you shall live here as
pleasantly;
Ay, and pleasanter, too, if it may be. But, Simony, from whence
came ye, tell me?[164]

SIMONY.

My birth, nursery and bringing-up hitherto hath been in Rome,
that ancient religious city.
On a time the monks and friars made a banquet, whereunto they invited me,
With certain other some English merchants, which belike were of their
familiarity;
So, talking of many matters, amongst others one began to debate
Of the abundant substance still brought to that state.
Some said the increase of their substance and wealth
Came from other princes, and was brought thither by stealth:
But the friars and monks, with all the ancient company,
Said that it first came, and is now upholden by me, Simony;
Which the English merchants gave ear to: then they flattered a little
too much,
As Englishmen can do for advantage, when increase it doth touch;
And being a-shipboard merry, and overcome with drink on a day,
The wind served, they hoist sail, and so brought me away:
And landing here, I heard in what great estimation you were,
[And] made bold to your honour to make my repair.

LUCRE.

Well, Simony, I thank thee; but as for Fraud and Dissimulation,
I know their long continuance, and after what fashion.
Therefore, Dissimulation, you shall be my Steward,
An office that every man's case by you must be preferred.
And you, Fraud, shall be my rent-gatherer, my letter of leases,
and my purchaser of land,
So that many old bribes will come to thy hand.
And, Usury, because I know you be trusty, you shall be my secretary,
To deal amongst merchants, to bargain and exchange money.
And Simony, because you are a sly fellow, and have your tongue liberal,
I will place you over such matters as are ecclesiastical.
And though we appoint sundry offices, where now ye are in,
Yet jointly we mean to use you together oftentimes in one thing.

ALL.

Lady, we rest at your command in ought we can or may.

LUCRE.

Then, Master Davy, to my palace haste thee away,
And will Crafty Conveyance, my butler, to make ready
The best fare in the house to welcome thee and thy company.
But stay, Dissimulation, I myself will go with thee.
Gentlemen, I'll go before; but pray, in any case,
So soon as ye please, resort to my place.

[_Exeunt_ DISSIMULATION _and_ LUCRE.]

SIMONY.

I warrant you, lady,[165] we will not long absent be.

USURY.

Fellow Simony, this fell out pat, so well as heart could wish.

We are cunning anglers: we have caught the fattest fish.

I perceive it is true that her grandmother told:

Here is good to be done by use of silver and gold.

And sith I am so well settled in this country,

I will pinch all, rich and poor, that come to me.

SIMONY.

And sirrah, when I was at Rome, and dwelt in the Friary,

They would talk how England yearly sent over a great mass of money,

And that this little island was more worth to the Pope,

Than three bigger realms which had a great deal more scope;

For here were smoke-pence, Peter-pence, and Paul-pence to be paid,

Besides much other money that to the Pope's use was made.

Why, it is but lately since the Pope received this fine,

Not much more than twenty-six years--it was in Queen Mary's time.[166]

But I think England had never known what this gear had meant,

If Friar Austin from the Pope had not hither been sent;

For the Pope, hearing it to be a little island, sent him with a great

army over,

And winning the victory, he landed about Rye, Sandwich, or Dover:

Then he erected laws, having the people in subjection;

So for the most part England hath paid tribute so long--

I, hearing of the great store and wealth in the country,

Could not choose but persuade myself the people loved Simony.

USURY.

But stay your talk till some other time: we forget my lady.

SIMONY.

Of troth you say true, for she bad us make haste: [_Aside_.]

But my talk, me-thought, savoured well, and had a good taste.

[_Exeunt ambo_.]

[_Enter_ MERCATORE _like an Italian Merchant_.]

MERCATORE.

I judge in my mind a, dat me be not vare far

From da place where dwells my Lady Lucar.

But here come an shentlymane, a, soe he do.

[_Enter_ DISSIMULATION.]

Shentleman, I pray you heartily, let me speak you.

Pray you, do you not know a shentleman dat Master Davy do call?

DISSIMULATION.

Yes, marry, do I: I am he, and what would you withal?

MERCATORE.

Gooda my friend, Master Davy, help me, pray you heartily,

For a some-a acquaintance a with Madonna Lucar, your lady.

DISSIMULATION.

Sir, upon condition I will: therefore I would you should know,
That on me and my fellows you must largely bestow;
Whose names are Fraud, Usury, and Simony, men of great credit and calling,
And to get my lady's goodwill and theirs it is no small thing.
But tell me, can you be content to win Lucre by Dissimulation?

MERCATORE.

A, gooda my friend, do axe-a me no shush a question,
For he dat will live in the world must be of the world sure;
And de world will love his own, so long as the world endure.

DISSIMULATION.

I commend your wit, sir; but here comes my lady.

Enter LUCRE.

MERCATORE.

Come hither: here's to tree crowns for de speak me.

DISSIMULATION.

Well, sir, I thank you: I will go speak for you.

LUCRE.

Master Davy Dissimulation, what new acquaintance have ye gotten there?

DISSIMULATION.

Such a one, madam, that unto your state hath great care;
And surely in my mind the gentleman is worthy
To be well-thought on for his liberality, bounty, and great care
to seek ye.

LUCRE.

Gentleman, you are heartily welcome: how are you called, I pray
you tell us?

MERCATORE.

Madonna, me be a mershant, and be call'd Signer Mercatore.

LUCRE.

But, I pray you, tell me what countryman?

MERCATORE.

Me be, Madonna, an Italian.

LUCRE.

Yet let me trouble ye: I beseech ye whence came ye?

MERCATORE.

For salva vostra buona grazia,[167] me come from Turkey.

LUCRE.

Gramercy: but Signor Mercatore, dare you not to undertake
Secretly to convey good commodities out of this country for my sake?

MERCATORE.

Madonna, me do for love of you tink no pain too mush,

And to do anything for you me will not grush:
Me will forsake a my fader, moder, king, country, and more dan dat;
Me will lie and forswear meself for a quarter so much as my hat.
What is dat for love of Lucre me dare, or will not do?
Me care not for all the world, the great devil, nay, make my God
angry for you.

LUCRE.

You say well, Mercatore; yet Lucre by this is not thoroughly won:
But give ear, and I will show what by thee must be done.
Thou must carry over wheat, pease, barley, oats, and vetches,
and all kind of grain,
Which is well sold beyond sea, and bring such merchants great gain.
Then thou must carry beside leather, tallow, beef, bacon, bell-metal
and everything,
And for these good commodities trifles into England thou must bring;
As bugles to make bables, coloured bones, glass beads to make bracelets
withal,
For every day gentlewomen of England do ask for such trifles from stall
to stall:
And you must bring more, as amber, jet, coral, crystal, and every
such babble,
That is slight, pretty and pleasant: they care not to have it profitable.
And if they demand wherefore your wares and merchandise agree,
You must say jet will take up a straw: amber will make one fat:
Coral will look pale, when you be sick, and crystal staunch blood.
So with lying, flattering and glosing you must utter your ware,
And you shall win me to your will, if you can deceitfully swear.

MERCATORE.

Tink ye not dat me have carried over corn, leader, beef and bacon too,
all tis while?
And brought heder many babbles dese countrymen to beguile?
Yes; shall me tell you, Madonna I me and my countrymans have sent over
Bell-metal for make ordnance, yea, and ordnance itself beside,
Dat my country and oder countries be so well furnish as dis country,
and has never been spi'd.

LUCRE.

Now I perceive you love me; and if you continue in this still,
You shall not only be with me, but command me when and where you will.

MERCATORE.

Lady, for to do all dis and more for you me be content;
But I tink some skall^[168] knave will put a bill in da Parliament,
For dat such a tings shall not be brought here.

LUCRE.

Tush, Mercatore! I warrant thee, thou needest not to fear.
What, and one do? there is some other will flatter, and say
They do no hurt to the country, and with a sleight fetch that bill away.
And if they do not, so that by Act of Parliament it be pass'd,
I know you merchants have many a sleight and subtle cast,
So that you will by stealth bring over great store,
And say it was in the realm a long time before.
For being so many of these trifles here, as there are at this day,
You may increase them at pleasure, when you send over sea;
And do but give the searcher an odd bribe in his hand,
I warrant you, he will let you 'scape roundly with such things in

and out the land.
But, Signor Mercatore, I pray you walk in with me,
And as I find you kind to me, so will I favour ye.

MERCATORE.

Me tank you, my good lady. But, Master Dissimulation, here is for
your fellows, Fraud, Usury, and Simony, and say me give it dem.

[_Exeunt LUCRE and MERCATORE_.

DISSIMULATION.

Ay marry, sir, these bribes have welcome[169] been.
Good faith, I perceive, Dissimulation, Fraud, Usury, and Simony
shall live
In spite of Love and Conscience, though their hearts it doth grieve.
Mass, masters, he that cannot lie, cog, dissemble and flatter now-a-days,
Is not worthy to live in the world, nor in the court to have praise.

Enter ARTIFEX, _an Artificer_.

ARTIFEX.

I beseech you, good Master Dissimulation, befriend a poor man
To serve Lady Lucre; and sure, sir, I'll consider it hereafter, if I can.

DISSIMULATION.

What, consider me? dost thou think that I am a bribetaker?
Faith, it lies not in me to further thy matter.

ARTIFEX.

Good Master Dissimulation, help me: I am almost quite undone;
But yet my living hitherto with Conscience I have won,
But my true working, my early rising, and my late going to bed
Is scant able to find myself, wife and children dry bread:
For there be such a sort of strangers in this country,
That work fine to please the eye, though it be deceitfully;
And that which is slight, and seems to the eye well,
Shall sooner than a piece of good work be proffered to sell;
And our Englishmen be grown so foolish and nice,
That they will not give a penny above the ordinary price.

DISSIMULATION.

Faith, I cannot help thee: 'tis my fellow Fraud must pleasure thee.
Here comes my fellow Fraud: speak to him, and I'll do what I can.

Enter FRAUD.

ARTIFEX.

I beseech you be good unto me, right honest gentleman.

FRAUD.

Why and whereto? what wouldest thou have me do?

ARTIFEX.

That my poor estate you will so much prefer,
As to get me to be a workman to Lady Lucre;
And, sir, I doubt not but to please you so well for your pain,
That you shall think very well of me, if I in her service remain.

DISSIMULATION.

Good fellow Fraud, do so much; for I see he is very willing to live,
And some piece of work to thee for thy pains he will give.

FRAUD.

Well, upon that condition I will; but I care not so much for his gifts,
As that he will by my name declare how he came by his great thrifts,
And that he will set out in every kind of thing,
That Fraud is a good husband, and great profit doth bring.
Therefore the next piece of work that thou dost make,
Let me see how deceitful thou wilt do it for my sake.

ARTIFEX.

Yes, I will, sir; of that be you sure:
I'll honour your name, while life doth endure.

DISSIMULATION.

Fellow Fraud, here comes a citizen, as I deem.

FRAUD.

Nay, rather a lawyer, or some pettifogger he doth seem.

Enter a LAWYER.

LAWYER.

Gentlemen, my earnest suit is to desire ye,
That unto your lady's service you would help me;
For I am an attorney of the law, and pleader at the bar,
And have a great desire to plead for Lady Lucre.
I have been earnest, sir, as is needful in such a case,
For fear another come before me, and obtain my place.
I have pleaded for Love and Conscience, till I was weary:
I had many clients, and many matters that made my purse light,
and my heart heavy:
Therefore let them plead for Conscience that list for me;
I'll plead no more for such as brings nothing but beggary.

DISSIMULATION.

Sir, upon this condition that you will keep men in the law
Ten or twelve years for matters that are not worth a straw,
And that you will make an ill matter seem good and firmable indeed,
Faith, I am content for my part you shall speed.

FRAUD.

Nay, fellow, thou knowest that Simony and Usury hath an ill-matter
in law at this time;
Now, if thou canst handle the matter so subtle and fine,
As to plead that ill-matter good and firmable at the bar,
Then thou shalt show thyself worthy to win Lady Lucre.
Therefore tell me if you can or will do it, or no:
If you do it, be sure to get my lady's goodwill, ere you go.

DISSIMULATION.

By my honesty, well-rememb'ed: I had quite forgot;
'Tis about that a fortnight ago fell out, the matter I wot.

LAWYER.

Tush, sir, I can make black white, and white black again.
Tut, he that will be a lawyer must have a thousand ways to feign:
And many times we lawyers do one befriend another,

And let good matters slip! tut, we agree like brother and brother.
Why, sir, what shall let us to wrest and turn the law as we list,
Seeing we have them printed in the palms of our fist?
Therefore doubt you not, but make bold report,
That I came and will plead their ill-cause in good kind of sort.

FRAUD.

Of troth, how likest thou this fellow, Dissimulation?

DISSIMULATION.

Marry, I like him well: he is a cunning clerk, and one of our profession.
But come, sir, go with us, and we will prefer you.

ARTIFEX.

Good Master Fraud, remember me.

FRAUD.

Leave thy prating: I will, I tell thee.

ARTIFEX.

Good Master Dissimulation, think on me.

DISSIMULATION.

Thou art too importunate and greedy.

FRAUD.

Come after dinner, or some other time, when we are at leisure.

[DISSIMULATION, FRAUD, _and_ LAWYER _exeunt_.

ARTIFEX.

Come after dinner, or some other time! I think so[170] indeed,
For full little do they think of a poor man's need.
These fellows will do nothing for pity and love,
And thrice happy are they that hath no need them to prove.
God he knows the world is grown to such a stay,
That men must use Fraud and Dissimulation too, or beg by the way.
Therefore I'll do as the most doth; the fewest shall laugh me to scorn,
And be a fellow amongst good fellows to hold by St Luke's horn.

[_Exit_.

Enter SIMPLICITY _and_ SINCERITY.

SINCERITY.

Good Cousin Simplicity, do somewhat for me.

SIMPLICITY.

Yes, faith, Cousin Sincerity, I'll do anything for thee.
What wouldst for me to do for thee? canst tell that?

[SINCERITY.]

Mass, I cannot tell what shouldst do for me, except thou wouldst
give me a new hat.

SIMPLICITY.

Alas! I am not able to give thee a new.
Why, I marvel then how thou dost do:
Dost thou get thy living amongst beggars, from door to door?
Indeed, Cousin Sincerity, I had thought thou wast not so poor.

SINCERITY.

Nay, Cousin Simplicity, I got my living hardly, but yet I hope just,
And with good conscience too, although I am restrained from my lust.
But this is it, Cousin Simplicity, I would request you to do for me,
Which is to get Lady Love and Lady Conscience' hand to a letter,
That by their means I may get some benefice, to make me live the better.

SIMPLICITY.

Yes; I'll do so much for thee, cousin; but hast thou any here?

SINCERITY.

Ay, behold they are ready-drawn, if assigned[171] they were.

[Let_ SIMPLICITY _make as though he read it, and
look quite over; meanwhile let_ CONSCIENCE _enter_.

SIMPLICITY.

Let me see, cousin, for I can read.
Mass, 'tis bravely done: didst thou it indeed?
Mistress Conscience, I have a matter to bequest you to.

CONSCIENCE.

What is't? I doubt not but 'tis some wise thing, if it be for you.

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, my cousin Sincerity wad desire to scribe these papers here,
That he may get some preferment, but I know not where.

CONSCIENCE.

Be these your letters? what would you have me do, and how
shall I call ye?

SINCERITY.

Lady, my name is Sincerity.

CONSCIENCE.

And from whence come ye?

SINCERITY.

I came from Oxford, but in Cambridge I studied late;[172]
Having nothing, thought good, if I could, to make better my state:
But if I had, instead of divinity, the law, astronomy, astrology,
Physiognomy, palmestry, arithmetic, logic, music, physic,
or any such thing,
I had not doubted, then, but to have had some better living.
But divines, that preach the word of God sincerely and truly,
Are in these days little or nothing at all[173] set by.
God grant the good preachers be not taken away for our unthankfulness!
There never was more preaching and less following,
the people live so amiss.
But what is he that may not on the Sabbath-day attend to
hear God's word,
But he will rather run to bowls, sit at the alehouse,
than one hour afford,
Telling a tale of Robin Hood, sitting at cards, playing at
skittles[174], or some other vain thing,
That I fear God's vengeance on our heads it will bring.
God grant amendment! But, Lady Conscience, I pray,

In my behalf unto Lucre do what ye may.

SIMPLICITY.

Mass, my cousin can say his book well: I had not thought it.
He's worthy to have a benefice, and it will hit.

CONSCIENCE.

God be blessed, Sincerity, for the good comfort I have of thee:
I would it lay in us to pleasure such, believe me.
We will do what we can; but *_ultra posse non est esse_*, you know:
It is Lucre that hath brought us poor souls so low;
For we have sold our house, we are brought so poor,
And fear by her shortly to be shut out of door.
Yet to subscribe our name we will with all our heart:
Perchance for our sakes something she will impart.
Come hither, Simplicity; let me write on thy back.

SIMPLICITY.

Here is the right picture of that fellow that sits in the corner.[175]

Enter HOSPITALITY, *_while she is writing_*.

HOSPITALITY.

Lady, methinks you are busy.

CONSCIENCE.

I have done, sir. I was setting my hand to a letter to Lucre
for our friend Sincerity.
But I would Lady Love were here too.

HOSPITALITY.

She is at home with me; but, if it please, so much in her behalf
I will do.

CONSCIENCE.

I pray you[176] heartily, and it shall suffice the turn well enou'.
Good Simplicity, once more thy body do bow.

SIMPLICITY.

I think I shall serve[177] to be a washing-block for you. [*_Aside_*].
I would do it for you, but I am afraid yonder boy will mock me.

HOSPITALITY.

No; I warrant thee.

CONSCIENCE.

Here, take thy letters, Sincerity; and I wish them prosperous
to thee.[178]

SINCERITY.

I yield you most hearty thanks, my good lady.

HOSPITALITY.

Lady Conscience, pleaseth it you to walk home to dinner with me?[179]

CONSCIENCE.

I give you thanks,[180] my good friend Hospitality;
But I pray, sir, have you invited to dinner any stranger?

HOSPITALITY.

No, sure; none but Lady Love, and three or four honest neighbours.

SIMPLICITY.

Mass, my lady is gotten to dinner already:

I believe she rose at ten o'clock, she is so hungry.

What, and I should come to dinner, hast thou any good cheer.

HOSPITALITY.

I have bread and beer, one joint of meat, and welcome, thy best fare.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, art thou call'd Hospitality, and hast no better cheer than that?

I'll tell thee, if thou hast no more meat for so many, they'll

ne'er be fat.

What, if my cousin--nay, I myself alone--to dinner should come,

Where should my lady and the rest dine, for I could eat up every crumb?

Thou art an old miser: dost thou keep no better fare in thy house?

Hast thou no great bag-pudding, nor hog's-face that is called souse?

HOSPITALITY.

My friend, hospitality doth not consist in great fare and banqueting,

But in doing good unto the poor, and to yield them some refreshing;

Therefore, thou and Sincerity will come and take part:

Such as I have I'll give you with a free and willing heart.

[_Exeunt_ HOSPITALITY _and_ CONSCIENCE.

SIMPLICITY.

He speaks well, cousin; let's go to dinner with him.

The old man shall not think but we will pleasure him.

Faith, he might have richer fellows than we to take his part,

But he shall never have better eating fellows, if he would

swelt his heart.

Here be them that will eat with the proudest of them;

I am sure my mother said I could eat so much as five men.

Nay, I have a gift for eating, I tell ye,

For our maids would never believe I put all the meat in my belly.

But I have spied a knave, my Lady Lucre's cogging man.

Give me your letters, cousin; I'll prefer ye, if I can.

Enter DISSIMULATION.

SINCERITY.

Dissimulation! out upon him! he shall be no spokeman for me.

SIMPLICITY.

Why then you are a fool, Cousin Sincerity.

Give me 'em;[181] I tell ye, I know he'll do it for me.

SINCERITY.

Seeing thou wilt have it, here receive it; but yet it grieves my heart

That this dissembling wretch should speak on my part.

SIMPLICITY.

Hear ye, sir, I would request [you] to 'liver this letter

To your good wholesome mistress, Lady Lucre.

DISSIMULATION.

Where hadst thou it, tell me?

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, of my Cousin Sincerity.

DISSIMULATION.

Why, I have nothing to do in it; 'tis not to me thou shouldst come:
I have not to do with Sincerity's matters: 'tis my fellow Simony's room.

SINCERITY.

Thou art akin to the lawyer; thou wilt do nothing without a fee:
But thou, Fraud, Usury, nor yet Simony, shall do nothing for me.
And thou wilt do it, do it; and thou wilt not, choose,
But thee and their dealing I hate and refuse.

DISSIMULATION.

Why, and I am not bound to thee so far as knave go,
And therefore, in despite of thee and thy cousin, there thy letters be.
What, thinkest thou by captious words to make me do it?
Let them deliver your letters that hath a stomach to it.

SIMPLICITY.

Faith, cousin, he's such a testern^[182] and proud, 'sembling knave,
That he'll do nothing, 'less some bribery he have.
There's a great many such promoting knaves, that gets their living
With nothing else but facing, lying, swearing, and flattering.
Why, he has a face like a black dog,^[183] and blusheth like the
back-side of a chimney.
'Twas not for nothing thy godfathers a cogging name gave thee.

[_Enter_ LADY LUCRE.

But here comes his mistress Lady Lucre:
Now, cousin, I'll 'liver your letter.
Mistress Lady Lucre, here's a letter for ye.

LUCRE.

Hast thou a letter for me?

SIMPLICITY.

Yes, by Saint Mary.
How say you, cousin? she reads your letter:
And you can flatter, perhaps you shall speed better.

SINCERITY.

Thou speakest the truth, Simplicity; for flatterers now-a-days
Live gentlemen-like, and with prating get praise.

LUCRE.

Sir, I have read the tenure of your letter, wherein I find
That at the request of Love and Conscience I should show myself kind
In bestowing some spiritual living on ye, parsonage, or benefice:
It seems it stands greatly in need, as appears by this.
And, trust me, I would do for you; but it lies not in me,
For I have referred all such matters to my servant Simony.
You must speak to him, and if you can get his goodwill,
Then be sure of mine their minds to fulfil.

SINCERITY.

Lady, I shall never get his goodwill, because I want ability,
For he will do nothing, except I bring money.
And if you grant it not, then, 'tis past all doubt,
I shall be never the better, but go quite without.

DISSIMULATION.

Madam, I can tell you what you may give,
Not hurting yourself, whereby he may live,
And without my fellow Simony's consent,
If to follow my mind you are any whit bent.

LUCRE.

Pray thee, what is it? thou knowest, while for their house I am
in bargaining,
And it be never so little, I must seem to do something.

DISSIMULATION.

Why, have you not the parsonage of St Nihil to bestow?
If you give him that, Simony shall never know.

LUCRE.

Indeed, thou sayest true. Draw near, Sincerity:
Lo, for their sakes I will bestow frankly on thee.
I'll give thee the parsonage of Saint Nihil to pleasure them withal,
And such another to it, if thou watch, till it fall.

SIMPLICITY.

My lady axes you, when you will take possession of your house,
and lend the rest of the money.

LUCRE.

What, are they so hasty? belike they spent it merrily.

SIMPLICITY.

Faith, no; for they would eat it, if they could get it, when they
are a-hungry.
But you may be happy, for you have sped well to-day:
[Speaking to_ SINCERITY.
You may thank God and good company that you came this way.
The parsonage of St Michael's; by'r Lady, if you have nothing else,
You shall be sure of a living, beside a good ring of bells.
Cousin, I'll tell thee what thou shalt do: sell the bells, and make money.

SINCERITY.

Thou mayest well be Simplicity, for thou showest thy folly.
I have a parsonage, but what? of St Nihil; and Nihil is nothing:
Then, where is the church, or any bells for to ring?
Thou understandest her not: she was set for to flout.
I thought, coining in their names, I should go without.
'Tis easy to see that Lucre loves not Love and Conscience;
But God, I trust, will one day yield her just recompense.

SIMPLICITY.

Cousin, you said that something to me you would give,
When you had gotten preferment of Lucre to live,
And I trust you will remember your poor cousin Simplicity:
You know to Lady Conscience and e'rybody I did speak for you.

SINCERITY.

Good Simplicity, hold thy peace: my state is yet nought.
I will help thee, sure, if ever I get ought.
But here comes Sir Nicholas Nemo: to him I will go,
And see if for their sakes he will anything bestow.

Enter SIR NICHOLAS NEMO.

NEMO.

You come from Love and Conscience, as seemeth me here,
My special good friends, whom I account of most dear:
And you are called Sincerity; your state shows the same.
You are welcome to me for their sakes, and for your own name;
And for their sakes you shall see what I will do for you
Without Dissimulation, Fraud, Usury, or Simony;
For they will do nothing without some kind of gain,
Such cankered corruption in their hearts doth remain.
But come in to dinner with me, and when you have din'd,
You shall have--

[_Presently go out_.

SINCERITY.

You shall have--but what? a living that is blown down with the wind.

SIMPLICITY.

Now, cousin, dismember your friends, seeing two livings you have,
One that this man promis'd, and another that Lady Lucre gave.
Mass, you'll be a jolly man, and you had three or four more:
Let's beg apace, cousin, and we shall get great store.
Do thou get some more letters, and I'll get them scribed of
Mistress Love and Conscience,
And we'll go beg livings together; we'll beg no small pence.
How sayest thou, Cousin Sincerity? wut do so mich?
If we can speak fair and 'semble, we shall be plaguy rich.

SINCERITY.

Good Simplicity, content thee: I am never the better for this,
But must of force leave off, for I see how vain it is.
It boots not Sincerity to sue for relief:
So few regard [me,] that to me is a grief.
This was Nicholas Nemo, and No-Man hath no place:
Then how can I speed well in this heavy case?
And no man bid me to dinner, when shall I dine?
Or how shall I find him--where, when, and at what time?
Wherefore the relief I have had, and shall have, is small;
But to speak truth, the relief is nothing at all.
But come, Simplicity, let us go see what may be had.
Sincerity in these days was, sure, born to be sad.

SIMPLICITY.

Come, let's go to dinner, cousin, for the gentleman, I think,
hath almost din'd,
But, and I do get victuals enough, I'll warrant you, I will
not be behind.

SINCERITY.

What, if thou canst not get it then, how wilt thou eat?

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, on this fashion; with both hands at once; ye shall see,

when I get meat.

SINCERITY.

Why, his name was Nemo, and Nemo hath no being.

SIMPLICITY.

I believe, cousin, you be not hungry, that you stand prating.

Faith, I'll go do him a pleasure, because he hath need.

Why, and he will needs have meat eat, a' shall see how I'll feed.

I believe he will not bid me come again to him:

Mass, and he do, a' shall find a fellow that has his eating.

[_Exeunt ambo_.

Enter USURY _and_ CONSCIENCE.

USURY.

Lady Conscience, is there anybody within your house, can you tell?

CONSCIENCE.

There is nobody at all, be ye sure: I know certainly well.

USURY.

You know, when one comes to take possession of any piece of land,
There must not be one within, for against the order of law it doth stand.
Therefore I thought good to ask you; but I pray you think not amiss,
For both you and almost all others knows, that an old custom it is.

CONSCIENCE.

You say truth: take possession, when you please; good leave I render ye.
Doubt you not; there is neither man, woman, nor child, that will or
shall hinder ye.[184]

USURY.

Why, then, I will be bold to enter.

[_Exit_.

CONSCIENCE.

Who is more bold than Usury to venter?
He maketh the matter dangerous, where is no need at all,
But he thinks it not perilous to seek every man's fall.
Both he and Lucre hath so pinch'd us, we know not what to do:
Were it not for Hospitality, we knew not whither to go.
Great is the misery that we poor ladies abide,
And much more is the cruelty of Lucre and Usury beside,
O Conscience, thou art not accounted of; O Love, thou art little set by,
For almost every one true love and pure conscience doth deny:
So hath Lucre crept into the bosom of man, woman and child,
That every one doth practise his dear friend to beguile.
But God grant Hospitality be not by them overprest,
In whom all our stay and chiefest comfort doth rest:
But Usury hates Hospitality, and cannot him abide,
Because he for the poor and comfortless doth provide.
Here he comes that hath undone many an honest man,
And daily seeks to destroy, deface, and bring to ruin, if he can--
Now, sir, have you taken possession, as your dear lady will'd you?

Enter USURY.

USURY.

I have done it, and I think you have received your money.
But this to you: my lady will'd me to bid you provide some other
house out of hand,
For she would not by her will have Love and Conscience to dwell in
her land.
Therefore I would wish you to provide ye;
So ye should save charges, for a less house may serve ye.

CONSCIENCE.

I pray you heartily, let us stay there, and we will be content
To give you ten pound a year, which is the old rent.

USURY.

Ten pound a year! that were a stale jest,
If I should take the old rent to follow your request.
Nay, after forty pound a year you shall have it for a quarter,
And you may think, too, I greatly befriend ye in this matter:
But no longer than for a quarter to you I'll set it,
For perhaps my lady shall sell it, or else to some other will let it.

CONSCIENCE.

Well, sith we are driven to this hard and bitter drift,
We accept it, and are contented to make bare and hard shift.

USURY.

Then, get you gone, and see at a day your rent be ready.

CONSCIENCE.

We must have patience perforce, seeing there is no remedy.
[Exit_ CONSCIENCE.

USURY.

What a fool was I! it repents me I have let it so reasonable.
I might so well have had after threescore as such a trifle;
For, seeing they were distressed, they would have given largely.
I was a right sot; but I'll be overseen no more, believe me.

[Enter_ MERCATORE.

MERCATORE.

Ah, my good a friend Master Usury! by my trot', you be very well-met.
Me be much beholden unto you for your goodwill; me be in your debt.
But a me take a your part so much against a scald old churl, call'd
Hospitality,
Did speak against you, and says you bring good honest men to beggary.

USURY.

I thank you, sir. Did he speak such evil of me, as you now say?
I doubt not but to reward him for his treachery one day.

MERCATORE.

But, I pray, tell a me how fare a my lady all dis while?

USURY.

Marry, very well,[185] sir; and here she comes, if myself I do
not beguile.

[Enter_ LUCRE.

LUCRE.

What, Signer Mercatore! I have not seen you many a day:
I marvel what is the cause you kept so long away.

MERCATORE.

Shall me say you, Madonna, dat me have had much business for you in hand,
For send away good commodities out of dis little country England:
Me have now sent over brass, copper, pewter, and many oder ting,
And for dat me shall ha for gentlewomans fine trifles, that great
profit will bring.

LUCRE.

I perceive you have been mindful of me, for which I thank ye.
But, Usury, tell me, how have you sped in that you went about?

USURY.

Indifferently, lady, you need not to doubt.
I have taken possession, and because they were destitute,
I have let it for a quarter; my tale to conclude,
Marry, I have a little raised the rent, but it is but forty pound
by the year;
But if it were to let now, I would let it more dear.

LUCRE.

Indeed, 'tis but a trifle; it makes no matter:
I force not greatly, being but for a quarter.

MERCATORE.

Madonna, me tell ye vat you shall do; let dem to stranger,
dat are content
To dwell in a little room, and to pay much rent:
For you know da Frenchmans and Flemings in dis country be many,
So dat they make shift to dwell ten houses in one very gladly;
And be content a for pay fifty or threescore pound a year
For dat which da Englishmans say twenty mark is too dear.

LUCRE.

Why, Signor Mercatore, think you not that I
Have infinite numbers in London that my want doth supply?
Beside in Bristow, Northampton, Norwich, Westchester, Canterbury,
Dover, Sandwich, Eye, Porchmouth, Plymouth, and many mo,
That great rents upon little room do bestow?
Yes, I warrant you; and truly I may thank the strangers for this,
That they have made houses so dear, whereby I live in bliss.
But, Signor Mercatore, dare you to travel undertake,
And go amongst the Moors, Turks and Pagans for my sake?

MERCATORE.

Madonna, me dare go to de Turks, Moors, Pagans, and more too:
What do me care, and me go to da great devil for you?
Command a me, madam, and you shall see plain,
Dat a for your sake me refuse a no pain.

LUCRE.

Then, Signor Mercatore, I am forthwith to send ye,
From hence to search for some new toys in Barbary and in Turkey;
Such trifles as you think will please wantons best,
For you know in this country 'tis their chiefest request.

MERCATORE.

Indeed, de gentlewomans here buy so much vain toys,
Dat we strangers laugh a to tink wherein day have their joys.
Fait', Madonna, me will search all da strange countries me can tell,
But me will have sush tings dat please dese gentlewomans vell.

LUCRE.

Why, then, let us provide things ready to haste you away.

MERCATORE.

A vostro commandamento, Madonna, me obey.
[Exeunt_.

[Enter_ SIMONY _and_ PETER PLEASEMAN, _like a parson_.[186]

SIMONY.

Now proceed with your tale, and I'll hear thee.

PETER.

And so, sir, as I was about to tell you,
This same Presco and this same Cracko be both my parishioners now;
And, sir, they fell out marvellously together about you:
This same Cracko took your part, and said that the clergy
Was upholden by you, and maintained very worshipfully.
So, sir, Presco he would not grant that in no case,
But said that you did corrupt the clergy, and dishonour that holy place.
Now, sir, I was weary to hear them at such great strife,
For I love to please men, so long as I have life:
Therefore I beseech your mastership to speak to Lady Lucre,
That I may be her chaplain, or else to serve her.

SIMONY.

What is your name?

PETER.

Sir Peter.

SIMONY.

What more?

PETER.

Forsooth, Pleaseman.

SIMONY.

Then, your name is Sir Peter Pleaseman?

PETER.

Ay, forsooth.

SIMONY.

And please-woman too, now and then?

PETER.

You know that _homo_ is indifferent.[187]

SIMONY.

Now, surely, a good scholar in my judgment!
I pray, at what university were ye?

PETER.

Of no university, truly. Marry, I have gone
To school in a college, where I have studied two or three places
of divinity.
And all for Lady Lucre's sake, sir, you may steadfastly believe me.

SIMONY.

Nay. I believe ye. But of what religion are you, can ye tell?

PETER.

Marry, sir, of all religions: I know not myself very well.

SIMONY.

You are a Protestant now, and I think to that you will grant?

PETER.

Indeed I have been a Catholic: marry, now for the most part, a Protestant.
But, and if my service may please her--hark in your ear, sir--
I warrant you my religion shall not offend her.

SIMONY.

You say well; but if I help you to such great preferment,
Would you be willing that for my pain
I shall have yearly half the gain?
For it is reason, you know, that if I help you to a living,
That you should unto me be somewhat beholding.

PETER.

Ay, sir; and reason good; I'll be as your mastership please:
I care not what you do, so I may live at ease.

SIMONY.

Then, this man is answered. Sir Peter Pleaseman, come in with me,
And I'll prefer you straightway to my lady.

PETER.

O sir, I thank ye.
[_Exeunt_.

[_Enter_ SIMPLICITY, _with a basket on his arm_.

SIMPLICITY.

You think I am going to market to buy roast meat, do ye not?
I thought so; but you are deceived, for I wot what I wot.
I am neither going to the butcher's to buy veal, mutton, or beef,
But I am going to a bloodsucker; and who is it? faith, Usury, that thief.
Why, sirs, 'twas no marcle[188] he undid my father, that was called
Plain-Dealing,
When he has undone my lady and Conscience too with his usuring.
I'll tell ye, sirs, trust him not, for he'll flatter bonfacion[189]
and sore,
Till he has gotten the baker vantage; then he'll turn you out of door.

[_Enter_ DISSIMULATION.

DISSIMULATION.

Simplicity, now of my honesty, very heartily well-met.

SIMPLICITY.

What, Semblation, swear not; for thou swearest by that thou couldst not get.

Thou have honesty now? thy honesty is quite gone:

Marry, thou hadst honesty at eleven of the clock, and went from you at noon.

Why, how canst thou have honesty, when it dare not come nigh thee?

I warrant, Semblation, he that has less honesty than thou may defy thee.

Thou hast honesty, sir reverence! come out, dog, where art thou?

Even as much[190] honesty as had my mother's great hoggish sow.

No, faith, thou must put out my eye with honesty, and thou hadst it here:

Hast not left it at the alehouse in gage for a pot of strong beer?

DISSIMULATION.

Pray thee, leave prating, Simplicity, and tell me what thou hast there.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, 'tis nothing for thee: thou dost not deal with such kind of ware.

Sirrah, there is no deceit in a bag-pudding, is there? nor in a plain pudding-pie?

But there is deceit, and knavery too, in thy fellow that is called Usury.[191]

Sirrah, I'll tell thee; I won[192] not tell thee; and yet I'll tell thee, now I 'member me, too.

Canst tell, or wouldst know whither with this parliament I go?[193]

Faith, even to Suck-Swill, thy fellow Usury, I am sent

With my Lady Love's gown, and Lady Conscience' too, for a quarter's rent.

DISSIMULATION.

Alas! poor Lady Love, art thou driven so low?

Some little pittance on thee I'll bestow.

Hold, Simplicity: carry her three or four ducats from me,

And commend me to her even very heartily.

SIMPLICITY.

Duck-eggs? yes, I'll carry 'em, and 'twere as many as this would hold.

DISSIMULATION.

Tush! thou knowest not what I mean: take this, 'tis gold.

SIMPLICITY.

Mass, 'tis gold indeed: why, wilt thou send away thy gold? hast no more need?

I think thou art grown plaguy rich with thy dissembling trade.

But I'll carry my lady the gold, for this will make her well apaid.

DISSIMULATION.

And, sirrah, carry Lady Love's gown back again; for my fellow Usury

Shall not have her gown: I am sure so much he will befriend me.

SIMPLICITY.

But what shall Conscience' gown do? shall I carry it back again too?

DISSIMULATION.

Nay, let Conscience' gown and skin to Usury go.

If nobody cared for Conscience more than I,

They would hang her up like bacon in a chimney to dry.

SIMPLICITY.

Faith, I told thee thou caredst not for Conscience nor honesty:
I think, indeed, it will never be the death of thee.
But I'll go conspach my errand so soon as I can, I tell ye,
For now I ha' gold, I would fain have some good meat in my belly.
[Exit_.

DISSIMULATION.

Nay, I'll hie me after, that I may send back Lady Love's gown,
For I would not have Love bought quite out of town.
Marry, for Conscience, tut, I care not two straws:
Why I should take care for her, I know no kind of cause.
[Exit_.

Enter HOSPITALITY.

HOSPITALITY.

O, what shall I say? Usury hath undone me, and now he hates me
to the death,
And seeks by all means possible for to bereave me of breath.
I cannot rest in any place, but he hunts and follows me everywhere,
That I know no place to abide, I live so much in fear.
But, out alas! here comes he that will shorten my days.

Enter USURY.

USURY.

O, have I caught your old grey beard? you be the man whom the people
so praise:
You are a frank gentleman, and full of liberality.
Why, who had all the praise in London or England, but Master Hospitality?
But I'll master you now, I'll hold you a groat.

HOSPITALITY.

What, will you kill me?

USURY.

No; I'll do nothing but cut thy throat.

HOSPITALITY.

O help, help, help for God's sake!

Enter CONSCIENCE, _running apace_.

CONSCIENCE.

What lamentable cry was that I heard one make?

HOSPITALITY.

O Lady Conscience! now or never help me.

CONSCIENCE.

Why, what wilt thou do with him, Usury?

USURY.

What will I do with him? marry, cut his throat, and then no more.

CONSCIENCE.

O, dost thou not consider, that thou shalt dearly answer
For Hospitality, that good member? refrain it therefore.

USURY.

Refrain me no refraining, nor answer me no answering:
The matter is answered well enough in this thing.

CONSCIENCE.

For God's sake, spare him! for country-sake, spare him; for pity-sake,
spare him;
For love-sake, spare him; for Conscience-sake, forbear him!

USURY.

Let country, pity, love, Conscience, and all go in respect of myself,
He shall die. Come, ye feeble wretch, I'll dress ye like an elf.

CONSCIENCE.

But yet, Usury, consider the lamentable cry of the poor:
For lack of Hospitality fatherless children are turned out of door.
Consider again the complaint of the sick, blind, and lame,
That will cry unto the Lord for vengeance on thy head in his name.
Is the fear of God so far from thee that thou hast no feeling at all?
O, repent, Usury! leave Hospitality, and for mercy at the Lord's
hand call.

USURY.

Leave prating, Conscience: thou canst not mollify my heart.
He shall, in spite of thee and all other, feel his deadly smart.
Yet I'll not commit the murder openly,
But hale the villain into a corner, and so kill him secretly.
Come, ye miserable drudge, and receive thy death.

HOSPITALITY.

Help, good lady, help! he will stop my breath.

CONSCIENCE.

Alas! I would help thee, but I have not the power.

HOSPITALITY.

Farewell, Lady Conscience: you shall have Hospitality in London
nor England no more.

[_Hale him in_.[194]

CONSCIENCE.

O help! help, help, some good body!

[_Enter_ DISSIMULATION _and_ SIMPLICITY _hastily_.

DISSIMULATION.

Who is that calls for help so lustily?[195]

CONSCIENCE.

Out, alas! thy fellow Usury hath killed Hospitality.

SIMPLICITY.

Now, God's blessing on his heart: why, 'twas time that he was dead:
He was an old churl, with never a good tooth in his head.
And he ne'er kept no good cheer that I could see;
For if one had not come at dinner-time, he should have gone away hungry.
I could never get my belly-full of meat;
He had nothing but beef, bread, and cheese for me to eat.
Now I would have had some pies, or bag-puddings with great lumps of fat;

But, I warrant ye,[196] he did keep my mouth well enough from that.
Faith, and he be dead, he is dead: let him go to the devil, and he will;
Or if he will not go thither, let him even lie there still.
I'll ne'er make wamentation for an old churl,
For he has been a great while, and now 'tis time that he were out
of the worl'.

Enter LUCRE.

LUCRE.

What, Conscience, thou look'st like a poor pigeon, pull'd of late.

CONSCIENCE.

What, Lucre, thou lookest like a whore, full of deadly hate.

LUCRE.

Alas! Lucre, I am sorry for thee, but I cannot weep.[197]

CONSCIENCE.

Alas! Lucre, I am sorry for thee that thou canst no honesty keep:
But such as thou art, such are the[198] attenders on thee,
As appears by thy servant Usury, that hath killed that good member
Hospitality.

SIMPLICITY.

Faith, Hospitality is killed, and hath made his will,
And hath given Dissimulation three trees upon an high hill.

LUCRE.

Come hither, Dissimulation, and hie you hence, so fast as you may,
And help thy fellow Usury to convey himself out of the way:
Further will the justices, if they chance to see him, not to know him,
Or know[ing] him, not by any means to hinder him;
And they shall command thrice so much at my hand.
Go trudge, run; out, away: how? dost thou stand!

DISSIMULATION.

Nay, good lady, send my fellow Simony;
For I have an earnest suit to ye.

LUCRE.

Then, Simony, go, do what I have will'd.

SIMONY.

I run, Madam: your mind shall be fulfilled.

[Exit_.

CONSCIENCE.

Well, well, Lucre, *_Audeo et taceo_*: I see and say nothing;
But I fear the plague of God on thy head it will bring.

DISSIMULATION.

Good lady, grant that love be your waiting-maid.
For I think, being brought so low, she will be well apaid.

LUCRE.

Speakest thou in good earnest, or dost thou but dissemble?
I know not how to have thee, thou art so variable.

DISSIMULATION.

Lady, though my name be Dissimulation, yet I speak *_bona fide_* now.
If it please you my petitions to allow.

Enter SIMONY.

LUCRE.

Stand by: I'll answer thee anon. What news, Simony,
Bringest thou of thy fellow Usury?

SIMONY.

Marry, madam, good news; for Usury lies close,
Hid in a rich man's house, that will not let him loose,
Until they see the matter brought to a good end;
For Usury in this country hath many a good friend:
And late I saw Hospitality carried to burying.

LUCRE.

I pray thee, tell me who were they that followed him?

SIMONY.

There were many of the clergy, and many of the nobility,
And many right worshipful rich citizens,
Substantial graziers,[199] and very wealthy farmers:
But to see how the poor followed him, it was a wonder;
Never yet at any burial I have seen such a number.

LUCRE.

But what say the people of the murder?

SIMONY.

Many are sorry, and say 'tis great pity that he was slain.
But who be they? the poor beggarly people that so complain.
As for the other, they say 'twas a cruel, bloody fact,
But I perceive none will hinder the murderer for this cruel act.

LUCRE.

'Tis well: I am glad of it. Now, Dissimulation, if you can get
Love's good-will,
I am contented with all my heart to grant there-until.

DISSIMULATION.

I thank you, good lady, and I doubt not but she
With a little entreaty will thereto agree.

SIMPLICITY.

Now I have it in my breeches, and very well can tell,
That I and my lady with Mistress Lucre shall dwell;
But if I be her serving-fellow, and dwell there,
I must learn to cog, lie, foist, and swear;
And surely I shall never learn: marry, and 'twere to lie abed all day,
I know to that kind of living I should give a good 'ssay:[200]
Or if 'twere to eat one's meat, then I knew what I had to do.
How say ye, sirrah, can I not? I'll be judg'd[201] by you.

LUCRE.

Now to you, little mouse: did I not tell you before,
That I should, ere 'twere long, turn you both out of door?
How say you, pretty soul, is't come to pass, yea or no?

I think I have pull'd your peacock's plumes somewhat low.
And yet you be so stout as though you felt no grief;
But I know, ere it be long, you will come puling to me for relief.

CONSCIENCE.

Well, Lucre, well: you know pride will have a fall.
What advantageth[202] it thee to win the world, and lose thy soul withal?
Yet better it is to live with little, and keep a conscience clear,
Which is to God a sacrifice, and accounted of most dear.

LUCRE.

Nay, Conscience, and you be bookish, I mean to leave ye;
And the cold ground to comfort your feet I bequeath ye;
Methink, you being so deeply learned may do well to keep a school.
Why, I have seen so cunning a clerk in time to prove a fool.

[_Exeunt_ LUCRE _and_ SIMONY.]

SIMPLICITY.

Sirrah, if thou shouldst marry my lady, thou wouldst keep her brave,
For I think now thou art a plaguy rich knave.

DISSIMULATION.

Rich I am, but as for knave, keep [that] to thyself.
Come, give me my lady's gown, thou ass-headed elf.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, I'll go with thee, for I must dwell with my lady.

DISSIMULATION.

Pack hence away, [or] Jack Drum's entertainment:[203] she will
none of thee.

[_Exit_.

SIMPLICITY.

This is as my cousin and I went to Master Nemo's house:
There was nobody to bid a dog drink, or to change a man a louse.
But Lady Conscience--nay, who there?--scratch that name away!
Can she be a lady that is turned out of all her beray?[204]
Do not be call'd more lady, and if you be wise,
For everybody will mock you, and say you be not worth two butterflies.

CONSCIENCE.

What remedy, Simplicity? I cannot do withal.
But what shall we go do? or whereto shall we fall?

SIMPLICITY.

Why, to our victuals: I know nothing else we have to do?
And mark, if I cannot eat twenty times as much as you.

CONSCIENCE.

If I go lie in an inn, I shall be sore grieved to see
The deceit of the ostler, the polling of the tapster, as in most
houses of lodging they be.
If in a brewer's house, at the over-plenty of water and the scarceness
of malt I should grieve,
Whereby to enrich themselves all other with unsavoury thin drink
they deceive:
If in a tanner's house, with his great deceit in tanning;

If in a weaver's house, with his great cosening in weaving.
If in a baker's house, with light bread and very evil working;
If in a chandler's, with deceitful weights, false measures, selling
for a halfpenny that is scant worth a farthing;
And if in an alehouse, with the great resort of poor unthrifts,
that with swearing at the cards consume their lives,
Having greater delight to spend a shilling that way, than a groat
at home to sustain their needy children and wives.
For which I judge it best for me to get some solitary place,
Where I may with patience this my heavy cross embrace,
And learn to sell[220] broom, whereby to get my living,
Using that as a quiet mean to keep myself from begging.--
Wherefore, Simplicity, if thou wilt do the like,
Settle thyself to it, and with true labour thy living do seek.
[Exit_ CONSCIENCE.

SIMPLICITY.

No, faith, Mistress Conscience, I'll not; for, and I should
sell[205] broom,
The maids would cosen me to competually with their old shoon.
And, too, I cannot work, and you would hang me out of the way;
For when I was a miller, Will did grind the meal, while I did play.
Therefore I'll have as easy an occupation as I had when my father
was alive.
Faith, I'll go even a-begging: why, 'tis a good trade; a man shall be
sure to thrive;
For I am sure my prayers will get bread and cheese, and my singing will
get me drink.
Then shall not I do better than Mistress Conscience? tell me as
you think.
Therefore god Pan in the kitchen, and god Pot in the buttery,
Come and resist me, that I may sing with the more meliosity.
But, sirs, mark my cauled countenance, when I begin.
But yonder is a fellow[206] that gapes to bite me, or else to eat that
which I sing.
Why, thou art a fool; canst thou not keep thy mouth strait together?
And when it comes, snap at it, as my father's dog would do at a liver.
But thou art so greedy,
That thou thinkest to eat it before it comes nigh thee.

SIMPLICITY _sings_.

_Simplicity sings it, and 'sperience doth prove,
No biding in London for Conscience and Love.
The country hath no peer,
Where Conscience comes not once a year;
And Love so welcome to every town,
As wind that blows the houses down.
Sing down adown, down, down, down.
Simplicity sings it, and 'sperience doth prove,
No dwelling in London, no biding in London, for Conscience and Love_.

SIMPLICITY.

Now, sirrah, hast eaten up my song? and ye have, ye shall eat
no more to-day,
For everybody may see your belly is grown bigger with eating up our play.
He has fill'd his belly, but I am never a whit the better,
Therefore I'll go seek some victuals; and 'member, for eating up
my song you shall be my debtor.

[Exit_ SIMPLICITY.

[Enter_ MERCATORE, _the Merchant, and_ GERONTUS, _a Jew_.

GERONTUS.

But, Signor Mercatore, tell me, did ye serve me well or no,
That having gotten my money would seem the country to forego?
You know I lent you two thousand ducats for three months' space,
And, ere the time came, you got another thousand by flattery and
thy smooth face.

So, when the time came that I should have received my money,
You were not to be found, but was fled out of the country.

Surely, if we that be Jews should deal so one with another,
We should not be trusted again of our own brother;

But many of you Christians make no conscience to falsify your faith,
and break your day.

I should have been paid at three[207] months' end, and now it is
two years you have been away.

Well, I am glad you be come again to Turkey; now I trust I shall
receive the interest of you, so well as the principal.

MERCATORE.

Ah, good Master Geronto! pray heartily, bear a me a little while,

And me shall pay ye all without any deceit or guile:

Me have much business for my pretty knacks to send to England.

Good sir, bear a me for five days, me'll despatch your money
out of hand.[208]

GERONTUS.

Signor Mercatore, I know no reason why because you have dealt
with me so ill:

Sure, you did it not for need, but of set purpose and will;

And, I tell ye,[209] to bear with ye four or five days goes sore
against my mind,

Lest you should steal away, and forget to leave my money behind.

MERCATORE.

Pray heartily, do tink a no such ting, my good friend, a me.

Be my trot' and fait', me pay you all, every penny.

GERONTUS.

Well, I'll take your faith and troth once more, and trust to
your honesty,

In hope that for my long tarrying you will deal well with me.

Tell me what ware you would buy for England, such necessaries
as they lack?[210]

MERCATORE.

O no, lack some pretty fine toy, or some fantastic new knack;

For da gentlewomans in England buy much tings for fantasy.

You pleasure a me, sir, vat me mean a dere buy?

GERONTUS.

I understand you, sir: but keep touch with me, and I'll bring you
to great store,

Such as I perceive you came to this country for;

As musk, amber, sweet powders, fine odours, pleasant perfumes,
and many such toys,

Wherein I perceive consisteth that country gentlewomen's joys.

Besides, I have diamonds, rubies, emerands, sapphires, smaradines,
opals, onacles, jacinths, agates, turquoise, and almost of all
kind of precious stones,
And many mo fit things to suck away money from such green-headed wantons.

MERCATORE.

Faith-a, my good friend, me tank you most heartly alway.
Me shall a content your debt within this two or tree day.

GERONTUS.

Well, look you do keep your promise, and another time you shall
command me.
Come, go we home, where our commodities you may at pleasure see.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter CONSCIENCE, _with brooms at her back, singing as followeth:

New brooms,[211] green brooms, will you buy any?
Come, maidens, come quickly, let me take a penny.

My brooms are not steeped,
But very well-bound:
My brooms be not crooked,
But smooth-cut and round.
I wish it should please you
To buy of my broom,
Then would it well ease me,
If market were done.

Have you any old boots,
Or any old shoon;
Pouch-rings or buskins
To cope for new broom?

If so you have, maidens,
I pray you bring hither,
That you and I friendly
May bargain together.

New brooms, green brooms, will you buy any?
Come, maidens, come quickly, let me take a penny_.

CONSCIENCE _speaketh_.

Thus am I driven to make a virtue of necessity;
And, seeing God almighty will have it so, I embrace it thankfully,
Desiring God to mollify and lessen[212] Usury's hard heart,
That the poor people feel not the like penury and smart.
But Usury is made tolerable amongst Christians, as a necessary thing,
So that, going beyond the limits of our law, they extort, and many
to misery bring.
But if we should follow God's law, we should not receive above that
we lend;
For if we lend for reward, how can we say we are our neighbours' friend?
O, how blessed shall that man be, that lends without abuse,
But thrice accursed shall he be, that greatly covets use;
For he that covets over-much, insatiate is his mind,
So that to perjury and cruelty he wholly is inclin'd:
Wherewith they sore oppress the poor by divers sundry ways,

Which makes them cry unto the Lord to shorten cutthroats' days.
Paul calleth them thieves that doth not give the needy of their store,
And thrice accurs'd are they that take one penny from the poor.
But while I stand reasoning thus, I forget my market clean;
And sith God hath ordained this way, I am to use the mean.

_Sing again.

Have ye any old shoes, or have ye any boots? have ye any buskins,
or will ye buy any broom?
Who bargains or chops with Conscience? What, will no customer come?_

Enter USURY.

USURY.

Who is it that cries brooms? What, Conscience, selling brooms
about the street?

CONSCIENCE.

What, Usury, it is great pity thou art unchanged yet.

USURY.

Believe me, Conscience, it grieves me thou art brought so low.

CONSCIENCE.

Believe me, Usury, it grieves me thou wast not hanged long ago;
For if thou hadst been hanged, before thou slewest Hospitality,
Thou hadst not made me and thousands more to feel like poverty.

Enter LUCRE.

LUCRE.

Methought I heard one cry brooms along the door.

USURY.

Ay, marry, madam; it was Conscience, who seems to be offended
at me very sore.

LUCRE.

Alas, Conscience! art thou become a poor broom-wife?

CONSCIENCE.

Alas, Lucre! wilt thou continue a harlot all [the] days of thy life?

LUCRE.

Alas! I think it is a grief to thee that thou art so poor.

CONSCIENCE.

Alas, Lucre! I think it is no pain to thee, that thou still
playest the whore.

LUCRE.

Well, well, Conscience, that sharp tongue of thine hath not been
thy furtherance:
If thou hadst kept thy tongue, thou hadst kept thy friend, and not
have had such hindrance.
But wottest thou who shall be married tomorrow?
Love with my Dissimulation;
For, I think, to bid the guests they are by this time wellnigh gone;

And having occasion to buy brooms, I care not if I buy them all.

CONSCIENCE.

Then, give me a shilling, and with a goodwill have them you shall.

LUCRE.

Usury, carry in these brooms, and give them to the maid,
For I know of such store she will be well apaid.

[_Exit_ USURY _with the brooms_.

Hold, Conscience; though thy brooms be not worth a quarter so much,
Yet to give thee a piece of gold I do it not grutch;
And if thou wouldst follow my mind, thou shouldst not live in such sort,
But pass thy days with pleasure, store of every kind of sport.

CONSCIENCE.

I think you lead the world in a string, for everybody follows you:
And sith every one doth it, why may not I do it too?
For that I see your free heart and great liberality,
I marvel not that all people are so willing to follow ye.

LUCRE.

Then, sweet soul, mark what I would have thee do for me.
That is, to deck up thy poor cottage handsomely;
And for that purpose I have five thousand crowns in store,
And when it is spent, thou shalt have twice as much more.
But only see thy rooms be neat, when I shall thither resort,
With familiar friends to play, and^[213] pass the time in sport;
For the deputy, constable and spiteful neighbours do spy, pry,
and eye about my house,
That I dare not be once merry within, but still mute like a mouse.

CONSCIENCE.

My good Lady Lucre, I will fulfil your mind in every kind of thing,
So that you shall be welcome at all hours, whomsoever you do bring:
And all the dogs in the town shall not bark at your doings, I trow;
For your full pretence and intent I do thoroughly know,
Even so well as if you had opened the very secrets of your heart,
For which I doubt not but to rest in your favour by my desert.
But here comes your man, Usury.

[_Enter_ USURY.

LUCRE.

I'll send him home for the money--Usury, step in,
And bring me the box of all abomination, that stands in the window:
It is little and round, painted with divers colours, and is pretty
to the show.

USURY.

Madam, is there any superscription thereon?

LUCRE.

Have I not told you the name? for shame; get you gone.

[_Exit_ USURY.]

Well, my wench, I doubt not but our pleasures shall excel,

Seeing thou hast got a corner fit, where few neighbours dwell,
And they be of the poorest sort, which fits our turn so right,
Because they dare not speak against our sports and sweet delight:
And if they should, alas! their words would nought at all be weigh'd,
And for to speak before my face they will be all afraid.

Enter USURY, _with a painted box of ink in his hand_.

USURY.

Madam, I deem this same to be it, so far as I can guess.

LUCRE.

Thou sayest the truth; 'tis it indeed: the outside shows no less,
But, Usury, I think Dissimulation hath not seen you since your
coming home;
Therefore go see him: he will rejoice, when to him you are shown.
It is a busy time with him: help to further him, if you can.

USURY.

You may command me to attend at board to be his man.

[_Exit_ USURY.

Here let LUCRE _open the box, and dip her finger in it,
and spot_ CONSCIENCE' _face, saying as followeth_.

LUCRE.

Hold here, my sweet; and then over to see if any want.
The more I do behold this face, the more my mind doth vaunt.
This face is of favour, these cheeks are reddy and white;
These lips are cherry-red, and full of deep delight:
Quick-rolling eyes, her temples high, and forehead white as snow;
Her eyebrows seemly set in frame, with dimpled chin below.
O, how beauty hath adorned thee with every seemly hue,
In limbs, in looks, with all the rest proportion keeping due.
Sure, I have not seen a finer soul in every kind of part:
I cannot choose but kiss thee with my lips, that love thee
with my heart.

CONSCIENCE.

I have told the crowns, and here are just so many as you to me did say.

LUCRE.

Then, when thou wilt, thou may'st depart, and homewards take thy way.
And I pray thee, make haste in decking of thy room,
That I may find thy lodging fine, when with my friend I come.

CONSCIENCE.

I'll make speed; and where I have with brooms oft-times been roaming,
I mean henceforth not to be seen, but sit to watch your coming.

[_Exit_ CONSCIENCE.

LUCRE.

O, how joyful may I be that such success do find!
No marvel, for poverty and desire of Lucre do force them follow my mind.
Now may I rejoice in full contentation,
That shall marry Love with Dissimulation:
And I have spotted Conscience with all abomination.
But I forget myself, for I must to the wedding,
Both vauntingly and flauntingly, although I had no bidding.

[_Exit_ LUCRE.

Enter DISSIMULATION _and_ COGGING _his man, and_ SIMONY.

COGGING.

Sir, although you be my master, I would not have you to upbraid my name,
But I would have you use the right skill and title of the same:
For my name is neither scogging[214] nor scragging, but ancient Cogging.
Sir, my ancestors were five of the four worthies,
And yourself are of my near kin.

DISSIMULATION.

Indeed thou say'st true, for Cogging is a kinsman to Dissimulation.
But, tell me, have you taken the names of the guests?

COGGING.

Yea, sir.

DISSIMULATION.

Let me hear after what fashion.

The names of the guests told by COGGING.

COGGING.

There is, first and foremost, Master Forgery and Master Flattery,
Master Perjury and Master Injury:
Master Cruelty and Master Pickery, Master Bribery and Master Treachery;
Master Wink-at-wrong and Master Headstrong, Mistress Privy-theft
And Master Deep-deceit, Master Abomination and Mistress Fornication
his wife, Ferdinando False-weight and Frisset False-measure his wife.

DISSIMULATION.

Stay: Fornication and Frisset False-measure are often familiar with
my Lady Lucre, and one of them she accounts her friend.
Therefore they shall sit with the bride in the midst, and the men
at each end.

Let me see; there are sixteen, even as many as well near is able
To dine in the summer-parlour at the playing-table;
Beside my fellow Fraud, and you, fellow Simony;
But I shall have a great miss of my fellow Usury.

SIMONY.

Take no care for that; he came home yesterday even, no longer:
His pardon was quickly begged, and that by a courtier.
But, sirrah, since he came home, he had like to have slain
Good Neighbourhood and Liberality,
Had not True Friendship stepp'd between them very suddenly.
But, sirrah, he hit True Friendship such a blow on the ear,
That he keeps out of all men's sight, I think[215] for shame or for fear.

DISSIMULATION.

Now, of my troth, it is a pretty jest: hath he made True Friendship
hide his head?
Sure, if it be so, Good Neighbourhood and Liberality for fear are fled.

SIMONY.

But, fellow Dissimulation, tell me what priest shall marry ye!

DISSIMULATION.

Marry, that shall an old friend of mine, Master Doctor Hypocrisy.

SIMONY.

Why, will you not have Sir Peter Pleaseman to supply that want?

DISSIMULATION.

Indeed, Sir Peter is a good priest, but Doctor Hypocrisy is most ancient.

But, Cousin Cogging, I pray you go to invite the guests,

And tell them that they need not disturb their quietness:

Desire them to come at dinner-time, and it shall suffice,

Because I know they will be loth so early to rise.

But at any hand will Doctor Hypocrisy,

That he meet us at the church very early;

For I would not have all the world to wonder at our match:

It is an old proverb: 'Tis good having a hatch before the door,

but I'll have a door before the hatch.

COGGING.

Sir, I will about it as fast as I can hie.

I'll first to that scald bald-knave Doctor Hypocrisy. [_Aside_.

[_Exit_ COGGING.

SIMONY.

But, fellow Dissimulation, how darest thou marry with Love,
bearing no love at all?

For thou dost nothing but dissemble: then thy love must needs be small.

Thou canst not love but from the teeth forward.

Sure the wife that marries thee shall highly be preferr'd.

DISSIMULATION.

Tush, tush! you are a merry man: I warrant you I know what I do,
And can yield a good reason for it, I may say unto you.

What, and if the world should change, and run all on her side,

Then might I by her means still in good credit abide.

Thou knowest Love is ancient, and lives peaceably without any strife;

Then sure the people will think well of me, because she is my wife.

SIMONY.

Trust me, thou art as crafty, to have an eye to the main-chance.

As the tailor, that out of seven yards stole one and a half
of durance.[216]

He served at that time the devil in the likeness of Saint Katherine:

Such tailors will thrive, that out of a doublet and a pair of

hose can steal their wife an apron.

The doublet-sleeves three fingers were too short;

The Venetians[217] came nothing near the knee.

DISSIMULATION.

Then, for to make them long enough, I pray thee what did he?

SIMONY.

Two pieces set an handful broad, to lengthen them withal;

Yet for all that below the knee by no means they could fall:

He, seeing that, desired the party to buy as much to make another pair:

The party did: yet, for all that, he stole a quarter there.

DISSIMULATION.

Now, sure, I can him thank, he could his occupation.

My fellow Fraud would laugh to hear one dress'd of such a fashion.

But, fellow Simony, I thank you heartily, for comparing the tailor to me.
As who should say his knavery and my policy did agree.[218]

SIMONY.

Not so; but I was the willinger to tell thee, because I know it
to be a true tale;
And to see how artificers do extol Fraud, by whom they bear their sale.
But come, let us walk, and talk no more of this:
Your policy was very good, and so, no doubt, was his.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter MERCATORE _reading a letter to himself; and let_
GERONTUS _the Jew follow him, and speak as followeth_.

GERONTUS.

Signor Mercatore, why do you not pay me? think you, I will be
mock'd in this sort?
This is three times you have flouted me: it seems you make
thereat a sport.
Truly pay me my money, and that even now presently,
Or by mighty Mahomet I swear I will forthwith arrest ye.

MERCATORE.

Ha, pray a bare wit me tree or four days: me have much business in hand:
Me be troubled with letters, you see here, dat comes from England.

GERONTUS.

Tush, this is not my matter: I have nothing therewith to do.
Pay me my money, or I'll make you, before to your lodging you go.
I have officers stand watching for you, so that you cannot pass by;
Therefore you were best to pay me, or else in prison you shall lie.

MERCATORE.

Arrest me, dou seal knave? marry, do, and if thou dare;
Me will not pay de one penny: arrest me, do, me do not care.
Me will be a Turk; me came heder for dat cause:
Derefore me care not de so mush as two straws.

GERONTUS.

This is but your words, because you would defeat me:
I cannot think you will forsake your faith so lightly.
But seeing you drive me to doubt, I'll try your honesty;
Therefore be sure of this, I'll go about it presently.

[_Exit_.

MERCATORE.

Marry, farewell and be hang'd, sitten, scald, drunken Jew.
I warrant ye me shall be able very well to pay you.
My Lady Lucre have sent me here dis letter,
Praying me to cosen de Jew for love a her.
Derefore me'll go to get a some Turk apparel,
Dat me may cosen de Jew, and end dis quarrel.

[_Exit_.

Enter three beggars; that is to say_, TOM BEGGAR,
WILY WILL, _and_ SIMPLICITY, _singing_.

THE SONG.

_To the wedding, to the wedding, to the wedding go we:
To the wedding a-begging, a-begging all three.

Tom Beggar shall brave it, and Wily Will too,
Simplicity shall knave it, wherever we go:
With lustly bravado, take care that care will,
To catch it and snatch it we have the brave skill.

Our fingers are lime-twigs, and barbers we be,
To catch sheets from hedges most pleasant to see:
Then to the alewife roundly we set them to sale,
And spend the money merrily upon her good ale.

To the wedding, to the wedding, to the wedding go we:
To the wedding a-begging, a-begging all three_.

FINIS.

TOM.

Now truly, my masters, of all occupations under the sun,
begging is the best;
For when a man is weary, then he may lay him down to rest.
Tell me, is it not a lord's life in summer to louse one under a hedge,
And then, leaving that game, may go clip and coll his Madge?
Or else may walk to take the wholesome air abroad for his delight,
When he may tumble on the grass, have sweet smells, and see
many a pretty sight?
Why, an emperor for all his wealth can have but his pleasure,
And surely I would not lose my charter of liberty for all
the king's treasure.

WILL.

Shall I tell thee, Tom Beggar, by the faith of a gentleman,
this ancient freedom I would not forego,
If I might have whole mines of money at my will to bestow.
Then, a man's mind should be troubled to keep that he had;
And you know it were not for me: it would make my valiant mind mad.
For now we neither pay Church-money, subsidies, fifteens, scot nor lot:
All the payings we pay is to pay the good ale-pot.

SIMPLICITY.

But, fellow beggars, you cosen me, and take away all the best meat,
And leave me nothing but brown bread or fin of fish to eat.
When you be at the alehouse, you drink up the strong ale,
and give me small beer:
You tell me 'tis better than the strong to make me sing clear.
Indeed, you know, with my singing I get twice so much as ye,
But, and you serve me so, you shall sing yourselves, and beg
alone for me.

TOM.

We stand prating here: come, let us go to the gate.
Mass, I am greatly afraid we are come somewhat too late.
Good gentle Master Porter, your reward do bestow
On a poor lame man, that hath but a pair of legs to go.

WILL.

For the honour of God, good Master Porter, give somewhat to the blind,

That the way to the alehouse in his sleep cannot find.

TOM.

For the good Lord's sake, take compassion on the poor.

Enter FRAUD, _with a basket of meat on his arm_.

FRAUD.

How now, sirs! you are vengeance hasty: can ye not tarry,
But stand bawling so at my lady's door?
Here, take it amongst you; yet 'twere a good alms-deed to give
you nothing,
Because you were so hasty, and kept such a calling.

TOM.

I beseech ye not so, sir, for we were very hungry:
That made us so earnest, but we are sorry we troubled ye.

SIMPLICITY (_aside_).

Look how greedy they be, like dogs that fall a snatching.
You shall see that I shall have the greatest alms, because
I said nothing.
Fraud knows me, therefore he'll be my friend; I am sure of that.
They have nothing but lean beef, ye shall see I shall have a piece
that is fat.
Master Fraud, you have forgot me: pray ye, let me have my share.

FRAUD.

Faith, all is gone; thou com'st too late: thou seest to all
is given there.
By the faith of a gentleman, I have it not: I would I were able
to give thee more.

SIMPLICITY.

O sir, I saw your arms hang out of a stable-door.[219]

FRAUD.

Indeed, my arms are at the painter's; belike, lie hung them out to dry.
I pray thee, tell me what they were, if thou canst them descry.

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, there was never a scutcheon, but there was two trees rampant,
And then over them lay a sour tree passant,
With a man like you in a green field pendant,
Having a hempen halter about his neck, with a knot under the left ear,
because you are a younger brother.
Then, sir, there stands on each side, holding up the cres',
A worthy ostler's hand in a dish of grease.
Besides all this, on the helmet stands the hangman's hand,
Ready to turn the ladder, whereon your picture did stand:
Then under the helmet hung cables I like chains, and for what
they are I cannot devise,
Except it be to make you hang fast, that the crows might pick
out your eyes.

FRAUD.

What a swad is this? I had been better to have sent him to the back-door,
To have gotten some alms amongst the rest of the poor. [_Aside_.
Thou prat'st thou canst not tell what, or else art not well in thy wit:

I am sure my arms are not blas'd so far abroad as yet.

SIMPLICITY.

O yes, sir, your arms were known a great while ago,
For your elder brother Deceit did give those arms too.
Marry, the difference is all, which is the knot under the left ear.
The painter says, when he is hung, you may put out the knot without fear.
I am sure they were arms, for there was written in Roman letters
round about the hempen collar:
Given by the worthy valiant captain, Master Fraud, the ostler.
Now, God be wi' ye, sir; I'll get me even close to the back-door.
Farewell, Tom Beggar and Wily Will; I'll beg with you no more.
[Exit.]

TOM.

O farewell, Simplicity: we are very loth to lose thy company.

FRAUD.

Now he is gone, give ear to me. You seem to be sound men in every
joint and limb,
And can ye live in this sort to go up and down the country a-begging?
O base minds! I trow I had rather hack it out by the highway-side,
Than such misery and penury still to abide.
Sirs, if you will be rul'd by me, and do what I shall say,
I'll bring ye where we shall have a notable fine prey.
It is so, sirs, that a merchant, one Mercatore, is coming from Turkey,
And it is my lady's pleasure that he robbed should be:
She hath sworn that we shall be all sharers alike,
And upon that willed me some such companions as you be to seek.

TOM.

O worthy Captain Fraud, you have won my noble heart:
You shall see how manfully I can play my part.
And here's Wily Will, as good a fellow as your heart can wish,
To go a-fishing with a crank through a window, or to set limetwigs
to catch a pan, pot or dish.

WILL.

He says true; for I tell you, I am one that will not give back
Not for a double shot out of a black Jack.
O sir, you bring us a-bed, when ye talk of this gear.
Come, shall we go, worthy Captain? I long, till we be there.

FRAUD.

Ay, let us about it, to provide our weapons ready,
And when the time serves, I myself will conduct ye.

TOM.

O, valiantly spoken! Come, Wily Will, two pots of ale we'll bestow
On our captain courageously for a parting blow.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter the Judge of Turkey with GERONTUS and MERCATORE.]

[JUDGE.]

Sir Gerontus, because you are the plaintiff, you first your
mind shall say.
Declare the cause you did arrest this merchant yesterday.

GERONTUS.

Then, learned judge, attend. This Mercatore, whom you see in place,
Did borrow two thousand ducats of me but for a five weeks' space:
Then, sir, before the day came, by his flattery he obtained one
thousand more,
And promis'd me at two[221] months' end I should receive my store:
But before the time expired, he was closely fled away,
So that I never heard of him at least this two years' day,
Till at the last I met with him, and my money did demand,
Who sware to me at five days' end he would pay me out of hand.
The five days came, and three days more, then one day he requested:
I, perceiving that he flouted me, have got him thus arrested.
And now he comes in Turkish weeds to defeat me of my money,
But, I trow, he will not forsake his faith: I deem he hath more honesty.

JUDGE.

Sir Gerontus, you know, if any man forsake his faith, king, country,
and become a Mahomet,
All debts are paid: 'tis the law of our realm, and you may not
gainsay it.

GERONTUS.

Most true, reverend judge, we may not; nor I will not against our
laws grudge.

JUDGE.

Signor Mercatore, is this true that Gerontus doth tell?

MERCATORE.

My lord judge, de matter and de circumstance be true, me know well;
But me will be a Turk, and for dat cause me came here.

JUDGE.

Then, it is but folly to make many words.--Signor Mercatore, draw near:
Lay your hand upon this book, and say after me.

MERCATORE.

With a good will, my lord judge; me be all ready.

GERONTUS.

Not for any devotion, but for Lucre's sake of my money.

JUDGE. [MERCATORE _repeating after him_.]

Say: I, Mercatore, do utterly renounce before all the world my duty to
my Prince, my honour to my parents, and my good-will to my country.--
Furthermore, I protest and swear to be true to this country during life,
and thereupon I forsake my Christian faith----

GERONTUS.

Stay there, most puissant judge.--Signor Mercatore, consider what you do:
Pay me the principal; as for the interest, I forgive it you.
And yet the interest is allowed amongst you Christians, as well as
in Turkey:
Therefore, respect your faith, and do not seek[222] to deceive me.

MERCATORE.

No point da interest, no point da principal.[223]

GERONTUS.

Then pay me the one half, if you will not pay me all.

MERCATORE.

No point da half, no point denier: me will be a Turk, I say.
Me be weary of my Christ's religion, and for dat me come away.

GERONTUS.

Well, seeing it is so, I would be loth to hear the people say,
it was 'long of me
Thou forsakest thy faith: wherefore I forgive thee frank and free;
Protesting before the judge and all the world never to demand penny
nor halfpenny.

MERCATORE.

O sir Gerontus, me take a your proffer, and tank you most heartily.

JUDGE.

But, Signor Mercatore, I trow, ye will be a Turk for all this.

MERCATORE.

Signor, no: not for all da good in da world me forsake a my Christ.

JUDGE.

Why, then, it is as sir Gerontus said; you did more for the greediness
of the money
Than for any zeal or goodwill you bear to Turkey.

MERCATORE.

O sir, you make a great offence: You must not judge a my conscience.

JUDGE.

One may judge and speak truth, as appears by this;
Jews seek to excel in Christianity and Christians in Jewishness.
[Exit_.

MERCATORE.

Vell, vell; but me tank you, Sir Gerontus, with all my very heart.

GERONTUS.

Much good may it do you, sir; I repent it not for my part.
But yet I would not have this bolden you to serve another so:
Seek to pay, and keep day with me, so a good name on you will go.
[Exit_.

MERCATORE.

You say vel, sir; it does me good dat me have cosen'd de Jew.
Faith, I would my Lady Lucre de whole matter now knew:
What is dat me will not do for her sweet sake?
But now me will provide my journey toward England to take.
Me be a Turk? no: it will make my Lady Lucre to smile,
When she knows how me did da scal' Jew beguile.
[Exit_.

[Enter_ LUCRE, _and_ LOVE _with a vizard, behind_.

LUCRE.

Mistress Love, I marvel not a little what coy conceit is crept
into your head,

That you seem so sad and sorrowful, since the time you first did wed.
Tell me, sweet wench, what thou ailest, and if I can ease thy grief,
I will be prest to pleasure thee in yielding of relief.
Sure, thou makest me for to think something has chanc'd amiss.
I pray thee, tell me what thou ailest, and what the matter is.

LOVE.

My grief, alas! I shame to show, because my bad intent
Hath brought on me a just reward and eke a strange event.
Shall I be counted Love? nay, rather lascivious Lust,
Because unto Dissimulation I did repose such trust.
But now I moan too late, and blush my hap to tell.
My head in monstrous sort, alas! doth more and more still swell.

LUCRE.

Is your head then swollen, good Mistress Love? I pray you let me see.
Of troth it is, behold a face that seems to smile on me:
It is fair and well-favoured, with a countenance smooth and good;
Wonder is the worst,[224] to see two faces in a hood.
Come, let's go, we'll find some sports to spurn away such toys.

LOVE.

Were it not for Lucre, sure, Love had lost all her joys.
[_Exeunt_.

Enter SERVICEABLE DILIGENCE, _the Constable, and_ SIMPLICITY,
with an Officer to whip him, or two, if you can.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, but must I be whipp'd, Master Constable, indeed?
You may save your labour, for I have no need.

DILIGENCE.

I must needs see thee punished; there is no remedy,
Except thou wilt confess, and tell me,
Where thy fellows are become, that did the robbery.

SIMPLICITY.

Indeed, Master Constable, I do not know of their stealing,
For I did not see them, since we went together a-begging.
Therefore pray ye, sir, be miserable[225] to me, and let me go,
For I labour to get my living with begging, you know.

DILIGENCE.

Thou wast seen in their company a little before the deed was done;
Therefore it is most likely thou knowest where they are become.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, Master Constable, if a sheep go among wolves all day,
Shall the sheep be blam'd if they steal anything away?

DILIGENCE.

Ay, marry, shall he; for it is a great presumption
That, keeping them company, he is of like profession--
But despatch, sirs; strip him and whip him:
Stand not to reason the question.

SIMPLICITY.

Indeed, 'twas Fraud, so it was, it was not I;

And here he comes himself: ask him, if I lie.

Enter FRAUD.

DILIGENCE.

What sayest thou, villain? I would advise thee hold thy tongue:
I know him to be a wealthy man and a burgess of the town.--
Sir, and it please your mastership, here one slanders you with felony:
He saith you were the chief doer of a robbery.

FRAUD.

What says the rascal? But you know,
It standeth not with my credit to brawl;
But, good Master Constable, for his slanderous report
Pay him double, and in a greater matter command me you shall.

[_Exit_.

SIMPLICITY.

Master Constable, must the countenance carry out the knave?
Why, then, if one will face folks out, some fine reparation he must have.

[BEADLE _put off his clothes_.

BEADLE.

Come, sir Jack-sauce, make quick despatch at once:
You shall see how finely we will fetch the skin from your bones.

SIMPLICITY

Nay, but tell me whether you be right-handed or no?

BEADLE.

What is that to thee? why wouldst thou so fain know?

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, if you should be both right-handed, the one would
hinder the other:
Then it would not[226] be done finely, according to order;
For if I be not whipp'd with credit, it is not worth a pin.
Therefore, I pray, Master Constable, let me be whipp'd upon my skin.

DILIGENCE.

Whereon dost thou think they would whip thee, I pray thee declare,
That thou puttest us in mind, and takest such great care?

SIMPLICITY.

I was afraid you would have worn out my clothes with whipping;
Then afterward, I should go naked a-begging.

BEADLE.

Have no doubt of that; we will favour thy clothes:
Thou shalt judge that thyself by fueling the blows.

[_Lead him once or twice about, whipping him, and so exit_.

Enter JUDGE NEMO, _the_ CLERK _of the 'size, the_ CRIER, _and_
SERVICEABLE DILIGENCE: _the_ JUDGE _and_ CLERK _being set, the_
CRIER _shall sound three times_.

JUDGE.

Serviceable Diligence, bring hither such prisoners as are in custody.

DILIGENCE.

My diligence shall be applied very willingly.
Pleaseth it you, there are but three prisoners, so far as I know,
Which are Lucre and Conscience, with a deformed creature much like
Bifrons,[227] the base daughter of Juno.

JUDGE.

No! where is that wretch Dissimulation?

DILIGENCE.

He hath transformed himself after a strange fashion.

JUDGE.

Fraud! where is he become?

DILIGENCE.

He was seen in the streets, walking in a citizen's gown.

JUDGE.

What is become of Usury!

DILIGENCE.

He was seen at the Exchange very lately.

JUDGE.

Tell me, when have you heard of Simony?

DILIGENCE.

He was seen this day walking in Paul's, having conference and very
great familiarity with some of the clergy.

JUDGE.

Fetch Lucre and Conscience to the bar.

DILIGENCE.

Behold, worthy judge, here ready they are.

Enter LUCRE _and_ CONSCIENCE.

JUDGE.

Stand forth. Diligence, divide them asunder.

CLERK.

Lucre, thou art indicted by the name of Lucre,
To have committed adultery with Mercatore the merchant and
Creticus the lawyer.
Thou art also indicted for the robbery of Mercatore:
Lastly and chiefly, for the consenting to the murder of Hospitality.
What sayest thou, art thou guilty or not in these causes?

LUCRE.

Not guilty. Where are mine accusers? they may shame to show their faces:
I warrant you, none comes, nor dare, to discredit my name.
In despite of the teeth of them that dare, I speak in disdain.

JUDGE.

Impudent! canst thou deny deeds so manifestly known?

LUCRE.

In denial stands trial: I shame not; let them be shown.
It grinds my gall they should slander me on this sort:
They are some old-cankered currish corrupt carls, that gave
me this report.
My soul craves revenge on such my secret[228] foes,
And revengement I will have, if body and soul I lose.

JUDGE.

Thy hateful heart declares thy wicked life:
In the abundance of thy abomination all evils are rife,--
But what sayest thou, Conscience, to thy accusation,
That art accused to have been bawd unto Lucre, and spotted with
all abomination?

CONSCIENCE.

What should I say; nay, what would I say in this our naughty living?

LUCRE.

Good Conscience, if thou love me, say nothing. [Aside_.

CLERK.

Diligence, suffer her not to stand prating.
[Let him put her aside_.

JUDGE.

What letter is that in thy bosom, Conscience?
Diligence, reach it hither. [Make as though he[229] read it_.
Conscience, speak on; let me hear what thou canst say,
For I know in singleness thou wilt a truth bewray.

CONSCIENCE.

My good lord, I have no way to excuse myself:
She hath corrupted me by flattery and her accursed pelf.
What need further trial, sith I, Conscience, am a thousand witnesses?
I cannot choose but condemn us all in living amiss.
Such terror doth affright me, that living I wish to die:
I am afraid there is no spark left for me of God's mercy.

JUDGE.

Conscience, where hadst thou this letter?

CONSCIENCE.

It was put into my bosom by Lucre,
Willing me to keep secret our lascivious living.
I cannot but condemn us all in this thing.

JUDGE.

How now, malapert; stand you still in defence or no?
This letter declares thy guilty Conscience: how sayest thou,
is it not so?
Tell me, why standest thou in a maze? speak quickly.
Hadst thou thy tongue so liberal, and now stand to study?

LUCRE.

O Conscience! thou hast kill'd me; by thee I am overthrown.

JUDGE.

It is happy that by Conscience thy abomination is known:
Wherefore I pronounce judgment against thee on this wise:
Thou shalt pass to the place of darkness, where thou shalt hear
fearful cries;
Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and torment without end;
Burning in the lake of fire and brimstone, because thou canst not amend.
Wherefore, Diligence, convey her hence: throw her down to the lowest hell,
Where the infernal sprites and damned ghosts do dwell;
And bring forth Love!

[Exit_ LUCRE _and_ DILIGENCE.

Let LUCRE _make ready for_ LOVE _quickly, and come with_ DILIGENCE.

Declare the cause, Conscience, at large how thou comest so spotted,
Whereby many by thee hath been greatly infected;
For under the colour of Conscience thou deceived'st many,
Causing them to defile the temple of God, which is man's body.
A clean conscience is a sacrifice, God's own resting-place:
Why wast thou then corrupted so, and spotted on thy face?

CONSCIENCE.

When Hospitality had his throat cut by Usury,
He oppressed me with cruelty and brought me to beggary,
Turning me out of house and home; and in the end
My gown to pay my rent to him I did send.
So, driven to that extremity, I have fallen to that you see;
Yet after judgment I hope of God's mercy.

JUDGE.

O Conscience, shall cankered coin corrupt thy heart?
Or shall want in this world cause thee to feel everlasting smart?
O Conscience, what a small time thou hast on earth to live:
Why dost thou not, then, to God all honour give?
Considering the time is everlasting that thou shalt live in bliss,
If by thy life thou rise from death to judgment, mercy, and forgiveness.

Enter LOVE _with_ DILIGENCE.

Stand aside, Conscience. Bring Love to the bar.
What sayest thou to thy deformity: who was the cause.

LOVE.

Lady Lucre----

JUDGE.

Did Lucre choke thee so, that thou gavest thyself over unto Lust?
And did prodigal expenses cause thee in Dissimulation to trust?
Thou wast pure (Love), and art thou become a monster,
Bolstering thyself upon the lasciviousness of Lucre?
Love, answer for thyself: speak in thy defence.

LOVE.

I cannot choose but yield, confounded by Conscience.

JUDGE.

Then judgment I pronounce on thee, because thou followed Lucre,
Whereby thou hast sold thy soul, to feel like torment with her
Which torments comprehended are in the worm of Conscience,
Who raging still shall ne'er have end, a plague for thine offence.

Care shall be thy comfort, and sorrow thy life sustain,
Thou shalt be dying, yet never dead, but pining still in endless pain.
Diligence, convey her to Lucre: let that be her reward.
Because unto her cankered coin she gave her whole regard.
But as for Conscience, carry her to prison,
There to remain until the day of the general session.
Thus we make an end--
Knowing that the best of us all may amend:
Which God grant to his goodwill and pleasure,
That we be not corrupted with the unsatiate desire of vanishing
earthly treasure;
For covetousness is the cause of 'resting man's conscience:
Therefore restrain thy lust, and thou shalt shun the offence.

FINIS.

THE THREE LORDS & THREE LADIES OF LONDON

_EDITION

The pleasant and Stately Morall of the three Lordes and three Ladies of London. With the great Joy and Pompe, Solemnized at their Mariages: Commicallly interlaced with much honest Mirth, for pleasure and recreation, among many Morall observations, and other important matters of due Regard. By R.W. London, Printed by R. Thones, at the Rose and Crowne neere Holburne Bridge_. 1590. 4. Black letter. With an engraving on the title.

_Enter, for the Preface, a Lady very richly attired,
representing London, having two Angels before her,
and two after her, with bright rapiers in their hands_.

LONDON _speaketh_.

Lo, gentles, thus the Lord doth London guard,
Not for my sake, but for his own delight;
For all in vain the sentinels watch and ward,
Except he keep the city day and night.
Now may my foes in vain both spurn and spite,
My foes, I mean, that London represent,
Guarded from heaven by angels excellent.

This blessing is not my sole benefit:
All England is, and so preserv'd hath been,
Not by man's strength, his policy and wit.
But by a power and Providence unseen;
Even for the love wherewith God loves our Queen,
In whom, for whom, by whom we do possess
More grace, more good, than London can express.

And that hath bred our plenty and our peace,
And they do breed the sports you come to see;
And joy it is that I enjoy increase.
My former fruits were lovely Ladies three;[230]
Now of three Lords to talk is London's glee:
Whose deeds I wish may to your liking frame,
For London bids you welcome to the same.

FINIS.

THE ACTORS' NAMES.

POLICY, |
POMP, | _The three Lords of London_.
PLEASURE, |

WIT, |
WEALTH, | _Their Pages_.
WILL, |

NEMO, _a grave old man_.

LOVE, |
LUCRE, | _Three Ladies of London_.
CONSCIENCE, |

HONEST INDUSTRY, |
PURE ZEAL, | _Three Sages_.
SINCERITY, |

PRIDE, |
AMBITION, | _Three Lords of Spain_.
TYRANNY, |

SHAME, |
TREACHERY, | _Their Pages_.
TERROR, |

DESIRE, |
DELIGHT, | _Three Lords of Lincoln_.
DEVOTION, |

SORROW, _a Jailor_.
SIMPLICITY, _a poor Freeman of London_.
PAINFUL PENURY, _his Wife_.
DILIGENCE, _a Post or an Officer_.

FEALTY, | _Two Heralds-at-Arms_.
SHEALTY, |

FRAUD, |
USURY, | _Four Gallants_.
DISSIMULATION, |
SIMONY, |

FALSEHOOD, | _Two that belong to_ FRAUD _and_ DISSIMULATION.

DOUBLE-DEALING. |

THE PLEASANT AND STATELY MORAL

OF

THE THREE LORDS OF LONDON.

Enter the three Lords and their Pages: first POLICY, _with his Page_ WIT _before him, bearing a shield; the impress a tortoise, the word_ Providens securus: _next_ POMP, _with his Page_ WEALTH _bearing his shield, the word_ Glory sans peere; _the impress a lily; last_, PLEASURE, _his Page_ WILL, _his impress a falcon; the word_ Pour Temps. POLICY _attired in black_, POMP _in rich robes, and_ PLEASURE _in colours_.

POLICY

Here I advance my shield and hang it up,
To challenge him who ever dare deny
That one of those three London ladies rare
Ought not of right be match'd with Policy,
A London lord, the which I represent.

POMP.

And Pomp provides his challenge in his word,
Glory sans peere, claiming the one of them,
Not by compulsion, but by common right.
Yet, maugre men, my shield is here advanc'd
For one matchless. A London lady best
Beseemeth Pomp, a London lord, to have.

PLEASURE.

Pleasure hath soar'd, as doth his impress show,
To look aloof on earthly ladies all.
And never could my curious eye discern
A dame of worth for London Pleasure's love,
But one, and she doth shine as silver dove.
Of self-bred soil, of London is her race;
For whom in challenge I my shield advance.

POLICY.

Thus each in honour of his mistress,
And in regard of his well-daring mind,
Hath here emprisd the challenge of his right.
But, lordships both and brethren bred and sworn,
A caution must be had in this conceit,
That all our thoughts aspire not to one heaven,
Nor all our ships do sail for one self haven;
I mean, that all our suits and services
We tend and tender to one only dame,
All choosing one, refusing th'other two.

POMP.

A great mislike amongst us that might breed.

PLEASURE.
I seek but one, and her unto myself.

POMP.
And one I wish sans partner of my love.

POLICY.
It stands with honour to be sole or none.

POMP.
Whom lovest thou, Pleasure?

PLEASURE.
Hark ye. [_Whisper in his ear_.

POMP.
Tush! ye lie.

WILL.
If my master were a soldier, that word would have the stab.

WIT.
Well, Will, still you'll be a saucy scab.

POMP.
Why, Pleasure, hath Pomp[231] chosen Lucre's love?

PLEASURE.
Why, Pomp, but [because] Pleasure honours Lucre most.

POLICY.
And Policy may Lady Lucre gain
Before you both, but let us not contend.
For Nemo doth the ladies prisoners keep,
Though they were slandered late with liberty,
And marriage to three far-born foreigners.
Then, first it fits we practise their release,
And see them, and by sight our liking please;[232]
For yet we love, as gossips tell their tales,
By hearsay: fame, not favour, hath us yet inflam'd.

POMP.
Lord Policy with reason hath discuss'd;
Pleasure, consent; and so our love shall hold.

PLEASURE.
Ye never found that London's Pleasure err'd
From reason, or from Pomp and Policy.

POLICY.
Come on, sir boy, attend you well your charge: [_To his Page_ WIT.
Wait in this place to watch and ward this shield.
If any man, in honour of his love,
So hardy he with stroke of sword to attain
This shield, and challenge him that hereby challengeth,
Say for thy lord, as should a trusty page,
That Policy doth dare him to perform
A hardier task than common challengers.

If he demand what Policy may be,
A lord of London, say--one of the three.

POMP.

And you, sir boy, for Pomp perform the like; [To_ WEALTH.
Bid him, that dare his impress batter once,
Be well advis'd he be no beggar's brat,
Nor base of courage, nor of bad conceit,
To match himself with such magnificence,
As fits Lord Pomp of London for his love:
Call, if he come that can encounter me,
[F]or move me not for each envious swad.

PLEASURE.

Will, be not wanton, nor of wayward mood: [To_ WILL.
Wait as do these; use faith and diligence,
And mark him well that dare disdain this shield,
Which London's lord, that Pleasure hath to name,
Hath here advanc'd in honour of his dame.
I bid thee mark him well, whate'er he be,
That London's Pleasure doth in malice scorn,
For he's a rascal or a stranger born.
Good boy, mark well his gesture and his look,
His eye, his gait, his weapon, and attire,
And dog him to his lodging or his den,
For I will make him scum and scorn of men.
No better boy than Will, when Will is pleas'd
Be pleas'd, my boy, and so be my good Will.

POLICY.

And so, good boys, farewell; look to your charge.
Watch well, good Wit, who scorneth London's Policy;
Be wary, Wit, for thou canst well discern.

POMP.

Wealth, watch for Pomp, for thou canst well defend.

PLEASURE.

Will can do something too, when pleaseth him.

[Exeunt the three Lords_.

WIT.

Will is a good boy, where better is none.

WILL.

Nay, Wit were the best boy, if Will were gone.

WEALTH.

Nay, Wealth is the best boy, sirs: let that alone.

WIT.

I-wis he say'th true, Will: this Wealth's a gay lad.

WILL.

I care not for him, curmudgeonly swad.

WEALTH.

Well, miss me awhile, and you'll go near to be sad.

WIT.

Will, ye are Will-fool, if of him ye be not glad.

WILL.

Nay, Wit, if thou want him, thou'lt go near to be mad.

WEALTH.

To keep us still quiet I would other talk we had.

WIT.

I hope we'll not fall out, being none but three.

WEALTH.

If Wealth were away, Wit and Will would agree.

WILL.

Nay, Wit and Will are at strife, when there's nobody but me.

WIT.

Let pass, and of our shields, sirs, let's make a little glee.

Will, what gives thy master here? a buzzard or a kite?

WILL.

Wit, you show yourself a gentleman by guessing so right.

A buzzard? thou buzzard! Wit, hast no more skill,

Than take a falcon for a buzzard?

WIT.

O be quiet, good Will:

It was but for sport, for I know the bird else.

WEALTH.

Thou mightest see it was no buzzard, man, by the bells.[233]

WIT.

What's the reason of this falcon? I pray thee, Will, show.

WILL.

Thou knowest that a falcon soars high, and stoops low:

So doth Pleasure.

WIT.

But what's the word?

WILL.

Pour temps, for time.

WIT.

A very pretty one: I would it were in rhyme.

WEALTH.

In rhyme, Wit! why so?

WIT.

Because it wants reason.

WILL.

Look for my fist, Wit, if ye rap out such treason.

WIT.
Treason to what, boy?

WILL.
To my master's bird.

WIT.
Now, Will, my thumb wags: it was but to his word.

WILL.
'Tis a pleasant gentleman, this young Master Wit.
Your master hath something too: I pray ye, what's it?

WIT.
Look, Will, and guess.

WILL.
 'Tis a toad in a shell.

WEALTH.
I had as lief ye had said a frog in a well.

WIT.
Is't not a great butterfly? Will, can'st thou tell?

WILL.
What is it in sadness?

WIT.
A tortoise, my boy; whose shell is so hard that a loaden cart may go over and not break it, and so she is safe within, and wheresoever she goes she bears it on her back, needing neither other succour or shelter, but her shell. The word underneath her is *_Providens securus_*, the provident is safe, like the tortoise armed with his own defence, and defended with his own armour; in shape somewhat round, signifying compass, wherein always the provident foresee to keep themselves within their own compass, my boy.

WILL.
Wittily spoken. Now, Wealth's master hath got a daffadowndilly.

WEALTH.
If Will had not been wilful, now, he might have said a lily, whose glory is without comparison and beauty matchless; for Solomon, the most sumptuous king that ever was, was never comparable in glory with the lily; neither is there any city matchable with the pomp of London. Mistake me not, good boys, that this pomp tends to pride; yet London hath enough, but my Lord Pomp doth rightly represent the stately magnificence and sumptuous estate, without pride or vainglory, to London accommodate; and therefore the word is well applied to the impress (*_Glory sans peere_*), for that the lily is neither proud of the beauty, nor vainglorious of the pomp; no more is London; but if it be joyful of anything, it is of the grace and plenty, both flowing from two such fountains as becomes not us to name. Now, therefore, my good boys, know that my master is rather Magnificence than Pomp in bad sense, and rather Pomp than Pride in the best sense.

WILL.

And my lord is not Pleasure sprung of Voluptuousness, but of such honourable and kind conceit as heaven and humanity well brooks and allows: Pleasure pleasing, not pernicious.

WIT.

Who would have thought that Will had been so philosophous? But what means the word *_Pour temps_* in the shield for time?

WILL.

Wit, shall I call the[e] fool? the best pleasure of all lasts but a time:
For of all pleasures most pleasing to sight,
Methinks there is none to the falcon's high flight;
Yet diseases end it: the breach of a wing,
Nay, the breach of a feather, spoils that sweet thing.

WIT.

And so my master hath the 'vantage, will ye or no.
Pomp and Pleasure may be ill.

WILL.

May not Policy be bad?

WEALTH.

Wit, well-overtaken by Will, that crafty lad.

WIT.

A crafty goose: the gander gives him health.
Bad Policy's seldom found in so Christian a commonwealth
As London is, I trust, where my master is a lord.

WILL.

And ours so too.

WEALTH.

Well, let us accord;
For Wit's a good thing, yet may be ill-applied.

WIT.

And so may Wealth, be it employed in pride,
And Will worst of all, when it disdains a guide.

WILL.

A Jackanapes hath wit.

WIT.

And so he hath Will.

WEALTH.

But he never hath Wealth: now ye are both still.

WIT.

Yes, he wears a chain.[234]

WILL.

Well-spoke, and like a bearward.

WEALTH.

If ye be *_non plus_*, let the matter fall.

WILL.

Wit, dost thou see? thus goes Wealth away with all.

WIT.

Let's reason no further, for we shall have glee.
Here is a challenger to our shields: step we aside.

Enter SIMPLICITY _in bare black, like a poor citizen_.

WILL.

He will eat them, I think, for he gapes very wide.

WEALTH.

Say nothing to him, and ye shall see the fool go by.

WILL.

Sirrah, gape not so wide for fear of a fly.

SIMPLICITY.

Fly, flam-flurt! Why, can a fly do hurt?

WIT.

Yea, have ye not heard that the fly hath her spleen,
And the ant her gall?

SIMPLICITY.

My uncle hath so, I ween; for it's an angry old fellow,
When his gall runs over: children, good day;
Whose pretty lads are you three?

WIT.

Three! are you sure?

SIMPLICITY.

I'll not swear, till I have told you: one, two, three.

WILL.

I beshrew thee.

SIMPLICITY.

Me, boy? Why, I am beshrewed already, for I am married.

WEALTH.

Then, thou hast a wife.

SIMPLICITY.

Yea, I would thou hadd'st her, if thou could'st stay her tongue.

WEALTH.

I thy wife, man! Why, I am too young.

SIMPLICITY.

And I am too old. But in good earnest, good boys--be not angry that I call you boys, for ye are no men yet: ye have no beards, and yet I have seen boys angry for being called boys. Forsooth they would be called youths: well, yet a boy is a boy, and a youth is a youth.--Well, if ye be not ashamed of the boy, good boys, whose boys are ye?

WIT.

No whit ashamed, sir, of that that we are, nor ashamed at all of those whom we serve? for boys we be, and as we be, we serve the three Lords of London: to wit, Policy, Pomp, and Pleasure.

SIMPLICITY.

A pretty-spoken child, and a pretty wit.

WILL.

Wit's his name, indeed: are ye one of his godfathers, ye hit it so right?

SIMPLICITY.

It is more than I know: then, is thy name Wit, boy? Now, of mine honesty, welcome, for I have wanted thee a great while.

WIT.

Welcome, sir! how so? why do ye entertain me so kindly? I cannot dwell with you, for I have a master already.

SIMPLICITY.

So have I, too, but she learns me little wit--my wife, I mean. Well, all this while I stand here, my wares are not abroad, and so I may lose both my customers and market.

WEALTH.

Wares, sir! have ye wares? what wares do ye sell?

SIMPLICITY.

Truly, child, I sell ballads. Soft; whose wares are these that are up already?[235] I paid rent for my standing, and other folks' wares shall be placed afore mine? this is wise, indeed.

WIT.

O, the fineness of the wares, man, deserves to have good place.

SIMPLICITY.

They are fine indeed. Who sells them, can ye tell? Is he free?

WIT.

Our masters be: we wait on this ware, and yet we are no chapmen.

SIMPLICITY.

Chapmen: no, that's true, for you are no men: neither chapmen nor chopmen, nor chipmen nor shipmen; but if ye be chappers, choppers, or chippers, ye are but chapboys; and, chapboys, ye are double.

WILL.

Double! how is it? Teach me that, and you will make me laugh a little.

WEALTH.

And me a little.

WIT.

And me a little.

SIMPLICITY.

Then your three little laughs will make one great laugh.

WIT.

True; for if three fools were one fool, that were a great fool.

[Points to_ SIMPLICITY.

But how are we double chapboys?

SIMPLICITY.

Because ye have two chaps, an upper chap and a nether chap.

WILL.

Ha, ha, ha!

WIT.

Ha, ha, ha!

WEALTH.

Ha, ha, ha!

SIMPLICITY.

You said you would laugh but a little, but you laugh a great deal:
why do ye laugh so much?

WILL.

Because your wit was so great in expounding your meaning.

SIMPLICITY.

Ye may see it is a good thing to have wit.

WIT.

I thank you, sir.

WEALTH.

And what say you to Wealth?

SIMPLICITY.

Wealth? Marry, Wealth is better.

WEALTH.

I thank you, sir.

WILL.

And how say you to Will?

SIMPLICITY.

Indeed, good Will is a great matter.

WILL.

Yea, between a maid and a bachelor.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, you are not in love, boy?

WILL.

Yes, but I am, and in charity too.

SIMPLICITY.

Charity! alas, poor child! thou in charity? ha, ha! now must I laugh.

WIT.

But you laugh a great while, and you laugh very loud.

SIMPLICITY.

Then, I owe you nothing for laughing, and you hear me the better.

WEALTH.

But now laugh not we.

SIMPLICITY.

No, you may be maddle-coddle.[236] Well, here's three passing fine lads, if a man were able to keep them all. Let me see: Wealth! O, that's a sweet lad: then Wit! O, that's a fine lad: Will: O, that's a pretty lad. Will, Wit, and Wealth, God lend ye health. I would I could guile their masters of two of them. If I had Fraud here, that served Lady Lucre, he would teach me: he would teach me to 'tice one of them from his master. Which of them, now, if a man should steal one? Will? nay, I care not for Will, outsep[237] he be good-will. Wit? a pretty child, but a man cannot live by wit. Wealth? Yea, marry, sir, I would I could win that Wealth, for then I need neither Will nor Wit; nor I need sell no ballads, but live like a mouse in a mill, and have another to grind my meal for me. I'll have a fling at one of them anon.

WEALTH.

Do you not forget yourself, gaffer?

WIT.

Have ye not wares to sell, gaffer?

WILL.

When do you show, gaffer?

SIMPLICITY.

Well-rememb'red, pretty lad: ye may see children can teach old folks. I am an unthrift, indeed. Well, my wares shall out now. But, sirs, how sell you your wares? How many of these for a groat?

WEALTH.

Our wares are not to be sold.

SIMPLICITY.

Not for silver nor gold? Why hang they, then, in the open market?

WILL.

To be seen, not bought.

SIMPLICITY.

Then they are like ripe plums upon a rich man's tree, that set men's teeth a-watering, when they are not to be bought. But what call you these things?

WIT.

Scutcheons.

SIMPLICITY.

Cushions? Alas! it were pity to sit on such fine cushions. But come, my boys, if you'll buy any of my wares, here's my stall, and I'll open and show straight.

WEALTH.

What dainty fine ballad have you now to be sold?

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, child, I have _Chipping-Norton, a mile from Chapel o' th' Heath --a lamentable ballad of burning the Pope's dog; the sweet ballad of the Lincolnshire bagpipes_[238]; and _Peggy and Willy:--But now he is dead and gone: Mine own sweet Willy is laid in his grave. La, la, la, lan ti dan derry, dan da dan, lan ti dan, dan tan derry, dan do_.

WIT.

It is a doleful discourse, and sung as dolefully.

SIMPLICITY.

Why, you cannot mend it, can ye?

WIT.

What will you lay on that? for I myself dare lay six groats to six of your bald ballads, that you yourself shall say I sing better than you.

SIMPLICITY.

What a brag-boy is this, to comparison with a man! But, boy, boy, I will not lay six ballads to six groats, but I will lay six ballads to six jerks at your buttocks, that you shall not sing so well as I.

WIT.

That I shall not? No! possible, you will not let me sing?

SIMPLICITY.

I not let you! Is that spoken like Wit? It is spoken like a woodcock: how can I stay thee, if thou wilt sing out thy throat?

WIT.

Well, then, to our bargain: six ballads to six stripes, and who shall keep stakes?

SIMPLICITY.

Neither of your companions; for that's, ask my fellow, if I be a thief.

WILL.

Will you keep the stakes yourself?

SIMPLICITY.

Best of all, for I mean plainly, and will pay, if I lose. Here's my six ballads: they be ready. Now, how shall I come by your six stripes, boy?

WIT.

Down with your breeches, I'll fetch a rod and deliver them straight.

SIMPLICITY.

Nay, then, I care not, if thou keep stakes.

WIT.

You speak too late, gaffer, having challenged preheminance.

SIMPLICITY.

Then, let's lay no wager, but sing for good fellowship.

WIT.

Agreed. Who shall begin?

SIMPLICITY.

O boy! who is the elder? Hast thou not heard, give flounders to thy elder?

WIT.

You mistake the fish: trust me, I am sure 'tis give plaice; but begin with a good grace.

[Here_ SIMP. _sings first and_ WIT _after, dialoguewise: both to music, if ye will_.

WIT.

Now, sirs, which sings best?

SIMPLICITY.

Tush, your copesmates shall not judge.

Friend, what say you? which of us sings best?

[To one of the auditory_.

WILL.

To say truth, there's but a bad choice. How will you sell the ballad you sang, for I'll not buy the voice?

SIMPLICITY.

Why wilt thou not buy my voice?

WILL.

Because it will cost me more money to buy sallet-oil to keep it from rusting, than it is worth. But, I pray ye, honest man, what's this?

SIMPLICITY.

Read, and thou shalt see.

WILL.

I cannot read.

SIMPLICITY.

Not read, and brought up in London! Went'st thou never to school?

WILL.

Yes, but I would not learn.

SIMPLICITY.

Thou wast the more fool. If thou cannot read, I'll tell thee. This is Tarlton's picture. Didst thou never know Tarlton?[239]

WILL.

No: what was that Tarlton? I never knew him.

SIMPLICITY.

What was he? A prentice in his youth of this honourable city, God be with him. When he was young, he was leaning to the trade that my wife useth now, and I have used, _vide lice shirt_,[240] water-bearing. I-wis, he hath toss'd a tankard in Corn-hill ere now: If thou knew'st him not, I will not call thee ingram;[241] but if thou knewest not him, thou knewest nobody. I warrant, here's two crack-ropes knew him.

WIT.

I dwelt with him.

SIMPLICITY.

Didst thou? now, give me thy hand: I love thee the better.

WILL.

And I, too, sometime.

SIMPLICITY.

You, child! did you dwell with him sometime?

Wit dwelt with him, indeed, as appeared by his rhyme,
And served him well; and Will was with him now and then. But, soft, thy

name is Wealth: I think in earnest he was little acquainted with thee.

O, it was a fine fellow, as e'er was born:

There will never come his like, while the earth can corn.

O passing fine Tarlton! I would thou hadst lived yet.

WEALTH.

He might have some, but thou showest small wit.

There is no such fineness in the picture that I see.[242]

SIMPLICITY.

Thou art no Cinque-Port man; thou art not wit-free.

The fineness was within, for without he was plain;

But it was the merriest fellow, and had such jests in store

That, if thou hadst seen him, thou would'st have laughed thy heart sore.

WEALTH.

Because of thy praise, what's the price of the picture?

SIMPLICITY.

I'll tell thee, my lad. Come hither: if thou wilt be ruled by me, thou

shalt pay nothing; I'll give it thee, if thou wilt dwell with me; and,

I promise thee, this counsel is for thy prefarmin'.[243] Hadst not thou

better serve a freeman of the City, and learn a trade to live another
day, than to be a serving-boy in thy youth, and to have no occupation
in thine age. I can make thee free, if thou wilt be my prentice.

WEALTH.

Why, Wealth is free everywhere: what need I serve you? My lord is a
freeman, if that may do me good.

SIMPLICITY.

I cry you mercy, master boy: then, your master is free of the Lord's
Company, and you serve him, that you may be a lord, when you come out
of your years.

WIT.

Wealth is a proud boy, gaffer: what say you to me?

SIMPLICITY.

Thy name is Wit: wilt thou dwell with me?

WIT.

If I like your name and science, perchance we'll agree.

SIMPLICITY.

Nay, my name and mine honesty is all one: it is well known. He's a very
fool that cannot beguile me, for my name is Simplicity.

WILL.

Goads,[244] gaffer! were you not a mealman once, and dwelt with Lady
Conscience?

SIMPLICITY.

Yes, for want of a better.

WILL.

What, a better man?

SIMPLICITY.

No; for want of a better mistress: she was as very a fool as I.
We dwelt so long together, that we went both on begging.

WIT.

Indeed, they that use a good conscience cannot suddenly be rich.
But I'll not dwell with ye: you are too simple a master for me.

WILL.

Nor I'll not dwell with you for all this world's treasure.

SIMPLICITY.

No? Why, whom serve you, Will?

WILL.

I serve my Lord Pleasure.

SIMPLICITY.

And whom serve you, Wit?

WIT.

I serve my Lord Policy.

SIMPLICITY.

And whom serve you, Wealth?

WEALTH.

I serve my Lord Pomp.

SIMPLICITY.

You should be served all with my Lord Birchley, if you were well served.
These lads are so lordly that louts care not for them; for Wealth serves
Pomp, Wit serves Policy, and Will serves Pleasure. Wealth, will you buy
this picture for your lord?

[_Shew Tarlton's picture_.

WEALTH.

No: it is too base a present for Pomp.

WIT.

And Policy seldom regards such a trifle.

WILL.

Come on, gaffer, come on; I must be your best chapman: I'll buy it for
Pleasure. Hold, there is a goat.

SIMPLICITY.

Gramercy, good Will, my wife shall love thee still;
And since I can neither get Wit nor Wealth,
Let my wife have her Will, and let me have my health.
God forgive me, I think I never name her, but it conjures her:
look where she comes!

Be mannerly, boys, that she knock ye not with her staff:
Keep your own counsel, and I'll make ye laugh.
What do ye lack? What lack ye?
Stand away, these boys, from my wares:
Get ye from my stall, or I'll wring you by the ears:
Let my customers see the wares. What lack ye?
What would ye have bought?

Enter PAINFUL-PENURY, _attired like a water-bearing woman,
with her tankard_.

PENURY.
You have customers enou', and if they were ought.
What do you with these boys here, to filch away your ware?
You show all your wit: you'll ne'er have more care.

WILL.
Content ye, good wife: we do not filch, but buy.

PENURY.
I meant not you, young master, God's blessing on your heart:
You have bought indeed, sir, I see, for your part.
Be these two young gentlemen of your company?
Buy, gentlemen, buy ballads to make your friends merry.

WIT.
To stand long with your burden, methinks, you should be weary.

PENURY.
True, gentlemen; but you may see, poor Painful-Penury
Is fain to carry three tankards for a penny.
But, husband, I say, come not home to dinner; it's Ember-day:
You must eat nothing till night, but fast and pray.
I shall lose my draught at Conduit, and therefore I'll away.
Young gentlemen, God be with ye.

SIMPLICITY.
Wife, must I not dine to-day?

PENURY.
No, sir, by my fay.
[_Exit_ PENURY.]

SIMPLICITY.
If I must not eat, I mean to drink the more:
What I spare in bread, in ale I'll set on the score.
How say ye, my lads, and do I not speak wisely?

WIT.
Methinks ye do; and it's pretty that Simplicity
Hath gotten to his wife plain Painful-Penury.

SIMPLICITY.
Yea, I thank God, though she be poor and scarce cleanly,
Yet she is homely, careful, and comely.

One call within.

Wit, Wealth, and Will, come to your lords quickly.

WILL.
Must the scutcheons hang still?

One within.

Yea, let them alone.

WIT.
Farewell, Master Simplicity.

[_Exeunt_.

SIMPLICITY.
Farewell, good master boys, e'en heartily, e'en heartily, heartily.
And, hear ye, Will, I thank you for your hansel[245] truly.
Pretty lads! hark ye, sirs, how? Will, Wit, Wealth!

[_Re-]enter_ WIT.

WIT.
What's the matter, you call us back so suddenly?

SIMPLICITY.
I forgot to ask you whether your three lords of London be courtiers
or citizens?

WIT.
Citizens born, and courtiers brought up. Is this all? Farewell.
[_Exit_.

SIMPLICITY.
Citizens born and courtiers brought up! I think so; for they that be
born in London are half courtiers, before they see the court: for
fineness and mannerliness, O, passing! My manners and misbehaviour is
mended half in half, since I gave over my mealman, and came to dwell in
London: ye may see time doth much. Time wears out iron horseshoes: time
tears out milstones: time seasons a pudding well; and time hath made me
a free man, as free to bear water and sell ballads as the best of our
copulation. I would have thought once my horse should have been free as
soon as myself, and sooner too, for he would have stumbled with a sack
of meal, and lien along in the channel with it, when he had done; and
that some calls freedom. But it's but a dirty freedom, but, ye may see,
bad horses were but jades in those days. But soft: here comes customers.
What lack ye? What is't ye lack? What lack ye? Come along, and buy
nothing. Fine ballads! new ballads! What lack ye?

Enter NEMO _and the three Lords_.

NEMO.
My lords, come on. What suits have you to me?

POLICY.
Renowned Nemo, the most only one
That draws no breath but of th'eternal air,
That knowest our suit before we bound to speak,
For thou art the very Oracle of thoughts;
Whose virtues do encompass thee about,
As th'air surrounds this massy globe of earth;

Who hast in power whatever pleaseth thee,
And canst bestow much more than we may crave,
To thee we seek; to thee on knees we sue,
That thou wilt deign from thraldom to release
Those lovely dames, that London ladies are.

NEMO.

What, those three caitiffs, long ago condemn'd?
Love, Lucre, Conscience? well-deserving death,
Being corrupt with all contagion:
The spotted ladies of that stately town?

POMP.

Love, Lucre, Conscience, we of thee desire,
Which in thyself hast all perfection,
Accomplished with all integrity,
And needest no help to do what pleaseth thee;
Which holdest fame and fortune both thy slaves,
And dost compel the Destinies draw the coach,
To thee we sue, sith power thou hast thereto,
To set those ladies at their liberty.

PLEASURE.

At liberty, thou spotless magistrate,
That of the cause dost carry all regard,
Careless of bribes, of birth and parentage,
Because thyself art only born to bliss.
Bless us so much, that lords of London are,
That those three ladies, born and bred with us,
May by our suits release of thraldom find.

NEMO.

Release, my lords! why seek ye their release,
That have perpetual prison for their doom?

POLICY.

But Nemo can from thence redeem them all.

NEMO.

Their deeds were cause, not Nemo, of their thrall.

POMP.

Yet Nemo was the judge that sentence gave.

NEMO.

But Nemo never spill'd, whom he could save.

PLEASURE.

Thou from perpetual prison may'st revoke.

POLICY.

Death hath no power 'gainst him to give a stroke.

POMP.

Thou only mild and courteous sir, vouchsafe
To grant our suit, and set those ladies free.

NEMO.

What is your purpose in this earnest suit?

PLEASURE.

To marry them, and make them honest wives.

NEMO.

But may it be, that men of your regard,
Lords of such fortune and so famous place,
Will link yourselves with ladies so forlorn,
And so distained with more than common crimes?

POLICY.

Marriage doth make amends for many a miss.

POMP.

And love doth cover heaps of cumbrous evils.

PLEASURE.

And doth forget the faults that were before.

NEMO.

Mean as you say: you need to say no more.

POLICY.

In token that we mean what we have said,
Lo, here our shields, the prizes of our love,
To challenge all, except thyself, that dare
Deny those ladies to be ours by right.

NEMO.

Woo them and win them, win them and wear them too:
I shall both comfort and discourage you, my lords.
The comfort's this: of all those former crimes,
Wherewith the world was wont these dames to charge,
I have them clear'd, and made them all as free
As they were born, no blemish left to see.
But the discourage, gentle lords, is this:
The time of their endurance hath been long,
Whereby their clothes of cost and curious stuff
Are worn to rags, and give them much disgrace.

POMP.

Alas. good ladies! was there none that sued
For their release, before we took't in hand?

NEMO.

Yes, divers for fair Lucre sought release.
And some for Love would fain have paid the fees;
But silly Conscience sat without regard
In sorrow's dungeon, sighing by herself.
Which when I saw that some did sue for Love,
And most for Lucre, none for Conscience,
A vow I made, which now I shall perform:
Till some should sue to have release for all,
Judg'd as they were, they should remain in thrall.
But you, that crave their freedoms all at once.
Shall have your suit, and see them here ere long.
A little while you must have patience,
And leave this place. Go in, my lords, before.

POMP.
Becometh us to wait on Nemo still.

NEMO.
Not so; but, lordings, one condition more.
You promise me, sith they are in my power,
I shall dispose them, when they are releas'd,
Upon you three, as I shall think it best.

POMP.
Do but command, and we shall all subscribe.

NEMO.
Then go your ways, for I have here to do.

[_Exeunt Three Lords_.

Enter SORROW.

Sorrow, draw near; to-morrow bring thou forth
Love, Lucre, Conscience, whom thou hast in thrall,
Upon these stones to sit and take the air,
But set no watch or spial[246] what they do.

[_Exeunt Ambo_.

Enter FRAUD, USURY, DISSIMULATION, SIMONY, and SIMPLICITY.

FRAUD.
How happy may we call this merry day, my mates, wherein we meet, that
once were desperate, I think, ever to have seen one another, when Nemo,
that upright judge, had, by imprisoning our mistresses, banished us
(by setting such diligent watch for us) out of London, and almost out
of the world. But live we yet and are we met, and near our old seat?
Usury, is it thou? Let me see, or hath some other stolen thy face?
Speakest thou, man?

USURY.
No, Fraud: though many have counterfeited both thee and me,
We are ourselves yet, and no changelings, I see
And why shouldst thou ask me, man, if I live?
The silly ass cannot feed on harder forage than
Usury: she upon thistles, and I upon a brown crust of a month old.

SIMPLICITY.
So that Usury and an ass are two of the profitablest beasts that a man
can keep; yet th'one hath sharper teeth than th'other.

FRAUD.
But what means Dissimulation? He droops, methinks. What cheer, man?
Why, cousin, frolic a fit. Art thou not glad of this meeting? What's
the cause of thy melancholy?

DISSIMULATION.
Not melancholic, but musing how it comes to pass that we are thus
fortunate to meet, as we do?

SIMONY.
I'll tell thee why we met: because we are no mountains.[247]

SIMPLICITY.

But ye are as ill, for ye are monsters.

SIMONY.

And men may meet, though mountains cannot.

FRAUD.

In token that this meeting is joyous to us all, let us embrace altogether with heart's joy and affection.

SIMPLICITY.

I see many of these old proverbs prove true; 'tis merry when knaves meet. [Aside_.

FRAUD.

How, sir! what's that?

SIMONY.

If a man had a casting-net, he might catch all you.

FRAUD.

Art thou not Simplicity?

SIMPLICITY.

Goodman Simplicity, for I am married, and it like your mastership. And you are Master Fraud, too; a pox on your worship. I see a fox and a false knave have all one luck, the better for banning; and many of you crafty knaves live merrilier than we honest men.

FRAUD.

Sirrah, bridle your tongue, if you'll be welcome to our company. No girds nor old grudges, but congratulate this meeting. And, sirs, if you say it, let's tell how we have lived since our parting.

SIMPLICITY.

O, it is great pity.

USURY.

What, to tell how we have lived?

SIMPLICITY.

No; that ye do live.

FRAUD.

Yet again, sirrah? Usury, as for thee, it were folly to ask, for thou livest but too well; but Dissimulation and Simony, how have you two lived? Discourse, I pray you heartily.

SIMPLICITY.

Faith, even like two mice in an ambery,[248] that eat up all the meat, and when they have done gnaw holes in the cupboard.

DISSIMULATION.

Fraud, after my 'scaping away at the Sessions, where I shifted, as thou knowest, in three sundry shapes: one of a friar, and they can dissemble; another like a woman, and they do little else; the third as a saint and a devil--and so is a woman--I was banished out of London by Nemo. To the country went I amongst my old friends, and never better loved than among

the russet-coats. Once in a month I stole in o' th' market-day to Leadenhall and about, and sometime to Westminster Hall. Now, hearing some speech that the ladies should be sued for, I am come in hope of my old entertainment, supposing myself not known of many, and hoping the three lords will prevail in their suit, and I to serve one of them.

SIMPLICITY.

He shall do well that gives thee a coat, but he should do better that could take off thy skin. [Aside.]

SIMONY.

And I have been a traveller abroad in other realms, for here I am so cried out against by preachers (and yet some ministers, that be none, could be content to use me) that I was glad to be gone: now, in some other lands, and not very far off, I am secretly fostered--saving in Scotland and the Low-Countries, [where] they are reformed, they cannot abide me. Well, now and then hither I came stealing over sea, and hearing as you hear, intend as you do.

FRAUD.

And for mine own part, among artificers,
And amongst a few bad-conscienced lawyers,
I have found such entertainment as doth pass,
Yet would I with Lucre fain be as I was.

SIMPLICITY.

Fraud is as ill as a cut-purse, by the mass. [Aside.]

USURY.

And for Usury, the longer I live the greater love I find;
Yet would I be with Lucre again, to please my mind.

FRAUD.

Here's a good fellow, too, one of our acquaintance.
How hast thou lived, Simplicity?

SIMPLICITY.

More honestly than all the rest of thy company; for when I might beg no longer, as begging was but bad, for you cosen'd me once of an alms, I fell to tankard-bearing, and so got a wife of the same science, Painful-Penury: then got I my freedom, and feeling my shoulder grow weary of the tankard, set up an easier trade--to sell ballads.

FRAUD.

Hadst thou a stock to set up withal?

SIMPLICITY.

Wise enough to tell you, I!--and yonder's my stall: but beware I lose nothing, for if I do, I'll lay it straight to some of you; for I saw none so like thieves, I promise you, since I set up.

FRAUD.

You are a wise man, when your nose is in the cup. But soft, who comes here? step we close aside, for these be the three ladies, for my life, brought out of prison by their keeper. Let us be whist, and we shall hear and see all. Sirrah, you must say nothing.

_Enter SORROW and the three Ladies: he sets them
on three stones on the stage._

SIMPLICITY.

Not till ye speak, for I am afraid of him that's with the women.

CONSCIENCE.

O Sorrow, when, when, Sorrow, wilt thou cease
To blow the spark that burns my troubled soul,
To feed the worm that stings my fainting breast,
And sharp the steel that gores my bleeding heart?
My thoughts are thorns, my tears hot drops of lead:
I plain, I pine, I die, yet never dead.
If world would end, my woe should but begin:
Lo, this the case of Conscience for her sin;
And sin the food, wherewith my worm was fed,
That stings me now to death, yet never dead.

LOVE.

Yet never dead, and yet Love doth not live,
Love, that to loss in life her folly led[249],
Folly the food whereon her frailty fed,
Frailty the milk that Nature's breast did give:
Life, loss, and folly: frailty, food, and kind,
Worm, sting, thorns, fire, and torment to the mind;
Life but a breath, and folly but a flower,
Frailty, clay, dust, the food that fancy scorns;
Love a sweet bait to cover losses sour,
Flesh breeds the fire that kindles lustful thorns;
Lust, fire, bait, scorn, dust, flower and feeble breath,
Die, quench, deceive, flie, fade, and yield to death.
To death? O good! if death might finish all:
We die each day, and yet for death we call.

LUCRE.

For death we call, yet death is still in sight.
Lucre doth scald in drops of melting gold
Accusing rust calls on eternal night[250],
Where flames consume, and yet we freeze with cold.
Sorrow adds sulphur unto fury's heat,
And chops them ice whose chattering teeth do beat;
But sulphur, snow, flame, frost, nor hideous crying
Can cause them die that ever are in dying,
Nor make the pain diminish or increase:
Sorrow is slack, and yet will never cease.

SORROW.

When Sorrow ceaseth, Shame shall then begin
With those that wallow senseless in their sin.
But, ladies, I have drawn you from my den
To open air, to mitigate some moan.
Conscience, sit down upon that sweating stone,
And let that flint, Love, serve thee for a seat;
And, Lady Lucre, on that stone rest you.
And, ladies, thus I leave you here alone.
Mourn ye, but moan not I shall absent be;
But good it were sometime to think on me.

[_Exit_.]

CONSCIENCE.

Comfort it is to think on sorrow past.

LOVE.

Sorrow remains, where joy is but a blast.

LUCRE.

A blast of wind is world's felicity.

CONSCIENCE.

A blasting wind, and full of misery.

LOVE.

O Conscience, thou hast more tormented me.

LUCRE.

Me hath thy worm, O Conscience, stung too deep.

CONSCIENCE.

But more myself my thoughts tormented have,
Than both of you, in Sorrow's sullen cave;
From whence drawn forth, I find but little rest:
A seat uneasy, wet, and scalding hot,
On this hard stone hath Sorrow me assign'd.

LOVE.

And on my seat myself I frozen find:
No flint more hard, no ice more cold than this.

LUCRE.

I think my seat some mineral stone to be;
I cold from it, it draw[eth] heat from me.
Ladies, consent, and we our seats will view.

CONSCIENCE.

Dare we for shame our stained faces shew?

LOVE.

My double face is single grown again.

LUCRE.

My spots are gone: my skin is smooth and plain.

CONSCIENCE.

Doff we our veils, and greet this gladsome light;
The chaser of gloom, Sorrow's heavy night[251].

LOVE.

Hail, cheerful air, and clearest crystal sky.

LUCRE.

Hail, shining sun and fairest firmament,
Comfort to those that time in woe have spent.

CONSCIENCE.

Upon my weeping stone is set REMORSE in brazen letters.

LOVE.

And on this flint in lead is CHARITY.

LUCRE.

In golden letters on my stone is CARE.

CONSCIENCE.

Then Lucre sits upon the stone of Care.

LUCRE.

And Conscience on the marble of Remorse.

LOVE.

Love on the flint of frozen Charity.

Ladies, alas, what tattered souls are we.

CONSCIENCE.

Sorrow our hearts, and time our clothes hath torn.

LUCRE.

Then sit we down like silly souls forlorn,
And hide our faces that we be not known;
For Sorrow's plagues tormenteth[252] me no more,
Than will their sight, that knew me heretofore.

LOVE.

Then will their sight, that knew us heretofore,
Draw ruth and help from them for our relief.

CONSCIENCE.

For our relief? for Conscience and for Love
No help, small ruth that our distress may move.

LOVE.

O Conscience, thou wouldst lead me to despair,
But that I see the way to hope is fair,
And hope to heaven directs a ready way,
And heaven to help is prest to them that pray.

LUCRE.

That pray with faith, and with unfeign'd remorse,
For true belief and tears make prayer of force.

CONSCIENCE.

Then veil ourselves, and silent let us stay,
Till heaven shall please to send some friends this way.

[_Sit all down_.

[_Enter_ FRAUD, DISSIMULATION, &c.]

FRAUD.

Ladies, unmask[253]! blush not for base attire:
Here are none but friends and servants all. Dear Lady Lucre,
Dearer unto us than daily breath we draw from sweetest air,
Dearer than life, dearer than heaven itself,
Deign to discover those alluring lamps,
Those lovely eyes more clear than Venus' star,
Whose bright aspects world's wonder do produce.
Unveil, I say, that beauty more divine
Than Nature (save in thee) did ever paint,
That we, sworn slaves unto our mistress, may
Once more behold those stately lovely looks,

And do those duties which us well beseems,
Such duties as we all desire to do.

CONSCIENCE.

I know that tongue. Lucre, beware of Fraud.

LUCRE.

Of Fraud! Indeed by speech it should be he.
Fraud, what seekest thou?

FRAUD.

Lucre, to honour thee with wit, with worth, with all I have;
To be thy servant, as I was before,
To get thee clothes, and what thou wantest else.

LUCRE.

No, Fraud, farewell: I must be won no more
To keep such servants as I kept before.

SIMONY.

Sweet Lady Lucre, me thou mayest accept.

LUCRE.

How art thou called?

SIMONY.

Simony.

LUCRE.

Aye? No, sir; Conscience saith.

CONSCIENCE.

No; Lucre now beware, false not thy faith,
For Simony's subject to perpetual curse.

DISSIMULATION.

As you two have sped, I would desire to speed no worse.

FRAUD.

Make you a suit: you may chance to speed better.

DISSIMULATION.

Not I, for of all my tongue is best known;
But if I speak, it shall be to her that was once mine own.
Good Lady Love, thou little knowest the grief
That I, thy friend, sustain for thy distress,
And less believest what care I have of thee.
Look up, good Love, and to supply thy wants
Ask what thou wilt, and thou shalt have of me,
Of me, that joy more in thy liberty
Than in this life or [254] light that comforts me.

LOVE.

O gall in honey, serpent in the grass!
O bifold fountain of two bitter streams,
Dissimulation fed with viper's flesh,
Whose words are oil, whose deeds, the darts of death!
Thy tongue I know, that tongue that me beguil'd,
Thyself a devil mad'st me a monster vild.

From the[e] well known well may I bless myself:
Dear-bought repentance bids me shun thy snare.

CONSCIENCE.

O happy Love, if now thou can beware.

SIMPLICITY.

Marry, but hear ye, motley-beard. I think this blindfold buzzardly hedge-wench spoke to ye; she knows ye, though she see thee not. Hark ye, you women, if you'll go to the alehouse, I'll bestow two pots on ye, and we'll get a pair of cards^[255] and some company, and win twenty pots more; for you play the best at a game, call'd smelling of the four knaves, that ever I saw.

USURY.

Four! soft, yet they have not smell'd thee.

SIMPLICITY.

No? I am one more than is in the deck, but you'll be smell'd as soon as ye begin to speak. I'll see what they'll say to me. Hear ye, you women, wives, widows, maids, men's daughters, what shall I call ye? These four fellows (hark ye, shall I call ye crafty knaves?) make me believe that you are the three that were the three fair ladies of London.

CONSCIENCE.

Gentle Simplicity, we are unhappy they.

SIMPLICITY.

Now, ye bad fellows, which of ye had such a word as gentle Sim?

USURY.

Bad fellows, ye rascal! If e'er you bring me pawn, I'll pinch ye for that word.

SIMPLICITY.

I cry you mercy, Master Inquiry--Master Usury: I meant not you.

FRAUD.

If you mean us, we may be even with ye too.

SIMPLICITY.

Tut! I knew ye an ostler, and a thief beside: You have rubb'd my horse-heels ere now for all your pride. But, ladies, if ye be the three ladies, which of ye dwelt in Kent Street? One of you did, but I know not which is she, ye look all so like broom-wenches. I was once her servant: I'll ne'er be ashamed of her, though I be rich and she be poor; yet if she that hath been my dame, or he that hath been my master, come in place, I'll speak to them, sure: I'll do my duty. Which is Lady Conscience?

CONSCIENCE.

Even I am she, Simplicity.

SIMPLICITY.

I am glad ye are out of prison. I thought ye had forgot me: I went a-begging for^[256] you, till the beadles snapp'd me up: now I am free, and keep a stall of ballads. I may buy and sell. I would you had as good a gown now, as I carried once of yours to pawn to Usury here.

CONSCIENCE.

Gramercy, good Simplicity. Wilt thou be with me now?

SIMPLICITY.

No, I thank you heartily; I'll beg no more. I cannot with ye, though I would, for I am married to Painful-Penury. Look now, my proud stately masters, I may if I will; and you would, if ye might.

FRAUD.

No, not dwell with such a beggar as Conscience.

SIMPLICITY.

No, Fraud ne'er lov'd Conscience, since he was an ostler.

USURY.

Who cares for Conscience but dies a beggar?

SIMPLICITY.

That will not Usury do: he will first take threescore pound in the hundred.

DISSIMULATION.

Love, look on me, and I will give thee clothes.

LOVE.

I will no more by thee be so disguised.

SIMPLICITY.

Ye do the wiser, for his face looks like a cloak-back.

DISSIMULATION.

In thy affections I had once a place.

LOVE.

Those fond affections wrought me foul disgrace.

DISSIMULATION.

I'll make amends, if ought amiss were done.

LOVE.

Who once are burn'd, the fire will ever shun.

DISSIMULATION.

And yet once burn'd to warm again may prove.

LOVE.

Not at thy fire; I will be perfect Love.

SIMPLICITY.

I promise you, the wenches have learn'd to answer wittily. Here's many fair proffers to Lucre and Love, But who clothes poor Conscience? she may sit long enough.

USURY.

I will clothe her straight.

[USURY _takes_ FRAUD'S _cloak, and casts it on_ CONSCIENCE.

SIMPLICITY.

Will you, Master Usury? that's honestly spoke.
Ha! that's no gramercy to clothe her with another man's cloak;
But I see you have a craft in the doing, Master Usury:
Usury covers Conscience with Fraud's cloak very cunningly.

CONSCIENCE.

Alas! who loads my shoulders with this heavy weed?
Fie! how it stinks: this is perfum'd indeed.

FRAUD.

Marry, gup, Goody Conscience! indeed I do you wrong,
But I'll quickly right it; my cloak shall not cumber you long.

USURY.

All this while Lucre knows not I am here,
But now will I to her; mark how I speed!
Lady, the fairest that Nature ever form'd,
Loadstone of love, that draws affection's darts,
The only object of all humane eyes,
And sole desired dainty of the world,
Thy vassal here, a virtue in thy need,
Whom thou by licence of the law may'st use,
Tenders himself and all his services
To do thy will in duty as 'tofore,
Glad of thy freedom as his proper life.

SIMPLICITY.

Lady Lucre, you love an apple: take heed the caterpillar consume
not your fruit.

LUCRE.

Who is it that maketh this latest suit?

SIMPLICITY.

'Tis Usury. [_Aloud in her ear_.

LUCRE.

Great is the service he hath done for me;
But, Usury, now I may not deal with thee.

USURY.

The law allows me, madam, in some sort.

CONSCIENCE.

But God and I would have thy bounds cut short.

USURY.

For you I reckon not; but if God me hate,
Why doth the law allow me in some rate?

CONSCIENCE.

Usury slanders both law and state.
The law allows not, though it tolerate,
And thou art sure be shut out at heaven-gate.

USURY.

You were ever nice: no matter what you prate.

SIMPLICITY.

Then it will be with him, as it is with a great man's house in dinner-time! he that knocks, when the door is shut, comes too late.

LUCRE.

Well, Usury, Fraud, and Simony,
Dissimulation, hearken unto me.
My tongue (although in memory it be green)
Cannot declare what horrors I have seen;
Ne can it enter into mortal ears
Unmortified: the furies' fires and fears,
The shrieks, the groans, the tortures, and the pains,
That any soul for each of you sustains--
No pen can write, how Conscience hath me scourg'd,
When with your faults my soul she ever urg'd:
Arithmetic doth fail to number all
The plagues of Sorrow in the den of thrall.
Then tempt me not, nor trouble me no more;
I must not use you as I did before.
If you be found within fair London's gate,
You must to prison, whence we came of late.
Conscience will accuse ye, if ye be in sight.

FRAUD.

That scurvy Conscience works us all the spite.

Enter NEMO.

USURY.

Well, Lucre, yet in thee we have delight.

DISSIMULATION.

Yonder come some: we must take our flight.

[_Exeunt_ OMNES.

SIMPLICITY.

Birds of a feather will fly together; but when they be taken,
then are they baken.

Yonder comes a customer: I'll to my stall.

Love, Lucre, and Conscience, blindman-buff to you all.

NEMO.

Conscience, Love, Lucre, ladies all, what cheer?

How do ye like the seats you sit upon?

CONSCIENCE.

O pure unspotted Nemo, sole paragon
Of Love, of Conscience and perfection;
The marble of remorse I sit upon
Sweats scalding drops, like bitter brinish tears.

NEMO.

So should remorse, when Conscience feels her guilt.

But, gentle Love, how feelest thou thy flint?

LOVE.

O, sharp and cold: I freeze unto my seat:

The flint holds fire, and yet I feel no heat.

But am benumb'd and frozen every joint.

NEMO.

O Love, so cold is charity in these times.
Lucre, how sit you?

LUCRE.

Upon a heavy stone, not half so cold, not half so hot as theirs,
But of some secret power, for I do find and sensibly feel,
That I from it exhale an earthly cold,
And it from me doth draw a kindly heat.

NEMO.

Such force hath care of Lucre in itself
To cool the heart and draw the vital spirits;
And such the true condition of you three;
Remorse of Conscience, Charity of Love,
And Care of Lucre; such your uses be.
But, ladies, now your sorrow lay aside:
Frolic, fair dames; an unexpected good
Is imminent through me unto you all.
Three lords there be, your native countrymen,
In London bred, as you yourselves have been,
Which covet you for honourable wives,
And presently will come to visit you.
Be not abashed at your base attire,
I shall provide you friends to deck you all.
If I command, stand up, else sit you still.
Lo, where they come.

Enter the three Lords.

My lords, the dames be here.

POLICY.

Why are they wimpled?^[257] Shall they not unmask them?

NEMO.

It is for your sake; for Policy they do it.

POMP.

Much may their fortune and their feature be,
But what it is we cannot thus discern.

NEMO.

You shall in time. Lord Pomp; be yet content.

PLEASURE.

Their fame is more than cause or reason would.
May one of these be Pleasure's paragon?

NEMO.

Pleasure, be pleas'd and use no prejudice.
Mesdames, stand up. Mislike not their attire;
That shall be mended as yourselves desire.

POLICY.

Their port and their proportion well contents.

POMP.
Right stately dames, if they were well attir'd.

PLEASURE.
May we not see their beauty, what it is?

NEMO.
Yes, lordings, yes. Lucre, lift up thy veil.

POLICY.
Of beauty excellent!

POMP.
Of rare perfection!

PLEASURE.
A dainty face!

NEMO.
Unmask, Love.

POLICY.
Sweet Love indeed!

POMP.
A lovely face!

PLEASURE.
A gallant grace!

NEMO.
Conscience, uncover.

POLICY.
Beauty divine!

POMP.
A face angelical!

PLEASURE.
Sweet creature of the world!

NEMO.
Enough for once; ladies, sit down again.
As cunning chapmen do by curious wares,
 [To the audience_.
Which seldom shown do most inflame the mind,
So must I deal, being dainty of these dames,
Who seldom seen shall best allure these lords.
Awhile, my lords, I leave you with these three:
Converse, confer on good conditions.
I will right soon return with such good friends
As it concerns to clothe these dainty ones.
If any in my absence visit them,
Know their intent, and use your skill therein.
 [Exit_.

POLICY.
Ladies, to call to mind your former lives,

Were to recount your sorrows on a row.
Omitting, then, what you have been or be,
What you may be I'll speak, so it please you;
Wives to us three, ladies to London lords,
Pomp, Pleasure, Policy, men of such regard,
As shall you guard from evil, once matched with us:
And Policy presents this good to you.

POMP.

With London's Pomp may one of you be join'd,
Possessing more than Fortune can afford:
Fortune's a fool, but heavenly providence
Guards London's Pomp and her that shall be his.

PLEASURE.

And London's Pleasure, peerless in delights,
Will deign to make one of these dames his own,
Who may with him in more contentment live,
Than ever did the Queen of Oethiop.

CONSCIENCE.

Though silence, lords, our modesty enforce,
Nemo can tell the secrets of our thoughts:
Nemo, that womens' minds can constant keep,
He shall for us you answer, good my lords.
I speak for all, though ill-beseeming me.

Enter FALSEHOOD _and_ DOUBLE-DEALING.

POLICY.

You speak but well. My lords, step we aside
To note these fellows, what they do intend.

Enter NEMO.

POMP.

Nemo can tell, for he doth follow them.

FALSEHOOD.

Ladies, to you--to some of you--we come,
Sent from such friends as much affect your good,
With garments and with compliments of cost,
Accordant well to dames of such degree--
I come to Lucre.

DOUBLE-DEALING.

I to Love am sent,
With no less cost than could be got for coin,
Which with my message I deliver would,
Could I discern which of these dames were she.

LOVE.

Friend, I am Love: what bringest thou there to me?

CONSCIENCE.

Beware, good Love, from whom, and what, thou takest.

NEMO.

No whispering, friend, but show it openly:

The matter good, you need not be ashamed.
From whom comest thou?

DOUBLE-DEALING.
That I conceal from any but from Love.

NEMO.
From whom come you, sir?

FALSEHOOD.
That shall Lucre know, and none but she.

NEMO.
Then speak aloud, for whispering here is barr'd.

FALSEHOOD.
Then neither will I do, nor speak at all.

NEMO.
Then I will speak, and tell what you are both.
Thyself art Falsehood, and are sent from Fraud,
To compass Lucre with a cloak of craft,
With lawn of lies, and cauls of golden guile.

POLICY.
Pack you, my friend; for if you stay a while,
You shall return no more to him that sent you.

NEMO.
Thou from Dissimulation art sent,
And bring'st a gown of glosing, lin'd with lust,
A vardingale^[258] of vain boast and fan of flattery,
A ruff of riot and a cap of pride;
And Double-dealing is thy name and office both.

DOUBLE-DEALING:
Falsehood, let's go: we are deciphered.

FALSEHOOD.
Lucre, thou lovest here a princely gift.

[_Exeunt ambo_.

NEMO.
Lucre consumes, being won by Fraud or shift.
Thus, lords, you see how these are qualified,
And how these ladies shun that sharp rebuke,
Which some deserve by taking of such toys,
As women weak are tempted soon with gifts.
But here they come, that must these ladies deck.
Lucre, arise; come from the stone of Care.

[_Enter_ HONEST INDUSTRY, PURE ZEAL, _and_ SINCERITY.

HONEST INDUSTRY.
Fair Lucre, lo, what Honest Industry
To thee hath brought, to deck thy dainty self.
Lucre, by Honest Industry achiev'd,
Shall prosper, nourish, and continue long.

Come to thy chamber, to attire thee there.

NEMO.

Thou mayest depart with Honest Industry.

[_Exit_ LUCRE _with_ HONEST INDUSTRY.]

PURE ZEAL.

And, Love, arise from Charity's cold flint:
Pure Zeal hath purchas'd robes to cover Love.
Whiles Love is single, Zeal shall her attire,
With kind affection mortifying lust.
Come, Love, with me these garments to put on.

NEMO.

Love, follow Zeal, and take his ornaments.

[_Exit_ LOVE _with_ PURE ZEAL.]

SINCERITY.

Rise, Conscience, from that marble of Remorse,
That weeping stone that scalds thy parched skin:
Sincerity such robes for thee hath brought,
As best beseems good Conscience to adorn.
Come, follow, that thou may'st go put them on;
For Conscience, clothed by Sincerity,
Is armed well against the enemy.

NEMO.

Follow him, Conscience: fear not; thou art right.

[_Exit_ CONSCIENCE _with_ SINCERITY.]

POLICY.

Most reverend Nemo, thanks for this good sight.
Lucre is clothed by Honest Industry.

POMP.

Love by Pure Zeal.

PLEASURE.

And Conscience by Sincerity.

NEMO.

Lordings, thus have you seen them at the first,
And thus you see them, trust me, at the worst.
Depart we now: come hence a day or two,
And see them deck'd as dainty ladies should,
And make such choice as may content you all.

POLICY.

Thanks, righteous Nemo. We, the London lords,
Only to thee ourselves acknowledge bound.

[_Exeunt omnes_]

[_Enter_ PAINFUL PENURY _and_ SIMPLICITY.]

PENURY.

Come on, gentle husband; let us lay our heads together, our purses together, and our reckonings together, to see whether we win or lose, thrive or not, go forward or backward. Do you keep a book or a score?

SIMPLICITY.

A score, wife? you mean for the alehouse, do you not?
I would have her examine me thereof no further, for I am in too far there, more than I would she should know. [_Aside_].

PENURY.

I mean no alehouse-score, but a note of your wares. Let me see: first you began to set up with a royal. How much money have ye? What ware, and what gain?

SIMPLICITY.

I have five shillings in money, two shillings in wares, or thereabout, and I owe two shillings and eightpence upon the score; how much is that? Five shillings, two shillings, and two shillings and eightpence?

PENURY.

That is nine shillings and eightpence: so we are worse by a groat than when we began. Well, once again I'll set ye up: here is four groats I have got by bearing water this week: make up your stock, and run no more behind. Who comes here?

Enter FRAUD, _like [a foreign] artificer_.

SIMPLICITY.

What lack ye? What do ye lack?

FRAUD.

Me lack-a de monish pour de feene--very feene--French knack, de feene gold button, de brave bugla lace, a de feene gold ring-a. You be free man, me un' foreigner: you buy a me ware, you gain teene pounnd by lay out teene shellengs.

SIMPLICITY.

Wife, what hard luck have we, that cannot make ten shillings now to gain ten pound. Why, ten pound would set us up for ever.

PENURY.

Husband, see the ware; and if ten shilling will buy it, it shall go hard but we will make that money. Friend, show my husband your wares.

FRAUD.

Look you dere, mastra, de feene buttoon de la gold, de ring-a de gold, de bugla shean: two shelleng un doozen de buttoon, un shelleng-a un ring. 'Tis worth ten shelleng, but, mastra and mastressa, me muss a make money to go over in my own cuntry, but me lose teen pound pour hast to go next tide, or to-morrow.

PENURY.

Here is five shillings; buy them of this stranger.

SIMPLICITY.

Friend, you have not stolen them, but you make them? Well, I'll buy them in the open market, and then I care not; here is ten shillings; deliver me the wares.

FRAUD.

Dere, mastra! O, pover necessity mak a me sell pour grand, grand loss: you shall gain ten pound at least. Go'boy[259].

SIMPLICITY.

What's your name?

FRAUD.

Merchant, I think I am even with ye now for calling me ostler. You'll thrive well with such bargains, if ye buy, ye know not what. Fraud hath fitted you with worse than your ballads. [_Aside_.

PENURY.

You'll warrant them gold, sirrah?

FRAUD.

Oui; so good gol' as you pay for. [_Aside_.]
Adieu, mounsier.
[_Exit_.

SIMPLICITY.

Adieu, mounsier. Adieu, fool: sell such gold buttons and rings for so little money. Good Lord! what pennyworths these strangers can afford. Now, wife, let me see: ten pound! when we have ten pound, we'll have a large shop, and sell all manner of wares, and buy more of these, and get ten pound more, and then ten pound, and ten pound, and twenty pound. Then thou shalt have a taffata hat and a guarded gown, and I a gown and a new cap, and a silk doublet, and a fair hose[260].

PENURY.

I thank ye, husband. Well, till then look well to your wares, and I'll ply my waterbearing, and save and get, and get and save, till we be rich. But bring these wares home every night with ye.

SIMPLICITY.

Tush! I shall sell them afore night for ten pounds. Gow, wife, gow; I may tell you[261], I am glad this French fellow came with these wares: we had fall'n to examining the ale-score else, and then we had fall'n out, and the ale-wife and my wife had scolded. [_Aside_.] Well, a man may see, he that's ordained to be rich shall be rich: gow, woman.

[_Exeunt_.

[_Enter_ NEMO _and the three_ LORDS _as though they had been chiding_.

NEMO.

From whence, good lords, grew this hot argument?

POLICY.

Thou knowest already; yet, if thou wilt hear,
For this we strive: fond Pleasure makes account,
Summing his bills without an auditor[262],
That Lady Lucre ought of right be his.

PLEASURE.

So I affirm, and so I will maintain,
That Pleasure ought by right Dame Lucre have,
To bear the charge of sports and of delights.

POMP.

Nay, to support the haughty magnificence
And lordly Pomp of London's excellence
Befits it rather Lucre join with me,
By whom her honour shall be more advanced.

POLICY.

More fit for Pomp than Pleasure; but most fit
That Policy with Lucre should be matched,
As guerdon of my studies and my cares,
And high employments in the commonwealth.

PLEASURE.

What pleasure can be fostered without cost?

POMP.

What pomp or port without respect of gain?

POLICY.

What policy without preferment lives?

PLEASURE.

Pleasure must have Lucre.

POMP.

Pomp hath need of Lucre.

POLICY.

Policy merits Lucre.

PLEASURE.

Pleasure dies without Lucre.

POMP.

Pomp decays without Lucre.

POLICY.

Policy droops without Lucre.

NEMO.

Thus, lords, you show your imperfections,
Subject to passions, straining honour's bounds.
Be well-advis'd: you promised to be rul'd,
And have those dames by me disposed to you,
But since I see that human humours oft
Makes men forgetful of their greater good,
Be here a while: Dame Lucre shall be brought
By me to choose which lord she liketh best,
So you allow her choice with patience.

PLEASURE.

Go: we abide thy doom till thy return. [_Exit_.

POMP.

If Lucre be not mad, she will be mine.

POLICY.

If she regard her good, she will be mine.

PLEASURE.

If she love happy life, she will be mine:
Women love Pleasure.

POMP.

Women love Pomp.

POLICY.

Women use Policy: and here she comes that must decide the doubt.

Enter NEMO, _with_ CONSCIENCE _all in white_.

NEMO.

Conscience, content thee with a quaint conceit:
Conceal thy name to work a special good.
Thou art not known to any of these lords
By face or feature: till they hear thy name,
Which must be Lucre for a fine device,
And Conscience clear indeed's the greatest gain. [_Aside_.
Lo, lordings, here fair Lucre whom ye love.
Lucre, the choice is left unto thyself,
Which of these three thou wilt for husband choose.

CONSCIENCE.

The modesty that doth our sex beseem
Forbids my tongue therein to tell my thought;
But may it please my lords to pardon me,
Which of you three shall deign to make such choice,
Him shall I answer to his own content.

POLICY.

If Lucre please to match with Policy,
She shall be mistress over many men.

POMP.

If Lucre like to match with London's Pomp,
In stately port all others she shall pass.

PLEASURE.

If Pleasure may for wife fair Lucre gain,
Her life shall be an earthly paradise.

NEMO.

Lo, Lucre! men, and port, and pleasant life,
Are here propounded. Which wilt thou accept?

CONSCIENCE.

Lord Policy, Love were the only choice,
Methinks, for you, that all your cares employ,
And studies for the love of commonwealth.
For you, Lord Pleasure, Conscience were a wife
To measure your delights by reason's rule:
In recreation Conscience' help to use.

PLEASURE.

Were Conscience half so sweet as is thyself,
Her would I seek with suits and services.

NEMO.

No less accomplished in perfection
Is Conscience than this lady, I protest.

PLEASURE.
But on this dame hath Pleasure fix'd his heart,
And this or death the period of his love.

CONSCIENCE.
Lucre with Pomp most aptly might combine.

PLEASURE.
Lucre or Love, if case thou wilt be mine,
Let pass thy name: thyself do I desire.
Thee will I have, except thyself deny;
With thee to live, or else for thee to die.

NEMO.
What, if I deny?

PLEASURE.
Then will I have her.

POLICY.
If we deny?

PLEASURE.
So much the rather.

POMP.
The rather in despite of us? Not so.

NEMO.
My lords, no quarrel: let this lady go;
And if ye trust me, I'll content ye both.
Pleasure, this is not Lucre.

PLEASURE.
She's Lucre unto me;
But be she Love or Conscience, this is she--

POLICY.
--whom you will have?

PLEASURE.
Spite of the devil, I will.

CONSCIENCE.
Must it not be, my lord, if I agree?

PLEASURE.
Agree.

CONSCIENCE.
Some further proof of it fits^[263] you to see.

PLEASURE.
Receive in^[264] pawn my heart, my hand, and oath
To be thy own in love, in faith, and troth.

CONSCIENCE.

Thus you are fast, and yet myself am free.

PLEASURE.

I know in ruth thou wilt not me refuse.

CONSCIENCE.

I know not that; but other I'll not choose.

NEMO.

It is enough: Lord Pleasure, do not fear:
Conscience will use you as becomes her best.

PLEASURE.

And art thou Conscience? welcomer to me
Than either Love or Lucre.

CONSCIENCE.

God send grace I be!

NEMO. [_Addressing_ POMP _and_ POLICY.]
My lords, be pleas'd: ere long shall you be sped,
As much to your contents as Pleasure is.
Say but the word, myself shall soon present
Lucre and Love, well worthy such as you.

POLICY.

Right thankfully those favours we'll receive.

Enter DILIGENCE _in haste_.

DILIGENCE.

My lords, if your affairs in present be not great,
Greater than any, save regard of life,
Yea, even the greatest of the commonwealth,
Prepare ye to withstand a stratagem,
Such as this land nor London ever knew.
The Spanish forces[265], lordings, are prepar'd
In bravery and boast beyond all bounds,
T'invade, to win, to conquer all this land.
They chiefly aim at London's stately Pomp,
At London's Pleasure, Wealth, and Policy,
Intending to despoil her of them all,
And over all these lovely ladies three,
Love, Lucre, Conscience, of the rarest price[266],
To tyrannise and carry hardest hand.
From Spain they come with engine and intent
To slay, subdue, to triumph and torment:
Myself (so heaven would) espial of them had,
And Diligence, dear lords, they call my name.
If you vouchsafe to credit my report,
You do me right, and to yourselves no wrong,
Provided that you arm you, being warn'd.

POLICY.

Diligence, thy service shall be knowen,
And well rewarded. Nemo, for a time
Conceal this dame, and live secure, unseen;
Let us alone, whom most it doth concern,

To meet and match our overweening foes.

POMP.

Nemo, keep close, and Conscience, pray for us.
Begone, and recommend us to our God.

CONSCIENCE.

My lords, if ever, show your honours now.
Those proud, usurping Spanish tyrants come,
To reave from you what most you do regard:
To take away your credit and your fame:
To raze and spoil our right-renowned town;
And if you Love or Lucre do regard,
Or have of Conscience any kind of care,
The world shall witness by this action;
And of the love that you to us pretend,
In this your valour shall assurance give.
More would I speak, but danger's in delay:
You know my mind, and heavens record my thoughts,
Which I with prayers for you will penetrate,
And will in heart be present in your fight.
Now, Pleasure, show what you will do for me.

PLEASURE.

I will be turn'd to Pain for thy sweet sake.

POLICY.

Fair Conscience, fear not, but assure thyself,
What kind affection we soever bear
To Love and Lucre in this action,
Chiefly for thee our service shall be done.

POMP.

For Conscience' sake more than for Lucre now.

POLICY.

For Love and Conscience, not despising Lucre.

PLEASURE.

Only for Conscience will I hazard all.

NEMO.

And I from hence will her convey a space,
Till you return with happy victory.

CONSCIENCE.

Farewell, my lords: for me, my lords, for me!

[_Exeunt_ NEMO _and_ CONSCIENCE.]

POLICY.

Diligence, what number may there be?

DILIGENCE.

A mighty host, and chiefly led by three,
Who brave it out in show, as men assured
Of victory, sans venture or repulse.

POLICY.

How near be they?

DILIGENCE.

So near, my lords, that each delay is death.
Stand on your guard: they come as challengers
To bruise your shields and bear away your prize,
Mounting the seas, and measuring the land
With strong imaginations of success.

POLICY.

Well, Diligence, go get in readiness
Men and munition: bid our pages ply,
To see that all our furniture be well:
Wit, Wealth, and Will to further wars be fit.

[_Exit_ DILIGENCE.]

My lords, I would I might advise ye now
To Carry, as it were, a careless regard
Of these Castilians and their accustomed bravado.
Lord Pomp, let nothing that's magnificent,
Or that may tend to London's graceful state,
Be unperform'd; as shows and solemn feasts,
Watches in armour, triumphs, cresset-lights[268],
Bonfires, bells, and peals of ordnance.
And, Pleasure, see that plays be published,
May-games and masques, with mirth and minstrelsy,
Pageants and school-feasts, bears and puppet plays.
Myself will muster upon Mile-end Green,
As though we saw, and fear'd not to be seen;
Which will their spies in such a wonder set,
To see us reckon so little such a foe,
Whom all the world admires, save only we.
And we respect our sport more than his spite.
That John the Spaniard will in rage run mad,
To see us bend like oaks with his vain breath.

POMP.

In this device such liking I conceive,
As London shall not lack what Pomp can do.
And well I know that worthy citizens
Do carry minds so frank and bountiful,
As for their honour they will spare no cost:
Especially to let their enemy know,
Honour in England, not in Spain, doth grow.

PLEASURE.

And for the time that they in pleasure spend,
'Tis limited to such an honest end,
Namely, for recreation of the mind,
With no great cost, yet liberal in that kind,
That Pleasure vows with all delights he can
To do them good--till death to be their man.

POLICY.

Of Policy they trial have at large.

POMP.

Then, let us go, and each man to his charge.

[_Exeunt the three Lords_.]

Enter SIMPLICITY _led by_ USURY.

SIMPLICITY.

I, sir? Why, alas! I bought them of a stranger, an old Frenchman, for good gold, and to be worth ten pound, for so he told me. I have good witness, for my own wife was by, and lent me part of the money.

USURY.

And what did they cost you?

SIMPLICITY.

Ten shillings, every penny.

USURY.

That argues you are guilty. Why, could ye buy so many rings and buttons of gold, think ye, for ten shillings? Of whom did ye buy them?

SIMPLICITY.

Of an old Frenchman, the old French disease take him!

USURY.

And where dwells that old Frenchman?

SIMPLICITY.

In France, I think, for he told me he was to go over the next tide or the next day:

My wife can tell as well as I,

If ye think I lie.

For she was by.

USURY.

A good answer: he dwells in France, and you dwell here; and for uttering copper for gold you are like to lose both your ears upon the pillory, and besides lose your freedom.

SIMPLICITY.

Nay, if I lose my ears, I care not for my freedom: keep you my freedom, so I may keep my ears. Is there no remedy for this, Master Usury?

USURY.

None, except you can find out that old Frenchman.

SIMPLICITY.

Peradventure I can, if you'll let me go into France to seek him.

USURY.

So we may lose you, and never see him. Nay, that may not be.

SIMPLICITY.

Nay, good Master Usury, take all my goods, and let me go.

Enter FRAUD, DISSIMULATION, SIMONY, _in canvas coats like sailors_.

FRAUD.

What's the matter, Usury, that this poor knave cries so?

SIMPLICITY.

O Master Fraud! speak to him to let me go.

FRAUD.

Fraud, ye villain! call me not by my name, and ye shall see I will speak to him to let you go free. [_Aside_.]

Usury, of all old fellowship, let this poor knave pack, if the matter be not too heinous.

USURY.

No: fie! his fault is odious. Look here what stuff he would utter for gold: flat copper; and he say'th he bought them of an old Frenchman.

FRAUD.

But thou didst not sell them, didst thou?

SIMPLICITY.

No, sir; I would have but laid them to pawn for five pounds to him.

FRAUD.

That was more than they were worth. I promise thee, a foul matter. Well, thou must lose thy ware, and be glad to escape: so, Usury, at my request ye shall let the poor man go.

USURY.

Well, for this once I will. Sirrah, get ye packing, and take heed of such a piece of work again, while ye live.

SIMPLICITY.

There is divers pieces of work in that box: pray ye, give me some of my goods again, a ring, or something.

USURY.

Not an inch, and be glad to 'scape as ye do.

SIMPLICITY.

Alas! I am undone: there's all the wealth and stock I have.

FRAUD.

Do ye long to lose your ears? be gone, ye foolish knave.

SIMPLICITY.

I thank ye, Master Fraud. I'll not go far, but I'll be near to hear and see what the meaning of these fellows in this canvas should be; for I know Fraud, Dissimulation, and Simony to be those three. Here, I think, I am unseen.

[SIMPLICITY _hides him near them_.]

FRAUD.

Usury, thank me for this good booty, for it is I that help ye to it, for I sold them to him for gold indeed, in the shape of an old French artificer; come, give me half, for I deserve it, for my part was the first beginning of this comedy. I was ever afraid lest the fool should have known me; for ye see now, though disguis'd, he called me by my name.

SIMPLICITY.

Did I so? I am glad I have found the Frenchman. Now, I'll raise the street, but I'll have my wares again, and prove ye, as ye were ever, both false knaves, I believe.

[_Exit_ SIMPLICITY[269].]

FRAUD.

Kill him, stab him! Out, villain! he will betray us all.

USURY.

What a fool were you to speak before he was gone: now you have lost your part of this, too; for he will go complain, you will be sought for, and I made to restore these things again.

FRAUD.

Not if thou be wise: thou wilt not tarry the reckoning, for seest thou not us three, Dissimulation, Simony, and myself?

USURY.

Yes: what means these canvas suits? Will ye be sailors?

FRAUD.

Usury, make one: this is our intent. Let's see that none hear us now. The Spaniards are coming, thou hearest, with great power: here is no living for us in London; men are grown so full of conscience and religion, that Fraud, Dissimulation, and Simony are deciphered, and being deciphered are also despised, and therefore we will slip to the sea, and meet and join with the enemy; and if they conquer, as they may, for they are a great army by report, our credit may rise again with them: if they fail and retire, we may either go with them and live in Spain, where we and such good fellows are tolerated and used, or come slyly again hither, so long as none knows but friends.

USURY.

But will you do thus, you two?

DISSIMULATION.

And thou too, I hope: why, what should we do?

USURY.

Whatsoever ye do, be not traitors to your native country.

SIMONY.

'Tis not our native country, thou knowest. I, Simony, am a Roman: Dissimulation, a mongrel--half an Italian, half a Dutchman: Fraud so, too--half French and half Scottish; and thy parents were both Jews, though thou wert born in London, and here, Usury, thou art cried out against by the preachers. Join with us, man, to better thy state, for in Spain preaching toucheth us not.

USURY.

To better my state? Nay, to alter my state, for here, where I am, I know the government: here I can live for all their threat'ning. If strangers prevail, I know not their laws nor their usage: they may be oppressors, and take all I have; and it is like they are so, for they seek that's not their own. Therefore here will I stay, sure to keep what I have, rather than be a traitor upon hap and had-I-wist: and stay you, if ye be wise, and pray as I pray, that the preachers and all other good men may die, and then we shall flourish; but never trust to strangers' courtesy.

FRAUD.

We shall trust but to our friends and kin. You'll not go with us, yet for old acquaintance keep counsel; betray us not, for we'll be gone to sea. I am afraid yon foolish knave have belaid the streets for us.

USURY.

Let me go afore ye: if any such thing be, I'll give ye inkling.

[_Exit_.

FRAUD.

Do: farewell, Usury: and as he goes one way, we'll go another.

Follow, sirs: never trust a shrinker, if he be your own brother.

[_Exeunt omnes_.

Enter the three Lords with their Pages and FEALTY, _a Herald,
before them, his coat having the arms of London before, and an
olive tree behind_.

POLICY.

Fealty, thou faithful herald of our town,
Thou true truce-keeper and sure friend in peace,
Take down our shields, and give them to our boys.

[_He delivers them_.

Now, Fealty, prepare thy wits for war,
To parley with the proud Castilians,
Approaching fast the frontiers of our coast.
Wit here, my page, in every message shall
Attend on thee, to note them and their deeds.
I need not tell thee, they are poor and proud:
Vaunters, vainglorious, tyrants, truce-breakers:
Envious, ireful, and ambitious.
For thou hast found their facings and their brags,
Their backs their coffers, and their wealth their rags;
But let me tell thee what we crave of thee--
To scan with judgment what their leaders be,
To note their presence and observe their grace,
And truly to advertise what they seem;
Whether to be experienced in arms,
Or men of name--those three that lead the rest--
The rest refer we to thy own conceit.

FEALTY.

I hope in this my duty to discharge,
As heretofore----

SIMPLICITY _make a great noise within, and enter with
three or four weaponed_.

SIMPLICITY.

Clubs! clubs![270] Nay, come, neighbours, come, for here they be: here
I left them, arrant thieves, rogues, coseners. I charge ye, as you will
answer, 'prehend them; for they have undone me, and robb'd me, and made
me the poorest freeman that ever kept a ballad-stall.

A CONSTABLE.

I charge ye keep the peace, and lay down your weapons.

[_To the three Lords_.

POMP.

Who rais'd this tumult? Speak, what means this stir?

SIMPLICITY.

O, I am undone, robb'd, spoil'd of all my stock! Let me see, where be they? Keep every street and door: 'xamine all that comes for Fraud that cosener.

POLICY.

Masters, what mean you in these troublous times
To keep this coil?

CONSTABLE.

Alas! my lord, here's a poor man robb'd or cosened.

SIMPLICITY.

I am robb'd.--O my boys, my pretty boys, I am undone!
Saw ye no thieves, nor no crafty knaves? What be all these?

WIT.

Simplicity, away! these be our lords; offend them not for fear.

SIMPLICITY.

I seek not them: I seek for Fraud that robb'd me.

PLEASURE.

Go, seek elsewhere, for here's no place for such.

POLICY.

My friends, depart, and qualify this stir,
And see peace kept within the walls, I charge ye.

CONSTABLE.

I will, my lord. Come, Simplicity, we came too late to find your losses.

SIMPLICITY.

Pray for me, my boys; I think I shall hang myself.
I come ever too late to speed.

[_Exeunt_.

POLICY.

Now, lords, let honour's fire inflame our thoughts,
And let us arm our courage with our cause,
And so dispose ourselves to welcome them.
Do me the favour (if I may entreat)
To be the first to front the foe in face:
The vanguard let be Policy's this once,
Pomp's the main battle, Pleasure's the rearward;
And so bestow us, if you think it good.

POMP.

I think it good, and time that it were done.

PLEASURE.

I think it good, and wish the enemy come.

[_Enter_ DILIGENCE.

DILIGENCE.

And here they come, as brave as Philip's son
And his Hephaestion wont to be array'd,
In glittering gold and party-coloured plumes;

With curious pendants on their lances fix'd,
Their shields impress'd with gilt copartiments;
Their pages careless playing at their backs,
As if with conquest they triumphing came.

POLICY.

If they be conquer'd, greater is their shame.
But, Diligence, go post alongst the coast
To tell the news; and look, to welcome them,
Let us alone. My lords, you hear the news:
More words were vain; I know ye well resolv'd.

[Exit_ DILIGENCE.

POMP.

And here they come. O proud Castilians!

Enter first, SHEALTY _the Herald; then_ PRIDE, _bearing his shield himself, his impress a Peacock; the word_ Nonpareil; _his Page_, SHAME, _after him with a lance, having a pendant gilt, with this word in it_, Sur le Ciel. AMBITION, _his impress a black horse saliant, with one hinder-foot upon the globe of the earth, one fore-foot stretching towards the clouds, his word_ Non sufficit orbis; _his Page_, TREACHERY, _after him, his pendant argent and azure, an armed arm catching at the sunbeams, the word in it_ Et gloriam Phoebi. _Last_, TYRANNY, _his impress a naked child on a spear's-point, bleeding; his word_ Pour sangue; _his Page_, TERROR, _his pendant gules, in it a tiger's head out of a cloud, licking a bloody heart; the word in it_ Cura cruor. _March once about the stage, then stand and view the Lords of London, who shall march towards them, and they give back, then the Lords of London wheel about to their standing, and th' other come again into their places. Then_ POLICY _sends_ FEALTY; _their Herald's coat must have the arms of Spain before, and a burning ship behind_.

POLICY.

My lords, what mean these gallants to perform?
Come these Castilian cowards but to brave?
Do all these mountains move to breed a mouse?
Fealty, go fetch their answer resolute,
How they dare be so bold, and what
They dare do here.

[_As_ FEALTY _is going toward them, they send forth_ SHEALTY.

SHEALTY.

What wouldst thou, herald?

FEALTY.

Parley with those three, herald.

SHEALTY.

They scorn to grace so mean a man as thou
With parley or with presence.

FEALTY.

Do they scorn?

What, are thy masters monarchs every one?
Or be they gods? or rather be they devils?

Scorn they a herald's presence and his speech?
Name them, that I may know their mightiness,
And so avoid of duties some neglect.

SHEALTY.

Monarchs in minds, and gods in high conceits,
That scorn you English as the scum of men,
Whom I ne dare without their licence name,
'Fore whom thy duties all are few and base.

FEALTY.

Imperious Spaniard, do a herald right:
Thyself art one; their trouchman[271] if thou be,
Be thou my trump[272], that I my message may
Through thee convey to them from London lords.

SHEALTY.

Base English groom, from beggars sent belike,
Who for their mate thee malapert account,
Dare I (think'st thou) these lords magnificent,
Without their special pleasure understood.
Once move with message or with show of speech?

FEALTY.

More servile thou to lose a herald's due,
That is in field a king's companion.
But if thou dare not my ambassage do,
Stand by, and stop not my access to them.

SHEALTY.

Rather will I return, and know their minds.

[_When_ SHEALTY _goes to them_, WIT _goes to the
three Lords of London_.

POLICY.

Now, boy, what news?

WIT.

The fearful herald of yon famous crew
Durst not your message to his masters tell,
Till Fealty with contumelious words
(Yet was the Spaniard brave and hot in terms)
Enforced him for their answer resolute.

[_The Spaniards whisper with their Herald_.

POMP.

Which now, belike, our herald shall receive;
For theirs comes to him.

SHEALTY.

It pleaseth them to be magnifical,
And of their special graces to vouchsafe
A counterview of pages and of shields,
And countermessage by us heralds done;
A favour which they seldom grant to foes.
Go thou for those; I meet thee will with these.

FEALTY.

My lords, yon braving Spaniards wish
A counterview of pages and of shields,
But what they mean or be, I know not yet.
Haply you may by their impresses view,
Or I by parley some conjecture give,
So please it you your pages and your shields
With me to send: their herald comes with theirs.

POLICY.

Our shields I reckon not, but to send our Wealth--

FEALTY.

Accompanied with Wit and Will--no peril.

POMP.

It is my Wealth; but keep him, if they dare:
I'll fetch him double, if they do, my lords.

PLEASURE.

Boys, take our shields and spears, for they come on.

WIT.

Vail, Spaniard: couch thy lance and pendant both.
Knowest where thou art? Here will we bear no braves.

[When the English boys meet the other, cause them to put
down the tops of their lances, but they beat up theirs_.

WEALTH.

Down with your point: no loft-born lances here
By any stranger, be he foe or friend.

WILL.

Well dost thou note the couching of thy lance;
Mine had, ere this, else gor'd your Spanish skin.

FEALTY.

Well done, my boys; but now all reverence--

SHEALTY.

Advance again your lances now, my boys.

[Hold up again_.

S. PRIDE.

Dicito nobis ideo, qui ades, quid sibi velint isthaec emblemata?
Dicito (inquam) lingua materna: nos enim omnes belle intelligimus,
quamvis Anglice loqui dedignamur.

FEALTY.

Then know, Castilian cavaleros, this:
The owners of these emblems are three lords,
Those three that now are viewing of your shields:
Of London, our chief city, are they lords;
Policy, Pomp, and Pleasure be their names;
And they, in honour of their mistresses,
Love, Lucre, Conscience, London ladies three,
Emblazoned these scutcheons, challenging
Who durst compare or challenge one of them.

And Policy a tortoise hath impress'd,
Encompass'd with her shell, her native walls,
And *_Providens securus_* is his word:
His page is Wit, his mistress Lady Love.
Pomp in his shield a lily hath portray'd,
As paragon of beauty and boon-grace:
Glorie sans peere his word, and true it is;
With London's Pomp Castile cannot compare:
His page is Wealth, his mistress Lucre hight.
Pleasure, the dainty of that famous town,
A falcon hath emblazon'd, soaring high,
To show the pitch that London's Pleasure flies:
His word *_Pour temps_*, yet never stops to train,
But unto Conscience, chosen for his dear:
His page is Will; and thus th'effect you hear.

S. PRIDE.

Buena, buena, per los Lutheranos Ingleses.

FEALTY.

Mala, mala, per Catholicos Castellanos.

POLICY.

Loqueris Anglice?

SHEALTY.

Maxime, Domine.

POLICY.

Agendum: go to, then; and declare
Thy lords their shields, their pages and their purpose.
Speak, man; fear not: though Spain use messengers ill,
'Tis England's guise to entreat them courteously.

SHEALTY.

Three cavalieros Castilianos here,
Without compeers in compass of this world,
Are come to conquer, as full well they shall,
This molehill isle, that little England hight,
With London, that proud paltry market-town,
And take those dames, Love, Lucre, Conscience,
Prisoners, to use or force, as pleaseth them.
The first (now quake) is Spanish Majesty,
That for his impress gives Queen Juno's bird,
Whose train is spang'd with Argus' hundred eyes;
The Queen of Gods scorns not to grace him so:
His word is *_Nonpareil_*, none his like;
Yet is his page or henchman Modesty,
Lucre the lady that shall be his prize:
And in his pendant on his lance's point
Sur le Ciel his word, Above the heavens.

POLICY.

Whilome, indeed, above the heavens he was,
Could he have kept him in that blessed state.
From thence for pride he fell to pit of pain;
And is he now become the pride of Spain?
And to his page, not Modesty, but Shame.
Well, on, the rest---

SHEALTY.

Don Honour is the next grand peer of Spain,
Whose impress is a courser saliant,
Of colour sable, darkening air and earth,
Pressing the globe with his disdainful foot,
And sallying to aspire to rolling skies:
Non sufficit orbis is his haughty word,
The world sufficeth not high Honour's thoughts;
And on the pendant, fixed on his lance,
A hand is catching at the sunny beams:
Et gloriam Phoebi, and the sun's bright coach
Honour would guide, if he might have his will.
His page is Action, tempering still with state.

POLICY.

Himself Ambition, whom the heavens do hate.

SHEALTY.

And Love the lady that he hopes to gain.

POLICY.

His thoughts, distract from foul-distempered brain,
Proves him the very firebrand[273] of Spain:
And in his shield his black disordered beast,
Scaling the skies, scornful to tread the ground,
And both his words--proud words--prove perfectly
Action his page to be but Treachery,
Ever attendant on Ambition.
But to the third----

SHEALTY.

The third grand cavaliero is Government,
Severe in justice and in judgment deep:
His impress is a naked infant, gor'd
Upon a lance, signifying Severity.
His word _Pour sangue_; for blood of enemies
He bends his forces: on his pendant is
A tiger, licking of a bleeding heart;
And _Cura cruor_ is the word thereon:
His care's for blood of those that dare resist.
Yet hight his page, that follows him, Regard,
And he for Conscience to this conquest comes.

POLICY.

The Government of Spain is Tyranny,
As do his impress and his words declare:
His page is Terror; for a tyrant fears
His death in diet, in his bed, in sleep.
In Conscience' spite, the Spanish tyranny
Hath shed a sea of most unguilty blood.
Well, what's the end?

SHEALTY.

The end is, best you yield,
Submitting you to mercy of these lords.

POMP.

Before we fight? soft, sir; ye brave too fast.

Castilians, know that Englishmen will knock. But say,
Doth Spanish Pride for London's Lucre gape?

PLEASURE.
And would their Tyranny Conscience captive have?

POLICY.
Doth their Ambition London's Love affect?

SHEALTY.
All this they will, and prey upon your town,
And give your lands away before your face.
Alas! what's England to the power of Spain?
A molehill, to be placed where it pleaseth them.

POMP.
But in this molehill many pismires be,
All which will sting, before they be remov'd.
What is thy name?

SHEALTY.
Shealty.

POLICY.
An Irish word, signifying liberty;
Rather remissness, looseness, if ye will.
Why hath thy coat a burning ship behind?

SHEALTY.
To signify the burning of your fleet
By us Castilians.

POLICY.
It rather means your commonwealth's on fire
About your ears, and you were best look home.
A commonwealth's compared to a ship:
If yours do flame, your country is hot; beware.

FEALTY.
I see, Castilians, that you marvel much
At this same emblem of the olive-tree
Upon my back; lo, this it signifies.
Spain is in wars; but London lives in peace:
Your native fruit doth wither on your soil,
And prospers where it never planted was.
This London's Fealty doth avouch for truth.
Herald of war, and porter of their peace,
Command ye me no service to my lords?

S. PRIDE.
Quid tu cum dominis mox servietis miseri nobis[274]: discede.

FEALTY.
Quid mihi cum dominis servietis miseri meis!

POMP.
Shealty, say unto yon Thrasoes three,
The Lords of London dare them to the field,
Pitying their pride and their ambition,

Scorning their tyranny, and yet fearing this,
That they are come from home and dare not fight;
But if they dare--in joint or several arms,
Battle or combat--him that Lucre seeks,
Your Spanish Pride, him dare I from the rest.

PLEASURE.

That bloody cur, your Spanish Tyranny,
That London's Conscience would force with cruelty,
I challenge him for Conscience' sake to fight
A Lord of London, and I Pleasure hight.
And, Shealty, when citizens dare them thus,
Judge what our nobles and our courtiers dare.

POLICY.

Say, if thou wilt, that London's Policy
Discerns that proud Ambition of Spain;
And for he comes inflam'd with London's Love,
In combat let him conquer me, and have her.
This is Love's favour; I her servant am.

POMP.

This Lucre's favour: Pomp for her will fight.

PLEASURE.

This Conscience' favour: she my mistress is.

SHEALTY.

You craven English on your dunghills crow.

POMP.

You Spanish pheasants crow upon your perch:
But when we fire your coats about your ears,
And take your ships before your walled towns,
We make a dunghill of your rotten bones,
And cram our chickens with your grains of gold.

SHEALTY.

You will not yield?

PLEASURE.

Yes, the last moneth.

SHEALTY.

Farewell.

[Retire Heralds with the Pages to their places_.

S. PRIDE.

Vade.

POLICY.

Herald, how now?

FEALTY.

Yon proud Castilians
Look for your service.

POMP.

So do we for theirs.

But, Fealty, canst thou declare to me
The cause why all their pages follow them,
When ours in show do ever go before?

FEALTY.

In war they follow, and the Spaniard is
Warring in mind.

POLICY.

But that's not now the cause.
Yon three are Pride, Ambition, Tyranny:
Shame follows Pride, as we a proverb have;
Pride goes before, and Shame comes after.
Treachery ever attends upon Ambition;
And Terror always with a fearful watch
Doth wait upon ill-conscienced Tyranny.
But why stay we to give them space to breathe?
Come, Courage! let us charge them all at once.

[Let the three Lords pass towards the Spaniards, and the
Spaniards make show of coming forward and suddenly depart_.

POMP.

What braving cowards these Castilians be?
My lords, let's hang our 'scutcheons up again,
And shroud ourselves, but not far off, unseen,
To prove if that may draw them to some deed,
Be it to batter our impressed shields.

PLEASURE.

Agreed. Here, Fealty, hang them up a space.

[They hang up their shields, and step out of sight. The Spaniards
come, and flourish their rapiers near them, but touch them not, and
then hang up theirs; which the Lords of London perceiving, take
their own and batter theirs. The Spaniards, making a little show to
rescue, do suddenly slip away and come no more_.

POLICY.

Facing, faint-hearted, proud, and insolent,
That bear no edge within their painted sheaths,
That durst not strike our silly patient shields!

POMP.

Up have they set their own: see, if we dare
Batter on them, and beat their braving lords.

PLEASURE.

Let them not yonder hang unhack'd, my lords.

POLICY.

With good advice, that we be not surprised.

POMP.

And good enough myself will onset give[275]
On Pride's. At your Peacock, sir.

PLEASURE.

At Tyranny's will I bestow my blow,
Wishing the master.

POLICY.

I at Ambition's strike. Have at his pampered jade!

Enter S. PRIDE.

S. PRIDE.

Fuoro Viliagos! fuoro Lutheranos Ingleses! fuoro, sa, sa, sa!

POMP.

Their shields are ours: they fled away with shame.
But, lordings, whiles the stratagem is fresh,
And memory of their misfortune green,
Their hearts yet fainting with the novel grief,
Let us pursue them flying: if you say it,
Haply we may prevent their passage yet.

POLICY.

With speed and heed the matter must be done.

PLEASURE.

Therefore you, Policy, shall our leader be.

[_Exeunt omnes_.

Enter [the] three Ladies and NEMO.

NEMO.

The day is ours: fair ladies, let us joy
The joyful day that all men may rejoice;
Yet only I am thankful for this good,
And your good day at hand approacheth fast,
Wherein you shall be join'd to three such lords,
As all the cities under heaven's bright cope
Cannot with all their glory match in worth.
Lucre, Lord Pomp a victor comes to thee:
Love, look thou for Lord Policy as well;
And Conscience for her well-reformed phere,
Pleasure, that only made his choice of her.
Upon that day triumphant shall we feast,
Wherein, mesdames, your honours nill be least.

LUCRE.

Against their coming, might my reed be heard[276],
Prepare would we garlands of laurel green,
To welcome them; more for the common good,
Than for affection private that we bear.

LOVE.

To meet them coming will not be amiss;
But what know we, how they will take such work?

CONSCIENCE.

Report may be much more than there is cause.
We may them meet and greet with joyful hearts,
And make them garlands, when we know their minds.

Enter the three Lords, with the Spanish shields, and DILIGENCE.

NEMO.

And here they come with new-impressed shields.--
My lords, well-met, and welcome from your foes.

LUCRE.

Lord Pomp, well-met, and welcome home again.

LOVE.

Lord Policy, well-met, and welcome home again.

CONSCIENCE.

Lord Pleasure, welcome with unfeigned heart.

PLEASURE.

Fair joy and lady, twenty thousand thanks.

POLICY.

Fair Love and lady, twice as many thanks.

POMP.

Fair and beloved Lucre, though I speak last,
As kindly I thy welcome do accept,
As heart can think, pen write, or tongue can tell.

NEMO.

Now speak, my lords, how have ye sped?

POLICY.

Right well; thanks unto Him that gave the day to us.
The Pride of Spain was cloak'd with majesty,
And Shame, his page, nicknamed Modesty:
Spanish Ambition Honour would be call'd,
And Treachery, his page, term'd Action:
Their Tyranny was cleped Government;
Terror, his page, was falsely nam'd Regard;
But God above hath given them their reward.
They with dishonour left their shields behind,
The only prizes purchas'd by us now,
And those, fair ladies, we present to you.
Love, this is thine, and he that gives it thee.

NEMO.

In lieu whereof your gift and her I give
Again to you, that merit more than both.

POLICY.

The greatest gift and good could me befall.

POMP.

Fair Lucre, lo, my present and myself.

LUCRE.

Which I, with Nemo's license, gladly take.

NEMO.

Take her, Lord Pomp; I give her unto thee,
Wishing your good may ten times doubled be.

POMP.

The richest[277] good this world could give to me.

PLEASURE.

Of duty I, my dear, must give thee this:
That art my comfort and my earthly bliss.

NEMO.

Now, lords, I hope you are contented all:
Pomp with his Lucre, Policy with Love,
Pleasure with Conscience: joy fall you from above.
And thus to you my promise is perform'd,
And I expect that yours as well be kept,
That present preparation may be made
To honour those with holy marriage rites,
That I, in presence of the world, may give
These as my daughters unto you my sons.

POLICY.

By my consent one day shall serve us all,
Which shall be kept for ever festival.

POMP.

And on that day, in honour of these dames,
These shields in triumph shall be borne about.

PLEASURE.

With pageants, plays, and what delights may be,
To entertain the time and company.

NEMO.

So it please you, lordings, methinks it were meet,
That the ladies took care to provide their own toys.
Myself need to help them, who know their minds well,
For I can keep women both quiet and constant.

POLICY.

It pleaseth us well that you will take the pains.
Fair ones, for a while ye[278] betake you to your business.

POMP.

Ladies, adieu.

PLEASURE.

Beloved, farewell.

[_The Lords bring them to the door, and they go out_ [FRAUD _and_ DISSIMULATION _enter disguised], and_ FRAUD[279] _gives_ POLICY _a paper, which he reads, and then says_:

POLICY.

It seems by this writing, sir, you would serve me.
Is your name Skill? whom did you serve last?

FRAUD.

An ill master, my lord: I served none but myself.

POLICY.

Have ye never served any heretofore?

FRAUD.

Yes, divers, my lord, both beyond sea and here. With your patience, my good lord, not offending the same, I think I am your poor kinsman: your lordship, Policy, and I Skill, if it like ye.

POLICY.

You say very well, and it is very like.
I will answer ye anon.

[DISSIMULATION _gives_ PLEASURE _a paper, which he reads, and says_:

PLEASURE.

Is your name Fair Semblance, that wish to serve me?

DISSIMULATION.

Please your lordship, Fair Semblance. I am well-seen, though I say it, in sundry languages meet for your lordship, or any noble service, to teach divers tongues and other rare things.

PLEASURE.

I like ye very well; stay a while for your answer.

Enter USURY, _and gives a paper to_ POMP,
which he reads, and saith:

POMP.

Master Usury, I thank ye that ye offer me your service; it seems to me to be for your old mistress' sake, Lady Lucre. Stay but a while; I will answer you with reason.

[_The three Lords go together and whisper, and call_ DILIGENCE.
DILIGENCE _goes out for a marking-iron, and returns_.

FRAUD.

How now, my hearts, think ye we shall speed? [_Aside_.

POLICY.

Diligence, come hither.

USURY.

I cannot tell what you shall, but I am sure I shall. [_Aside_.

DISSIMULATION.

I am as like as any of ye both.

USURY.

Fraud!

DISSIMULATION.

Whist, man; he's Skill. [_Aside_.

USURY.

Skill, why dost thou seek to serve Lady Love?
What profit will that be?

FRAUD.

Tut, hold thee content: I'll serve but a while, and serve mine

own turn, and away.

POMP.

Master Usury, come hither. You desire to serve me: you have done Lady Lucre good service, you say, but it was against God and Conscience you did it: neither ever in your life did ye anything for Love. Well, to be short, serve me you shall not; and I would I could banish you from London for ever, or keep you close prisoner; but that is not in me; but what is, or may be, that straight you shall see. By Policy's counsel this shall be done. Diligence, bring that iron. Help me, my lords[280].

POLICY.

Give me the iron. Pomp, Cousin Skill, help to hold him.

[FRAUD _lays hold on him, but_ DISSIMULATION _slip away_.

Sirrah, Policy gives you this mark, do you see;
A little x standing in the midst of a great C,
Meaning thereby to let men understand,
That you must not take above bare ten pound in the hundred at any hand:
And that too much too; and so be packing quietly,
And know that London's Pomp is not sustained by Usury,
But by well-ventured merchandise and honest industry.

USURY.

I would I had never seen ye, if this be your courtesy.
[_Exit_ USURY.

POLICY.

Now, Cousin Skill, _alias_ Filthy Fraud,
No kinsman to Policy, nor friend to the state:
Instead of serving me, Diligence, take him to Newgate.
Ask me not why, sir: but, Diligence, if he do strive,
Raise the street: he's unweaponed, and thou hast a weapon on.--
And now, lords, when ye will, about our affairs let's be gone.

PLEASURE.

Agreed; but what's become of Fair-semblance, my man?

POMP.

A crafty villain, perceiving how we meant to Usury, slipt away.

[_Enter_ SIMPLICITY _in haste, and give the Lords a paper to read_.

SIMPLICITY.

All hail, all rain, all frost, and all snow
Be to you three Lords of London on a row!
Read my supplantation, and my suit ye shall know,
Even for God's sake above, and three ladies' sakes below.

FRAUD.

Master Diligence, do me a favour: you know I am a gentleman.

DILIGENCE.

Step aside, till my lords be gone; I'll do for you what I can.
[_Slip aside_.

POMP.

What's here, my boy, what's here? Pleasure, this suit is, sure, to you;

for it's mad stuff, and I know not what it means.

PLEASURE.

Neither do I. Sirrah, your writing is so intricate, that you must speak your mind; otherwise we shall not know your meaning.

POLICY.

You sue for three things here, and what be they? tell them.

SIMPLICITY.

Cannot you three tell, and the suit to you three? I am glad a simple fellow yet can go beyond you three great Lords of London. Why, my suit, look ye, is such a suit, as you are bound in honour to hear, for it is for the puppet-like^[281] wealth. I would have no new orders nor new sciences set up in the city, whereof I am a poor freeman, and please ye, as ye may read in my bill there--Simplicity freeman. But, my lords, I would have three old trades, which are not for the commonwealth, put down.

PLEASURE.

And after all this circumstance, sir, what be they?

SIMPLICITY.

They be not three what-lack-ye's, as what do ye lack? fine lockram,^[282] fine canvas, or fine Holland cloth, or what lack ye? fine ballads, fine sonnets, or what lack ye? a purse, or a glass, or a pair of fine knives? but they be three have-ye-any's, which methinks are neither sciences nor occupations; and if they be trades, they are very malapert trades--and more than reason.

POLICY.

As how, sir? name them.

SIMPLICITY.

Will you banish them as readily as I can name them? The first is, have ye any old iron, old mail, or old harness?

POMP.

And what fault find ye with this?

SIMPLICITY.

What fault? I promise ye, a great fault: what have you, or any man else, to do to ask me if I have any old iron? What, if I have, or what, if I have not; why should you be so saucy to ask?

PLEASURE.

Why, fool, 'tis for thy good to give thee money for that that might lie and rust by thee.

SIMPLICITY.

No, my lord, no; I may not call you fool: it is to mark the houses where such stuff is that, against rebels rise, there is harness and weapon ready for them in such and such houses; and what then? The rusty weapon doth wound past surgery, and kills the queen's good subjects; and the rest of the old trash will make them guns too: so it is good luck to find old iron, but 'tis naught to keep it, and the trade is crafty. And now, my Lord Policy, I speak to you, 'twere well to put it down.

POLICY.

Wisely said. Which is your second? Is that as perilous?

SIMPLICITY.

Yea, and worse. It is, have ye any ends of gold and silver? This is a perilous trade, covetous, and a 'tishment to murder; for, mark ye, if they that ask this should be evil-given, as Gods forbod, they see who hath this gold and silver: may they not come in the night, break in at their houses, and cut their throats for it? I tell ye, gold and silver hath caused as much mischief to be done as that: down with it.

POMP.

They that have it need not show it.

SIMPLICITY.

Tush! they need ask no such question: many a man hath delight to show what he hath. The trade is a 'ticing trade; down with it!

POLICY.

Now, your third, sir?

SIMPLICITY.

That is the craftiest of all, wherein I am disbus'd, for that goes under the colour of Simplicity: have ye any wood to cleave?

PLEASURE.

A perilous thing: what hurt is there in this, sir?

SIMPLICITY.

O, do you not perceive the subtlety? Why, sir, the woodmongers hire these poor men to go up and down, with their beetles and wedges on their backs, crying, Have ye any wood to cleave? and laugh to see them travel so loaden with wood and iron. Now, sir, if the poor men go two or three days, and are not set a-work (as sometimes they do), the woodmongers pay them, and gain by it, for then know they there's no wood in the city: then raise they the price of billets so high, that the poor can buy none. Now, sir, if these fellows were barr'd from asking whether there were any wood to cleave or not, the woodmongers need not know but that there were wood, and so billets and faggots would be sold all at one rate. Down with this trade: we shall sit a-cold else, my lords.

PLEASURE.

I promise you, a wise suit, and done with great discretion.

SIMPLICITY.

Yea, is it not? might ye not do well to make me of your council? I believe I could spy more faults in a week than you could mend in a month.

POLICY.

Well, for these three faults, the time serves not now to redress.

SIMPLICITY.

No, marry; for you three must be married suddenly, and your feast must be dress'd.

POMP.

Against which feast repair you to Diligence, and he shall appoint you furniture and money, and a place in the show: till when, farewell.

SIMPLICITY.

Farewell, my lords: farewell, my three lords; and remember that I have set each of ye a fault to mend. Well, I'll go seek Master Diligence, that he may give me forty pence against the feast, sir reverence.

[Exit_.

DILIGENCE _and_ FRAUD _step out_[283].

DILIGENCE.

What is it, Master Fraud, ye would demand of me?

FRAUD.

Sir, this you know, though yourself be a man of good reckoning, yet are ye known an officer unto these three lords, and what discredit it were to me, being a noted man, to pass through the streets with you, being an officer; or if any of my friends should suspect me with you, and dog us, and see me committed to Newgate, I were utterly discredited. Here is a purse, sir, and in it two hundred angels: look, sir; you shall tell them.

DILIGENCE.

Here are so indeed. What mean ye by this? I will not take these to let ye escape.

[Deliver_ FRAUD _the purse again_.

FRAUD.

I mean not so, sir; nor I will not give half of them to be suffered to escape; for I have done none offence, though it please them to imprison me, and it is but on commandment[284]. I shall not stay long; but I will give you this purse and gold in pawn to be true prisoner, only give me leave to go some other way, and home to my lodging for my boots and other necessaries; for there I'll leave word I am ridden out of town, and with all the haste that possibly I may, I will meet you at Newgate, and give you an angel for your courtesy. There is the purse.

[FRAUD _gives him a purse like the other_.

DILIGENCE.

I hazard, as you know, my lords' displeasure herein; and yet, to pleasure you, I will venture this once; but, I pray ye, make haste, that I be not shent. I would not for ten angels it were known.

FRAUD.

If I tarry above an hour, take that gold for your tarrying.

[Exit_.

DILIGENCE.

I do not fear that you'll forfeit so much for so little cause.

[Exit_.

Enter NEMO, _with_ DESIRE, DELIGHT, _and_ DEVOTION,
the three Lords of Lincoln.

NEMO.

My Lords of Lincoln,
Have you such title and such interest
To Love, Lucre, and Conscience as you say?
Who gave you leave to have access to them?
I am their father by adoption:
I never knew of love 'twixt them and you;
And to perpetual prison they were doom'd,

From whence I only might deliver them:
Which at the suit of three most matchless lords,
Their countrymen, in London bred as they,
I have perform'd, and freed them from their bonds;
And yet have bound them in their freedom too,
To Policy, to Pleasure, and to Pomp,
Three Lords of London, whose they are in right,
Contracted wives, and done by my consent;
And even to-morrow is the marriage-day,
Except your coming stay, or break it off.
I will go call their lords to answer you:
They (under covert-baron[285]) meddle not.
[Exit_.

DESIRE.
Fetch them, Lord Nemo: we will here attend.

DELIGHT.
Attend we may, but unto little end:
The ladies are in hucksters' handling now.

DEVOTION.
I would I had my time in praying spent,
That I in wooing Conscience did consume.

[Enter the three Lords of London and_ NEMO.

DESIRE.
Here come the lords: let's show good countenance, man.

POMP.
Yet more ado, before we can enjoy
The joys of marriage with our mistresses?
Be these the lords that title do pretend?
My Lords of Lincoln, so we hear you be,
What are your names?

DELIGHT.
Devotion, Desire, and Delight.

POMP.
Which comes for Lucre?

DESIRE.
I Desire.

PLEASURE.
Which for Conscience?

DEVOTION.
I Devotion.

POLICY.
Which for Love?

DELIGHT.
I Delight.

POLICY.

You shall be answered straight.

PLEASURE.

I can answer them quickly. Ye cannot have them, nor ye shall not have them.

POLICY.

Stay, Pleasure; soft. My Lord Desire, you Lucre seek: desire of Lucre (be it without reproach to you, my lord) is covetousness, which cannot be separated long from that. Read, my lord.

[_Point to the stone of Care_.

DESIRE.

In golden letters on this stone is written _Care_.

POLICY.

Care with desire of Lucre well agrees; the rather for that London's Lucre may not be separated from London's Pomp: so you may take that stone, if ye will; but the lady you cannot have.

DESIRE.

And a stone is a cold comfort, instead of Lucre.

POLICY.

Devotion to Conscience (I speak now to you, my lord, that are learned) is sorrow for sin, or (in one word) read--

[_Points to the stone of Remorse_.

DEVOTION.

On this sweating-stone in brass is set _Remorse_.

POLICY.

And that is your portion; for Conscience is bestowed on London's Pleasure, because London makes o'[286] Conscience what pleasure they use and admit, and what time they bestow therein, and to what end: so, my Lord Devotion, either that or nothing.

DEVOTION.

A stone is a hard lot, instead of a lady.

POLICY.

My Lord Delight, that do delight in Love,
You must I love for making choice of mine.
Love is my portion, and that flint is yours.

DELIGHT.

Here in lead is written _Charity_: and what of this?

POLICY.

If you be (as I doubt not) honest Delight in love, then in the best sense you can have but Charity: if you be (which I suspect not) other Delight in love, you must be noted for concupiscence, and that you will blush to be. Well, Charity is your best: then, that is your portion; for, mark ye, London's Policy joins with London's Love, to show that all our policy is for love of London's commonwealth; and so our love cannot be separate from our policy. You hear this?

DELIGHT.

A flint's a hard change for so fair a wife.

POLICY.

And thus, lords, Desire of Lucre may take Care; Devotion of Conscience may have Remorse; and Delight of Love may have Charity: other recompense none.

PLEASURE.

And so we three leave you three with Care, Remorse, and Charity.

[_Exeunt_.

DESIRE.

With Care and Remorse, I swear, ye do leave us; but what Charity I cannot tell.

DEVOTION.

Well, yet we must use Charity, though we fail of our desire; and we are answered with such reason as is not to be gainsayed.

DELIGHT.

Indeed, my lord, your calling is to persuade to charity; but if I use patience, it shall be perforce.

DEVOTION.

Yet being so wisely warn'd, methinks, we should be arm'd, and take this in worth: that the world wonder no further, I will take up my hard burden of Remorse, and be gone.

[_Exit_.

DESIRE.

It is good to follow examples of good. I'll take this heavy burden of Care, and follow as I may.

[_Exit_.

DELIGHT.

Because I'll not be singular, I'll frame myself to follow, taking this cold portion of Charity as my share.

[_Exit_.

[_Enter_ SIMPLICITY _with_ DILIGENCE.

SIMPLICITY.

Come on, Master Diligence: I have been seeking ye, as a man should seek a load of hay in a needle's eye.

DILIGENCE.

And why hast thou sought me, I pray thee, so earnestly?

SIMPLICITY.

Why? For this ointment, these shells, these pictures: do ye not know this _countus mountus cum this da mihi_?

DILIGENCE.

What money? Why, do I owe thee any money?

SIMPLICITY.

Owe me? Tush, no, man; what do ye talk of owing? Come, and yet I must have some certain _sigillatum_ and _deliberatum_ in presentia_. Do you not understand, sir? Fortypence and furniture by my Lord Pomp's

'pointment against the wedding day, to be one of the showmakers. I do not say shoemakers, and yet they be honest men.

DILIGENCE.

I understand thee now, and thou shalt want neither money nor furniture for that. Sawest thou not Fraud lately?

SIMPLICITY.

No, a fox ferret him! for if I could find him, I would make him fast enough for cosening me of ten shillings for certain copper buttons and rings. I thought to have been a haberdasher, and he hath made me worse than a haymaker.

DILIGENCE.

I may say to thee in counsel, but I'll have no words of it, he hath overreach'd me too: but if thou spy him first, let me understand; and if I see him first, thou shalt have knowledge; for I'll tell thee--but laugh not--he showed me a purse with a hundred pound in angels, which he would deliver me in pawn to be my true prisoner, because, for his credit, he was loth to go with me through the streets to Newgate. I refused it at first; but at last by his entreaty I was content to take his pawn, and thinking he had given me the right purse of gold, he had another like it, which he gave me with counters, and so went away. I never did see him since; but, mum, no words of it.

SIMPLICITY.

No words, quotha! that's a stale jest; would you be cosen'd so?

DILIGENCE.

Well, so it is now. Come, follow me for thy furniture and money.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter DISSIMULATION _and_ FRAUD _in caps, and as the rest must be for the show_.

DISSIMULATION.

The coast is clear: come, follow, Fraud, and fear not, for who can decipher us in this disguise? Thus may we shuffle into the show with the rest, and see and not be seen, doing as they do, that are attired like ourselves.

FRAUD.

That is, to stand amongst them, and take as they take, torches or anything to furnish the show. Now, if we can pass but this day unseen, let to-morrow shift for itself as it may. I promise thee, Dissimulation, thou art very formal.

DISSIMULATION.

Not more than thyself, Fraud. I would thou sawest thy picture.

FRAUD.

Picture here, picture there! let us follow our business.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter a Wench, singing.

_Strew the fair flowers and herbs that be green,

To grace the gayest wedding that ever was seen.
If London list to look, the streets were ne'er so clean,
Except it was, when best it might, in welcome of our Queen.
Three lovely lords of London shall three London ladies wed:
Strew sweetest flowers upon the stones; perfume the bridal bed.

Strew the fair flowers, &c_.

Enter first DILIGENCE _with a truncheon, then a boy with_ POLICY'S
lance and shield: then POLICY _and_ LOVE, _hand in hand: then_
FRAUD _in a blue gown, red cap, and red sleeves, with_ AMBITION'S
lance and shield: then a boy with POMP'S _lance and shield: then_
POMP _and_ LUCRE, _hand in hand: then_ DISSIMULATION _with_ PRIDE'S
lance and shield: then a boy with PLEASURE'S _lance and shield:
then_ PLEASURE _and_ CONSCIENCE, _hand in hand: then_ SIMPLICITY,
with TYRANNY'S _lance and shield. They all going out_, NEMO
stays and speaks.

NEMO.

These lords and ladies thus to church are gone,
An honoured action to solemnise there;
With greater joy will they return anon,
Than Caesar did in Rome his laurel wear.
Lord Policy hath Love unto his ppeer;
Lord Pomp hath Lucre to maintain his port;
Lord Pleasure Conscience, to direct his sport.
Usury is marked to be known;
Dissimulation like a shadow fleets,
And Simony is out of knowledge grown,
And Fraud unfound in London, but by fits.
Simplicity with Painful Penury sits;
For Hospitality, that was wont to feed him,
Was slain long since, and now the poor do need him.
That Hospitality was an honest man,
But had few friends, alas! if he had any;
But Usury, which cut his throat as then,
Was succoured and sued for by many.
Would Liberality had been by thy side,
Then, Hospitality, thou hadst never died.
But what mean I, one of the marriage train,
To mourn for him will ne'er be had again?
His ghost may walk to mock the people rude:
Ghosts are but shadows, and do sense delude
I talk too long; for, lo, this lovely crew
Are coming back, and have performed their due.

[_Return as they went, saving that the blue gowns, that bare
shields, must now bear torches_: SIMPLICITY _going about
spies_ FRAUD, _and falleth on his knees before_ PLEASURE _and_
CONSCIENCE, _saying_--

SIMPLICITY.

O Lady Conscience, that art married to Lord Pleasure,
Help thy servant, Simplicity, to recover his lost treasure.
A boon, my lords, all for Love and Lucre[s] sake;
Even as you are true lords, help a false lout to take.

PLEASURE.

Thou shalt have help: speak, what is the matter?

SIMPLICITY.

See you yon fellow with the torch in his hand?
E'en the falsest villain that is in this land.
Let him be laid hold on, that he run not away,
And then ye shall hear what I have to say.

PLEASURE.

Diligence, bring him hither. Good lords and ladies, stay.

SIMPLICITY.

O Master Fraud, welcome to the butts:
Now I'll have my ten shillings in spite of your guts.
The French canker consume ye, you were an old Frenchman!
De gol' button, gol' ringa, bugla lace! you cosen'd me then.
My lords, I beseech ye, that at Tyburn he may totter,
For instead of gold the villain sold me copper.

PLEASURE.

Is this true, Master Skill?

FRAUD.

It is true in a sort, my lord. I thought to be pleasant with him, being
my old acquaint'ce, and disguis'd myself like an old French artificer;
and having a few copper knacks, I sold them to him, to make sport, for
ten shillings, which money I am content to pay him again: so shall he
have no loss, though we have made a little sport.

PLEASURE.

First, give him an angel before my face. Simplicity, art thou pleased?

SIMPLICITY.

Truly I am pleas'd to take a good angel for ten shillings, speciously
of such a debtor as Master Fraud; but now I am to be pleas'd otherwise,
that is, to see him punished. I promise ye the people love him well,
for they would leave work and make half-holiday to see him hanged.

PLEASURE.

That his punishment may please thee the better, thou shalt punish him
thyself: he shall be bound fast to yon post, and thou shalt be
blindfold, and with thy torch shalt run, as it were, at tilt, charging
thy light against his lips, and so (if thou canst) burn out his tongue,
that it never speak more guile.

SIMPLICITY.

O, *_singulariter nominativo_*, wise Lord Pleasure: *_genitivo_*, bind him
to that post: *_dativo_*, give me my torch: *_accusativo_*, for I say he's
a cosener: *_vocativo_*, O, give me room to run at him: *_ablativo_*, take
and blind me. *_Pluraliter per omnes casus_*, Laugh all you to see me, in
my choler adust, To burn and to broil that false Fraud to dust.

[*_Bind_* FRAUD, *_blind_* SIMPLICITY: *_turn_* him thrice about; set his
face towards the contrary post, at which he runs, and all-to burns
it. DISSIMULATION, *_standing behind_* FRAUD, *_unbinds_* him, and while
all the rest behold SIMPLICITY, *_they two slip away_*; PLEASURE,
missing FRAUD, *_saith_*--

PLEASURE.

Wisely perform'd! but soft, sirs, where is Fraud?

O notable^[287] villain! gone, whiles we beheld
The other. Who loos'd him? Who let him slip?
Well, one day he will pay for all. Unblind Simplicity.

SIMPLICITY.

How now! Have I heated his lips? Have I warm'd his nose, and scorched
his face? Let me see: how looks the villain? Have I burned him?

DILIGENCE.

Thou hast done more; for thou hast quite consumed him into nothing.
Look, here is no sign of him; no, not so much as his ashes.

SIMPLICITY.

Very few ashes, if there be any. Ye may see what a hot thing anger is:
I think that the torch did not waste him so much as my wrath. Well, all
London, nay, all England, is beholding to me for putting Fraud out of
this world. I have consumed him and brought him to nothing, and I'll
tread his ashes under my feet, that no more Frauds shall ever spring of
them. But let me see: I shall have much anger; for the tanners will miss
him in their leather, the tailors in their cutting out of garments, the
shoemaker in closing, the tapsters in filling pots, and the very
oystermen to mingle their oysters at Billingsgate: yet it is no matter;
the world is well-rid of such a crafty knave.

PLEASURE.

Well, now thou art satisfied, I wish all here as well contented;
And we, my lords, that praise this happy day,
Fall we on knees, and humbly let us pray.

POMP.

First that from heaven upon our gracious queen
All manner blessings may be multiplied,
That as her reign most prosperous hath been,
During world's length so may it still abide,
And after that with saints be glorified,
Lord! grant her health, heart's-ease, joy and mirth,
And heaven at last, after long life on earth.

POLICY.

Her council wise and noble of this land
Bless and preserve, O Lord! with Thy right hand.

PLEASURE.

On all the rest that in this land do dwell
Chiefly in London, Lord! pour down Thy grace,
Who living in Thy fear, and dying well,
In heaven with angels they may have a place.

FINIS.

A KNACK TO KNOW A KNAVE.

_EDITION.

A most pleasant and merie new Comedie, intituled A Knacke to Knowe a Knaue. Newlie set forth, as it hath sundrie tymes bene played by Ed: Allen and his Companie. With Kemps applauded Merrimentes of the men of Goteham, in receiuing the King into Goteham. Imprinted at London by Richard Iones, dwelling at the signe of the Rose and Crowne, nere Holborne Bridge_, 1594. 4. Black letter.

A MERRY KNACK TO KNOW A KNAVE.

Enter KING EDGAR, BISHOP DUNSTAN, and PERIN, a courtier.

KING.

Dunstan, how highly are we bound to praise
The Eternal God that still provides for us,
And gives us leave to rule in this our land.
Likewise Vespasian, Rome's rich emperor,
Suppressing sin, that daily reigns in us.
First, murther we reward with present death,
And those that do commit felonious crimes
Our laws of England do award them death:
And he that doth despoil a virgin's chastity
Must likewise suffer death by law's decree,
And that decree is irrevocable.
Then, as I am God's vicegerent here on earth,
By God's appointment here to reign and rule,
So must I seek to cut abuses down, that, like
To Hydra's heads, daily grows up, one in another's
Place, and therein makes the land infectious.
Which if with good regard we look not to,
We shall, like Sodom, feel that fiery doom
That God in justice did inflict on them.

DUNSTAN.

Your grace's care herein I much commend,
And England hath just cause to praise the Lord,
That sent so good a king to govern them.
Your life may be a lantern to the state,
By perfect sign of humility.
How blest had Sodom been in sight of God,
If they had had so kind a governor;
They had then undoubtedly escap'd that doom,
That God in justice did inflict on them.
Then, England, kneel upon thy hearty knee,
And praise that God that so provides for thee.
And, virtuous prince, thou Solomon of our age,
Whose years, I hope, shall double Nestor's reign,
And bring a thousand profits to the land,
Myself (dread prince), in token of my love
And dutiful obedience to your grace,
Will study daily, as my duty wills,
To root sins from the flourishing commonwealth,
That Fame, in every angle of the world,
May sound due praise of England's virtuous[288] king.

KING.

Dunstan, live thou, and counsel still the king
To maintain justice, were it on himself,
Rather than, soothing him in his abuse,
To see subversion of his commonwealth.
I tell thee, Dunstan, thou hast pleased the king,
And proved thyself a virtuous councillor:
Thy counsel is to me as North-Star light,
That guides the sailor to his wished port;
For by that star he is so comforted,
That he sails dangerless on dangerous seas,
And in his deepest sadness comforts him.
So Dunstan's knowledge is that star of joy,
That will with help conduct me to my happiness.

HONESTY.

And yet thou art not happy, Edgar,
Because that sins, like swarms, remain in thee.

KING.

Why, 'tis impossible; for I have studied still,
To root abuses from the commonwealth,
That may infect the king or commonalty.
Therefore, base peasant, wilful as thou art,
I tell thee troth, thou hast displeas'd the king.

HONESTY.

Nay, the king hath displeas'd himself,
In trusting every one that speaks him fair:
For through fair words kings many times are fain
To countenance knaves by their authority.
I will not say your grace doth so--

PERIN.

No, sir; you were not best.

HONESTY.

Why, if I should, I might make good my word,
And find a knave, I fear, before I part.

KING.

Why, what art thou?

HONESTY.

Marry, I go plain, and my name is Honesty:
A friend to your grace, but a foe to flatterers,
And one that hath _a knack to know a knave_.

PERIN.

As how, sir?
By art, or by some foolish gift God hath given you?
You are some physician, or skill'd in phys'ognomy, or in palmistry;
For, I am sure, you can never do it by astronomy,
Because there are no stars to know a knave.

HONESTY.

True, but many an honest man knows a knave to his cost,
And is neither physician, or skill'd physiognomer, palmester,

nor astronomer,
But a plain man of the country, like me,
That knows a knave, if he do but see his cap.

PERIN.

That were pretty, i'faith, to see. Honesty know a knave by his cap:
'Tis more than I can do with all the skill I have.
But tell me, I pray thee, how I should know a knave.

HONESTY.

I believe you well; for offenders never bewray their offences,
Till the law find them, and punish them.
But you would fain tell how to know a knave?
Then thus: the first man you meet in the morning,
If he salute you, draw near him,
And smell to his hat, and after smell to your own;
And, my cap to a noble, if his smell like yours, he is a knave.
I think I spoke with you now!

PERIN.

Base villain, were it not that the king's presence
Doth privilege thy presumption, I would teach you to jest
with your fellows.

KING.

Forbear, Honesty; thou art a good plain fellow,
And I commend thy wit, that hast such ways to know a knave.

HONESTY.

Honesty is plain, my lord, but no good fellow,
For good fellows be purse-takers now-a-days:
And there be so many of such good fellows,
That Honesty may walk the streets without company.
Not that there wants company, but honest company, I mean;
Yet Honesty can clap a knave on the shoulder for all his bravery.

PERIN.

Why, base companion, mean you me?

HONESTY.

Not base, sir, because I was truly begotten,
For Honesty may be suspected, but never detected.
But you think I had a bailiff to my father, as you had,
And that my mother could return a writ of error,
As yours did, when such a gallant as you were gotten.

KING.

Believe me, Perin, he hath touch'd you now;
And I perceive, though Honesty be simple,
Yet many times he speaks truth.

HONESTY.

True, if it please your grace, for honest men will not lie.
But, if your grace vouchsafe to give me leave,
You shall see me find more knaves than one,
If my cunning fail me not; or else say Honesty had no honesty.

KING.

But tell me, Dunstan, how thinkest thou of this motion?

Were it not good, thinkest thou, we gave him leave
To stifle such caterpillars as corrupt the commonwealth?
For many times such simple men as he
Bewray much matter in simplicity.
Then, tell me, Dunstan, what thinkest thou of his motion?

DUNSTAN.

If it please your grace to think it good,
Dunstan will say, as once Hephaestion did,
When Alexander wan rich Macedon;[289]
That whatsoe'er the king himself thought meet,
He would in dutiful obedience yield unto.
And so saith Dunstan to your majesty:
For many times such simple men bring that to pass,
That wiser heads cannot attain unto;
For doubtless he hath some device in hand,
Whereby to find such subtle knavery.

KING.

Well, Dunstan, then, as thou hast counsell'd me,
I will for once make proof of Honesty.
Sirrah: come hither:
In hope you will, as your profession is
In honest sort to find deceivers out,
And, finding them, to give us notice straight,
That we may punish them for their amiss.
We give thee leave to work what means thou may'st,
So it be not prejudice to the state nor us.

HONESTY.

My gracious lord, if Honesty offend
In anything that he hath promised,
And do not, as your grace hath given in charge,
Stifle such caterpillars as corrupt the state,
Let Honesty receive such punishment,
As he deserves that leses to the king.[290]

KING.

Honesty, it is enough; but tell me now
What moved thee first to undertake this task
To visit us? Speak truth, dissemble not.

HONESTY.

If I should tell your grace, 'twould make you laugh
To hear how Honesty was entertain'd.
Poor, lame, and blind, when I came once ashore,
Lord! how they came in flocks to visit me;
The shepherd with his hook, and thrasher with his flail,
The very pedlar with his dog, and the tinker with his mail:
Then comes a soldier counterfeit, and with him was his jug,[291]
And Will, the whipper of the dogs, had got a bouncing trug;
And cogging Dick was in the crew that swore he came from France:
He swore that in the king's defence he lost his arm by chance;
And yet in conscience, if I were put to swear,
I would be bound to lay a pound, the knave was never there.
And hap'ning 'mongst this company by chance one day,
I had no sooner nam'd my name, but they ran all away.
But now I will to my task, and leave your grace;
And so I take my conge of your majesty.

[Exit_.

KING.

Honesty, farewell, and look unto your charge.

PERIN.

My gracious lord, if I might not offend,
I would entreat a favour at your hand.
'Tis so, I heard of late, my gracious lord,
That my kind father lay at point of death,
And if, my lord, I should not visit him,
The world, I fear, would find great fault with me.

KING.

Nay, Perin, if your business be of weight,
We are content to give you leave to go:
Provided this, that you return again,
When you have seen your father and your friends.

PERIN.

My gracious lord, I will not stay there long,
Only but see my father and return again:
Till when, my gracious lord, I take my leave.

[Exit_.

KING.

Perin, farewell.
And tell me, Dunstan, now we are alone,
What dost thou think of beauteous Alfrida,
For she is reported to be passing fair?
They say she hath a white pit in her chin,
That makes her look like to the Queen of Love,[292]
When she was dallying with Endymion.
Believe me, Dunstan, if she be so fair,
She will serve our turn to make a concubine:
Methinks 'tis good some time to have a love,
To sport withal, and pass away the time.

DUNSTAN.

Ay, my good lord; Dunstan could well allow of it,
If so your grace would marry Alfrida.

KING.

What?

Wouldst thou have me marry her I never saw?
Then men would say I doted on a wench:
But, Dunstan, I have found a policy,
Which must indeed be followed to the full.

Enter ETHENWALD.

Earl Ethenwald, welcome: I thought to send for you.
You must go do a message for us now:
'Tis nothing but to woo a wench, which you
Can do. You must not woo her for yourself,
But me. Tell her, I sit and pine like Tantalus;
And, if you can, strain forth a tear for me.
Tell her she shall be honoured in my love,
And bear a child that one day may be king.

Bid her not stand on terms, but send me word,
Whether she be resolved to love me, yea or no.
If she say no, tell her I can enforce her love:
Or 'tis no matter, though you leave that out,
And tell her this--we hear she is as wise,
As eloquent and full of oratory,
As Thaly[293] was, daughter of Jupiter,
Whose speeches was so pleasing 'mong the Greeks,
That she was term'd a second Socrates.
For some report, women love to be praised;
Then in my cause, I pray thee, love thou Alfrida.

ETHENWALD.

My gracious lord, and Ethenwald shall not fail
To show his humble duty to your majesty.
I will, my lord, woo her in your behalf, plead love
For you, and strain a sigh to show your passions:
I will say she is fairer than the dolphin's eye,
At whom amaz'd the night-stars stand and gaze.
Then will I praise her chin and cheek, and pretty hand,
Long, made like Venus when she us'd the harp,
When Mars was revelling in Jove's high house.
Besides, my lord, I will say she hath a pace
Much like to Juno in Ida[294] vale,
When Argus watch'd the heifer on the mount.
These words, my lord, will make her love, I am sure;
If these will not, my lord, I have better far.

KING.

Nay, this is well: now, Ethenwald, be gone,
For I shall long to hear of thy return.

ETHENWALD.

My gracious lord, I humbly take my leave.
[Exit.]

KING.

Ethenwald, farewell. Dunstan, how likest thou this?
What, have I done well in sending Ethenwald?
But in good time, how if he like the maid;
Believe me, Dunstan, then my game is marr'd.

DUNSTAN.

I do not think, my gracious lord,
My nephew Ethenwald bears that bad mind,
For hitherto he hath been termed just,
And clept[295] your grace his gracious favourer.

KING.

True, Dunstan; yet have I read that love
Hath made the son deceive the father oft.
But, Dunstan, leaving this, come, let's to court.

DUNSTAN.

I will attend upon your majesty.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter] BAILIFF of Hexham, and his four sons; to wit, a

COURTIER, _a_ PRIEST, _a_ CONEYCATCHER, _and a_ FARMER.

BAILIFF.

My sons, you see how age decays my state,
And that my life, like snow before the sun,
'Gins to dissolve into that substance now,
From whose enclosure grew my fire of life;
The earth I mean, sweet mother of us all,
Whom death, authorised by heaven's high power,
Shall bring at last, from whence at first I came.
Yet, ere I yield myself to death, my sons,
Give ear, and hear what rules I set you down.
And first to thee, my son, that liv'st by wit:
I know thou hast so many honest sleights,
To shift and cosen smoothly on thy wit,
To cog and lie, and brave it with the best,
That 'twere but labour lost to counsel thee.
And therefore to the next--
Walter, that seems in show a husbandman--
My son, when that thy master trusts thee most,
And thinks thou dealest as truly as himself,
Be thou the first to work deceit to him;
So by that means thou may'st enrich thyself,
And live at pleasure when thy master's dead:
And when to market thou art sent with wool,
Put sand amongst it, and 'twill make it weigh--
The weight twice double than it did before:
The overplus is thine into thy purse--
But now, my son, that keeps the court;
Be thou a means to set the peers at strife,
And curry favour, for the Commons' love.
If any, but in conference, name the king,
Inform his majesty they envy him;
And if the king but move, or speak to thee,
Kneel on both knees, and say, God save your majesty.
If any man be favoured by the king,
Speak thou him fair, although in heart thou envy him,
But who is next?

PRIEST.

That am I, father, that use the word of God,
And live only by the heavenly manna.

BAILIFF.

Who? the Priest? Give ear, my son,
I have a lesson yet in store for thee.
Thou must, my son, make show of holiness;
And blind the world with thy hypocrisy;
And sometime give a penny to the poor,
But let it be in the church or market-place,
That men may praise thy liberality.
Speak against usury, yet forsake no pawns,
So thou may'st gain three shillings in the pound.
Warn thou the world from sin and vile excess,
And now and then speak against drunkenness:
So by this means thou shalt be termed wise,
And with thy pureness blind the people's eyes.
But now, my sons, discourse to me in brief
How you have lived, and how you mean to die.

CONEYCATCHER.

Then, father, thus I live that use my wit:
Unto myself I love still to be wise;
For when I am driven to shift for meat or coin,
Or gay apparel to maintain me brave,
Then do I flaunt it out about the 'Change,
As if I were some landed gentleman;
And, falling in with some rich merchant there,
I take commodities for six months' day:
The bill being made, I must set to my hand;
Then, if I pay not, they may burn the band.[296]

FARMER.

Then, father, hark how I have profited--
Walter, your son that keeps the country--
I have raised the markets and oppress'd the poor,
And made a thousand go from door to door.
And why did I, think you, use this extremity?
Because I would have corn enough to feed the enemy.
Father, you know we have but a while to live,
Then, while we live, let each man shift for one;
For he that cannot make shift in the world,
They say he's unworthy to live in it:
And he that lives must still increase his store,
For he that hath most wealth of all desireth more.

PERIN.

Brethren, you have spoken well, I must needs say;
But now give ear to me, that keeps the court.
Father, I live as Aristippus did,
And use my wits to flatter with the king.
If any in private conference name the king,
I straight inform his grace they envy him.
Did Sinon live, with all his subtlety
He could not tell a flattering tale more cunningly.
Sometime I move the king to be effeminate,
And spend his time with some coy courtesan.
Thus with the king I curry favour still,
Though with my heart I wish him any ill:
And sometime I can counterfeit his hand
And seal, and borrow money of the commonalty;
And thus I live and flaunt it with the best,
And dice and card inferior unto none:
And none dares speak against me in the court,
Because they know the king doth favour me.

PRIEST.

And I, among my brethren and my friends,
Do still instruct 'em with my doctrine,
And Yea and Nay goes through the world with us.
Fie, not an oath we swear for twenty pound:
Brethren, say we, take heed by Adam's fall;
For by his sins we are condemned all.
Thus preach we still unto our brethren,
Though in our heart we never mean the thing:
Thus do we blind the world with holiness,
And so by that are termed pure Precisians.

BAILIFF.

Full well and wisely have you said, my sons,
And I commend you for your forward minds,
That in your lives bewray whose sons ye are.
Here have I been a bailiff threescore years,
And us'd exaction on the dwellers-by;
For if a man were brought before my face
For cosenage, theft, or living on his wit:
For counterfeiting any hand or seals,
The matter heard, the witness brought to me,
I took a bribe, and set the prisoners free:
So by such dealings I have got the wealth,
Which I would have disburs'd among you all,
With this proviso, that you all shall live,
And lead such lives as I have set you down.
Carve to yourselves, and care not what they say,
That bid you fear the fearful judgment-day.
Live to yourselves, while you have time to live:
Get what you can, but see ye nothing give.
But hark, my sons: me thinks I hear a noise,
And ghastly visions make me timorous.
Ah! see, my sons, where death, pale Death, appears,
To summon me before a fearful Judge.
Methinks Revenge stands with an iron whip,
And cries, Repent, or I will punish thee.
My heart is hardened, I cannot repent,
And I am damned to ever-burning fire.
Soul, be thou safe, and body fly to hell. [_He dieth_.

Enter DEVIL, _and carry him away_.

CONEYCATCHER.

Brother, why do you not read to my father?

PRIEST.

Truly, my book of exhortation is
At my place of exercise, and without it
I can do nothing. God's peace be with him!

[_Exeunt_.

Enter the KING, PHILARCHUS _and his_ FATHER, DUNSTAN
and attendants.

KING.

Father, say on; for now my leisure serves,
And Edgar gives thee leave to tell thy mind;
For I perceive thine eyes are full of tears,
Which shows that many inward passions trouble thee.
If any here have wrong'd thine aged years,
In keeping that from thee that is thy due,
Name but the man, and, as I am England's king,
Thou shalt have all the favour I can show.

FATHER.

Then, virtuous prince, mirror of courtesy,
Whose judgments, and whose laws for government,
And punishing of every foul abuse,
Is like the judgment of great Alexander,

Third of that name, whom some termed the Severe;
Or like Vespasian, Rome's virtuous governor,
Who, for a blow his son did give a swain,
Did straight command that he should lose his hand.
Then, virtuous Edgar, be Vespasian once,
In giving sentence on a graceless child.
Know, virtuous prince, that in my pride of years,
When lustful pleasure prick'd my wanton mind,
Even in the April of my flourishing time,
I was betroth'd and wedded to a wife,
By whom too soon I had that unkind boy,
Whose disobedience to his aged sire
The Lord will plague with torments worse than death.
This disobedient child, nay, base extravagant,[297]
Whom I with care did nourish to this state,
Puff'd with a pride that upstart courtiers use,
And seeing that I was brought to poverty,
He did refuse to know me for his sire;
And when I challenged him by nature's laws
To yield obedience to his father's age,
He told me straight he took it in great scorn
To be begot by one so base as I.
My age, that ill could brook this sharp reply,
Did with this wand, my lord, reach him a blow;
But he, contrary laws of God and men,
Did strike me such a blow in vild disdain,
That with the stroke I fell to earth again.

KING.

Unkind Philarchus, how hast thou misdona,
In wilful disobedience to thy sire!
Art thou grown proud, because I favoured thee?
Why, I can quickly make thee bare again,
And then, I think, being in thy former state,
Thou wilt remember who thy father was.
And, gentle Sophocles, in good time I recount
Thy ancient saying, not so old as true,
For saith [he], He that hath many children,
Shall never be without some mirth,
Nor die without some sorrow; for if they
Be virtuous, he shall have cause to rejoice,
But if vicious, stubborn, or disobedient,
Ever to live in continual sadness.
I am sorry, Philarchus, that my favours
Have made thee insolent: well, I will see now if
My frowns will make thee penitent.
Now, father, see how Nature 'gins to work,
And how salt tears, like drops of pearly[298] dew,
Falls from his eyes, as sorrowing his amiss.

PHILARCHUS.

Most gracious prince, vouchsafe to hear me speak.
I cannot but confess, most gracious sovereign,
That I have err'd in being obstinate
In wilful disobedience to my sire
Wherein I have wrong'd nature and your majesty.
But I am not the first, whom oversight
Hath made forgetful of a father's love.
But father's love shall never be forgot,

If he but deign to pardon my amiss:
But if your wrath will noways be appeased,
Rip up this breast, where is enclos'd that heart,
That bleeds with grief to think on my amiss.
Ah, father! pardon, sweet father, pardon me.

FATHER.

No, graceless imp, degenerate and unkind,
Thou art no son of mine, but tiger's whelp,
That hast been fost' red by some lion's pap:
But as the tall'st ash is cut down, because
It yields no fruit, and an unprofitable cow,
Yielding no milk, is slaughtered, and the idle drone,
Gathering no honey, is contemned;
So ungrateful children, that
Will yield no natural obedience, must be
Cut off, as unfit to bear the name [of] Christians,
Whose lives digress both from reason and humanity.
But as thou hast dealt unnaturally with me,
So I resolve to pull my heart from thee.
Therefore, dread prince, vouchsafe to pity me,
And grant I may have justice on my son.

KING.

Dunstan, how counsellest thou the king in this?
I promise thee, I am sorry for the youth,
Because in heart I ever wish'd him well.

DUNSTAN.

My gracious lord, if I might counsel you,
I would counsel you to judge as he deserves.
He that disdains his father in his want,
And wilfully will disobey his sire,
Deserves, my lord, by God's and nature's laws,
To be rewarded with extremest ills:
Then, as your grace hath 'stablish'd laws for government,
So let offenders feel the penalties.

KING.

Ay, Dunstan; now thou speakest as fits a councillor,
But not as friend to him whom Edgar loves.
Father, what wouldest thou have me do in this?
Thou seest thy son is sorry for his fault,
And I am sure thou would not wish his death,
Because a father's care commands the contrary.
Then, gentle father, let me plead for him,
And be his pledge for shunning wilful ills.

FATHER.

Will Edgar now be found a partial judge,
In pleading pardon for a graceless child?
Is it not true,
That one coal of fire will burn many houses,
And one small brack in finest cloth that is,
Will both disgrace and blemish the whole piece?
So wilful children, spotted with one ill,
Are apt to fall to twenty thousand more;
And therefore, mighty sovereign, leave to speak,
And pass just sentence on Philarchus' life.

PHILARCHUS.

My life? dear father, that sentence were too hard:
Let me be banish'd from my country's bounds,
And live as exil'd in some wilderness,
Barr'd from society and sight of men;
Or let me hazard fortunes on the seas,
In setting me aboard some helmless ship,
That either I may split upon some rock,
Or else be swallowed in the purple main,
Rather than die in presence of my king,
Or bring that sorrow to your aged years.
If this suffice not, then let me be arm'd,
And left alone among ten thousand foes;
And if my weapon cannot set me free,
Let them be means to take my life from me.

KING.

Father, what say you to Philarchus now?
Are you content to pardon his amiss?
Dunstan, I promise thee, it grieves me much,
To hear what piteous moan Philarchus makes:
Methinks I see sad sorrow in his face,
And his humility argues him penitent.
But, father, for I will not be the judge,
To doom Philarchus either life or death,
Here, take my robes, and judge him as thou wilt.

FATHER.

Then, virtuous prince, seeing you will have it so,
Although the place be far unfit for me,
I am content your grace shall have your mind.
Thus, like an ass attired in costly robes,
Or like a ring thrust in a foul sow's snout,
So do these robes and sceptre fit mine age.
But for I am judge, Philarchus, stand thou forth,
And know, as there is nothing so good, but it hath some inconvenience,
So there is no man whatsoever without some fault:
Yet this is no argument to maintain thy wilful disobedience.
As the rose hath his prickle, the finest velvet his brack,
The fairest flower his bran, so the best wit his wanton will.
But, Philarchus, thou hast been more than wanton,
Because thou hast disobeyed the laws both of God and nature:
The tears that thou hast shed might warrant me,
That thou art penitent for thy amiss,
Besides, my son, a father's natural care
Doth challenge pardon for thy first amiss.

KING.

Father, well said: I see thou pitiest him.

FATHER.

Nay, stay, my lord:
This did I speak as father to Philarchus;
But now, my lord, I must speak as a judge.
And now, Philarchus, mark what I set down.
Because thou hast been disobedient,
And wronged thy aged father wilfully,
And given a blow to him that nourished thee,

And thereby hast incurr'd thy mother's curse,
And in that curse to feel the wrath of God,
And so be hated on the earth 'mongst men;
And for I will be found no partial judge,
Because I sit as God's vicegerent now,
Here I do banish thee from England's bounds,
And never to----

KING.

There stay: now, let me speak the rest.
Philarchus, thou hast heard thy father's doom,
And what thy disobedience moved him to;
Yet for thou wast once bedfellow to the king,
And that I loved thee as my second self, thou shall
Go live in France, in Flanders, Scotland, or elsewhere,
And have [an] annual pension sent to thee.
There may'st thou live in good and honest sort,
Until thou be recalled by the king.

PHILARCHUS.

Thanks, gracious king, for this great favour shown,
And may I never live, if I forget
Your grace's kind and unexpected love,
In favouring him whom all the world forsook:
For which my orisons shall still be spent,
Heavens may protect your princely majesty.
And, loving father, here upon my knee,
Sorry for my amiss, I take my leave
Both of yourself, my king, and countrymen.
England, farewell, more dearer unto me,
Than pen can write, or heart can think of thee.

[_Exit_.

KING.

Farewell, Philarchus; and, father, come to Court;
And, for Philarchus' sake, thou shalt not want.

FATHER.

Thanks, virtuous king; I humbly take my leave.

[_Exit_.

KING.

Dunstan, I promise thee, I was like to weep,
To hear what piteous moan Philarchus made.

DUNSTAN.

Here your grace hath showed yourself to be
Edgar, so famed for love and virtuous government;
And I pray God your grace may live to be
Long England's king to reign with verity.

[_Exeunt_.

[_Enter_ HONESTY.]

HONESTY.

'Tis strange to see how men of honesty
Are troubled many times with subtle knavery:
For they have so many cloaks to colour their abuses,

That Honesty may well suspect them, but dares not detect them;
For if he should, they have by their knavery
Got so many friends, that though never so bad,
They will stand in defence with the best.
I was at the water-side, where I saw such deceit--
I dare not say knavery--in paying and receiving
Custom for outlandish ware, that I wond'red to see,
Yet durst not complain of: the reason was,
They were countenanced with men of great wealth,
Richer than I a great deal, but not honester.
Then I went into the markets, where I saw petty knavery
In false-measuring corn, and in scales,
That wanted no less than two ounces in the pound.
But all this was nothing, scant worth the talking of;
But when I came to the Exchange, I espied in a corner of an aisle
An arch-cosener; a coneycatcher, I mean,
Which used such gross cosening, as you would wonder to hear.
But here he comes fine and brave:
Honesty marks him down for a knave.

[Enter_ CONEYCATCHER.]

CONEYCATCHER.

Why so, 'tis an ill wind blows no man to profit;
And he is but a fool that, when all fails, cannot live upon his wit.
I have attired myself like a very civil citizen,
To draw fourscore pound from a couple of fools.
A gentleman, having made over his land by deed of gift,
Means to cosen a broker with a false conveyance.
All's one to me; I shall lose nothing by the bargain.
But here comes the broker: I will walk, as I regarded him not.

[Enter_ BROKER.]

BROKER.

God save you, sir: I see you keep your hour.
But hear you, sir; hath the gentleman that conveyance
You told me of ready? I hope, sir, I
Shall need misdoubt no deceit in the matter,
For I mean plainly, and so, I hope, do you.

CONEYCATCHER.

Sir, as concerning the conveyance, I assure you,
'Tis so good, and he hath such good interest in it,
That, were I furnish'd with so much money presently,
No man in the world should have it but myself.
And for own part, you need not suspect me,
For I would not discredit myself for a thousand pound;
For the gentleman is my very friend,
And, being in some want, is enforc'd to pawn land
For the supplying of a present necessity.
Tush, the interest is good, I warrant you.

HONESTY.

And that's much worth: some will say,
A crafty knave needs no broker,
But here is a crafty knave and a broker too:
There wants not a knave, then, I imagine. [Aside_

BROKER.

But tell me, sir, when did he promise to be here?
What, will it be long, ere he come?

CONEYCATCHER.

Nay, it will not be long, ere he come,
For the conveyance was made, ere I came from the scrivener's,
And in good time here he comes. God save you, sir:

[_Enter_ GENTLEMAN.]

Here is the man I told you of, that would lend you the money.
He is a very honest man; and but for my sake, I know,
He would not do it. But is the land despatch'd another way?
If you be ready to seal, he is ready with the money.
Hear you, sir, you have a good bargain; despatch it quickly.

BROKER.

Being advertised by my friend, this honest merchant,
That you have certain land to pawn for present money,
Now, I had not so much money of mine own at this time,
But I made means to borrow so much of a friend of mine,
Because I would not have you fall in bad men's handling.

GENTLEMAN.

I thank you, sir, for this unspeakable favour.
If you deal amiss with me, I am undone for ever.

BROKER.

I would not deal amiss with any man for a thousand pound.

HONESTY.

And yet he will cut a man's throat for twelve-pence.
Here is a cluster of knaves; here lacks but the baily of Hexham.
[Aside.]

BROKER.

Well, sir, here is the money: will it please you seal the assurance.

GENTLEMAN.

With all my heart.

HONESTY.

God save her, sirs, and her good friends; her is a poor Welshman,
come as far as Carnarvon, in Wales, to receive a little money, and
here a has paid her I cannot tell what.
[_To_ BROKER.] Here, you master; what, is it not brass money?

BROKER.

No, honest fellow; 'tis a good angel in gold.

HONESTY.

Who told him my name? [_Aside_.]
Hear you, master: a has a great deal more in her bosom, but a will
take her leave.

CONEYCATCHER.

Nay, stay and dine with me.
I must fetch him over for all his gold. [_Aside_.]

HONESTY.

Marry, I thank her, good master: I will wait upon her, I warrant you.

BROKER.

Now, sir, have you seal'd and subscribed?

GENTLEMAN.

I have, sir.

BROKER.

And you deliver this as your deed to my use?

GENTLEMAN.

With all my heart, sir; and hope you will use me well.

BROKER.

We will talk of that another time: here is your money.

GENTLEMAN.

I thank you, sir: I'll be gone.

CONEYCATCHER.

Hear you, sir; was not this bravely done? [_Aside_.]

GENTLEMAN.

Excellent: hold, here is forty pound, as I promised thee.

CONEYCATCHER.

I thank you, sir. Do you hear, sir, you have got a thousand pound by the bargain; but much good may it do you.

[_Exit_.]

BROKER.

God-a-mercy; and here's forty pound for thy pains.
Such another match, and I'll give thee a hundred pound.

[_Exit_.]

CONEYCATCHER.

I thank you, sir, God b'w'y'. Now to my Welshman.
Sirrah, let me see thy piece of gold;
I'll tell thee whether it be weight or no.
Hast thou any more? I'll give thee white money for it.

HONESTY.

Yes, a has a great deal more in her bosom,
But a will have no whit' money: O, a loves red money.

CONEYCATCHER.

Well, I'll keep them for thee, till thou come to my house.

HONESTY.

Why, Cutbert, wilt thou never leave thy old knavery?
Why, we should gree together like bells,
If thou wert but hanged first.
Why, we are as near kin together
As the cates[299] of Banbury be to the bells of Lincoln.
Why, man, we are all birds of a feather,
And whosoever says nay, we will hold together.

Come, you mad slave, thou dost not know me.
Tush! I have done many better tricks than this.

CONEYCATCHER.

Why, you base slave, take you me for your fellow?
Why, I am of good reputation in the city,
And held in account with the best.

HONESTY.

And yet you are Cutbert the Coneycatcher,
The bailiff's son of Hexham, whose father, being dead,
The devil carried to hell for his knavery.
How sayest thou, art not thou his son?
This grave black cloak makes you so proud,
You have forgotten who was your father.

CONEYCATCHER.

Nay, I have not forgotten that my father was a bailiff,
A man that would live to himself.
And yet, in faith, he gave me nothing at his death
But good counsel, how to live in the world.
But, sirrah, as thou knowest me, I pray thee, bewray me not,
And in anything I can, command me.

HONESTY.

Tush! fear not me, I will be as secret as thyself.
But, sirrah, 'tis thus, if thou wilt do one thing,
I shall tell thee, I will give thee an hundred pound:
'Tis nothing with thee, I am sure.

CONEYCATCHER.

Tush! tell me what it is; I'll do it, I warrant thee.

HONESTY.

Nothing but this; to swear upon a book
That thou sawest a gentleman pay a farmer
Four hundred pound, as the last payment of a farm
That the said gentleman bought of him.

CONEYCATCHER.

Tush! if this be all, let me alone, I will do it.
Why, 'tis nothing for me to swear,
For I am forsworn already: but when is the day?

HONESTY.

Why, to-morrow,

CONEYCATCHER.

But where shall I meet you?

HONESTY.

Why, upon the Exchange at eight o'clock.

CONEYCATCHER.

I will not miss: till that time, farewell. [Exit.]

HONESTY.

Fare well? [Aside.] Nay, you will scant fare well
By that time I have done: but I must about my business,

To find some knack to know this knave at large.

[_Exit_.

[_Enter_ ETHENWALD.

ETHENWALD.

The night draws on,
And Phoebus is declining towards the west.
Now shepherds bear their flocks unto the folds,
And wint' red oxen, foddered in their stalls,
Now leave to feed, and 'gin to take their rest:
Black, dusky clouds environ round the globe,
And heaven is covered with a sable robe.
Now am I come to do the king's command;
To court a wench, and win her for the king:
But if I like her well, I say no more,
'Tis good to have a hatch before the door.
But first I will move her father to prefer
The earnest suit I have in canvassing,
So may I see the maid, woo, wed,
Ay, and bed her too. Who is here? what ho!

[_Enter_ OSRICK.

OSRICK.

Earl Ethenwald, welcome. How fares our friends at court?
What cause constrains your honour, that thus late
You visit us, that dream not of your coming?

ETHENWALD.

My lord, I am come unlooked-for, very true;
So is my coming yet conceal'd from you.

OSRICK.

Your honour shall repose you here to-night,
And early as you please begin your task;
Time serves not now. Come, Ethenwald,
As welcome as the king himself to me.

ETHENWALD.

Now, Ethenwald, if fortune favour thee,
Thou may'st prove happy love to Alfrida. [_Exeunt_.

[_Enter_ HONESTY, _and the_ KING _disguised_.

HONESTY.

This is the place, and this th'appointed time. I know
He'll keep his word, for he thinks me his friend.

KING.

But tell me, Honesty, am I not well disguised?
Can any man discern me by my looks
To be the king? Take heed of that,
For then our game is marr'd: and hast
Thou promised him what reward he shall have?

HONESTY.

Tush! fear not you; for you never knew honest man
Dissemble with his friend, though many friends

Dissemble with honest men. But, my lord,
The cards be shuffled, and here comes a knave.

Enter CONEYCATCHER.

CONEYCATCHER.

'Tis strange to see how men of our knowledge live,
And how we are hated of the baser sort,
Because, forsooth, we live upon our wit:
But let the baser sort think as they will,
For he may best be termed a gentleman,
That, when all fails, can live upon his wit.
And if all fails, then have I got a wench
That cuts and deals to maintain my expense.
Now I use her, as men use sweetest flowers,
That while they are sweet and pleasant to the eye.
I do regard them for their pleasant smell;
But when their colour fades, and scent decays,
I cast them off for men to trample on.
But to the purpose: here is the gentleman,
My honest friend did lately tell me of. [_Aside_.
Sir, though I had another business of import,
That might have hind'red me from coming here,
Yet in regard I am loth to break my word,
I have set my other business clean apart,
Because you should not judge amiss of me.

HONESTY.

I find you kind, sir, and yourself shall see
How I will labour to requite your courtesy.
[_To the_ KING.] This is the honest man I told you of,
One that will do your pleasure in the cause,
So be it you will content him for his pains.

KING.

Else God forbid: and, good sir, thus it is,
I bought a farm of one that dwells here by,
And for an earnest gave an hundred pound:
The rest was to be paid as six weeks past.
Now, sir, I would have you as witness,
That at my house you saw me pay three hundred pound,
And for your pains I will give you a hundred pound;
Besides, I will stand your friend in what I may.
You hear the cause;
What, will your conscience serve you to do it?

CONEYCATCHER.

How say you, sir? My conscience? then you touch me!
I tell you, sir, my conscience will serve me to do more than this.
Why, I have been a post-knight[300] in Westminster this twelve year,
And sworn to that which no one else would venture on.
Why, I have sworn against mine own father for money:
I have sworn right or wrong--any ways--for money,
When I have received money before witness, I swore to the contrary;
And do you misdoubt me in so slight a matter as this,
When I have sworn against father, mother, and all my kin?

HONESTY.

I told you, sir, how resolute you should find him:

He doth it without fear, I warrant you. I think
That in London you could not have found a man so fit
For your purpose. I knew his father, sir:
A man of honest reputation, and one whose life
Was witness to the life he led: he was a bailiff, sir,
Though I say't, but no bailiff that used deceit;
He had too good a conscience for that.

KING.

All the better for that; for it should seem by his
Behaviour that he hath had good bringing-up.

CONEYCATCHER.

Indeed, my father in his lifetime was a man
Given to the fear of God, and to use much devotion.

HONESTY.

Ay, but he gave nothing for God's sake, except it were
Hard words, or blows; and they had been better kept than given.
But hush! here comes the judge.

Enter PERIN _a judge, and_ DUNSTAN _a farmer_.

KING.

Hear you, sir;
If you be in readiness, here is the judge.

CONEYCATCHER.

Ay, sir: I fear not,
I warrant you: is that your adversary?
What an old crust it is!

HONESTY.

I think the villain hath a face hardened with steel;
He could never be so impudent else.

DUNSTAN.

If it please your worship, this is the man
That wrongfully would have my farm from me,
Facing me down that he hath paid me that,
Which he never off'red, nor I never received:
And this day he hath promised to make proof,
That he hath paid me full four hundred pound.

KING.

And so I can; and here's my witness to it,
That saw me when I paid the money.

DUNSTAN.

Why, I am sure he will not say it.
I never saw the man in all my life.

CONEYCATCHER.

No, sir? but I saw you, and was a witness
When this gentleman paid you three hundred pound,
As the last payment for the farm he bought.

PERIN.

But where was the money tendered?

CONEYCATCHER.

At the gentleman's house.

PERIN.

You see, father, this merchant will be witness,
That he saw so much money tend'red,
And you received it, being full satisfied,
As the last payment for the farm he bought.
And if this merchant take his oath against you,
That seven days past he saw the money tendered,
I must pass sentence, then, against you needs.
[_To_ CONEYCATCHER.] But will you swear on the Bible this is true?

CONEYCATCHER.

Ay, sir, and to that intent I came hither;
For I will never refuse to swear a truth, while I live.

DUNSTAN.

Yet, ere thou speak, vouchsafe to hear me speak.
Full threescore winters, gentle sir, I have pass'd,
And age hath brought grey hairs upon my head:
Look but upon my face, and thou shalt see
The perfect pattern of humility.
Thou man of worth, or citizen, whate'er thou be,
Weigh but my charge, and then thou wilt not swear.
I have five sons, all pretty, tender babes,
That live upon the farm that he would have;
Twelve hundred sheep do feed upon the plains,
That yearly bring a great increase to me,
Besides a hundred oxen, fatly fed,
That every winter feed within my stalls,
And twenty poor men, living near my house,
I daily feed, and all upon my farm.
Go but among my neighbours, where I dwell,
And hear what good report they give of me.
The poor man never yet went from my door,
But to my power I did relieve his want:
I was no farmer that enrich'd myself,
By raising markets and oppressing poor,
But I have sold my corn full many times
At better rate than I could well afford,
And all to help my needy brethren,
Then, ere thou swear'st, call all these things to mind,
And thou wilt weep, and leave to swear untruths--
Confusion to thy body and thy soul.

PERIN.

Well, if thou be well-advised, take thy oath;
But yet remember before whom thou swearest,
The God of truth and perfect equity,
Which will revenge wrong to the innocent
With thousand plagues and tortures worse than death.

CONEYCATCHER.

By the holy contents of this Bible,
And by that just God before whom I stand,
I saw this man---

KING.

Peace! shameless villain, execrable wretch,
Monster of nature, degenerate miscreant!
Who ever knew or heard so vile an oath
Vilely pronounc'd[301] by such a damned slave?
Have I such monstrous vipers in my land,
That with their very breaths infect the air?
Say, Dunstan, hast thou ever heard the like?

DUNSTAN.

My liege,
Such loathsome weeds must needs infect the corn;
Such cankers perish both the root and branch,
Unless they be soon spied, and weeded out.

KING.

I'll be the husbandman to mow such tares--
Here, Honesty; let him be manacled,
And scar his forehead, that he may be known--
As Cain for murder, he for perjury.

CONEYCATCHER.

I beseech your grace, be good to me.

HONESTY.

Ay, you shall have a cold iron clapt in your forehead;
A hot one, I would say: you are a slave indeed.

CONEYCATCHER.

Good Honesty!

HONESTY.

Good villain, there's no help for you.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter ETHENWALD _alone_.

ETHENWALD.

My fancy's thoughts, like the labouring spider,
That spreads her nets to entrap the silly fly,
Or like the restless billows of the seas,
That ever alter by the fleeting air,
Still hovering past their wonted passions,
Makes me amazed in these extremities.
The king commands me on his embassy
To Osrick's daughter, beauteous Alfrida,
The height and pride of all this bounding ill;
To post amain, plead love in his behalf,
To court for him, and woo, and wed the maid.
But have you never heard that theme?
Deceit in love is but a merriment
To such as seek a rival to prevent.
Whither, distraught, roams my unruly thoughts?
It is the king I cosen of his choice,
And he nill brook Earl Ethenwald should prove
False to his prince, especially in love.
Then thus it shall be:
I'll tell the king the maid is fair,

Of nut-brown colour, comely and fair-spoken,
Worthy companion to an earl or so,
But not a bride for Edgar, England's king.
This will allay the strong effects in love
Fame wrought in Edgar's mind of Alfrida.
Well, I'll to court, and dally with the king,
And work some means to draw his mind from love.

Enter a KNIGHT, SQUIRE, _and_ FARMER.

KNIGHT.

Neighbour Walter, I cannot but admire to see
How housekeeping is decayed within this thirty year;
But where the fault is, God knows: I know not.
My father in his lifetime gave hospitality
To all strangers,
And distressed travellers;
His table was never empty of bread, beef, and beer;
He was wont to keep a hundred tall men in his hall.
He was a feaster of all comers in general,
And yet was he never in want of money: I think
God did bless him with increase for his bountiful mind.

FARMER.

Truly, sir, I am sorry you are fallen into decay,
In that you want to maintain household charge;
And whereof comes this want? I will tell you, sir:
'Tis only through your great housekeeping.
Be ruled by me, and do as I advise you.
You must learn to leave so great a train of men,
And keep no more than needs of force you must,
And those you keep, let them be simple men,
For they will be content with simple fare.
Keep but a boy or two within your house,
To run of errands, and to wait on you,
And for your kitchen, keep a woman-cook,
One that will serve for thirty shillings a year;
And by that means you save two liveries.
And if ye will keep retainers towards you,
Let them be farmers, or rich husbandmen,
For you shall find great profit, sir, in keeping them:
For if you stand in need of corn or hay,
Send but to them, and you may have it straight.
And if you kill a beef, let it be so lean,
The butcher nor the grazier will not buy it.
Your drink is too strong, and tastes too much of malt:
Tush, single beer is better far, both for your profit,
and your servants' health.
And at a Christmas-time feast none at all,
But such as yield you some commodity;
I mean such as will send you now and then
Fat geese and capons to keep house withal:
To these and none else would I have you liberal.

KNIGHT.

Why, neighbour, my goods are lent me to no other end,
But to relieve my needy brethren; but God, I hope, hath in store for me.

FARMER.

Ay, trust you to that, and you may hap die a beggar.

SQUIRE.

Why, sir, if he should not trust in God, in whom should he trust, for God is the giver of all good whatsoever?

FARMER.

True; and yet 'tis good for a man to trust to himself now and then; for if you be down, and bid God help you up, and do not help yourself, you may fortune lie and perish; and therefore serve God on Sundays, as you are appointed, and thereby hope to be saved; for by your alms-deeds you cannot, for if you give to the poor, there be many will say, he thinks to be saved by his alms-deeds; and thus you shall be ill-thought on for your good-will; and therefore learn to provide for yourself; let God provide for the poor.

KNIGHT.

I tell you, neighbour, my great grandfather and all my predecessors have been held in good regard for their good housekeeping; and (God willing) their good names shall never take an exigent[302] in me, for I will (God willing) keep such hospitality to my death, as my state can maintain; and I will rather sell my land to maintain housekeeping, than, keeping my land, make sale of my good name for housekeeping. But, stay, who comes here?

Enter two poor OLD MEN _and a_ BAILIFF.

ONE OLD MAN.

God save you, sir; I pray be good to me, for cham a poor man, and I cannot tell what you will do, for you say my horse hath broken into your corn, or your corn into my horse. But, indeed, my neighbour saw your boy drive my horse into a field. But I'll stand to nothing, now I am warn'd with a piece of paper and a little wax, to prepare to proceed to London; and there I am invented, I cannot tell for what. The bailiff here hath arrested me, ere I was weary,[303] against my will; he said it was upon your suit, and yet he laid his hands on me; nay, more, on my shoulder--

ANOTHER OLD [MAN.]

And, sir, and it may please you, I borrowed certain corn; and I brought you your corn again, and yet you 'rrest me.

FARMER.

True, sir; but then was corn sold for four shillings a bushel, and now 'tis sold for two.

KNIGHT.

Ay, sir, but he borrowed corn, and promised
To pay you corn again, and you can have
But so much as you lent; for if
He should pay you at the rate you demand,
You would have for the twenty bushels you lent,
Forty, which were neither right nor conscience.

FARMER.

O sir, I pray let me alone with my conscience. You would have me give all I have away to the poor, and want as you do. I pray, let me alone to deal for myself. Hear you, have you 'rrested them?

BAILIFF.

I have, sir, as you commanded me.

FARMER.

Then to prison with them, till they have paid such damages, as the law shall award them.

ONE POOR [MAN.]

Hear you, sir: if you should bid your boy break down a gap, and drive in my horse, 'twere little better than plain knavery; for my horse is as honest a horse as any is in this town.

ANOTHER.

Well, neighbour, we will have the horse examined
Before an officer, and my boy Jack shall write
What the horse speaks; and if the horse say a was driven
In against his will,
Then you may have the law of him, neighbour;
For all the horses in the parish will be sworn
For his horse. But I'll stand to nothing--

FARMER.

Well, to prison with them, till they have paid your due; away with them.

ONE POOR [MAN.]

Nay, I pray, be more miserable to me, and I will give you forty shillings, when I have it.

FARMER

By the mass, the knave hath a pretty cottage:
I'll see, and I can get that. [_Aside_] Sirrah,
You have an old cottage; if you will make
Me that over by deed of gift, I am content
To draw my action.

ANOTHER POOR MAN.

My house? why, 'tis my goods,
My wife, my land, my horse, my ass, or anything
That is his. No, you caterpillar, I will never make
Away my house; I will die first.

KNIGHT.[304]

But tell me, sir,
How much would you have of them for their trespass?

FARMER.

Marry, forty[305] shillings, and yet I befriend them.
Why, sir, I hope you will not pay it for them?

KNIGHT.

But I will. Sirrah, bailiff, I will answer
The poor men's debts, and come home to me for thy fee
Anon. Go, old men; get you home, and praise God.

ONE POOR [MAN.]

Marry, Jesus bless you. Neighbour, how many such
Good knights have you now-a-days?

ANOTHER.

Too few, neighbour; the more is the pity.
But come, lets away. [Exeunt_.

KNIGHT.
But who comes here?

 Enter PERIN _and_ HONESTY.

PERIN.
God save you, gentlemen. The king greets you, and at this time
Having some occasion to use money, hath sent to know
What you that be knights and squires will lend his grace;
And you, Master Farmer: be brief, sir[s,] for I cannot stay.

KNIGHT.
Sir, though housekeeping be some hind'rance
to my willing mind, by reason that it robs me of
that, which should bewray my loving mind both
to my prince and country--money I mean, which
at this time I stand in some want of--yet of that
small store that I have, [I] am willing to impart the
lending of the king twenty pound; and more, I
assure you, I am not able.

PERIN.
Very well; and what say you, Master Squire?

SQUIRE.
I say that my revenues are but small,
Yet I will lend his majesty ten pound.

PERIN.
Very well; but what saith the Farmer?
What can he spare the king?

FARMER.
 Marry, sir,
I am a poor farmer, and yet I can afford to lend
The king a hundred or two of pounds. And hear you, sir; [Aside_.]
If you prefer a suit I have to the king,
I will give you forty angels for your pains:
Besides, I will give you the keeping of a dozen jades,
And now and then meat for you and your horse,
If you come to my house, and lie a whole year.

PERIN.
Why, that's well said, and I commend
Thy honest mind. Would all men were of thy mind:
I warrant thee, thou art an honest man,
And one that loves the king. But tell me,
What wouldst thou have me do?

FARMER.
Nothing, but procure me the king's letter to convey corn beyond seas;
for in England it is so good cheap, that a man can make no living by
selling thereof: therefore, if the king will grant me his letter, I
will at any time lend him five or six hundred pound, and perhaps never
ask it again; and I will not forget your pains.

PERIN.

Sir, fear not, I will do it for you, I warrant you;
For, I tell you, I can do much with the king.

HONESTY.

I believe you will do more than you will be
Commended for. The courtier resembleth
The jay, that decketh herself with the feathers
Of other birds, to make herself glorious;
So the courtier must be brave, though he be
Hang'd at the gallows. [Aside_.

FARMER.

Well, sir, will it please you to come and dine
With me?

PERIN.

I thank you, sir, heartily.

FARMER.

But what's he there in your company?

PERIN.

A plain fellow, and his name is Honesty.

FARMER.

O, let him go where he will, for he shall
Not dine with me.

HONESTY.

See how the Farmer fears my name;
What would he do if he knew my nature?
But hear you, master courtier, shall I dine
With you? I promise you, sir, I am very hungry.

PERIN.

Truly, Honesty, if I were furnish'd with money,
I would not stick to give thee thy dinner;
But now, thou seest, I am but a guest myself.

FARMER.

Truly, honest fellow, if I were certain of my cheer, I would bid thee
to dinner, but know not my provision, I promise thee.

KNIGHT.

Hear you, sir; will it please you to take part of a piece of beef
with me? you shall be welcome.

PERIN.

I thank you, sir, but I must dine with my honest friend here, else
I would not refuse your gentle offer.

HONESTY.

See how he can use my name and not me:
But I perceive I may go dine with Duke Humphrey.[306]
God b'w'y', gentlemen; for none here hath occasion to use Honesty.

KNIGHT.

Yes, Honesty; thou shalt be my brother's guest and mine.

HONESTY.

Marry, and I thank you too; for now the world may say,
That Honesty dines with Hospitality to-day.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter OSRICK _and_ ALFRIDA.

OSRICK.

Daughter, see that you entertain the earl
As best beseems his state and thy degree.
He comes to see, whether Fame have worthily
Been niggard in commending thee or no:
So shall thy virtues be admired at the court,
And thou be praised for kind and debonaire;
For courtesy contents a courtier oft,
When nothing else seems pleasant in his eyes.

ALFRIDA.

Father, you shall perceive that Alfrida
Will do her best in honouring of your age,
To entertain the Earl of Cornwall so,
That he shall think him highly favoured,
Through loving speech and courteous entertain.

Enter ETHENWALD.

OSRICK.

How fares my Lord of Cornwall? What, displeased?
Or troubled with a mood that's malecontent?

ETHENWALD.

Not malecontent, and yet I am not well,
For I am troubled with a painful rheum,
That, when I would be merry, troubles me;
And commonly it holds me in my eyes,
With such extremes that I can scanty see.

OSRICK.

How long have you been troubled with the pain?
Or is it a pain that you have usual?
Or is it some water that, by taking cold,
Is fall'n into your eyes and troubles you?

ETHENWALD.

I cannot tell, but sure it pains me much.
Nor did it ever trouble me till now;
For till I came to lodge within your house,
My eyes were clear, and I never felt the pain.

OSRICK.

I am sorry that my house should cause your grief.
Daughter, if you have any skill at all,
I pray you, use your cunning with the earl,
And see if you can ease him of his pain.

ALFRIDA.

Father, such skill as I received of late,

By reading many pretty-penn'd receipts,
Both for the ache of head and pain of eyes,
I will, if so it please the earl to accept it,
Endeavour what I may to comfort him.
My lord, I have waters of approved worth,
And such as are not common to be found;
Any of which, if it please your honour use them,
I am in hope will help you to your sight.

ETHENWALD.
No, matchless Alfrida, they will do me no good,
For I am troubled only when I look.

ALFRIDA.
On what, my lord, or whom?

ETHENWALD.
I cannot tell.

ALFRIDA.
Why, let me see your eyes, my lord; look upon me.

ETHENWALD.
Then 'twill be worse.

ALFRIDA.
What, if you look on me? then, I'll be gone.

ETHENWALD.
Nay, stay, sweet love, stay, beauteous Alfrida,
And give the Earl of Cornwall leave to speak.
Know, Alfrida, thy beauty hath subdued,
And captivate the Earl of Cornwall's heart:
Briefly, I love thee, seem I ne'er so bold,
So rude and rashly to prefer my suit;
And if your father give but his consent,
Eased be that pain that troubles Ethenwald:
And, this considered. Osrick shall prove
My father and his daughter be my love.
Speak, Osrick, shall I have her, ay or no?

OSRICK.
My lord, with all my heart: you've my consent,
If so my daughter please to condescend.

ETHENWALD.
But what say'th Alfrida?

ALFRIDA.
I say, my lord, that seeing my father grants,
I will not gainsay what his age thinks meet:
I do appoint myself, my lord, at your dispose.

ETHENWALD.
Well, Osrick, now you see your daughter's mine;
But tell me when shall be the wedding-day?

OSRICK.
On Monday next; till then you are my guest.

ETHENWALD.

Well, Osrick, when our nuptial rites are past,
I must to court of business to the king.

ALFRIDA.

Let that be as you please, my lord; but stay
Not long, for I shall hardly brook your absence then.

ETHENWALD.

Fear not, Alfrida, I will not stay there long.
But come, let us in; Father, pray lead the way.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter the KING _and_ DUNSTAN.

KING.

Tell me, Dunstan, what thinkest thou of the favours of kings?

DUNSTAN.

I think of kings' favours as of a marigold flower
That, as long as the sun shineth openeth her leaves
And with the least cloud closeth again:
Or like the violets in America, that in summe yield an odoriferous smell,
And in winter a most infectious savour:
For at every full sea they flourish, or at every dead ebb[307] they vade.
The fish palerna, being perfect white in the calm,
Yet turneth black with every storm.
Or like the trees in the deserts of Africa,
That flourish but while the south-west wind bloweth:
Even so, my lord, the favours of kings to them they favour;
For as their favours give life, so their frowns yield death.

KING.

Well said, Dunstan: but what merits he, that dissembles with his
sovereign?

DUNSTAN.

In my opinion, my lord, he merits death.

KING.

Then assure thyself, if Ethenwald dissemble, he shall die. But who
comes here? Perin, what news, that thou comest in such haste? and
what is he that bears thee company?

[_Enter_ PERIN _and the_ FARMER.]

PERIN.

It is, my gracious lord, an honest man, and one,
It seems, that loves your majesty; for as your grace
Gave me in charge, I went about into the country,
To see what sums of money I could make.
Among the chiefest of the commonalty:
And 'mongst the richest knights that I could find,
They would lend your grace at most but twenty pound,
And every squire would lend your grace but ten.
Then came I, 'mongst the rest, to this plain man,
And asked him what he would lend the king.

He answered, sir, you see I am but poor,
Not half so wealthy as a knight or squire,
And yet, in sign of duty to his grace,
I will lend his majesty two hundred pound.

KING.

Thanks, honest fellow, for thy love to us;
And if I may but pleasure thee in ought,
Command me to the uttermost I may.
England hath too few men of thy good mind.

Enter HONESTY _and_ PIERS PLOWMAN.

Honesty, what news? where hast thou been so long?

HONESTY.

Ah, my lord, I have been searching for a privy knave;
One, my lord, that feeds upon the poor commons,
And makes poor Piers Plowman wear a thread-bare coat.
It is a farmer, my lord, which buys up all the corn in the market,
And sends it away beyond seas, and thereby feeds the enemy.

KING.

Alas, poor Piers Plowman! what ailest thou?
Why dost thou weep? Peace, man: if any have
Offended thee, thou shalt be made amends
Unto the most.

PIERS PLOWMAN.

I beseech your grace
To pity my distress. There is an unknown thief
That robs the commonwealth, and makes me and my
Poor wife and children beg for maintenance.
The time hath been, my lord, _in diebus illis_,
That the ploughman's coat was of good homespun russet cloth,
Whereof neither I nor my servants had no want,
Though now both they and I want,
And all by this unknown farmer;
For there cannot be an acre of ground to be sold,
But he will find money to buy it: nay, my lord,
He hath money to buy whole lordships, and yet but a farmer.
I have kept a poor house, where I dwell this fourscore year,
Yet was I never driven to want till now:
I beseech your grace, as you have still been just,
To seek redress for this oppression.
I beseech your grace, read my humble petition.
[_Delivers it to the_ KING.]

KING.

Let me see: The humble petition of poor Piers Plowman.
Alas, poor Piers! I have heard my father say,
That Piers Plowman was one of the best members in a commonwealth;
For his table was never empty of bread, beef, and beer,
As a help to all distressed travellers. But where thou tellest me
I harbour him, and he is daily under my elbow,
I assure thee, 'tis more than I know; for I harbour
None but this, which is my honest friend.

HONESTY.

Is this your honest friend? the devil a is. [_Aside_].
My lord, this is he: if you doubt my word to be true, call in Clerk
of the Assizes. Now shall your grace see, how Honesty can shake out
a knave in this company.

Enter CLERK OF THE ASSIZE.

Sirrah, tell me who hath most poor men in suit at this Sizes?

CLERK.

That hath Walter Would-have-more:
He hath one poor man in suit for certain barley,
And another, for that his horse was taken in his corn.

HONESTY.

But what indictments are against him? read them.

CLERK. [_Read the indictment_].

First, he hath conveyed corn out of the land to feed the enemy. Next,
he hath turned poor Piers Plowman out of doors by his great raising of
rents. Next, he is known to be a common disturber of men of their quiet,
by serving writs on them, and bringing them to London, to their utter
undoing. Also, he keeps corn in his barn, and suffers his brethren and
neighbours to lie and want; and thereby makes the market so dear, that
the poor can buy no corn.

KING.

Enough! Now, fie upon thee, thou monster of nature,
To seek the utter undoing of many, to enrich thyself.--
Honesty, take him, and use him as thou wilt.

HONESTY.

Come, sir, I think I found out your knavery.
Away, sir, and bear your fellow company.

[_Exeunt omnes but the_ KING _and_ DUNSTAN.

Enter ETHENWALD.

ETHENWALD.

Health and good hap befall your majesty.

KING.

Ethenwald, welcome; how fares our beauteous love?
Be brief, man: what, will she love or no?

ETHENWALD.

Then, as your grace did give to me in charge,
I have discharged my duty every way,
And communed with the maid you so commend:
For when the sun, rich father of the day,
Eye of the world, king of the spangled vale,
Had run the circuit of the horizon,
And that Artofelex, the night's bright star,
Had brought fair Luna from the purpled main,
Where she was dallying with her wanton love,
To lend her light to weary travellers,
Then 'twas my chance to arrive at Osrick's house:
But being late, I could not then unfold

The message that your grace had given in charge;
But in the morn Aurora did appear,
At sight of whom the welkin straight did clear.
Then was the spangled veil of heaven drawn in,
And Phoebus rose, like heaven's imperial king;
And ere the sun was mounted five degrees,
The maid came down, and gave me the good day.

KING.

But being come, what said she then?
How likest thou her? what, is she fair or no?

ETHENWALD.

My lord, she is coloured like the Scythia maid,[308]
That challenged Lucio at the Olympian games.
Well-bodied, but her face was something black,
Like those that follow household business:
Her eyes were hollow, sunk into her head,
Which makes her have a cloudy countenance.
She hath a pretty tongue, I must confess,
And yet, my lord, she is nothing eloquent.

KING.

Why then, my lord, there's nothing good in her.

ETHENWALD.

Yes, my lord, she is fit to serve an earl or so,
But far unfit for Edgar, England's king.

KING.

So then she is fit for Ethenwald, our Cornish earl,
But far unfit for Edgar, England's king.
Well, Ethenwald, I sound your policy:
But tell me, i'faith, dost thou love the maid?
Speak truly, man; dissemble not.

ETHENWALD.

I do, my gracious lord, and therewithal
Entreat your majesty to pardon me.

KING.

Ethenwald, I am content to pardon thee,
And will be with thee myself ere long,
To do thee honour in thy marriage:
And therefore, Ethenwald, thou may'st depart,
And leave us till we visit thee at home.

ETHENWALD.

My gracious lord, I humbly take my leave.

DUNSTAN.

If it please your grace, pardon me, and give me leave,
I would gladly bring my nephew on the way.

KING.

With all my heart, Dunstan; but stay not long.

ETHENWALD.

I humbly take my leave of your majesty.

[_Exeunt_ DUNSTAN _and_ ETHENWALD.]

[_Enter_ PERIN.]

KING.

Farewell, Ethenwald. But, Perin, tell me now,
What dost thou think of Alfrida?
Is she so foul as Ethenwald reports her?
Believe me, then, she had been unfit for me.

PERIN.

My gracious lord, Ethenwald hath dissembled with your majesty,
For Alfrida is fair and virtuous;
For last night, being in private conference,
He told me he had devised a mean
To colour with the king by forg'd excuse.
No, no (quoth he), my Alfrida is fair,
As is the radiant North star crystalline,
That guides the wet and weary traveller,
Sous'd with the surge of Neptune's wat'ry main.
And thus, my lord, he fell to praising her,
And from his pocket straight he drew this counterfeit.[309]
And said 'twas made by[310] beauteous Alfrida.

KING.

A face more fair than is the sun's bright beams,
Or snow-white Alps beneath fair Cynthia!
Who would refuse with Hercules to spin,
When such fair faces bears us company?
Fair Polyxena never was so fair:
Nor she that was proud love to Troylus.
Great Alexander's love, Queen of Amazons,
Was not so fair as is fair Alfrida.
But, Perin, be thou secret to the king,
And I will sound these subtle practises.
And, Ethenwald, be sure I will quittance thee,
And teach thee how to dally with thy king.
But, Perin, let's to court until to-morn,
And then we'll take horse and away.

[_Exeunt_ .

Enter mad men of Gotham, to wit, a_ MILLER,
a COBBLER, _and_ a_ SMITH.

MILLER.

Now, let us constult among ourselves,
How to misbehave ourselves to the king's worship,
Jesus bless him! and when he comes, to deliver him this petition,
I think the Smith were best to do it, for he's a wise man.

COBBLER.

Neighbour, he shall not do it, as long as Jeffrey the translater[311]
is Mayor of the town.

SMITH.

And why, I pray? because I would have put you from the Mace?

MILLER.

No, not for that, but because he is no good fellow;
Nor he will not spend his pot for company.

SMITH.

Why, sir, there was a god[312] of our occupation; and I charge you
by virtue of his godhead to let me deliver the petition.

COBBLER.

But soft, you: your god was a cuckold, and his godhead was the horn,
and that's the arms of the godhead you call upon. Go, you are put
down with your occupation; and now I will not grace you so much as
to deliver the petition for you.

SMITH.

What, dispraise our trade?

COBBLER.

Nay, neighbour, be not angry, for I'll stand to nothing only but this--

SMITH.

But what? bear witness a gives me the but, and I am not willing to
shoot. Cobbler, I will talk with you: nay, my bellows, my coal-trough,
and my water shall enter arms with you for our trade. O neighbour,
I cannot bear it, nor I will not bear it!

MILLER.

Hear you, neighbour; I pray consuade yourself and be not wilful, and
let the cobbler deliver it: you shall see him mar all.

SMITH.

At your request I will commit myself to you,
And lay myself open to you, like an oyster.

MILLER.

I'll tell him what you say. Hear you, neighbour, we have constulted to
let you deliver the petition: do it wisely, for the credit of the town.

COBBLER.

Let me alone, for the king's carminger[313] was here;
He says the king will be here anon.

SMITH.

But hark! by the mass, he comes.

Enter the KING, DUNSTAN, _and_ PERIN.

KING.

How now, Perin; who have we here?

COBBLER.

We, the townsmen of Gotham,
Hearing your grace would come this way,
Did think it good for you to stay.--
But hear you, neighbours, bid somebody ring the bells.--
And we are come to you alone, to deliver our petition[314].

KING.

What is it, Perin? I pray thee, read.

PERIN.

Nothing but to have a license to brew strong ale thrice a week; and he that comes to Gotham, and will not spend a penny on a pot of ale, if he be a-dry, that he may fast.

KING.

Well, sirs, we grant your petition.

COBBLER.

We humbly thank your royal majesty.

KING.

Come, Dunstan; let's away.

[_Exeunt omnes_.

Enter ETHENWALD _alone_.

ETHENWALD.

Ethenwald, be advised: the king has sent to thee;

Nay, more, he means to come and visit thee.

But why? Ay, there's the question.

Why, 'tis for this; to see if he can find

A front whereon to graft a pair of horns:

But in plain terms he comes to cuckold me.

And for he means to do it without suspect,

He sends me word he means to visit me.

The king is amorous, and my wife is kind,

So kind, I fear, that she will quickly yield

To any motion that the king shall make,

Especially if the motion be of love;

For Pliny writes, women are made like wax,

Apt to receive any impression,

Whose minds are like the Janamyst,

That eats, yet cries, and never is satisfied.

Well, be as it is, for I'll be sure of this,

It shall be no ways prejudice to me;

For I will set a screen before the fire,

And so prevent what otherwise would ensue.

'Twere good I questioned with my father first,

To hear how he['s] affected towards the king.

What ho!

Enter OSRICK _and_ ALFRIDA.

OSRICK.

Ethenwald, my son, what news?

ETHENWALD.

Why ask you? I am sure you have heard the news.

OSRICK.

Not yet, I promise you, my lord.

ETHENWALD.

Why then 'tis thus: the king doth mean to come and visit you.

OSRICK.

And welcome shall his majesty be to me,
That in the wane of my decreasing years,
Vouchsafes this honour to Earl Osrick's house.

ETHENWALD.
So then you mean to entertain him well?

OSRICK.
What else, my son?

ETHENWALD.
Nay, as you will:
But hear you, wife: what do you think in this--
That Edgar means to come and be your guest?

ALFRIDA.
I think, my lord, he shall be welcome then,
And I hope that you will entertain him so,
That he may know how Osrick honours him.
And I will be attired in cloth of biss[315],
Beset with Orient pearl, fetch'd from rich India[316].
And all my chamber shall be richly [decked,]
With arras hanging, fetch'd from Alexandria.
Then will I have rich counterpoints and musk,
Calambac[317] and cassia, sweet-smelling amber-grease,
That he may say, Venus is come from heaven,
And left the gods to marry Ethenwald.

ETHENWALD.
'Swouns! they are both agreed to cuckold me. [_Aside_.
But hear you, wife; while I am master of the bark,
I mean to keep the helmster in my hand.
My meaning is, you shall be rul'd by me,
In being disguised, till the king be gone;
And thus it shall be, for I will have it so.
The king hath never seen thee, I am sure,
Nor shall he see thee now, if I can choose;
For thou shalt be attir'd in some base weeds,
And Kate the kitchen-maid shall put on thine:
For being richly tired, as she shall be,
She will serve the turn to keep him company.

OSRICK.
Why, men that hear of this will make a scorn of you.

ETHENWALD.
And he that lies with this will make a horn for me. [_Aside_.]
It is enough: it must be so.

ALFRIDA.
Methinks 'twere better otherways.

ETHENWALD.
I think not so. Will you be gone?--

[_Exit_ ALFRIDA.

Father, let me alone; I'll break her of her will.
We that are married to young wives, you see,

Must have a special care unto their honesty;
For should we suffer them to have their will,
They are apt, you know, to fall to any ill.
But here comes the king.

Enter the KING, DUNSTAN, _and_ PERIN, _to_ [them] ETHENWALD[318].

KING.
Earl Osrick, you must needs hold us excused,
Though boldly thus unbid we visit you:
But know, the cause that moved us leave our court
Was to do honour to Earl Ethenwald,
And see his lovely bride, fair Alfrida.

OSRICK.
My gracious lord, as welcome shall you be,
To me, my daughter, and my son-in-law,
As Titus was unto the Roman senators,
When he had made a conquest on the Goths;
That, in requital of his service done,
Did offer him the imperial diadem.
As they in Titus, we in your grace, still find
The perfect figure of a princely mind.

KING.
Thanks, Osrick; but I think I am not welcome,
Because I cannot see fair Alfrida.
Osrick, I will not stay, nor eat with thee,
Till I have seen the Earl of Cornwall's wife.

ETHENWALD.
If it please your majesty to stay with us,
My wife shall wait as handmaid on your majesty,
And in her duty show her husband's love.
And in good time, my lord, see where she comes.

[_Enter the_ KITCHEN-MAID, _in_ ALFRIDA's _apparel_.]

[_Aside_.] Alfrida, you must leave your kitchen-tricks,
And use no words but princely majesty.

MAID.
Now Jesus bless your honourable grace.
Come, I pray, sit down: you are welcome by my troth.
As God save me, here's never a napkin: fie, fie!
Come on; I pray eat some plums, they be sugar.
Here's good drink, by Lady: why do you not eat?

KING.
Nay, pray thee, eat, Alfrida: it is enough for me to see thee eat.

MAID.
I thank you heartily. By my troth, here's never a cushion.
By my troth. I'll knock you anon; go to.

PERIN.
My lord, this is not Alfrida: this is the kitchen-maid.

KING.

Peace, Perin, I have found their subtlety.--
Ethenwald, I pray thee, let me see thy kitchen-maid.
Methinks it is a pretty homely wench:
I promise thee, Ethenwald, I like her well.

ETHENWALD.

My lord, she is a homely kitchen-maid,
And one whose bringing up hath been but rude,
And far unfit for Edgar's company;
But if your grace want merry company,
I will send for ladies wise and courteous,
To be associates with your majesty.
Or if your grace will have musicians sent for,
I will fetch your grace the best in all this land.

KING.

Ethenwald, no: I will have the kitchen-maid;
And therefore, if you love me, send for her,
For, till she come, I cannot be content.

ETHENWALD.

Father, I will not fetch her. 'Swouns! see, where she comes.

Enter ALFRIDA _in the_ KITCHEN-MAID'S _attire_.

ALFRIDA.

Successful fortune and his heart's content
Daily attend the person of the king.
And, Edgar, know that I am Alfrida, daughter to Osrick,
And lately made the Earl of Cornwall's wife.

KING.

Why, is not this Alfrida?

ALFRIDA.

No, my good lord; it is the kitchen-maid,
Whom Ethenwald, in too much love to me,
Hath thus attir'd to dally with the king.

MAID.

By my troth, my lord, she lies. Go to;
I'll course you by and by.

KING.

Away, base strumpet, get thee from my sight.

MAID.

Go your ways; you are a cogging knave, I warrant you.
[_Exit_.

KING.

Base Ethenwald, dissembler that thou art,
So to dissemble with thy sovereign;
And afterward, under a show of love,
Thou cam'st to soothe thy lesing to the king,
Meaning by that to make me to conceive,
That thy intent was just and honourable.
But, see, at last thou hast deceived thyself,
And Edgar hath found out thy subtlety;

Which to requite think Edgar is thy enemy,
And vows to be revenged for this ill.--
Go to thy husband, beauteous Alfrida,
For Edgar can subdue affects in love.

ALFRIDA.

Thanks, gracious king, mirror of courtesy,
Whose virtuous thoughts bewray thy princely mind,
And makes thee famous 'mongst thy enemies:
For what is he that hears of Edgar's name,
And will not yield him praise as he deserves.
Nor hath your grace ever been praised more,
Or term'd more just in any action,
Than you shall be in conquering your desires,
And yielding pardon to Earl Ethenwald.

KING.

Will you be gone?

ALFRIDA.

My gracious lord, I humbly take my leave.

[ALFRIDA _and_ ETHENWALD _Exeunt_.

KING.

How am I wrong'd, and yet without redress!

DUNSTAN.

Have patience, good my lord, and call to mind,
How you have lived praised for virtuous government.
You have subdued lust unto this day,
And been reputed wise in government,
And will you blemish all your honours got,
In being termed a foul adulterer?

KING.

Dunstan, forbear, for I will have it so:
It boots thee not to counsel me in this,
For I have sworn the death of Ethenwald;
And he shall die, or Edgar will not live.
Dunstan, it is enough; I am resolved.

[_Exit_.

DUNSTAN.

Nay, if it be so, then Ethenwald shall not die?
And since entreaties cannot serve the turn,
I will make proof for once what art will do.
Astroth[319], ascende! veni, Astroth, Astroth, veni!

Enter the DEVIL.

DEVIL.

What wilt thou?

DUNSTAN.

Tell me, what means the king?

DEVIL.

I will not tell thee.

DUNSTAN.

I charge thee, by the eternal living God,
That keeps the prince of darkness bound in chains,
And by that sun that thou wouldst gladly see,
By heaven and earth, and every living thing,
Tell me that which I did demand of thee.

DEVIL.

Then thus: the king doth mean to murder Ethenwald.

DUNSTAN.

But where is the king?

DEVIL.

Seeking for Ethenwald.

DUNSTAN.

But I'll prevent him: follow me invisible.

DEVIL.

I will.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter the PRIEST.

PRIEST.

I have been this morning with a friend of mine,
That would borrow a small sum of money of me;
But I have learn'd the best assurance a man can have
In such a matter is a good pawn of twice the value,
Or bonds sufficient for five times the quantity.
He is my near kinsman, I confess, and a clergyman,
But fifty shillings is money; and though I think
I might trust him simply with it for a twelvemonth,
Where he craves it but for a month, yet simply I
Will not be so simple; for I will borrow
His gelding to ride to the term, and keep away a just fortnight.
If then he pay me money, I will deliver him his horse.
I would be loth to lose my money, or crave assurance of my kinsman,
But this may be done to try me, and I mean likewise to try him.
This is plain, though truly, brethren, something subtle.
But here comes one would fain take my house of me.

NEIGHBOUR.

Sir, I am a poor man, and I will give you thirty shillings a year:
if I may have it, you shall be sure of your money.

PRIEST.

Truly, brother in Christ, I cannot afford it of the price;
A must let my house to live, I ask no gains. But who comes here?

Enter HONESTY _and a_ BEGGAR.

BEGGAR.

I beseech you, good master, for God's sake, give one penny to the poor,
lame, and blind; good master, give something.

PRIEST.

Fie upon thee, lazy fellow, art thou not ashamed to beg? Read the blessed saying of St Paul, which is, Thou shalt get thy living with the sweat of thy brows, and he that will not labour is not worthy to eat.

HONESTY.

Ay, but he remembers not where Christ saith,
He that giveth a cup of cold water in my name shall be blessed.
[Aside.]

BEGGAR.

Alas, sir, you see I am old.

PRIEST.

But that's no reason you should beg.

BEGGAR.

Alas, sir, age coming on me, and my sight being gone, I hope, sir, you will pardon me, though I beg; and therefore, for God's sake, one penny, good master.

PRIEST.

Why, I tell thee no, for the Spirit doth not move me thereunto. And in good time, look in the blessed Proverb of Solomon, which is, Good deeds do not justify a man; therefore, I count it sin to give thee anything.

HONESTY.

See how he can turn and wind the Scripture to his own use; but he remembers not where Christ say'th, He that giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and he shall be repaid sevenfold: but the Priest forgets that, or at leastwise he will not remember it. [Aside.]

BEGGAR.

Now, fie upon thee, is this the pureness of your religion?
God will reward you, no doubt, for your hard dealing.

PRIEST.

Care not thou for that. Well, neighbour, if thou wilt have my house, friend and brother in Christ, it will cost you forty shillings--'tis well worth it truly, provided this, I may not stay for my rent: I might have a great deal more, but I am loth to exact on my brother.

HONESTY.

And yet he will sell all a poor man hath, to his shirt, for one quarter's rent. [Aside.]

NEIGHBOUR.

God's blessing on your heart, sir, you made a godly exhortation on Sunday.

PRIEST.

Ay, brother, the Spirit did move me thereunto. Fie upon usury, when a man will cut his brother's throat for a little lucre: fie upon it, fie! We are born one to live by another, and for a man to let his own as he may live, 'tis allowed by the word of God; but for usury and oppression, fie on it, 'tis ungodly. But, tell me, will you have it?

NEIGHBOUR.

I will give you, as I have proffered you.

PRIEST.

Truly, I cannot afford it, I would I could; but I must go to our exercise of prayer, and after I must go see a farm that I should have.

[_Exeunt_.

Enter DUNSTAN _and_ PERIN, _with the_ KING.

DUNSTAN.

Most gracious prince, vouchsafe to hear me speak,
In that the law of kindred pricks me on;
And though I speak contrary to your mind,
Yet do I build on hope you will pardon me.
Were I as eloquent as Demosthenes,
Or like Isocrates were given to oratory,
Your grace, no doubt, will think the time well-spent,
And I should gain me commendations:
But for my note is tuned contrary,
I must entreat your grace to pardon me,
If I do jar in my delivery.

KING.

Why, Dunstan, thou hast found us gracious still,
Nor will we pull our settled love from thee,
Until we find thy dealings contrary,
But if thy parley be for Ethenwald,
That base dissembler with his sovereign,
'Twere better leave to speak in his excuse,
Than by excusing him gain our ill-will:
For I am minded like the salamander-stone
That, fir'd with anger, will not in haste be quenched.
Though wax be soft, and apt to receive any impression,
Yet will hard metal take no form, except you melt the same.
So mean men's minds may move as they think good,
But kings' just dooms are irrevocable.

DUNSTAN.

'Tis not enough, where lust doth move the offence.

KING.

Why, councillors may not with kings dispense.

DUNSTAN.

A councillor may speak, if he see his prince offend.

KING.

And for his counsel rue it in the end.
But Dunstan, leave: you urge us over far.
We pardon what is past; but speak no more.

DUNSTAN.

Nay, pardon me, for I will speak my mind.
Your grace may call to mind proud Marius' fall,
That through his wilful mind lost life and empire;
And Nimrod, that built huge Babylon,
And thought to make a tow'r to check the clouds,

Was soon dismay'd by unknown languages;
For no one knew what any other spake:
Which made him to confess, though 'twere too late,
He had made offence in tempting of the Lord.
Remember David, Solomon, and the rest;
Nor had proud Holofernes lost his head,
Had he not been a foul adulterer.

KING.

Dunstan, forbear, and let this answer thee:
Thou art too presumptuous in reproving me,
For I have sworn, as truly as I live,
That I will never pardon Ethenwald.

DUNSTAN.

Did you but see the man, I am assur'd
You would not choose but pardon Ethenwald.

PERIN.

Why, Dunstan, you have seen as well as I,
That Ethenwald hath dissembled with the king.
My gracious lord, first cut that traitor down,
And then will others fear the like amiss.

DUNSTAN.

I tell thee, Perin, were the earl in place,
Thou wouldst eat these words utter'd in his disgrace.
Veni, Astoroth![320]
And, in good time, see where he comes. [_Aside_.

Here enter ALFRIDA _disguised, with the_ DEVIL,
[_disguised as_ ETHENWALD.]

KING.

But tell me, Dunstan, is this Alfrida?

DUNSTAN.

It is, my gracious lord, and this is Ethenwald,
That lays his breast wide open to your grace,
If so it please your grace to pardon him.

KING.

Yes, Dunstan, I am well content to pardon him.
Ethenwald, stand up, and rise up, Alfrida,
For Edgar now gives pardon to you both.

DUNSTAN.

Astoroth, away! [_Aside_.]
My gracious lord, Dunstan will not forget
This unknown favour shown Earl Ethenwald;
For which account my nephew and myself
Do yield both lives and goods at your dispose.

KING.

Thanks, Dunstan, for thy honourable love:
And thou deserv'st to be a councillor,
For he deserves not other to command,
That hath no power to master his desire;
For Lochrine, being the eldest son of Brute,

Did doat so far upon an Almain maid,
And was so ravished with her pleasing sight,
That full seven years he kept her under earth,
Even in the lifetime of fair Gwendolin:
Which made the Cornish men to rise in arms,
And never left, till Locrine was slain.
And now, though late, at last I call to mind
What wretched ends fell to adulterers.

DUNSTAN.

And if your grace call Abram's tale to mind,
When that Egyptian Pharaoh crav'd his wife,
You will, no doubt, forgive my nephew's guilt;
Who by the merry jest he showed your grace,
Did save your honour and her chastity.

KING.

We take it so; and for amends, Ethenwald,
Give me thy hand and we are friends;
And love thy wife, and live together long,
For Edgar hath forgot all former wrong.

ETHENWALD.

Thanks, gracious king, and here upon my knee
I rest to be disposed, as you please.

KING.

Enough, Ethenwald. But who comes here?

Enter HONESTY.

HONESTY.

Why, I think I have taken in hand an endless task,
To smell a knave: 'tis more than a dog can do.
I have disguised myself of purpose to find
A couple of knaves, which are yet behind.
The next knave is a priest, call'd John the precise,
That with counterfeit holiness blinds the people's eyes.
This is one of them, that will say it is a shame
For men to swear and blaspheme God's holy name;
Yet if a make a good sermon but once in a year,
A will be forty times in a tavern making good cheer:
Yet in the church he will read with such sobriety,
That you would think him very precise and of great honesty. [_Aside_.]

KING.

What, Honesty, hast thou despatch'd, and found these privy knaves?

HONESTY.

I shall do anon: I have them in scent; but I will be gone.
[_Exit_.]

Enter PRIEST.

PRIEST.

Good Lord! I praise God I am come from our morning's exercise,
Where I have profited myself, and e[d]ified my brethren
In shewing the way to salvation by my doctrine;
And now I am going to the court to prefer my petition.

I would give a hundred pound it were granted;
'Tis a thing of nothing: but here comes one of the court.

Enter HONESTY.

God save you, brother in Christ: are you towards the king?

HONESTY.

Ay, marry am I: what then? why dost thou ask?

PRIEST.

Nothing, sir, but I would desire you to stand my friend,
To get me the king's hand and seal to this letter.
I would not use it, sir, to hinder any man for a thousand pound;
For indeed I am a clergyman by my profession.
'Tis nothing, sir, but, as you see, to have the king's seal
To carry tin, lead, wool, and broadcloths beyond seas,
For you know, sir, every man will make the most he can of his own;
And for my part, I use it but for a present necessity,
If you will undertake to do it, I'll give you a hundred pound.

HONESTY.

I thank you, sir, but I am afraid the king will hardly grant it: why,
'tis an undoing to the commonwealth;
But, truly, I will move the king to hang you, priest, i'faith.--

Aside.

May it please your grace to grant me my petition,
For I offer it your grace in pure devotion.

KING.

O monstrous! Dunstan, didst thou ever hear the like?
Now fie upon the base villain! lay hands on him.

HONESTY.

On me? nay, on him. Priest, I give your petition to the king,
And I will speak to him you may be but hanged;
For if you should live, till the king granted your petition,
The very ravens would pick out thine eyes living;
And therefore 'twere better you were hanged, to save the birds a labour.

KING.

Now, Honesty, hast thou done? Is here all?

HONESTY.

O no, my lord, for there are so many behind,
That I am afraid my work will never have an end.
But I see by the priest's looks he lacks company:
Stay awhile, my lord, I'll fetch another presently.

Exit.

KING.

Fie, graceless man! hast thou no fear of God,
To withhold thee from these lawless motions?
Why, thou shouldst be as [a] messenger of God,
And hate deceit and wicked avarice:
But thou art one of those whom God doth hate,
And thy vild deeds will witness 'gainst thy soul,
And make the most abominable in his sight,
That made thee, wretch, but to a better end,

Than thus to wrong his sacred Deity.
Now, fie upon thee, monster of a man?
That for to gain thyself a private gain,
Wouldst seek the undoing of a commonwealth:
And though thou bide[321] ten thousand torments here,
They cannot quit thee, where thou shalt appear.

[_Enter_ HONESTY.]

HONESTY.
A prize! though it be long, I have found him at last;
But I could not bring him with me,
And therefore I pinn'd a paper on his shoulder,
Meaning thereby to mark him for the gallows.
But husht, here he comes.

Enter PERIN.

KING.
What, Perin? I cannot think that Perin will be false to me.

HONESTY.
Why no, for he is false to himself: look in his pocket and see.
This is but a false writ that he hath used,
Unknown to your majesty, and levied great sums of money,
And bribed upon your poor Commons extremely.
How say you, my lord, is this true or no?

KING.
Honesty, thou sayest true. Why, impious wretch!
Ingrateful wretch that thou art,
To injure him that always held thee dear.
Believe me, Dunstan, I durst well have sworn
That Perin had not hatch'd so base a thought.

HONESTY.
Ay, but your grace sees you are deceived.
But will your grace grant me one boon?

KING.
What's that, Honesty?

HONESTY.
That I may have the punishing of them,
Whom I have so laboured to find.

KING.
With all my heart, Honesty: use them as thou wilt.

HONESTY.
I thank your grace. Go fetch the other two.[322]
Now to you, Cutbert Cutpurse the Coneycatcher:
Thy judgment is to stand at the market-cross,
And have thy cursed tongue pinn'd to thy breast,
And there to stand for men to wonder at,
Till owls and night ravens pick out thy cursed eyes.

CONEYCATCHER.
Good Honesty, be more merciful.

HONESTY.

You know my mind, O Walter that-would-have-more, and you shall have judgment I mean, which is: to be carried into a corn-field, and there have your legs and hands cut off, because you loved corn so well, and there rest till the crows pick out thine eyes.--

But now to you, that will do nothing,
Except the Spirit move you thereunto.

You shall, for abusing the blessed word of God,
And mocking the divine order of ministry,
Whereby you have led the ignorant into errors,
You, I say,

As you were shameless in your shameful dealing,
Shall, to your shame, and the utter shame of all
Bad-minded men, that live as thou hast done,
Stand in Finsbury fields, near London,
And there, as a dissembling hypocrite, be shot to death.

PRIEST.

Good Honesty, be more favourable than so.

HONESTY.

Truly, no; the Spirit doth not move me thereunto.--
But who is next? what, Perin, a courtier and a cosener too!
I have a judgment yet in store for thee:

And for because I will use thee favourably,
I'faith, thy judgment is to be but hanged.

But where? even at Tyburn, in a good twopenny halter:

And though you could never abide the seas,
Yet now, against your will, you must bear your sail, namely, your sheet,
And in a cart be tow'd up Holborn-hill.

Would all men living, like these, in this land,
Might be judged so at Honesty's hand.

KING.

Well, Honesty, come, follow us to court,
Where thou shalt be rewarded for thy pain.

HONESTY.

I thank your grace. You that will damn yourselves for lucre's sake,
And make no conscience to deceive the poor;

You that be enemies of the commonwealth,
To send corn over to enrich the enemy;
And you that do abuse the word of God,
And send over wool and tin, broad-cloth and lead;

And you that counterfeit kings' privy-seals,
And thereby rob the willing-minded commonalty;

I warn you all that use such subtle villainy,
Beware lest you, like these, be found by Honesty.

Take heed, I say, for if I catch you once,
Your bodies shall be meat for crows,

And the devil shall have your bones.

And thus, though long, at last we make an end,
Desiring you to pardon what's amiss,

And weigh the work, though it be grossly penn'd.

Laugh at the faults, and weigh it as it is,

And Honesty will pray upon his knee,
God cut them off, that wrong the prince or commonalty.

And may her days of bliss never have end,

Upon whose life so many lives depend.

FINIS.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] It is one of the six additional dramas which the Editor of the present volume caused to be [first] inserted in the impression which came out between the years 1825 and 1827. It may be here stated that his duties, from various circumstances, were almost solely confined to these six dramas, four of them by Robert Greene, by George Peele, by Thomas Lodge, and by Thomas Nash, no specimens of whose works had been previously included: the two other plays, then new to the collection, were "The World and the Child," and "Appius and Virginia."

[2] See "Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company" (printed for the Shakespeare Society), vol. ii. p. 230.

[3] [The orthography has now been modernised in conformity with the principle adopted with regard to the rest of the collection.]

[4] "Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court." by Peter Cunningham, Esq. (printed for the Shakespeare Society), p. 176.

[5] Ibid. p. 36.

[6] Printed for the Shakespeare Society, in 1845, from the original most valuable MS. preserved in Dulwich College.

[7] Hardly so, perhaps, as scarcely any drama of this date occurs without such a prayer. The earliest in which we have seen the prayer for Elizabeth is the interlude of "Nice Wanton," 1560.

[8] It seems more than probable that "Tarlton's Jig of the Horse-load of Fools" (inserted in the introduction to the reprint of his "Jests" by the Shakespeare Society, from a MS. belonging to the Editor of this volume), was written for his humorous recitation by some popular author.

[9] "Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury, &c., by Francis Meres, Maister of Artes of both Universities." 8vo. 1598, fol. 286.

[10] "Hist. of Engl. Dram. Poetry and the Stage," i. 255.

[11] See "Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakespeare" (printed for the Shakespeare Society), p. 131. If Bucke were a young actor in 1584, he had a natural son buried in 1599, but it is not stated how old that son then was.

[12] See the entry of it by Henry Kirkham in the "Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company" (printed for the Shakespeare Society), vol. ii. p. 61.

[13] We quote from Mr Utterson's, on all accounts, valuable reprint of Guilpin's collection of Epigrams and Satires, which was limited to

sixteen copies. The same gentleman has conferred many other disinterested favours of the same kind on the lovers of our ancient literature.

[14] Percy's Reliques, i. 226, edit. 1812. There are copies in the Roxburghe, Pepys, and Ashmole collections.

[15] In his "Jew of Malta" reprinted in the Rev. A. Dyce's edit. of "The Works of Christopher Marlowe," i. 227.

[16] This quotation will appear in the next, the third, volume of "Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company," which is now in the press of the Shakespeare Society. [This third volume never appeared.]

[17] The question when blank verse was first employed in our public theatres is considered and discussed in the "History of English Dramatic Poetry and the Stage," iii. 107, and the whole of Marlowe's Prologue, in which he may be said to claim the credit of its introduction, is quoted on p. 116.

[18] This practice of addressing the audience was continued to a comparatively late date, and Thomas Heywood's Plays, as reprinted by the Shakespeare Society, afford various instances of it.

[19] Besides "1 day," in the body of the entry ("Henslowe's Diary," p. 28), the letters *_ne_* are inserted in the margin, by which also the manager indicated that the piece performed was a *_new_* play. Both these circumstances were unnoticed by, because unknown to, Malone when he had the original MS. from Dulwich College for some years in his hands.

[20] See "Memoirs of Edward Alleyn," founder of Dulwich College (printed for the Shakespeare Society), p. 29, &c.

[21] This memorandum, securing the right of publication to Richard Jones, is also contained in the forthcoming volume of "Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company," to be issued by the Shakespeare Society.

[22] See his "Diary," pp. 43-48, 50, 51, 54, 55, 57, 62, and 82.

[23] "Elfrid," afterwards remodelled under the title of "Athelwold," by Aaron Hill; and "Elfrida," by William Mason. At an earlier date the story, more or less altered, furnished a subject to Rymer and Ravenscroft.

[24] See vol. viii. of the former edition of Dodsley's "Old Plays," p. 165; and Rev. A. Dyce's edition of Robert Greene's Works, i. 14.

[25] Commune.

[26] [The Pope.]

[27] [Nimrod.]

[28] [Because.]

[29] This and the other marginalia are Hypocrisy's *_asides_*. By *_Ambo_* he seems to signify, You knaves, the two of you!

[30] [Until.]

[31] [Fellow.]

[32] [Query, _logic_.]

[33] [Thus.]

[34] [Good.]

[35] [Old copy, _wynde_.]

[36] [See Hazlitt's "Proverbs," 1869, p. 103. The origin of the term there suggested seems to be supported by the words put into the mouth of _Hypocrisy_ here.]

[37] [Old copy, _myne_.]

[38] [There is a proverb: "The devil is good when he is pleased."]

[39] [Tenor.]

[40] The priest is made to speak what the author seems to have taken for the Scottish dialect.

[41] [The writer should have written _requhair_, if anything of the kind; but his Scottish is deplorably imperfect.]

[42] The usual style in which priests and clergymen were anciently addressed. Instances are too numerous to require citation.

[43] [St. Rock.]

[44] [This passage was unknown to Brand and his editors.]

[45] Quiet.

[46] [Fagot.]

[47] [i.e., Tyranny, who disguises his identity, and goes under the name of _Zeal_.]

[48] [This word, to complete the metre, was suggested by Mr Collier.]

[49] Tyranny had made his _exit_, in order to bring back with him Sensual Suggestion: here he returns, but his re-entrance is not noted. Sensual Suggestion follows him, but not immediately, and what he first says was perhaps off the stage, and out of sight of the audience; for Hypocrisy, five speeches afterwards, informs the Cardinal that Sensual Suggestion is coming.

[50] i.e., Convicted of heresy. This use of the verb "to convince" was not unusual at a considerably later date: thus in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Lover's Progress," act v. sc. 3, edit. Dyce--

"You bring no witness here that may convince you," &c.

It was also often employed as synonymous with "to overcome." See

Shakespeare, ii. 377; vi. 49, &c., edit. Collier.

[51] [Old copy, _former_.]

[52] [Old copy, _demeanour_.]

[53] [Old copy, _myne_.]

[54] [Old copy, _line_.]

[55] [3, in the old copy.]

[56] [This and the next line but one have occurred before at the close of the speech of Spirit.]

[57] [Old copy, _me_.]

[58] [Assure.]

[59] [Old copy, _his_.]

[60] [Old copy, _that that_.]

[61] [Old copy, _prayers_.]

[62] [Makes all the world believe.]

[63] [Old copy, _anchors_.]

[64] [Old copy, _impire_.]

[65] [For _Whilome a goe_, possibly we ought to read "Whilome again," but this would not remove the whole difficulty.]

[66] [In harmony.]

[67] [Mr Collier remarks that this word seems wrong, "but it is difficult to find a substitute; _essays_ would not answer the purpose."]

[68] [Old copy, _thy_.]

[69] [Mr Collier printed _that_.]

[70] [Old copy, _supporteth_.]

[71] [Old copy, _to_.]

[72] [Old copy, _thou shalt_.]

[73] [Old copy, _as_.]

[74] [Old copy, _handy_.]

[75] Here Armenio comes forward and discovers himself.

[76] [Old copy, _none_.]

[77] Hermione here seems to turn to Fidelia, and to tell her that possibly he may be as well born as Prince Armenio--"And let me tell you

this, lady," &c.

[78] Her meaning is that the king her father should pardon the offence of Hermione, whose grief of mind is more severe than the wound he has just inflicted on Armenio. The two last lines of this speech appear to belong to Hermione.

[79] [Old copy, _give_.]

[80] [Old copy, _your_.]

[81] [Old copy, _entertain_.]

[82] [i.e., Award. Old copy, _Holde my rewarde_.]

[83] [Old copy, _to wander_.]

[84] [Mr Collier printed _honor_.]

[85] [Old copy, _some_.]

[86] We must suppose that Fidelia makes her _exit_ here, her father having gone out at the end of his last speech.

[87] [Old copy, _restor'de_. The alteration is suggested by Mr Collier.]

[88] [Unknown, hidden.]

[89] [Old copy, _one_.]

[90] [Old copy, _turned_.]

[91] [Old copy, _friends_.]

[92] [i.e., Constantly renewed.]

[93] _Companion_ was often used derogatorily by our old writers. See Shakespeare's "Coriolanus," edit. Collier, vol. vi. p. 230.

[94] _Franion_ was often used for an idle fellow (see Peele's "Old Wives' Tale," edit. Dyce, vol. i. p. 207), but here it is rather to be taken as meaning a gentleman who has nothing to do but to amuse himself. In Heywood's "Edward IV." part I., Hobbs tells the king that he is "a frank franion, a merry companion, and loves a wench well." See Shakespeare Society's edit., p. 45. The word occurs several times in Spenser; and the following lines are from "The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality," 1602, sig. F.--

"This gallant, I tell you, with other lewd franions
Such as himself unthrifty companions.
In most cruel sort, by the highway-side,
Assaulted a countryman."

[95] [Old copy, _knew_.]

[96] [See Hazlitt's "Proverbs," 1869, p. 478.]

[97] [Mr Collier printed _not_.]

[98] [Mr Collier printed _only man alive_.]

[99] [This and the next line of the dialogue are given in the old copy to Hermione.]

[100] [By.]

[101] [Old copy, pit_.]

[102] _With a wanion_ seems to have been equivalent to "with a witness," or sometimes to "with a curse," but the origin of it is uncertain. It was usually put into the mouths of persons in the lower orders, and it is used by one of the fishermen in act ii. sc. I of Shakespeare's "Pericles," edit. Collier, vol. viii. p. 292.

[103] [Taking.]

[104] [This appears to be imitated from some old ballad of the time. See "Ancient Ballads and Broadsides," 1867, p. 43-6, and the Editor's note at p. 410.]

[105] [Dapper.]

[106] [Old copy, _turn_.]

[107] Middleton uses _squall_ for a wench in his "Michaelmas Term" and in "The Honest Whore," edit. Dyce, i. 431, and iii. 55. Here it evidently means a person of the male sex. [When used of men, a little insignificant fellow, a whipper-snapper. Presently we see that Lentulo was referring to the Duke's son.]

[108] [Cuckoldy. A loose form of expression.]

[109] [Bomelio, in his disguise, is made to talk bad French and Italian, as well as English; this had been done in the ease of Dr Caius who, however, only spoke broken English. The nationality of Bomelio is therefore doubtful; but these _minutiae_ did not trouble the dramatists of those days much.]

[110] [Old copy, _Vedice_--an unlikely blunder.]

[111] Pedlar's French, often mentioned in our old writers, was the cant language of thieves and vagabonds.

"When every peasant, each plebeian,
Sits in the throne of undeserv'd repute:
When every pedlar's French Is term'd Monsigneur."

--"Histriomastix," 1610, sig. E2.

[112] [i.e., Tarry _for_ me. So in the title of Wapull's play, "The Tide tarrieth no Man."]

[113] Beat. See Nares, 1859, in _v_. Lambeake. Mr Collier refers us to the "Supplement to Dodsley's Old Plays," 1833, p. 80, Gabriel Harvey's "Pierces' Supererogation," 1593, and to "Vox Graculi," 1623.

[114] Come to be hanged.

[115] Old copy, _slave_.

[116] The following scene reminds us of the ancient story of the "Physician of Brai."

[117] Sure.

[118] Old copy, _flight_. Mr Collier suggested _sight_.

[119] He bites like the pestilence.

[120] Penulo makes his _exit_ (though not marked in the old copy), and the stage then represents some place near the cave of Bomelio, who enters with Fidelia.

[121] Old copy, _then_.

[122] Mr Collier printed _come of_.

[123] Old copy, _oft been_.

[124] Old copy, _O_.

[125] Old copy, _my favour_.

[126] Old copy, _for_.

[127] Old copy, _her_.

[128] Above this line Mercury's name is inserted as the speaker: as it seems, unnecessarily.

[129] Old copy, _Venus_.

[130] Old copy, _Fortune_. It is Mercury who afterwards cures Bomelio.

[131] Old copy, _replaies_.

[132] Old copy, _Hot's_.

[133] Old copy, _my_.

[134] Old copy, _But_, which would seem to convey the exact reverse of what Phizanties intends--that he did not know Hermione's birth, but, presuming him to be of obscure birth, did not wish him to marry Fidelia.

[135] Old copy, _But_.

[136] Old copy, _end_.

[137] [Evidently a proverbial expression, of which the import can only be obscurely gathered from the context. _Nock_ is the same, of course, as _hock_.]

[138] [There was a second edition, presenting considerable variations, generally for the better, in 1592. See Hazlitt's "Handbook," 1867, p. 466.]

[139] [For _stuff_ the edit, of 1592 substitutes _wares_.]

[140] This division is omitted in the edition of 1592, and it seems unnecessary.

[141] [Old copy, *_his_*.]

[142] [Sweetheart, mistress.]

[143] [Old copy, *_often_*.]

[144] [We should now say, "as fast *_as_*;" but the form in the text is not uncommon in early literature.]

[145] An intentional corruption, perhaps for *_importance_*.

[146] Adventures.

[147] Swaggerer, hence the well-known term, *_swash-buckler_*, for a roaring blade.

[148] In the snare: What care I who gets caught?

[149] "*_What care I to serve the Deuill,*" *_ &c.*, edit. 1592.

[150] Edit. 1584 has *_boniacion_*.

[151] [Old copies, *_but_*.]

[152] [A simpleton or bumpkin.]

[153] [A term of contempt, of which the meaning is not obvious. It might seem to indicate a person employed in attending to a house of office.]

[154] A bully.

[155] *_i e, pox_*.

[156] Old copies, *_alone_*.

[157] *_Vile_*.

[158] *_Your lives so farre amisse_*, edit. 1592.

[159] [Scrupulous.]

[160] [Old copies, *_Fraud_*.]

[161] [Dissimulation.]

[162] [Edit. 1592, *_Iwis_*.]

[163] Edit. 1584, *_shift it_*.

[164] This speech stands as follows in edit. 1592--"Gramercie, Usury; and doubt not but to live here as pleasantly, And pleasanter too: but whence came you, Symonie, tell me?"

[165] *_Doubt not, fairs ladie_*, edit. 1592. In the next line but two, edit. 1592 has *_certainly_* for "I perceau," and the last two lines of

the speech run as follows--

"And seeing we are so well setted in this country,
Rich and poore shall be pincht, whosoever come to me."

[166] When this drama was reprinted in 1592, the interval between 1584 and that date made it necessary to read 33 years for "26 yeares" in this line. It is a curious note of time.

[167] [This is given in the old copies, sarua voulra boungrace, but surely Mercatore was not intended to blunder in his own language.]

[168] [Scald.]

[169] Omitted in edit. 1584.

[170] I think so is omitted in the second 4to.

[171] [Signed.]

[172] Studied late is omitted in first 4to.

[173] At all is not in second 4to.

[174] [Old copies, kettels.]

[175] Possibly a personal allusion to somebody sitting "in the corner" of the theatre; or it may have been to some well-known character of the time. Farther on, Simplicity alludes to some boy among the audience.

[176] [Not in edit. 1581.]

[177] [I think youle make me serve, edit. 1592.]

[178] [And prosperous be they to thee, edit. 1592.]

[179] [And dine with me, edit. 1592.]

[180] [Thankes, edit. 1592, omitting I give you.]

[181] [Old copies, am.]

[182] [Testy. Halliwell spells it testorn. Old copies, testren.]

[183] [Clarke, in his "Paroemiologia," 1639, has the proverb "He blushes like a black dog."]

[184] [Old copies, you.]

[185] [Edit. 1584 has very, and second 4 deg. well, the true reading, as Mr Collier suggests, being that now given in the text.]

[186] [Priest, edit. 1592.]

[187] [Neuter.]

[188] [Miracle.]

[189] [i.e., in good style.]

[190] [Edit. 1584 has _must_.]

[191] This line is omitted in edit. 1592.

[192] [Will.]

[193] For _parliament_ we are to understand _parament_, i.e., apparel, referring to the gowns he carries. Beaumont and Fletcher use the word _paramentos_--

"There were cloaks, gowns, cassocks,
And other _paramentos_,"

--"Love's Pilgrimage," edit. Dyce, xi. 226. _Paramento_ is Spanish, and means ornament, embellishment, or sometimes any kind of covering.

[194] [In the old copies this direction is inserted wrongly six lines higher up.]

[195] [Old copies, _hastily_, the compositor's eye having perhaps caught the word from the stage-direction just above.]

[196] [These three words are not in second 4 deg..]

[197] [A proverbial expression. See Hazlitt's "Proverbs," 1869, p. 210. So, in the "Spanish Tragedy," vol. v. p. 84: "I am in a sort sorry for thee; but if I should be hang'd with thee, I cannot weep."]

[198] [Old copies, _thy_.]

[199] Mr Collier's suggestion; both the old copies, _gracious_.

[200] [The first 4 deg. has _can_ for _should_, and _say_ for _'ssay_ or _essay_. The second 4 deg. reads _lying_ for _living_.]

[201] [Old copy, _drudge_.]

[202] Edit. 1592 has _availeth_. See St Matthew xvi. 26.

[203] [A synonym for a drubbing.] See "All's Well that Ends Well," act iii. sc. 6, when this passage is quoted in illustration of "John Drum's entertainment," as it is called by Shakespeare. The expression was equivalent to _drumming out_.

[204] Second 4 deg. has _array_. Mr Collier thinks _beray_ was intended by the writer as a blunder on the part of the clown.

[205] First 4 deg., _seeke_.

[206] [The clown is addressing one of the audience.]

[207] [Edit. 1584, _the_.]

[208] [This word is omitted in first 4 deg..]

[209] [_I tell ye_, not in edit. 1592.]

[210] _Tell me what good ware for England you do lacke_, edit. 1592.

[211] According to "Extracts from the Stationers' Registers," i. 88, William Griffith was licensed in 1563-4 to print a ballad entitled "Buy, Broomes, buye." This maybe the song here sung by Conscience. A song to the tune is inserted in the tract of "Robin Goodfellow," 1628, 4 deg., but no doubt first published many years earlier.

[212] [So both the 4 deg.s, but Mr Collier suggests _soften_.]

[213] _Play, and_ are not in the second 4to.

[214] [The writer seems here to have intended an allusion to Scogin, whose "Jests" were well-known at that time as a popular book.]

[215] [_I think_, omitted in second 4to.]

[216] A strong kind of cloth so called, and several times mentioned in Shakespeare. See "Henry IV." Part I., act i. sc. 2; "Comedy of Errors," act iv. se. 3, &c.--_Collier_.

[217] _The Venetians came nothing near the knee. Venetians_ were a kind of hose, or breeches, adopted from the fashions of Venice.

[218] [First 4to reads, _not agree_.]

[219] [A pun, probably, upon _alms_ and _arms_.]

[220] [Old copy, _tables_.]

[221] [So old copies; but the period named before was _three months_.]

[222] [Old copies, _seeme_.]

[223] See Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost," edit. Collier, ii. 306 and 360; Beaumont and Fletcher's "Monsieur Thomas," edit. Dyce, vii. 364. Thomas Nash, in his "Strange Newes," 1592, sig. D 3, uses _no point_ just in the same way, as a sort of emphatic double negative.--"No point; _ergo_, it were wisely done of goodman Boores son, if he should go to the warres," &c.

[224] [The worst wonder is.]

[225] [Compassionate.]

[226] [Not in first 4to.]

[227] The learned Constable refers, of course, to Love, who has already been on the stage in a vizard at the back of her head: see earlier; _Enter_ LUCRE, _and_ LOVE _with a vizard, behind_.

[228] [Old copies, _sacred_. This was Mr Collier's suggestion.]

[229] [Old copies, _ye_.]

[230] [Alluding to the "Three Ladies of London," 1584.]

[231] [Old copy, _Pompe hath_.]

[232] [Old copy, _place_.]

[233] [The bells attached to the falcon, the _impress of Pleasure_.]

[234] Referring to the chains of gold formerly worn by persons of rank and property.

[235] Alluding to the manner in which ballad-sellers of that day used to expose their goods, by hanging them up in the same way that the three lords had hung up their shields.

[236] [Foolish, maudlin.]

[237] [Except.]

[238] [See Hazlitt's "Proverbs," 1869, p. 265-6.]

[239] The best, and indeed what may be considered the only, account of Tarlton the actor precedes the edition of his Jests, reprinted for the Shakespeare Society in 1844.

[240] [Videlicet.]

[241] [Ignorant.]

[242] [Alluding to some wood engraving of Tarlton, which Simplicity had in his basket. To the reprint of "Tarlton's Jests," by the Shakespeare Society, are prefixed two wood-cuts, made from a drawing of the time of Elizabeth, and no doubt soon after the death of Tarlton of the plague in 1588.]

[243] [Preferment.]

[244] An ejaculation, apparently equivalent to _God_.

[245] The first purchase made in the day--the ballad which Wit had bought of Simplicity.

[246] Espial. The word occurs again further on.

[247] [Probably a reference is intended to the proverbial expression about Mahomet and the mountain.]

[248] An ambry or aumbry is a pantry or closet. The next line explains the word.

[249] [Old copy, _lent_.]

[250] [Old copy, _might_.]

[251] [Old copy, _might_.]

[252] Old copy, _tormented_.

[253] [Old copy, _unmask'd_.]

[254] Old copy, _our_.

[255] i.e., A pack of cards; the expression was very common; _deck_, five lines lower, was often used for _pack_.

[256] [Old copy, _from_.]

[257] The wimple is generally explained as a covering for the neck, or for the neck and shoulders; but Shakespeare ("Love's Labour's Lost," act iii. se. 1) seems to use it as a covering for the eyes also, when he calls Cupid "This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy." Steevens in his note states that "the wimple was a hood or veil, which fell over the face." The passage in our text, and what follows it, supports this description of the wimple.

[258] This is the only part of female dress mentioned in this speech that seems to require a note. The "vardingale (or farthingale) of vain boast" is peculiarly appropriate, since a farthingale consisted of a very wide, expanded skirt, puffed out to show off the attire, and distort the figure of a lady. In modern times it bears a different name.

[259] [Good-bye.]

[260] [Old copy, _house_; but Simplicity is enumerating the new articles of attire he proposed to purchase.]

[261] [He addresses the audience.]

[262] [Old copy, _auditorie_.]

[263] [Old copy, _prooffe it fits of_.]

[264] [Old copy, _a_.]

[265] [Old copy, in the preceding line, _ever_.] This and the following lines afford a note of time, and show that the drama was written and acted during the preparation of the great Armada, and perhaps before its total defeat.

[266] [The old copy reads, _peerlesse, of the rarest price_, which destroys the metre. The writer probably wrote _peerless_, and then, finding it inconvenient as regarded the measure, substituted the other phrase, without striking out the first word, so that the printer inserted both.]

[267] [Old copy, _when_.]

[268] See "Henry IV.," Part I., act ii. sc 1, respecting "burning cressets." In a note, Steevens quotes the above line in explanation of Shakespeare.

[269] [The concluding portion of the speech is supposed to be overheard by Fraud and the others.]

[270] The ordinary cry of the apprentices of London, when they wished to raise their fellows to take their part in any commotion. It is mentioned in many old writers.

[271] A trouchman was an interpreter [literally, a truceman]: "For he that is the Trouchman of a Straungers tongue may well declare his meaning, but yet shall marre the grace of his Tale" (G. Whetstone's "Heptameron," 1582).

[272] [Old copy, _trunke_.]

[273] [This is to be pronounced as a trisyllable.]

[274] [In the old copy this line is printed thus--

"Quid tibi cum domini mox servient miseri nobis; discede."]

[275] [In the old copy this line is divided between Policy and Pomp improperly.]

[276] [Might my advice be heard.]

[277] [Old copy, _wished_.]

[278] [Old copy, _we_.]

[279] [Old copy, _Ne. Fra., Nemo_ being retained by error.]

[280] [The entrance of Diligence is marked here in old copy; but he was already on the stage.]

[281] [Simplicity seems to intend the public-wealth.]

[282] [An intentional (?) error for _buckram_.]

[283] They "slipped aside" on p. 483, and now re-enter. The preceding stage direction ought to be _Exeunt_, because the lords go out as well as Simplicity.

[284] [Committal, prior to trial.]

[285] That is, under the protection of their husbands--a legal phrase, not yet strictly applicable, as the ladies are not to be married to the lords until the next day--

"And even to-morrow is the marriage-day."

[286] [Old copy, _a_.]

[287] [Old copy, _noble_; the emendation was suggested by Mr Collier.]

[288] Old copy, _vetuous_.

[289] There must be some corruption here, or the author was not very anxious to be correct in his classical allusions.

[290] Lies to the king. The word _lese_ is more generally used as a substantive.

[291] [_Jug_ is a leman or mistress. Mr Collier remarks that this passage clears up] the hitherto unexplained exclamation in "King Lear," act. i. sc. 4: "Whoop, Jug, I love thee."--The Tinker's _mail_, mentioned in the preceding line, is his wallet. _Trug_, in the following line, is equivalent to _trull_, and, possibly, is only another form of the same word: Middleton (edit. Dyce ii. 222) has the expression, "a pretty, middlesized _trug_." See also the note, where R. Greene's tract is quoted.

[292] In one copy the text is as we give it, and in another the word is printed *_Ideal_*, the alteration having been made in the press. Possibly the author had some confused notion about *_Ida_*; but, if he cared about being correct, the Queen of Love did not "dally with Endymion."

[293] [*Thalia*.]

[294] [Old copy, *_Idea_*; a trissyllable is required for the rhythm.]

[295] [Old copy, *_kept_*.]

[296] [*Bond*.]

[297] [Old copy, *_Abstrauogant_*.]

[298] [Old copy, *_peely_*.]

[299] [*Cakes*. Old copy, *_cats_*.]

[300] [A Knight of the Post was a person hired to swear anything--a character often mentioned in old writers.]

[301] Some persons, not merely without reason, but directly against it, treat *_vild_* and *_vile_*, and consequently *vildly* and *vilely*, as distinct words. *_Vild_* and *_vildly_* are blunders in old spelling, only to be retained when, as now, we give the words of an author in the very orthography of that date. We profess here to follow the antiquated spelling exactly, that it may be seen how the productions in our volume came originally from the press: but when spelling is modernised, as it is in the ordinary republications of our ancient dramatists, &c., it is just as absurd to print "vile" *_vild_*, as to print "friend" *frend* or "enemy" *_ennimy_*--*_Mr Collier's note in the edition of_ 1851.*

[302] Shakespeare has the word "exigent" for *_extremity_*, and such seems to be its meaning here, and not the legal sense; the Knight says that the good name of his predecessors for housekeeping shall never be brought into extremity by him.

[303] [*Wary, aware*.]

[304] [Old copy, *_Squire_*.]

[305] [Old copy, *_for fourtie_*.]

[306] An early instance of the use of an expression, of frequent occurrence afterwards and down to our own day, equivalent to going without dinner. See Steevens's note to "Richard III." act iv. sc. 4, where many passages are quoted on the point.

[307] [Old copy, *_ope_*.]

[308] The copy of this play in the British Museum has here "*_Scinthin_ maide*;" but another, belonging to the Rev. A. Dyce, "*_Scythia_ maide*," a reading we have followed, and, no doubt, introduced by the old printer as the sheets went through the press.

[309] "Counterfeit" was a very common term for the resemblance of a person: in "Hamlet," act iii. sc. 4, we have "counterfeit presentment;" and in the "Merchant of Venice," act iii. sc. 2, "Fair Portia's

counterfeit." In Beaumont and Fletcher's "Wife for a Month," act iv. sc. 5, we meet-with "counterfeits in Arras" for portraits, or figures in tapestry.

[310] [i.e., from or after.]

[311] [i.e., The shoemaker. There is a jest turning upon this in one of the early collections of *_facetiae_*.]

[312] [Vulcan.]

[313] By "carminger" the cobbler means harbinger, an officer; who preceded the monarch during progresses, to give notice and make preparation.

[314] We print it precisely as in the old copy, but we may presume that here a couplet was intended, as the cobbler's speech begins in rhyme:--

"And we are come to you alone
To deliver our petition,"

[315] Roquefort in his "Glossary," i. 196, states that *bysse* is a sort *_d'etoffe de soie_*, and the Rev. A. Dyce, "Middleton's Works," v. 558, says that it means "fine linen," while others contend that it is "a delicate blue colour," but sometimes "black or dark grey." The truth may be that it was fine silk of a blue colour, and we now and then meet it coupled with purple--"purple and bis."

[316] [Old copy, *_Indian_*.]

[317] [Old copy, *_calamon_*.]

[318] [i.e., he withdraws to the back of the stage, to allow the king to confer first with Osrick, and then comes forward again.]

[319] [Old copy, *_Asmoroth_*.]

[320] [Old copy, *_Asmoroth_*.]

[321] [Old copy, *_bid_*.] *_Bid_* may be taken in the sense of invite, a meaning it often bears in old writers; but we are most likely to understand it *_bide_* or *_abide_*, the final *_e_* having been omitted, or dropped out in the press. In the next line we have *_quit_* again used for *_acquit_*.

[322] [We must suppose here that Honesty sends out some of the attendants to bring in the Coneycatcher and Farmer, who soon make their re-appearance on the stage.]

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