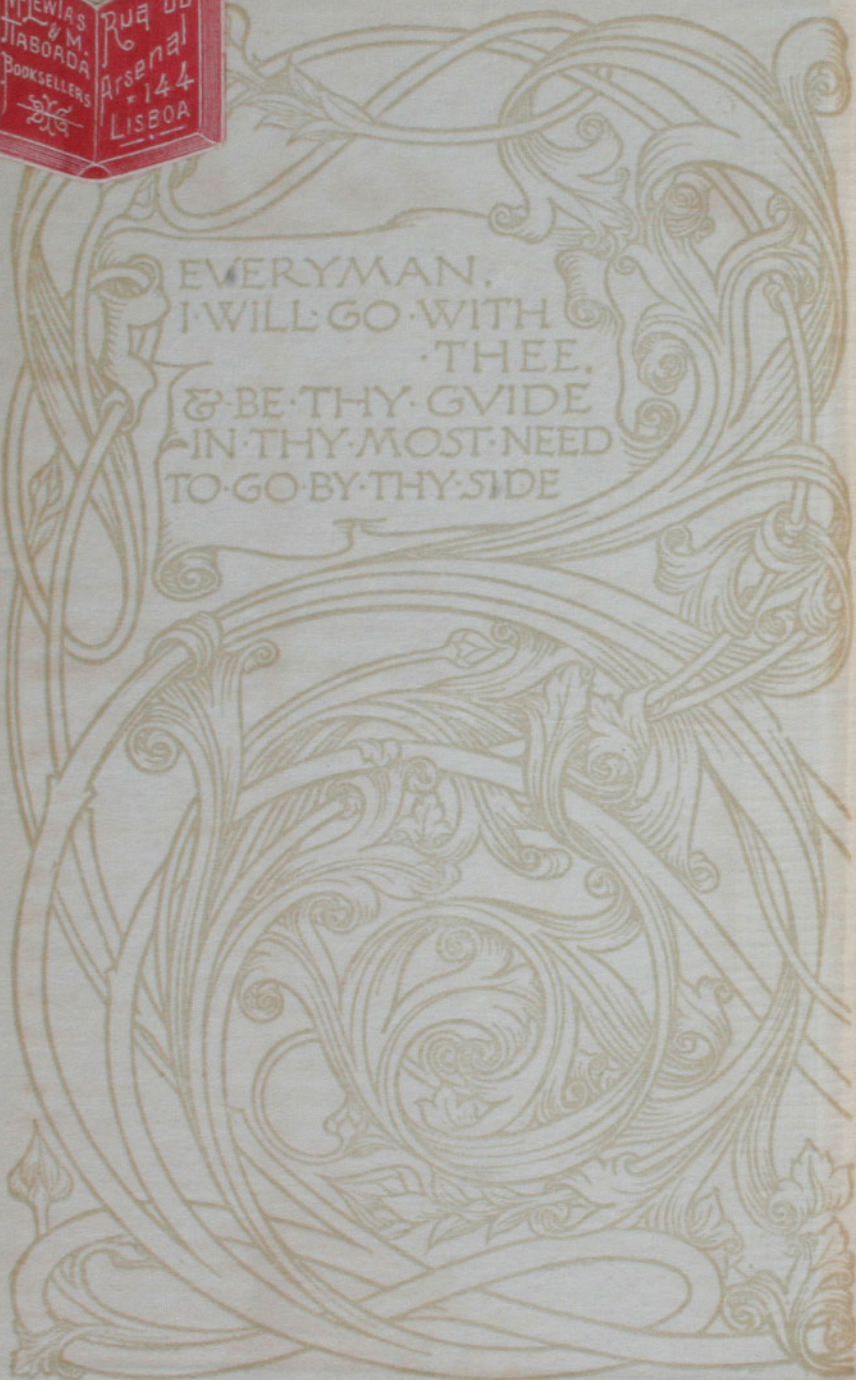




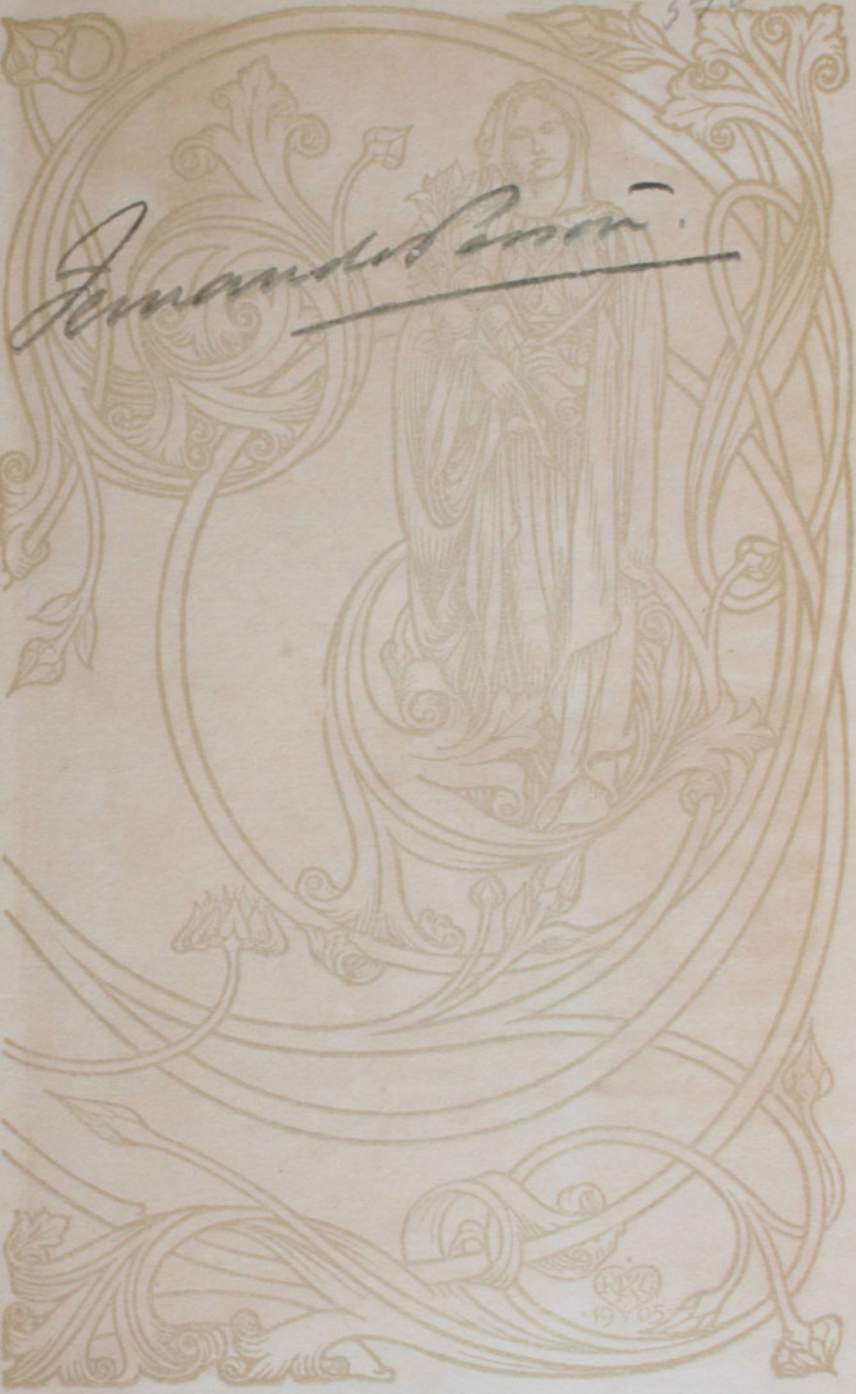
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LISBOA

EVERYMAN,  
I WILL GO WITH  
THEE,  
& BE THY GUIDE  
IN THY MOST NEED  
TO GO BY THY SIDE



322

Amanda Brown



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I.—PRE-SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDIES

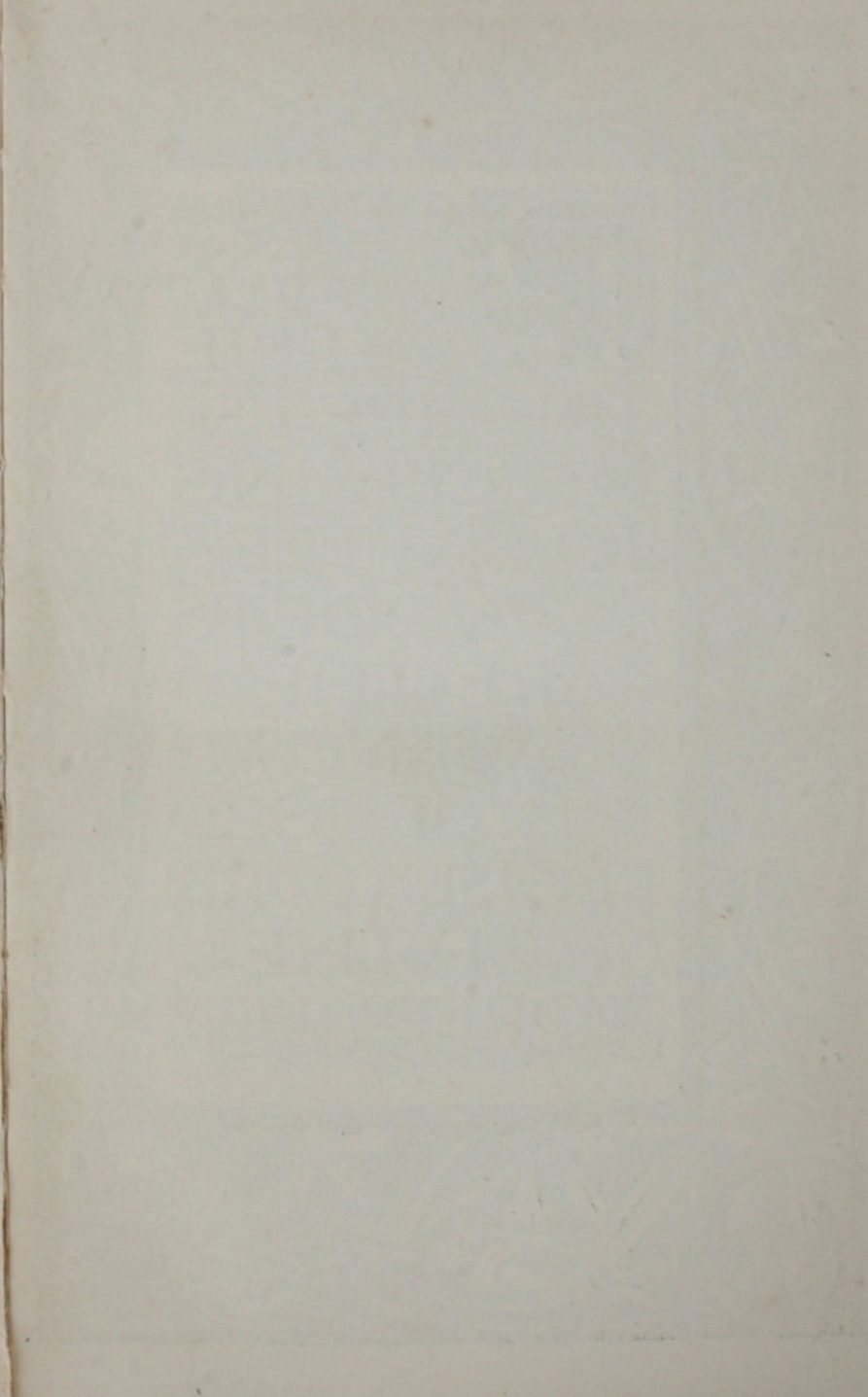
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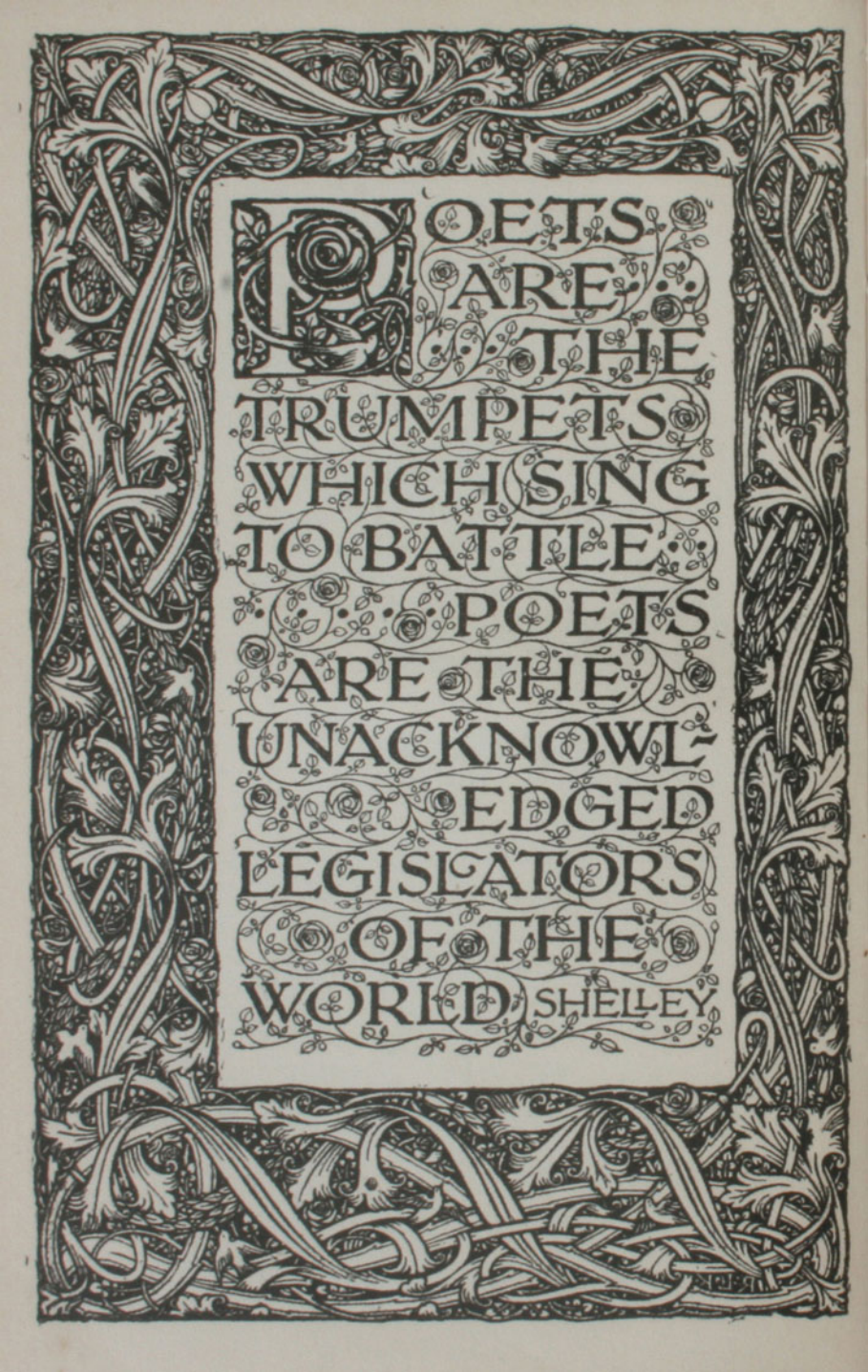


IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH,  
FLAT BACK, COLOURED TOP, AND  
LEATHER, ROUND CORNERS, GILT TOP.

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POETS  
ARE  
THE  
TRUMPETS  
WHICH SING  
TO BATTLE.  
POETS  
ARE THE  
UNACKNOWLEDGED  
LEGISLATORS  
OF THE  
WORLD. SHELLEY

THE MINOR  
ELIZABETH  
-AN DRAMA  
(I) PRE-SHAK  
-ESPEAREAN  
TRAGEDIES.



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## INTRODUCTION

THE dramas written during the first thirty years of Elizabeth's reign are not easily arranged in categories. They deal with many kinds of subjects, and they recall many different models. Any single play, in fact, is sure to reveal in some measure the conflicting influences of the two great traditions that were then struggling for mastery. The mediæval religious drama, with its miracles and moralities, had been for centuries virtually the only dramatic tradition existing; but by 1559, in England, as elsewhere in Europe, the new learning had brought to men's knowledge the tragedies and comedies of Greece and Rome. Although miracle plays had nearly ceased, their chief characteristics long survived: their epic structure, their adherence to the method of translation, their mixture of the terrible and the ludicrous, their medley of persons from all walks in life, and their readiness to exhibit anything whatever on the stage. And, although moralities were already losing their pre-eminence, abstractions figuring as characters in a symbolic presentation of life continued to be common until Shakespeare's time. The classical models, on the other hand, were winning imitators as well as admirers. By translations, by neo-Latin or vernacular imitations, by adaptations of biblical story to Terentian or Senecan form, by dramatisation of classical story or myth, and by many other processes, they were becoming familiar to actors and play-goers at court, school, and even in public theatres. While, as Sir Philip Sidney complained, there were very few "right comedies" or "right tragedies," there were an increasing number which showed that their authors had studied classical theory and practice.

The classical models adopted for tragedy were not, however, the Greek plays, but those of the Roman philosopher Seneca. These are but inferior rhetorical imitations of the Athenian masterpieces, but they won the unstinted admiration of the Renaissance. In England, as in every

other nation of Western Europe, they were read in school and college, translated into the vernacular, and became the common property of all educated men. Moreover, although they were probably never acted in Rome, they were accepted by the Elizabethans as stage plays, and all their characteristics were applied to stage performance. Their stories, drawn from the most bloody and revolting of the Greek myths and tracing crimes to their final horrible retribution, as well as their brilliant and elaborate poetic diction, delighted both scholars and public. Cultured men of letters strove to create an English drama modelled in all respects upon Seneca, retaining his structure, chorus, unities of time and place, along with his sensational themes and showy style. Fortunately, however, the public theatres had created a popular demand which could not endure such solecisms, and they soon attracted poets of independent genius who preferred the licence of the public taste to the narrow laws of the scholars. Meanwhile, however, Seneca served as a standard to define tragedy. If the popular dramatist did not produce "right tragedy," he was nevertheless conscious of his model. He wrote of adultery, lust, lawless ambition, murder, and revenge, and he gave these themes all the poetical embellishments he could devise. Even popular tragedies were generally confined to the affairs of princes or persons of high rank, and dealt with a reversal of fortune, the downfall of a prince, the ruin of a kingdom, or the punishment of some monstrous crime.

"Gorboduc" (1565, acted 1562), the first English tragedy, was a definite attempt to follow the examples of Italy and France and to initiate English tragedy in strict conformity to the Senecan model. It was written by two gentlemen of standing, both at court and in letters, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, afterwards Lord Buckhurst; and it was performed by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple as a part of their elaborate Christmas entertainment for the queen in 1561-2. The story of a fratricide and the resulting murders and wars was selected from English legend because of its likeness to Seneca's "Thebais;" and the long declamations, the chorus, the division into five acts, the messengers, and the narration of events, all follow Senecan practice. But even in "Gorboduc" the



unities of time and place are violated, and the interminable debates are like those in the moralities rather than those in Seneca. The structure, too, is really narrative and not dramatic, and the dumb-shows between the acts introduce spectacles foreign to the classical drama. "Gorboduc" was followed by several other English Senecan plays, "Jocasta," "Tancred and Gismunda," and "The Misfortunes of Arthur," all written for special occasions and performed by amateurs before the queen. These, along with some lost university plays, represent the attempt and the failure to bind English tragedy to Seneca. Sidney praised "Gorboduc," and Bacon assisted in "The Misfortunes of Arthur;" but the Senecan devotees won hardly a nod from Poetry and Imagination. These awaited the call of the public playhouses.

By the time that Shakespeare began his career, nearly twenty years after the performance of "Gorboduc," the companies of professional actors were securely established in London. They had built playhouses, won the favour of the court and the patronage of a large public, and were beginning to attract brilliant young men from the universities as playwrights. Tragedy by this time was well initiated as a species of the popular drama. To be sure, the species was not closely defined, and it existed without support of criticism or theory, but it already comprised a number of plays that were written in ambitious verse and dealt with momentous and direful events, heroic and extraordinary persons, and atrocious crimes. Sensational and bloody, they appealed to an audience which was familiar with cruelty and brutality in its daily life, and which read history in the light of the career of Mary Stuart and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Intent mainly on exhibiting the striking incidents of a story, careless of structure, eager for incongruity, they appealed to an audience which came to the theatre craving a startling story and which liked to have its emotions mixed. Grandiose in theme and style, audacious in their extravagant romanticism, they satisfied the desire for novelty, adventure, and fantasy which was shared by illiterate apprentice and aspiring poet. The audience welcomed verbal fireworks as well as gruesome murder; and while it required an exciting story, it was willing enough that the



poet should give this splendid verse and imaginative idealism.

The chief creator of this popular tragedy was Christopher Marlowe. His plays are contained in another volume of Everyman's Library, and need not be considered here; but any account of the pre-Shakespearean drama must be at pains to emphasise his importance. His plays deal with prodigious desires and the failures which inevitably result, and their dramatic interest centres upon the volitional struggles of their mighty protagonists. Marlowe freed himself from all allegiance to Senecan technique or diction, and devoted himself valiantly to the public theatres, providing his actors with great parts, his audience with sensation, spectacle, and rant, and the drama with genuine passion and exuberant poetry. His tragedies formed a type and set a fashion; and for several years all blank verse echoed his cadences, and the London stages witnessed ranting conquerors like Tamburlaine, monstrous villains like Barabbas, and death scenes like those of Faustus and Edward II. Shakespeare was his pupil, and in "Richard III." adopted his methods, and in "Richard II." and "The Merchant of Venice" wrote in emulation if no longer in imitation.

Only second to Marlowe in influence upon the pre-Shakespearian writers of tragedy was Thomas Kyd; and his influence is in most respects readily distinguishable from that of his greater rival. He was a "Senecal man." He translated the "Cornelia" of the French Senecan, Garnier; and in the one play on which his fame securely rests, "The Spanish Tragedy" (1592, acted 1588), he adapted a Senecan theme, and to some extent Senecan technique, to the popular stage. The main theme of revenge, the ghost, what there is left of the chorus, the philosophising, the introspection, the rhetorical antitheses and repetitions, are all Senecan. But Kyd was a born playwright, and he knew his theatre. In the main, the play was a crude, cumbrous, but powerful melodrama, so effective in its startling situations that it won an instantaneous, enormous, and long-continued popularity. Even the reader of to-day may find in its absurdities and bombast a not wholly powerless presentation of the struggle of the human will against evil and destiny.

Imitations of "The Spanish Tragedy" were many. Shrieking ghosts, soliloquising avengers, and Machiavellian villains became hardly less common than Tamburlaine-like protagonists. "Titus Andronicus," whatever may have been Shakespeare's share in its composition, belongs to Kyd's school, as does "Soliman and Perseda," somewhat doubtfully attributed to Kyd himself. Another play attributed to Kyd is the original "Hamlet," not extant but certainly acted by 1589, a dozen years before Shakespeare wrote his "Hamlet," and almost certainly used by Shakespeare as the basis of his play. In "The Spanish Tragedy" Kyd had dealt with the revenge of a father for a murdered son; in "Hamlet" he dealt, probably in a similar fashion, with the revenge of a son for a father. These two plays made the beginning of a long series of revenge tragedies, distinguished, like "The Spanish Tragedy," by the presentation of ghosts, insanity, diabolic intrigue, physical horrors, much philosophising, and copious slaughter. Ben Jonson, in his "Additions" to Kyd's play, Chapman, Webster, Shirley, and others, endowed the species with far greater poetry and more searching psychology than Kyd could muster. But his was the conception of the avenger hesitating and irresolute in the face of overpowering evil—a conception which Shakespeare transformed into the eternally puzzling moods of Hamlet.

Most of the tragedies written between the dates of "The Spanish Tragedy" and Shakespeare's "Hamlet" exhibit a large indebtedness to Marlowe or Kyd, or to both; but there were various departures from their methods. One of these is exemplified by Peele's "David and Bethsabe" (1599, acted *c.* 1590); another by the realistic "Arden of Feversham" (1592, acted *c.* 1590), often attributed in part to Shakespeare, but without any evidence.

George Peele was a versatile and facile poet who began his dramatic career at Oxford, where he made a version of one of the "Iphigenias" of Euripides, and who was later in London the friend of Nash, Greene, and Marlowe, and the author of a number of plays of various modes. "David and Bethsabe" is unique among extant tragedies of its time in its use of a biblical story, but otherwise it offers little that was novel in dramatic art. In structure and characterisation it offers no advance on the average



play of the period. Its most notable characteristic is undoubtedly its poetic style. This is generally monotonous and often absurd, as in the notorious passages where Absalom plays with conceits for many lines while hanging by his hair, and again for many lines after he has been stabbed. But Peele was famous as "primus verborum artifex," and he let no chance for poetry go by. No matter what the situation of his characters, he made them sing sweetly, and no matter what subjects were proposed, he could turn them to melodious and graceful fancy. And his play is not without charm and loveliness. It does not give us reality or wisdom or truth; it carries us into a world of verbal felicity, of music and fancy—a world that the Elizabethans loved, where the author of "Romeo and Juliet" was king.

"Arden of Feversham" represents tendencies in the drama opposite to those of "David and Bethsabe," and in the main counter to those prevailing in Elizabethan tragedy. It relates the history of a nearly contemporaneous murder, and is the earliest domestic tragedy extant. There had probably been earlier dramatisations of notorious criminal cases, and "Arden" makes the most of the public's morbid curiosity. But its author seems also to have designed a protest against current dramatic fashions. The tragedies of the day were concerned with kings and courts and state affairs; he would write of private men and domestic affairs. They were concerned with past events and remote scenes; he would write of English events of his own time. They sought to render their stories impressive by all the graces of imagery and ornament; he would tell the true story of an actual crime and let it point its own moral. He opposed the romanticism of the day with the creed of the realist.

Gentlemen, we hope youle pardon this naked tragedy,  
Wherein no filed points are foisted in  
To make it gracious to the eare or eye;  
For simple truth is gracious enough,  
And needes no other points of glosing stuffe.

"Arden of Feversham" was followed by a number of criminal plays in the Elizabethan period, and in the eighteenth century it was revived by Lillo and perhaps influenced him in his "George Barnwell." None of its



successors has surpassed it in its vivid presentation of facts, but the play does not merit half the laudation it has received. It borrows from Marlowe and Kyd, and its realism is tedious and over-detailed. Its unquestioned triumph lies in its portraiture of Alice Arden. No other evil woman in the drama before Lady Macbeth is comparable to her in verisimilitude.

"Arden of Feversham" might also be instanced as an example of plays based on the chronicles, for it follows Holinshed closely. Most of the chronicle plays, however, dealt with English history in a larger way, and they make up a loosely defined group. A considerable number of these have tragic themes and resemblances to some of the tragedies already discussed. Perhaps the most typical examples are the three parts of "Henry VI." In these Shakespeare had a share, but Marlowe's influence, if not his hand, is dominant. They form a panorama of Henry's long reign arranged to emphasise the "falls of princes;" and Shakespeare in "Richard III." carried on the tale to the downfall of the arch-villain and the triumph of the Tudor dynasty. Outside of the Shakespeare Folio the best tragic chronicle play is Marlowe's "Edward II."

With additions from these chronicle histories and the all-important work of Marlowe, the four plays in this volume illustrate the various essays and the most important tendencies in the beginnings of English tragedy. They indicate the way in which the field was prepared for Shakespeare; and their chief interest for us to-day is doubtless in their illustration of the conditions which he faced. They reveal themes, characters, stories, motives, stage effects, and traits of style which were examples and incentives for him. Under their tutelage he served his apprenticeship in dramatic art.

Naturally they suffer in comparison with his far more successful achievement. No one of the four plays is admirable as a whole. Only here and there, for a situation, a conception, a character, or a line—in the depiction of Alice Arden, in a verse here and there of Peele's, or a dramatic conception of Kyd's—can our praise become unreserved. But if we judge not by our own standards, and still less in comparison with Shakespeare, if we read these plays as the work of early pioneers of a new art and

a new poetry, as novel experiments of literature to express the life and passion of a great national epoch, then there must be admiration as well as gratitude for these pioneers and pursuivants of an imperial triumph.

ASHLEY THORNDYKE.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,  
NEW YORK.

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4

GORBODUC

## THE ARGUMENT

GORBODUC, King of Britain, divided his realm in his life time to his sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion, and slew both father and mother. The nobility assembled, and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards, for want of issue of the Prince, whereby the succession of the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

<p>GORBODUC, <i>King of Great Britain.</i></p> <p>VIDENA, <i>Queen, and wife to King Gorboduc.</i></p> <p>FERREX, <i>Elder son to King Gorboduc.</i></p> <p>PORREX, <i>Younger son to King Gorboduc.</i></p> <p>CLOTYN, <i>Duke of Cornwall.</i></p> <p>FERGUS, <i>Duke of Albany.</i></p> <p>MANDUD, <i>Duke of Loegrís.</i></p> <p>GWENARD, <i>Duke of Cumberland.</i></p> <p>EUBULUS, <i>Secretary to the King.</i></p> <p>AROSTUS, <i>a Counsellor to the King.</i></p> <p>DORDAN, <i>a Counsellor assigned by the King to his eldest son, Ferrex.</i></p> <p>PHILANDER, <i>a Counsellor assigned</i></p>	<p><i>by the King to his youngest son, Porrex.</i></p> <p><i>Both being of the old king's council before.</i></p> <p>HERMON, <i>a Parasite remaining with Ferrex.</i></p> <p>TYNDAR, <i>a Parasite remaining with Porrex.</i></p> <p>NUNTIUS, <i>a Messenger of the elder brother's death.</i></p> <p>NUNTIUS, <i>a Messenger of Duke Fergus rising in arms.</i></p> <p>MARCELLA, <i>a Lady of the Queen's privy-chamber.</i></p> <p>CHORUS, <i>four ancient and sage men of Britain.</i></p>
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# GORBODUC

## THE ORDER OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE FIRST ACT, AND THE SIGNIFICATION THEREOF.

*First, the music of violins began to play, during which came in upon the stage six wild men, clothed in leaves. Of whom the first bare on his neck a fagot of small sticks, which they all, both severally and together, assayed with all their strength to break; but it could not be broken by them. At the length, one of them pulled out one of the sticks, and brake it: and the rest plucking out all the other sticks, one after another, did easily break them, the same being severed; which being conjoined, they had before attempted in vain. After they had this done, they departed the stage, and the music ceased. Hereby was signified, that a state knit in unity doth continue strong against all force, but being divided, is easily destroyed; as befell upon Duke Gorboduc dividing his land to his two sons, which he before held in monarchy; and upon the dissension of the brethren, to whom it was divided.*

## ACT I

### SCENE I

VIDENA. FERREX.

*Vid.* The silent night that brings the quiet pause,  
From painful travails of the weary day,  
Prolongs my careful thoughts, and makes me blame  
The slow Aurore, that so for love or shame  
Doth long delay to show her blushing face,  
And now the day renews my grievful plaint.

*Fer.* My gracious lady, and my mother dear,  
Pardon my grief for your so grieved mind  
To ask what cause tormenteth so your heart.



- Vid.* So great a wrong and so unjust despite,  
Without all cause against all course of kind! <sup>1</sup> 10
- Fer.* Such causeless wrong, and so unjust despite,  
May have redress, or, at the least, revenge.
- Vid.* Neither, my son; such is the froward will,  
The person such, such my mishap and thine.
- Fer.* Mine know I none, but grief for your distress.
- Vid.* Yes; mine for thine, my son. A father? no:  
In kind a father, not in kindness.
- Fer.* My Father? why, I know nothing at all,  
Wherein I have misdome unto his grace. 20
- Vid.* Therefore, the more unkind to thee and me.  
For, knowing well, my son, the tender love  
That I have ever borne, and bear to thee;  
He grieved thereat, is not content alone,  
To spoil thee of my sight, my chiefest joy,  
But thee, of thy birth-right and heritage,  
Causeless, unkindly, and in wrongful wise,  
Against all law and right, he will bereave:  
Half of his kingdom he will give away.
- Fer.* To whom?
- Vid.* Even to Porrex, his younger son; 30  
Whose growing pride I do so sore suspect,  
That, being rais'd to equal rule with thee,  
Methinks I see his envious heart to swell,  
Fill'd with disdain and with ambitious hope.  
The end the gods do know, whose altars I  
Full oft have made in vain of cattle slain  
To send the sacred smoke to Heaven's throne,  
For thee, my son, if things do so succeed,  
As now my jealous mind misdeemeth sore.
- Fer.* Madam, leave care and careful plaint for me. 40  
Just hath my father been to every wight:  
His first injustice he will not extend  
To me, I trust, that give no cause thereof;  
My brother's pride shall hurt himself, not me.
- Vid.* So grant the gods! But yet, thy father so  
Hath firmly fixed his unmoved mind,  
That plaints and prayers can no whit avail;  
For those have I assay'd, but even this day  
He will endeavour to procure assent

<sup>1</sup> Nature.

Of all his council to his fond devise.

50

*Fer.* Their ancestors from race to race have borne  
True faith to my forefathers and their seed:  
I trust they eke <sup>1</sup> will bear the like to me.

*Vid.* There resteth all. But if they fail thereof,  
And if the end bring forth an ill success,  
On them and theirs the mischief shall befall,  
And so I pray the gods requite it them;  
And so they will, for so is wont to be,  
When lords and trusted rulers under kings,  
To please the present fancy of the prince,  
With wrong transpose the course of governance,  
Murders, mischief, and civil sword at length,  
Or mutual treason, or a just revenge,  
When right succeeding line returns again,  
By Jove's just judgment and deserved wrath,  
Brings them to cruel and reproachful death,  
And roots their names and kindreds from the earth.

60

*Fer.* Mother, content you, you shall see the end.

*Vid.* The end! thy end I fear: Jove end me first!

## SCENE II

GORBODUC. AROSTUS. PHILANDER. EUBULUS.

*Gor.* My lords, whose grave advice and faithful aid  
Have long upheld my honour and my realm,  
And brought me to this age from tender years,  
Guiding so great estate with great renown:  
Now more importeth me, than erst <sup>2</sup> to use  
Your faith and wisdom, whereby yet I reign;  
That when by death my life and rule shall cease,  
The kingdom yet may with unbroken course  
Have certain prince, by whose undoubted right  
Your wealth and peace may stand in quiet stay;  
And eke that they, whom nature hath prepared,  
In time to take my place in princely seat,  
While in their father's time their pliant youth  
Yields to the frame of skilful governance,  
May so be taught and trained in noble arts,

70

80

<sup>1</sup> Also.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly.

As what their fathers, which have reigned before,  
 Have with great fame derived down to them,  
 With honour they may leave unto their seed;  
 And not be thought, for their unworthy life,  
 And for their lawless swerving out of kind,  
 Worthy to lose what law and kind them gave; 90  
 But that they may preserve the common peace,  
 The cause that first began and still maintains  
 The lineal course of kings' inheritance,  
 For me, for mine, for you, and for the state  
 Whereof both I and you have charge and care.  
 Thus do I mean to use your wonted faith  
 To me and mine, and to your native land.  
 My lords, be plain without all wry respect,  
 Or poisonous craft to speak in pleasing wise,  
 Lest as the blame of ill-succeeding things 100  
 Shall light on you, so light the harms also.

*Aros.* Your good acceptance so, most noble king,  
 Of such our faithfulness, as heretofore  
 We have employed in duties to your grace,  
 And to this realm, whose worthy head you are,  
 Well proves, that neither you mistrust at all,  
 Nor we shall need in boasting wise to show  
 Our truth to you, nor yet our wakeful care  
 For you, for yours, and for our native land.  
 Wherefore, O king, I speak as one for all, 110  
 Sith all as one do bear you equal faith:  
 Doubt not to use our counsels and our aids,  
 Whose honours, goods, and lives are whole avow'd,  
 To serve, to aid, and to defend your grace.

*Gor.* My lords, I thank you all. This is the case:  
 Ye know, the gods, who have the sovereign care  
 For kings, for kingdoms, and for common weals,  
 Gave me two sons in my more lusty age,  
 Who now, in my decaying years, are grown  
 Well towards riper state of mind and strength, 120  
 To take in hand some greater princely charge.  
 As yet they live and spend their hopeful days  
 With me, and with their mother, here in court.  
 Their age now asketh other place and trade,  
 And mine also doth ask another change,  
 Theirs to more travail, mine to greater ease.



When fatal death shall end my mortal life,  
 My purpose is to leave unto them twain,  
 The realm divided in two sundry parts:  
 The one, Ferrex, mine elder son, shall have, 130  
 The other, shall the younger, Porrex, rule.  
 That both my purpose may more firmly stand,  
 And eke that they may better rule their charge,  
 I mean forthwith to place them in the same;  
 That in my life they may both learn to rule,  
 And I may joy to see their ruling well.  
 This is, in sum, what I would have you weigh:  
 First, whether ye allow my whole devise,  
 And think it good for me, for them, for you,  
 And for our country, mother of us all: 140  
 And if ye like it and allow it well,  
 Then, for their guiding and their governance,  
 Show forth such means of circumstance,  
 As ye think meet to be both known and kept.  
 Lo, this is all; now tell me your advice.

*Aros.* And this is much, and asketh great advice:  
 But for my part, my sovereign lord and king,  
 This do I think: Your majesty doth know,  
 How under you, in justice and in peace,  
 Great wealth and honour long we have enjoy'd: 150  
 So as we cannot seem with greedy minds  
 To wish for change of prince or governance:  
 But if we like your purpose and devise,  
 Our liking must be deemed to proceed  
 Of rightful reason, and of heedful care,  
 Not for ourselves, but for the common state,  
 Sith our own state doth need no better change.  
 I think in all as erst your grace hath said:  
 First, when you shall unload your aged mind  
 Of heavy care and troubles manifold, 160  
 And lay the same upon my lords, your sons,  
 Whose growing years may bear the burden long,  
 (And long I pray the gods to grant it so)  
 And in your life, while you shall so behold  
 Their rule, their virtues, and their noble deeds,  
 Such as their kind behighteth<sup>1</sup> to us all,  
 Great be the profits that shall grow thereof;

<sup>1</sup> To promise.

Your age in quiet shall the longer last,  
 Your lasting age shall be their longer stay.  
 For cares of kings, that rule as you have rul'd, 170  
 For public wealth, and not for private joy,  
 Do waste man's life and hasten crooked age,  
 With furrowed face, and with enfeebled limbs,  
 To draw on creeping death a swifter pace.  
 They two, yet young, shall bear the parted reign  
 With greater ease than one, now old, alone  
 Can wield the whole, for whom much harder is  
 With lessened strength the double weight to bear.  
 Your eye, your counsel, and the grave regard 180  
 Of father, yea, of such a father's name,  
 Now at beginning of their sundred reign,  
 When is the hazard of their whole success,  
 Shall bridle so their force of youthful heats,  
 And so restrain the rage of insolence,  
 Which most assails the young and noble minds,  
 And so shall guide and train in temper'd stay  
 Their yet green bending wits with reverend awe,  
 As now inur'd with virtues at the first,  
 Custom, O king, shall bring delightfulness,  
 By use of virtue, vice shall grow in hate. 190  
 But if you so dispose it, that the day  
 Which ends your life, shall first begin their reign,  
 Great is the peril, what will be the end,  
 When such beginning of such liberties,  
 Void of such stays as in your life do lie,  
 Shall leave them free to random of their will,  
 An open prey to traitorous flattery,  
 The greatest pestilence of noble youth:  
 Which peril shall be past, if in your life,  
 Their temper'd youth with aged father's awe 200  
 Be brought in ure<sup>1</sup> of skilful stayedness;  
 And in your life, their lives disposed so  
 Shall length your noble life in joyfulness.  
 Thus think I that your grace hath wisely thought,  
 And that your tender care of common weal  
 Hath bred this thought, so to divide your land,  
 And plant your sons to bear the present rule,  
 While you yet live to see their ruling well,

<sup>1</sup> Use, practice.

That you may longer live by joy therein.  
 What further means behooveful are and meet, 210  
 At greater leisure may your grace devise,  
 When all have said, and when we be agreed  
 If this be best, to part the realm in twain,  
 And place your sons in present government:  
 Whereof, as I have plainly said my mind,  
 So would I hear the rest of all my lords.

*Phil.* In part I think as hath been said before;  
 In part, again, my mind is otherwise.  
 As for dividing of this realm in twain,  
 And lotting out the same in equal parts 220  
 To either of my lords, your grace's sons,  
 That think I best for this your realm's behoof,  
 For profit and advancement of your sons,  
 And for your comfort and your honour eke:  
 But so to place them while your life do last,  
 To yield to them your royal governance,  
 To be above them only in the name  
 Of father, not in kingly state also,  
 I think not good for you, for them, nor us.  
 This kingdom, since the bloody civil field 230  
 Where Morgan slain did yield his conquer'd part  
 Unto his cousin's sword in Camberland,<sup>1</sup>  
 Containeth all that whilom did suffice  
 Three noble sons of your forefather Brute;  
 So your two sons it may suffice also,  
 The more the stronger, if they 'gree in one.  
 The smaller compass that the realm doth hold,  
 The easier is the sway thereof to wield,  
 The nearer justice to the wronged poor,  
 The smaller charge, and yet enough for one. 240  
 And when the region is divided so  
 That brethren be the lords of either part,  
 Such strength doth nature knit between them both,  
 In sundry bodies by conjoined love,  
 That, not as two, but one of doubled force,  
 Each is to other as a sure defence:

<sup>1</sup> The event here alluded to is recorded in the History of Geoffrey of Monmouth, b. ii. c. 15. Morgan and Cunedagius, who were cousins, and nephews of Cordeilla Queen of Britain, having forcibly taken possession of the kingdom, divided it between themselves. Morgan, in his attempt afterwards to obtain the sole government, was slain by Cunedagius.



The nobleness and glory of the one  
 Doth sharp the courage of the other's mind,  
 With virtuous envy to contend for praise.  
 And such an equalness hath nature made 250  
 Between the brethren of one father's seed,  
 As an unkindly wrong it seems to be,  
 To throw the brother subject under feet  
 Of him, whose peer he is by course of kind;  
 And Nature, that did make this equalness,  
 Oft so repineth at so great a wrong,  
 That oft she raiseth up a grudging grief  
 In younger brethren at the elder's state:  
 Whereby both towns and kingdoms have been rased,  
 And famous stocks of royal blood destroyed: 260  
 The brother, that should be the brother's aid,  
 And have a wakeful care for his defence,  
 Gapes for his death, and blames the lingering years  
 That draw not forth his end with faster course;  
 And, oft impatient of so long delays,  
 With hateful slaughter he prevents the fates,  
 And heaps a just reward for brother's blood,  
 With endless vengeance on his stock for aye.  
 Such mischiefs here are wisely met withal;  
 If equal state may nourish equal love, 270  
 Where none hath cause to grudge at other's good.  
 But now the head to stoop beneath them both,  
 Ne kind, ne reason, ne good order bears.  
 And oft it hath been seen, where nature's course  
 Hath been perverted in disordered wise,  
 When fathers cease to know that they should rule,  
 The children cease to know they should obey;  
 And often over kindly tenderness  
 Is mother of unkindly stubbornness.  
 I speak not this in envy or reproach, 280  
 As if I grudg'd the glory of your sons,  
 Whose honour I beseech the gods increase:  
 Nor yet as if I thought there did remain  
 So filthy cankers in their noble breasts,  
 Whom I esteem (which is their greatest praise)  
 Undoubted children of so good a king.  
 Only I mean to show by certain rules,  
 Which kind hath graft within the mind of man,

That Nature hath her order and her course,  
 Which (being broken) doth corrupt the state 290  
 Of minds and things, ev'n in the best of all.  
 My lords, your sons, may learn to rule of you,  
 Your own example in your noble court  
 Is fittest guider of their youthful years.

If you desire to see some present joy  
 By sight of their well ruling in your life,  
 See them obey, so shall you see them rule:  
 Who so obeyeth not with humbleness  
 Will rule with outrage and with insolence.  
 Long may they rule, I do beseech the gods, 300  
 Long <sup>1</sup> may they learn, ere they begin to rule.

If kind and fates would suffer, I would wish  
 Them aged princes, and immortal kings.  
 Wherefore, most noble king, I well assent  
 Between your sons that you divide your realm,  
 And as in kind, so match them in degree.

But while the gods prolong your royal life,  
 Prolong your reign; for thereto live you here,  
 And therefore have the gods so long forborne 310  
 To join you to themselves, that still you might  
 Be prince and father of our common weal.

They, when they see your children ripe to rule,  
 Will make them room, and will remove you hence,  
 That yours, in right ensuing of your life,  
 May rightly honour your immortal name.

*Eub.* Your wonted true regard of faithful hearts  
 Makes me, O king, the bolder to presume  
 To speak what I conceive within my breast;  
 Although the same do not agree at all 320

With that which other here my lords have said,  
 Nor which yourself have seemed best to like.

Pardon I crave, and that my words be deem'd  
 To flow from hearty zeal unto your grace,  
 And to the safety of your common weal.

To part your realm unto my lords, your sons,  
 I think not good for you, ne yet for them,  
 But worst of all for this our native land.

Within one land, one single rule is best:  
 Divided reigns do make divided hearts; 330

<sup>1</sup> But long.—*Edit.* 1570.

But peace preserves the country and the prince.  
 Such is in man the greedy mind to reign,  
 So great is his desire to climb aloft,  
 In worldly stage the stateliest parts to bear,  
 That faith and justice, and all kindly love,  
 Do yield unto desire of sovereignty,  
 Where equal state doth raise an equal hope  
 To win the thing that either would attain.  
 Your grace remembereth how in passed years,  
 The mighty Brute, first prince of all this land,<sup>1</sup> 340  
 Possess'd the same, and rul'd it well in one:  
 He, thinking that the compass did suffice  
 For his three sons three kingdoms eke to make,  
 Cut it in three, as you would now in twain.  
 But how much British blood hath since been spilt,  
 To join again the sunder'd unity!  
 What princes slain before their timely hour!  
 What waste of towns and people in the land!  
 What treasons heap'd on murders and on spoils!  
 Whose just revenge ev'n yet is scarcely ceas'd, 350  
 Ruthful remembrance is yet raw in mind.  
 The gods forbid the like to chance again:  
 And you, O king, give not the cause thereof.  
 My lord Ferrex, your elder son, perhaps  
 (Whom kind and custom gives a rightful hope  
 To be your heir, and to succeed your reign)  
 Shall think that he doth suffer greater wrong  
 Than he perchance will bear, if power serve.  
 Porrex, the younger, so uprais'd in state,  
 Perhaps in courage will be rais'd also. 360  
 If flattery then, which fails not to assail  
 The tender minds of yet unskilful youth,  
 In one shall kindle and increase disdain,  
 And envy in the other's heart inflame,  
 This fire shall waste their love, their lives, their land,  
 And ruthful ruin shall destroy them both.  
 I wish not this, O king, so to befall,  
 But fear the thing, that I do most abhor.  
 Give no beginning to so dreadful end,  
 Keep them in order and obedience, 370  
 And let them both by now obeying you,

<sup>1</sup> See Geoffrey of Monmouth, book i.



Learn such behaviour as beseems their state;  
 The elder, mildness in his governance,  
 The younger, a yielding contentedness.  
 And keep them near unto your presence still,  
 That they, restrained by the awe of you,  
 May live in compass of well temper'd stay,  
 And pass the perils of their youthful years.  
 Your aged life-draws on to feebler time,  
 Wherein you shall less able be to bear  
 The travails that in youth you have sustain'd,  
 Both in your person's and your realm's defence.  
 If planting now your sons in further parts,  
 You send them further from your present reach,  
 Less shall you know how they themselves demean:  
 Traitorous corrupters of their pliant youth  
 Shall have unspied a much more free access;  
 And if ambition and inflam'd disdain  
 Shall arm the one, the other, or them both,  
 To civil war, or to usurping pride,  
 Late shall you rue that you ne reck'd<sup>1</sup> before.  
 Good is I grant of all to hope the best,  
 But not to live still dreadless of the worst.  
 So trust the one that th' other be foreseen.  
 Arm not unskilfulness with princely power.  
 But you that long have wisely rul'd the reins  
 Of royalty within your noble realm,  
 So hold them, while the gods, for our avails,  
 Shall stretch the thread of your prolonged days.  
 Too soon he clomb into the flaming car,  
 Whose want of skill did set the earth on fire.  
 Time, and example of your noble Grace,  
 Shall teach your sons both to obey and rule.  
 When time hath taught them, time shall make them place,  
 The place that now is full: and so I pray  
 Long it remain, to comfort of us all.

*Gor.* I take your faithful hearts in thankful part:  
 But sith I see no cause to draw my mind,  
 To fear the nature of my loving sons,  
 Or to misdeem that envy or disdain  
 Can there work hate, where nature planteth love;  
 In one self purpose do I still abide.

<sup>1</sup> To heed, to care for.

My love extendeth equally to both,  
 My land sufficeth for them both also.  
 Humber shall part the marches of their realms:  
 The southern part the elder shall possess,  
 The northern shall Porrex, the younger, rule.  
 In quiet I will pass mine aged days,  
 Free from the travail, and the painful cares,  
 That hasten age upon the worthiest kings. 420  
 But lest the fraud, that ye do seem to fear,  
 Of flattering tongues, corrupt their tender youth,  
 And writhe them to the ways of youthful lust,  
 To climbing pride, or to revenging hate,  
 Or to neglecting of their careful charge  
 Lewdly to live in wanton recklessness,  
 Or to oppressing of the rightful cause,  
 Or not to wreak the wrongs done to the poor,  
 To tread down truth, or favour false deceit;  
 I mean to join to either of my sons 430  
 Some one of those, whose long approved faith  
 And wisdom tried, may well assure my heart,  
 That mining fraud shall find no way to creep  
 Into their fenced ears with grave advice.  
 This is the end; and so I pray you all  
 To bear my sons the love and loyalty  
 That I have found within your faithful breasts.

*Aros.* You, nor your sons, my sovereign lord, shall want  
 Our faith and service, while our hearts do last. [*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS.

When settled stay doth hold the royal throne 440  
 In steadfast place, by known and doubtless right,  
 And chiefly when descent on one alone  
 Makes single and unparted reign to light;  
 Each change of course unjoins the whole estate,  
 And yields it thrall to ruin by debate.

The strength that knit by fast accord in one,  
 Against all foreign power of mighty foes,  
 Could of itself defend itself alone,  
 Disjoined once, the former force doth lose.

The sticks, that sunder'd brake so soon in twain,  
In fagot bound attempted were in vain.

450

Oft tender mind that leads the partial eye  
Of erring parents in their children's love,  
Destroys the wrongly loved child thereby.  
This doth the proud son of Apollo prove,  
Who, rashly set in chariot of his sire,  
Inflam'd the parched earth with heaven's fire.

And this great king that doth divide his land,  
And change the course of his descending crown,  
And yields the reign into his children's hand,  
From blissful state of joy and great renown,  
A mirror shall become to princes all,  
To learn to shun the cause of such a fall.

460



THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB  
SHOW BEFORE THE SECOND ACT.

*First, the music of cornets began to play, during which came in upon the stage a king accompanied with a number of his nobility and gentlemen. And after he had placed himself in a chair of estate prepared for him, there came and kneeled before him a grave and aged gentleman, and offered up unto him a cup of wine in a glass, which the king refused. After him comes a brave and lusty young gentleman, and presents the king with a cup of gold filled with poison, which the king accepted, and drinking the same, immediately fell down dead upon the stage, and so was carried thence away by his lords and gentlemen, and then the music ceased. Hereby was signified, that as glass by nature holdeth no poison, but is clear and may easily be seen through, ne boweth by any art; so a faithful counsellor holdeth no treason, but is plain and open, ne yieldeth to any indiscreet affection, but giveth wholesome counsel, which the ill advised prince refuseth. The delightful gold filled with poison betokeneth flattery, which under fair seeming of pleasant words beareth deadly poison, which destroyeth the prince that receiveth it. As befel in the two brethren, Ferrex and Porrex, who, refusing the wholesome advice of grave counsellors, credited these young parasites, and brought to themselves death and destruction thereby.*

ACT II

SCENE I

FERREX. HERMON. DORDAN.

*Fer.* I marvel much what reason led the king,  
My father, thus, without all my desert,  
To reave me half the kingdom, which by course  
Of law and nature should remain to me.

*Her.* If you with stubborn and untamed pride  
Had stood against him in rebelling wise;  
Or if, with grudging mind, you had envied

So slow a sliding of his aged years;  
 Or sought before your time to haste the course  
 Of fatal death upon his royal head;  
 Or stain'd your stock with murder of your kin;  
 Some face of reason might perhaps have seem'd  
 To yield some likely cause to spoil ye thus.

10

*Fer.* The wreakful gods pour on my cursed head  
 Eternal plagues and never-dying woes,  
 The hellish prince adjudge my damned ghost  
 To Tantale's thirst, or proud Ixion's wheel,  
 Or cruel Gripe<sup>1</sup> to gnaw my growing heart,  
 To during torments and unquenched flames,  
 If ever I conceiv'd so foul a thought,  
 To wish his end of life, or yet of reign.

20

*Dor.* Ne yet your father, O most noble prince,  
 Did ever think so foul a thing of you;  
 For he, with more than father's tender love,  
 While yet the fates do lend him life to rule,  
 (Who long might live to see your ruling well)  
 To you, my lord, and to his other son,  
 Lo, he resigns his realm and royalty;  
 Which never would so wise a prince have done,  
 If he had once misdeem'd that in your heart  
 There ever lodged so unkind a thought.

30

But tender love, my lord, and settled trust  
 Of your good nature, and your noble mind,  
 Made him to place you thus in royal throne,  
 And now to give you half this realm to guide;  
 Yea, and that half which, in abounding store  
 Of things that serve to make a wealthy realm,  
 In stately cities, and in fruitful soil,  
 In temperate breathing of the milder heaven,  
 In things of needful use, which friendly sea  
 Transports by traffic from the foreign parts,  
 In flowing wealth, in honour, and in force,  
 Doth pass the double value of the part  
 That Porrex hath allotted to his reign.  
 Such is your case, such is your father's love.

40

*Fer.* Ah love, my friends! Love wrongs not whom he loves.

*Dor.* Ne yet he wrongeth you, that giveth you  
 So large a reign, ere that the course of time

<sup>1</sup> Griffin.

Bring you to kingdom by descended right,  
Which time perhaps might end your time before. 50

*Fer.* Is this no wrong, say you, to reave from me  
My native right of half so great a realm,  
And thus to match his younger son with me  
In equal pow'r, and in as great degree?  
Yea, and what son? The son whose swelling pride  
Would never yield one point of reverence,  
When I the elder and apparent heir  
Stood in the likelihood to possess the whole;  
Yea, and that son which from his childish age  
Envieth mine honour, and doth hate my life. 60  
What will he now do, when his pride, his rage,  
The mindful malice of his grudging heart  
Is arm'd with force, with wealth, and kingly state?

*Her.* Was this not wrong? yea, ill advised wrong,  
To give so mad a man so sharp a sword,  
To so great peril of so great mishap,  
Wide open thus to set so large a way?

*Dor.* Alas, my lord, what griefful thing is this,  
That of your brother you can think so ill?  
I never saw him utter likely sign, 70  
Whereby a man might see or once misdeem  
Such hate of you, ne such unyielding pride.  
Ill is their counsel, shameful be their end,  
That raising such mistrustful fear in you,  
Sowing the seed of such unkindly hate,  
Travail by treason to destroy you both.  
Wise is your brother, and of noble hope,  
Worthy to wield a large and mighty realm.  
So much a stronger friend have you thereby,  
Whose strength is your strength if you 'gree in one. 80

*Her.* If Nature and the Gods had pinched so  
Their flowing bounty, and their noble gifts  
Of princely qualities, from you, my lord,  
And pour'd them all at once in wasteful wise  
Upon your father's younger son alone;  
Perhaps there be, that in your prejudice  
Would say that birth should yield to worthiness.  
But sith in each good gift and princely art  
Ye are his match, and in the chief of all  
In mildness and in sober governance 90



Ye far surmount; and sith there is in you  
 Sufficing skill and hopeful towardness  
 To wield the whole, and match your elder's praise;  
 I see no cause why ye should lose the half,  
 Ne would I wish you yield to such a loss:  
 Lest your mild sufferance of so great a wrong,  
 Be deemed cowardice and simple dread,  
 Which shall give courage to the fiery head  
 Of your young brother to invade the whole.  
 While yet therefore sticks in the people's mind  
 The loathed wrong of your disheritance; 100  
 And ere your brother have, by settled power,  
 By guileful cloak of an alluring show,  
 Got him some force and favour in the realm;  
 And while the noble queen, your mother, lives,  
 To work and practise all for your avail;  
 Attempt redress by arms, and wreak yourself  
 Upon his life that gaineth by your loss,  
 Who now to shame of you, and grief of us,  
 In your own kingdom triumphs over you. 110  
 Show now your courage meet for kingly state,  
 That they which have avow'd to spend their goods,  
 Their lands, their lives and honours in your cause,  
 May be the bolder to maintain your part,  
 When they do see that coward fear in you  
 Shall not betray, ne fail their faithful hearts.  
 If once the death of Porrex end the strife,  
 And pay the price of his usurped reign,  
 Your mother shall persuade the angry king,  
 The lords, your friends, eke shall appease his rage. 120  
 For they be wise, and well they can foresee,  
 That ere long time your aged father's death  
 Will bring a time when you shall well requite  
 Their friendly favour, or their hateful spite,  
 Yea, or their slackness to advance your cause.  
 "Wise men do not so hang on passing state  
 Of present princes, chiefly in their age,  
 But they will further cast their reaching eye,  
 To view and weigh the times and reigns to come."  
 Ne is it likely, though the king be wroth,  
 That he yet will, or that the realm will bear,  
 Extreme revenge upon his only son: 130

Or, if he would, what one is he that dare  
 Be minister to such an enterprise?  
 And here you be now placed in your own,  
 Amid your friends, your vassals, and your strength:

We shall defend and keep your person safe,  
 Till either counsel turn his tender mind,  
 Or age or sorrow end his weary days.

But if the fear of gods, and secret grudge  
 Of nature's law, repining at the fact, 140

Withhold your courage from so great attempt,  
 Know ye, that lust of kingdoms hath no law.

The gods do bear, and well allow in kings,  
 The things that they abhor<sup>1</sup> in rascal routs.

“ When kings on slender quarrels run to wars,  
 And then in cruel and unkindly wise,

Command thefts, rapes, murders of innocents,  
 The spoil of towns, ruins of mighty realms;

Think you such princes do suppose themselves 150  
 Subject to laws of kind, and fear of gods? ”

Murders and violent thefts in private men  
 Are heinous crimes, and full of foul reproach;  
 Yet none offence, but decked with glorious name  
 Of noble conquests in the hands of kings.

But if you like not yet so hot devise,  
 Ne list to take such vantage of the time,  
 But, though with peril of your own estate,  
 You will not be the first that shall invade;

Assemble yet your force for your defence, 160  
 And for your safety stand upon your guard.

*Dor.* O heaven! was there ever heard or known,  
 So wicked counsel to a noble prince?

Let me, my lord, disclose unto your grace  
 This heinous tale, what mischief it contains;  
 Your father's death, your brother's, and your own,  
 Your present murder, and eternal shame.

Hear me, O king, and suffer not to sink  
 So high a treason in your princely breast.

*Fer.* The mighty gods forbid that ever I 170  
 Should once conceive such mischief in my heart.

Although my brother hath bereft my realm,  
 And bear, perhaps, to me an hateful mind,

<sup>1</sup> The things they abhor.—*Edit.* 1570.

Shall I revenge it with his death therefore?  
 Or shall I so destroy my father's life  
 That gave me life? The gods forbid, I say:  
 Cease you to speak so any more to me;  
 Ne you, my friend, with answer once repeat  
 So foul a tale. In silence let it die.

What lord or subject shall have hope at all, 180  
 That under me they safely shall enjoy  
 Their goods, their honours, lands, and liberties,  
 With whom, neither one only brother dear,  
 Ne father dearer, could enjoy their lives?  
 But, sith I fear my younger brother's rage,  
 And sith, perhaps, some other man may give  
 Some like advice, to move his grudging head  
 At mine estate; which counsel may perchance  
 Take greater force with him, than this with me;  
 I will in secret so prepare myself, 190  
 As, if his malice or his lust to reign  
 Break forth in arms or sudden violence,  
 I may withstand his rage and keep mine own.

[*Exeunt Ferrex and Hermon.*]

*Dor.* I fear the fatal time now draweth on,  
 When civil hate shall end the noble line  
 Of famous Brute, and of his royal seed.  
 Great Jove, defend the mischiefs now at hand!  
 O that the secretary's wise advice  
 Had erst been heard, when he besought the king  
 Not to divide his land, nor send his sons 200  
 To further parts, from presence of his court,  
 Ne yet to yield to them his governance.  
 Lo, such are they now in the royal throne  
 As was rash Phaeton in Phœbus' car;  
 Ne then the fiery steeds did draw the flame  
 With wilder random through the kindled skies,  
 Than traitorous counsel now will whirl about  
 The youthful heads of these unskilful kings.  
 But I hereof their father will inform;  
 The reverence of him perhaps shall stay 210  
 The growing mischiefs, while they yet are green.  
 If this help not, then woe unto themselves,  
 The prince, the people, the divided land! [*Exit.*]



## SCENE II

PORREX. TYNDAR. PHILANDER.

*Por.* And is it thus? and doth he so prepare  
 Against his brother as his mortal foe?  
 And now, while yet his aged father lives?  
 Neither regards he him? nor fears he me?  
 War would he have? and he shall have it so.

*Tyn.* I saw, myself, the great prepared store  
 Of horse, of armour, and of weapons there: 220  
 Ne bring I to my lord reported tales,  
 Without the ground of seen and searched truth.  
 Lo, secret quarrels run about his court,  
 To bring the name of you, my lord, in hate.  
 Each man, almost, can now debate the cause,  
 And ask a reason of so great a wrong,  
 Why he, so noble and so wise a prince,  
 Is, as unworthy, reft his heritage?  
 And why the king, misled by crafty means,  
 Divided thus his land from course of right? 230  
 The wiser sort hold down their grievful heads;  
 Each man withdraws from talk and company  
 Of those that have been known to favour you:  
 To hide the mischief of their meaning there,  
 Rumours are spread of your preparing here.  
 The rascal numbers of unskilful sort  
 Are filled with monstrous tales of you and yours.  
 In secret, I was counsell'd by my friends  
 To haste me thence, and brought you, as you know,  
 Letters from those that both can truly tell, 240  
 And would not write unless they knew it well.

*Phil.* My lord, yet ere you move unkindly war,  
 Send to your brother, to demand the cause.  
 Perhaps some traitorous tales have filled his ears  
 With false reports against your noble grace;  
 Which, once disclos'd, shall end the growing strife,  
 That else, not stay'd with wise foresight in time,  
 Shall hazard both your kingdoms and your lives.  
 Send to your father eke, he shall appease

Your kindled minds, and rid you of this fear.

250

*Por.* Rid me of fear! I fear him not at all;

Ne will to him, ne to my father send.

If danger were for one to tarry there,

Think ye it safety to return again?

In mischiefs, such as Ferrex now intends,

The wonted courteous laws to messengers

Are not observ'd, which in just war they use.

Shall I so hazard any one of mine?

Shall I betray my trusty friends to him,

That have disclosed his treason unto me?

260

Let him entreat that fears; I fear him not.

Or shall I to the king, my father, send?

Yea, and send now, while such a mother lives,

That loves my brother, and that hateth me?

Shall I give leisure, by my fond delays,

To Ferrex to oppress me all unware?

I will not; but I will invade his realm,

And seek the traitor prince within his court.

Mischief for mischief is a due reward.

His wretched head shall pay the worthy price

270

Of this his treason and his hate to me.

Shall I abide, and treat, and send, and pray,

And hold my yielding throat to traitor's knife,

While I, with valiant mind and conquering force,

Might rid myself of foes, and win a realm?

Yet rather, when I have the wretch's head,

Then to the king, my father, will I send.

The bootless case may yet appease his wrath:

If not, I will defend me as I may.

[*Exeunt Porrex and Tyndar.*

*Phil.* Lo, here the end of these two youthful kings!

280

The father's death! the ruin of their realms!

"O most unhappy state of counsellors,

That light on so unhappy lords and times,

That neither can their good advice be heard,

Yet must they bear the blames of ill success."

But I will to the king, their father, haste,

Ere this mischief come to the likely end;

That, if the mindful wrath of wreakful gods

(Since mighty Ilion's fall not yet appeas'd

With these poor remnants of the Trojan name)

290

Have not determin'd by unmoved fate,  
 Out of this realm to raze the British line,  
 By good advice, by awe of father's name,  
 By force of wiser lords, this kindled hate  
 May yet be quench'd ere it consume us all.

[Exit.

## CHORUS

When youth, not bridled with a guiding stay,  
 Is left to random of their own delight,  
 And wields whole realms by force of sovereign sway,  
 Great is the danger of unmaster'd might,  
 Lest skillless rage throw down, with headlong fall, 300  
 Their lands, their states, their lives, themselves and all.

When growing pride doth fill the swelling breast,  
 And greedy lust doth raise the climbing mind,  
 Oh, hardly may the peril be repress'd.  
 Ne fear of angry gods, ne lawes kind,  
 Ne country's care can fired hearts restrain,  
 When force hath armed envy and disdain.

When kings of foresight will neglect the rede <sup>1</sup>  
 Of best advice, and yield to pleasing tales  
 That do their fancies' noisome humour feed, 310  
 Ne reason nor regard of right avails.  
 Succeeding heaps of plagues shall teach, too late,  
 To learn the mischiefs of misguided state.

Foul fall the traitor false, that undermines  
 The love of brethren, to destroy them both.  
 Woe to the prince, that pliant ear inclines,  
 And yields his mind to poisonous tale that floweth  
 From flattering mouth! And woe to wretched land,  
 That wastes itself with civil sword in hand!  
 Lo thus it is, poison in gold to take, 320  
 And wholesome drink in homely cup forsake.

<sup>1</sup> Counsel.



THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB  
SHOW BEFORE THE THIRD ACT.

*First, the music of flutes began to play, during which came in upon the stage, a company of mourners, all clad in black, betokening death and sorrow to ensue upon the ill-advised misgovernment and dissension of brethren, as befel upon the murder of Ferrex by his younger brother. After the mourners had passed thrice about the stage, they departed, and then the music ceased.*

ACT III

SCENE I

GORBODUC. EUBULUS. AROSTUS.

*Gor.* O cruel fates, O mindful wrath of gods,  
Whose vengeance, neither Simois' stained streams  
Flowing with blood of Trojan princes slain,  
Nor Phrygian fields made rank with corpses dead  
Of Asian kings and lords, can yet appease;  
Ne slaughter of unhappy Priam's race,  
Nor Ilion's fall, made level with the soil,  
Can yet suffice: but still continued rage  
Pursues our lives, and from the farthest seas  
Doth chase the issues of destroyed Troy. 10  
"Oh, no man happy till his end be seen."  
If any flowing wealth and seeming joy  
In present years might make a happy wight,  
Happy was Hecuba, the woefull'st wretch  
That ever lived to make a mirror of;  
And happy Priam, with his noble sons;  
And happy I, till now, alas! I see  
And feel my most unhappy wretchedness.  
Behold, my lords, read ye this letter here;  
Lo, it contains the ruin of our realm, 20  
If timely speed provide not hasty help.

Yet, O ye gods, if ever woeful king  
 Might move ye, kings of kings, wreak it on me  
 And on my sons, not on this guiltless realm:  
 Send down your wasting flames from wrathful skies,  
 To reave me and my sons the hateful breath.  
 Read, read, my lords; this is the matter why  
 I call'd ye now, to have your good advice.

*The letter from DORDAN, the Counsellor of the elder Prince.*

EUBULUS readeth the letter.

My sovereign lord, what I am loath to write,  
 But loathest am to see, that I am forc'd 30  
 By letters now to make you understand.  
 My lord Ferrex, your eldest son, misled  
 By traitorous fraud of young untemper'd wits,  
 Assembleth force against your younger son,  
 Ne can my counsel yet withdraw the heat  
 And furious pangs of his inflamed head.  
 Disdain, saith he, of his disheritance  
 Arms him to wreak the great pretended wrong,  
 With civil sword upon his brother's life.  
 If present help do not restrain this rage, 40  
 This flame will waste your sons, your land, and you.  
*Your Majesty's faithful,*  
*and most humble subject,*  
 DORDAN.

*Aros.* O king, appease your grief, and stay your plaint;  
 Great is the matter, and a woeful case:  
 But timely knowledge may bring timely help.  
 Send for them both unto your presence here:  
 The reverence of your honour, age, and state,  
 Your grave advice, the awe of father's name, 50  
 Shall quickly knit again this broken peace.  
 And if in either of my lords, your sons,  
 Be such untamed and unyielding pride,  
 As will not bend unto your noble hests;<sup>1</sup>  
 If Ferrex, the elder son, can bear no peer,  
 Or Porrex, not content, aspires to more  
 Than you him gave above his native right;

<sup>1</sup> Commands.

Join with the juster side, so shall you force  
Them to agree, and hold the land in stay.

*Eub.* What meaneth this? Lo, yonder comes in haste 60  
Philander from my lord, your younger son.

*Enter PHILANDER.*

*Gor.* The gods send joyful news!

*Phil.* The mighty Jove  
Preserve your majesty, O noble king.

*Gor.* Philander, welcome: but how doth my son?

*Phil.* Your son, sir, lives, and healthy I him left.  
But yet, O king, the want of lustful health  
Could not be half so grievous to your grace,  
As these most wretched tidings that I bring.

*Gor.* O heavens, yet more? no end of woes to me?

*Phil.* Tyndar, O king, came lately from the court 70  
Of Ferrex, to my lord your younger son,  
And made report of great prepared store  
For war, and saith that it is wholly meant  
Against Porrex, for high disdain that he  
Lives now a king, and equal in degree  
With him that claimeth to succeed the whole,  
As by due title of descending right.  
Porrex is now so set on flaming fire,  
Partly with kindled rage of cruel wrath,  
Partly with hope to gain a realm thereby, 80  
That he in haste prepareth to invade  
His brother's land, and with unkindly war  
Threatens the murder of your elder son;  
Ne could I him persuade, that first he should  
Send to his brother to demand the cause;  
Nor yet to you to stay this hateful strife.  
Wherefore sith there no more I can be heard,  
I come myself now to inform your grace,  
And to beseech you, as you love the life  
And safety of your children and your realm, 90  
Now to employ your wisdom and your force  
To stay this mischief ere it be too late.

*Gor.* Are they in arms? would he not send to me?  
Is this the honour of a father's name?  
In vain we travail to assuage their minds,



As if their hearts, whom neither brother's love,  
 Nor father's awe, nor kingdom's cares, can move,  
 Our counsels could withdraw from raging heat.  
 Jove slay them both, and end the cursed line.  
 For though perhaps fear of such mighty force  
 As I, my lords, joined with your noble aids,  
 May yet raise, shall repress their present heat,  
 The secret grudge and malice will remain,  
 The fire not quench'd, but kept in close restraint,  
 Fed still within, breaks forth with double flame.  
 Their death and mine must 'pease the angry gods.

100

*Phil.* Yield not, O king, so much to weak despair:  
 Your sons yet live, and long, I trust, they shall.  
 If fates had taken you from earthly life,  
 Before beginning of this civil strife,  
 Perhaps your sons in their unmaster'd youth,  
 Loose from regard of any living wight,  
 Would run on headlong, with unbridled race,  
 To their own death, and ruin of this realm.  
 But sith the gods, that have the care for kings,  
 Of things and times dispose the order so,  
 That in your life this kindled flame breaks forth,  
 While yet your life, your wisdom, and your power,  
 May stay the growing mischief, and repress  
 The fiery blaze of their enkindled heat;  
 It seems, and so ye ought to deem thereof,  
 That loving Jove hath temper'd so the time  
 Of this debate to happen in your days,  
 That you yet living may the same appease,  
 And add it to the glory of your age,  
 And they your sons may learn to live in peace.  
 Beware, O king, the greatest harm of all,  
 Lest, by your wailful plaints, your hastened death  
 Yield larger room unto their growing rage.  
 Preserve your life, the only hope of stay.  
 And if your highness herein list to use  
 Wisdom or force, counsel or knightly aid,  
 Lo we, our persons, powers, and lives are yours;  
 Use us till death, O king, we are your own.

110

120

130

*Eub.* Lo, here the peril that was erst foreseen,  
 When you, O king, did first divide your land,  
 And yield your present reign unto your sons.

But now, O noble prince, now is no time  
 To wail and plain, and waste your woeful life;  
 Now is the time for present good advice. 140  
 Sorrow doth dark the judgment of the wit.  
 "The heart unbroken, and the courage free  
 From feeble faintness of bootless despair,  
 Doth either rise to safety or renown  
 By noble valour of unvanquish'd mind,  
 Or yet doth perish in more happy sort."  
 Your grace may send to either of your sons  
 Some one both wise and noble personage,  
 Which with good counsel, and with weighty name  
 Of father, shall present before their eyes 150  
 Your hest, your life, your safety, and their own,  
 The present mischief of their deadly strife.  
 And in the while, assemble you the force  
 Which your commandment and the speedy haste  
 Of all my lords here present can prepare.  
 The terror of your mighty power shall stay  
 The rage of both, or yet of one at least.

*Enter NUNTIUS.*

*Nun.* O king, the greatest grief that ever prince did hear,  
 That ever woeful messenger did tell,  
 That ever wretched land hath seen before, 160  
 I bring to you: Porrex your younger son  
 With sudden force invaded hath the land  
 That you to Ferrex did allot to rule;  
 And with his own most bloody hand he hath  
 His brother slain, and doth possess his realm.

*Gor.* O heavens, send down the flames of your revenge!  
 Destroy, I say, with flash of wreakful fire  
 The traitor son, and then the wretched sire!  
 But let us go, that yet perhaps I may  
 Die with revenge, and 'pease the hateful gods. [Exeunt.

CHORUS.

The lust of kingdom knows no sacred faith, 171  
 No rule of reason, no regard of right,  
 No kindly love, no fear of heaven's wrath;  
 But with contempt of gods, and man's despite,

Through bloody slaughter doth prepare the ways  
To fatal sceptre and accursed reign.

The son so loathes the father's lingering days,  
Ne dreads his hand in brother's blood to stain.

O wretched prince, ne dost thou yet record  
The yet fresh murders done within the land

180

Of thy forefathers, when the cruel sword  
Bereft Morgan his life with cousin's hand?

Thus fatal plagues pursue the guilty race,  
Whose murderous hand, imbru'd with guiltless blood,

Asks vengeance still before the heaven's face,  
With endless mischiefs on the cursed brood.

The wicked child thus brings to woeful sire  
The mournful plaints to waste his very life.

Thus do the cruel flames of civil fire

Destroy the parted reign with hateful strife.

190

And hence doth spring the well from which doth flow

The dead black streams of mourning, plaints, and woe.



THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB  
SHOW BEFORE THE FOURTH ACT.

*First, the music of hautboys began to play, during which there came forth from under the stage, as though out of hell, three furies, Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, clad in black garments sprinkled with blood and flames, their bodies girt with snakes, their heads spread with serpents instead of hair, the one bearing in her hand a snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning firebrand : each driving before them a king and a queen ; which, moved by furies, unnaturally had slain their own children. The names of the kings and queens were these, Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambyses, Althea ; after that the furies and these had passed about the stage thrice, they departed, and then the music ceased. Hereby was signified the unnatural murders to follow ; that is to say, Porrex slain by his own mother, and of king Gorboduc and queen Videna, killed by their own subjects.*

ACT IV

SCENE I

VIDENA *sola.*

Why should I live, and linger forth my time  
In longer life to double my distress?  
O me, most woeful wight, whom no mishap  
Long ere this day could have bereaved hence.  
Might not these hands, by fortune or by fate,  
Have pierc'd this breast, and life with iron reft?  
Or in this palace here, where I so long  
Have spent my days, could not that happy hour  
Once, once have happ'd, in which these hugy frames  
With death by fall might have oppressed me?  
Or should not this most hard and cruel soil,  
So oft where I have press'd my wretched steps,

10

Sometime had ruth of mine accursed life  
 To rend in twain, and swallow me therein?  
 So had my bones possessed now in peace  
 Their happy grave within the closed ground,  
 And greedy worms had gnawn this pined heart  
 Without my feeling pain: so should not now  
 This living breast remain the ruthless tomb,  
 Wherein my heart yieldden to death is grav'd; 20  
 Nor dreary thoughts, with pangs of pining grief,  
 My doleful mind had not afflicted thus.  
 O my beloved son! O my sweet child!  
 My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight!  
 Is my beloved son, is my sweet child,  
 My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight,  
 Murder'd with cruel death? O hateful wretch!  
 O heinous traitor both to heaven and earth!  
 Thou, Porrex, thou this damned deed hast wrought;  
 Thou, Porrex, thou shalt dearly bye <sup>1</sup> the same. 30  
 Traitor to kin and kind, to sire and me,  
 To thine own flesh, and traitor to thyself:  
 The gods on thee in hell shall wreak their wrath,  
 And here in earth this hand shall take revenge  
 On thee, Porrex, thou false and caitiff wight.  
 If after blood so eager were thy thirst,  
 And murd'rous mind had so possessed thee,  
 If such hard heart of rock and stony flint  
 Liv'd in thy breast, that nothing else could like  
 Thy cruel tyrant's thought but death and blood: 40  
 Wild savage beasts, might not their slaughter serve  
 To feed thy greedy will, and in the midst  
 Of their entrails to stain thy deadly hands  
 With blood deserv'd, and drink thereof thy fill?  
 Or if nought else but death and blood of man  
 Might please thy lust, could none in Britain land,  
 Whose heart betorn out of his panting breast  
 With thine own hand, or work what death thou would'st,  
 Suffice to make a sacrifice to 'pease  
 That deadly mind and murderous thought in thee, 50  
 But he who in the selfsame womb was wrapp'd,  
 Where thou in dismal hour receivedst life?  
 Or if needs, needs thy hand must slaughter make,

<sup>1</sup> Abye. To abide, to suffer for.

Mightest thou not have reach'd a mortal wound,  
 And with thy sword have pierc'd this cursed womb  
 That the accursed Porrex brought to light,  
 And given me a just reward therefore?  
 So Ferrex yet sweet life might have enjoyed,  
 And to his aged father comfort brought,  
 With some young son in whom they both might live. 60  
 But whereunto waste I this ruthless speech,  
 To thee that hast thy brother's blood thus shed?  
 Shall I still think that from this womb thou sprung?  
 That I thee bare? or take thee for my son?  
 No, traitor, no; I thee refuse for mine:  
 Murderer, I thee renounce; thou art not mine.  
 Never, O wretch, this womb conceived thee;  
 Nor never bode I painful throws for thee.  
 Changeling to me thou art, and not my child,  
 Nor to no wight that spark of pity knew. 70  
 Ruthless, unkind, monster of nature's work,  
 Thou never suck'd the milk of woman's breast;  
 But, from thy birth, the cruel tiger's teats  
 Have nursed thee; nor yet of flesh and blood  
 Form'd is thy heart, but of hard iron wrought;  
 And wild and desert woods bred thee to life.  
 But canst thou hope to 'scape my just revenge?  
 Or that these hands will not be wroke on thee?  
 Dost thou not know that Ferrex' mother lives,  
 That loved him more dearly than herself? 80  
 And doth she live, and is not veng'd on thee?

## SCENE II

GORBODUC. AROSTUS.

*Gor.* We marvel much, whereto this ling'ring stay  
 Falls out so long: Porrex unto our court,  
 By order of our letters, is return'd;  
 And Eubulus receiv'd from us behest,  
 At his arrival here, to give him charge  
 Before our presence straight to make repair,  
 And yet we have no word whereof he stays.  
*Aros.* Lo where he comes, and Eubulus with him.



*Enter EUBULUS and PORREX.*

- Eub.* According to your highness' hest to me, 90  
 Here have I Porrex brought, even in such sort  
 As from his wearied horse he did alight,  
 For that your grace did will such haste therein.
- Gor.* We like and praise this speedy will in you,  
 To work the thing that to your charge we gave.  
 Porrex, if we so far should swerve from kind,  
 And from those bounds which law of nature sets,  
 As thou hast done by vile and wretched deed,  
 In cruel murder of thy brother's life;  
 Our present hand could stay no longer time, 100  
 But straight should bathe this blade in blood of thee,  
 As just revenge of thy detested crime.  
 No; we should not offend the law of kind,  
 If now this sword of ours did slay thee here:  
 For thou hast murder'd him, whose heinous death  
 Even nature's force doth move us to revenge  
 By blood again; and justice forceth us  
 To measure death for death, thy due desert.  
 Yet since thou art our child, and sith as yet  
 In this hard case what word thou canst allege 110  
 For thy defence, by us hath not been heard,  
 We are content to stay our will for that  
 Which justice bids us presently to work,  
 And give thee leave to use thy speech at full,  
 If ought thou have to lay for thine excuse.
- Por.* Neither, O king, I can or will deny  
 But that this hand from Ferrex life hath reft:  
 Which fact how much my doleful heart doth wail,  
 Oh! would it might as full appear to sight,  
 As inward grief doth pour it forth to me. 120  
 So yet, perhaps, if ever ruthful heart  
 Melting in tears within a manly breast,  
 Through deep repentance of his bloody fact;  
 If ever grief, if ever woeful man  
 Might move regret with sorrow of his fault,  
 I think the torment of my mournful case,  
 Known to your grace, as I do feel the same,  
 Would force even Wrath herself to pity me.

But as the water, troubled with the mud,  
Shows not the face which else the eye should see; 130  
Even so your ireful mind with stirred thought  
Cannot so perfectly discern my cause.

But this unhap, amongst so many haps,  
I must content me with, most wretched man,  
That to myself I must reserve my woe,  
In pining thoughts of mine accursed fact;  
Since I may not show here my smallest grief,  
Such as it is, and as my breast endures,  
Which I esteem the greatest misery  
Of all mishaps that fortune now can send. 140

Not that I rest in hope with plaint and tears  
To purchase life; for to the gods I clepe <sup>1</sup>  
For true record of this my faithful speech;  
Never this heart shall have the thoughtful dread  
To die the death that by your grace's doom,  
By just desert, shall be pronounced to me:  
Nor never shall this tongue once spend the speech,  
Pardon to crave, or seek by suit to live.

I mean not this as though I were not touch'd  
With care of dreadful death, or that I held 150  
Life in contempt: but that I know the mind  
Stoops to no dread, although the flesh be frail.  
And for my guilt, I yield the same so great  
As in myself I find a fear to sue  
For grant of life.

*Gor.* In vain, O wretch, thou showest  
A woeful heart: Ferrex now lies in grave,  
Slain by thy hand.

*Por.* Yet this, O father, hear;  
And then I end. Your majesty well knows,  
That when my brother Ferrex and myself  
By your own hest were join'd in governance 160  
Of this your grace's realm of Britain land,  
I never sought nor travail'd for the same;  
Nor by myself, nor by no friend I wrought,  
But from your highness' will alone it sprung,  
Of your most gracious goodness bent to me.  
But how my brother's heart even then repin'd  
With swollen disdain against mine equal rule,

<sup>1</sup> To call.

Seeing that realm, which by descent should grow  
 Wholly to him, allotted half to me;  
 Even in your highness' court he now remains, 170  
 And with my brother then in nearest place,  
 Who can record what proof thereof was show'd,  
 And how my brother's envious heart appear'd.  
 Yet I that judged it my part to seek  
 His favour and good will, and loath to make  
 Your highness know the thing which should have brought  
 Grief to your grace, and your offence to him;  
 Hoping my earnest suit should soon have won  
 A loving heart within a brother's breast,  
 Wrought in that sort, that, for a pledge of love 180  
 And faithful heart, he gave to me his hand.  
 This made me think that he had banish'd quite  
 All rancour from his thought, and bare to me  
 Such hearty love as I did owe to him.  
 But after once we left your grace's court,  
 And from your highness' presence liv'd apart,  
 This equal rule still, still did grudge him so,  
 That now those envious sparks which erst lay rak'd  
 In living cinders of dissembling breast,  
 Kindled so far within his heart disdain, 190  
 That longer could he not refrain from proof  
 Of secret practice to deprive me life  
 By poison's force; and had bereft me so,  
 If mine own servant hired to this fact,  
 And mov'd by truth with hate to work the same,  
 In time had not bewray'd it unto me.  
 When thus I saw the knot of love unknit,  
 All honest league and faithful promise broke,  
 The law of kind and truth thus rent in twain,  
 His heart on mischief set, and in his breast 200  
 Black treason hid; then, then did I despair  
 That ever time could win him friend to me;  
 Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife  
 Wrapp'd under cloak, then saw I deep deceit  
 Lurk in his face and death prepar'd for me:  
 Even nature moved me then to hold my life  
 More dear to me than his, and bade this hand,  
 Since by his life my death must needs ensue,  
 And by his death my life to be preserved,



To shed his blood, and seek my safety so. 210  
 And wisdom willed me without protract  
 In speedy wise to put the same in ure.  
 Thus have I told the cause that moved me  
 To work my brother's death; and so I yield  
 My life, my death, to judgment of your grace.

*Gor.* Oh cruel wight, should any cause prevail  
 To make thee stain thy hands with brother's blood?  
 But what of thee we will resolve to do  
 Shall yet remain unknown. Thou in the mean 220  
 Shalt from our royal presence banish'd be,  
 Until our princely pleasure further shall  
 To thee be show'd. Depart therefore our sight,  
 Accursed child! [*Exit Porrex.*] What cruel destiny,  
 What froward fate hath sorted us this chance,  
 That even in those, where we should comfort find,  
 Where our delight now in our aged days  
 Should rest and be, even there our only grief  
 And deepest sorrows to abridge our life,  
 Most pining cares and deadly thoughts do grow.

*Aros.* Your grace should now, in these grave years of yours, 230  
 Have found ere this the price of mortal joys;  
 How short they be, how fading here in earth,  
 How full of change, how brittle our estate,  
 Of nothing sure, save only of the death,  
 To whom both man and all the world doth owe  
 Their end at last; neither shall nature's power  
 In other sort against your heart prevail,  
 Than as the naked hand whose stroke assays  
 The armed breast where force doth light in vain.

*Gor.* Many can yield right sage and grave advice 240  
 Of patient spirit to others wrapp'd in woe,  
 And can in speech both rule and conquer kind;  
 Who, if by proof they might feel nature's force,  
 Would show themselves men as they are indeed,  
 Which now will needs be gods. But what doth mean  
 The sorry cheer of her that here doth come?

*Enter MARCELLA.*

*Mar.* Oh where is ruth? or where is pity now?  
 Whither is gentle heart and mercy fled?

Are they exil'd out of our stony breasts,  
 Never to make return? is all the world  
 Drowned in blood, and sunk in cruelty? 250  
 If not in women mercy may be found,  
 If not, alas, within the mother's breast,  
 To her own child, to her own flesh and blood;  
 If ruth be banish'd thence, if pity there  
 May have no place, if there no gentle heart  
 Do live and dwell, where should we seek it then?

*Gor.* Madam, alas, what means your woeful tale?

*Mar.* O silly woman I! why to this hour  
 Have kind and fortune thus deferr'd my breath, 260  
 That I should live to see this doleful day?  
 Will ever wight believe that such hard heart  
 Could rest within the cruel mother's breast,  
 With her own hand to slay her only son?  
 But out, alas! these eyes beheld the same:  
 They saw the dreary sight, and are become  
 Most ruthful records of the bloody fact.  
 Porrex, alas, is by his mother slain,  
 And with her hand, a woeful thing to tell,  
 While slumbering on his careful bed he rests, 270  
 His heart stabb'd in with knife is reft of life.

*Gor.* O Eubulus, oh draw this sword of ours,  
 And pierce this heart with speed! O hateful light,  
 O loathsome life, O sweet and welcome death!  
 Dear Eubulus, work this we thee beseech!

*Eub.* Patient your grace; perhaps he liveth yet,  
 With wound receiv'd, but not of certain death.

*Gor.* O let us then repair unto the place,  
 And see if Porrex live, or thus be slain.

[*Exeunt Gorboduc and Eubulus.*

*Mar.* Alas, he liveth not! it is too true, 280  
 That with these eyes, of him a peerless prince,  
 Son to a king, and in the flower of youth,  
 Even with a twink a senseless stock I saw.

*Aros.* O damned deed!

*Mar.* But hear his ruthful end:  
 The noble prince, pierc'd with the sudden wound,  
 Out of his wretched slumber hastily start,  
 Whose strength now failing straight he overthrew,  
 When in the fall his eyes, ev'n new unclos'd,

Beheld the queen, and cried to her for help.  
 We then, alas, the ladies which that time  
 Did there attend, seeing that heinous deed, 290  
 And hearing him oft call the wretched name  
 Of mother, and to cry to her for aid,  
 Whose direful hand gave him the mortal wound,  
 Pitying, alas, (for nought else could we do)  
 His ruthful end, ran to the woeful bed,  
 Despoiled straight his breast, and all we might  
 Wiped in vain with napkins next at hand,  
 The sudden streams of blood that flushed fast  
 Out of the gaping wound. O what a look, 300  
 O what a ruthful steadfast eye methought  
 He fix'd upon my face, which to my death  
 Will never part from me, when with a braid<sup>1</sup>  
 A deep-fetch'd sigh he gave, and therewithal  
 Claspings his hands, to heaven he cast his sight;  
 And straight pale death pressing within his face,  
 The flying ghost his mortal corpse forsook.

*Aros.* Never did age bring forth so vile a fact.

*Mar.* O hard and cruel hap, that thus assign'd 310  
 Unto so worthy a wight so wretched end:  
 But most hard cruel heart that could consent  
 To lend the hateful destinies that hand,  
 By which, alas, so heinous crime was wrought.  
 O queen of adamant! O marble breast!  
 If not the favour of his comely face,  
 If not his princely cheer and countenance,  
 His valiant active arms, his manly breast,  
 If not his fair and seemly personage,  
 His noble limbs in such proportion cast  
 As would have wrapt a silly woman's thought; 320  
 If this might not have mov'd thy bloody heart,  
 And that most cruel hand the wretched weapon  
 Ev'n to let fall, and kiss'd him in the face,  
 With tears for ruth to reave such one by death;  
 Should nature yet consent to slay her son?  
 O mother, thou to murder thus thy child!  
 Even Jove with justice must with lightening flames  
 From heaven send down some strange revenge on thee.  
 Ah, noble prince, how oft have I beheld

<sup>1</sup> A start.



Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed,  
 Shining in armour bright before the tilt,  
 And with thy mistress' sleeve tied on thy helm,  
 And charge thy staff, to please thy lady's eye,  
 That bow'd the head-piece of thy friendly foe!  
 How oft in arms on horse to bend the mace,  
 How oft in arms on foot to break the sword,  
 Which never now these eyes may see again!

330

*Aros.* Madam, alas, in vain these plaints are shed;  
 Rather with me depart, and help to 'swage  
 The thoughtful griefs that in the aged king  
 Must needs by nature grow by death of this  
 His only son, whom he did hold so dear.

340

*Mar.* What wight is that which saw that I did see,  
 And could refrain to wail with plaint and tears?  
 Not I, alas! that heart is not in me:  
 But let us go, for I am griev'd anew,  
 To call to mind the wretched father's woe.

[*Exeunt.*]

## CHORUS.

When greedy lust in royal seat to reign  
 Hath reft all care of gods and eke of men;  
 And cruel heart, wrath, treason, and disdain,  
 Within ambitious breast are lodged, then  
 Behold how mischief wide herself displays,  
 And with the brother's hand the brother slays.

350

When blood thus shed doth stain the heaven's face,  
 Crying to Jove for vengeance of the deed,  
 The mighty god ev'n moveth from his place,  
 With wrath to wreak: then sends he forth with speed  
 The dreadful Furies, daughters of the night,  
 With serpents girt, carrying the whip of ire,  
 With hair of stinging snakes, and shining bright  
 With flames and blood, and with a brand of fire.  
 These, for revenge of wretched murder done,  
 Do make the mother kill her only son.

360

Blood asketh blood, and death must death requite:  
 Jove, by his just and everlasting doom,

Justly hath ever so requited it.

The times before record, and times to come  
Shall find it true, and so doth present proof  
Present before our eyes for our behoof.

O happy wight, that suffers not the snare  
Of murderous mind to tangle him in blood;  
And happy he, that can in time beware  
By other's harms, and turn it to his good.  
But woe to him that, fearing not to offend,  
Doth serve his lust, and will not see the end.

370

THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB SHOW  
BEFORE THE FIFTH ACT.

*First, the drums and flutes began to sound, during which there came forth upon the stage a company of harquebussiers, and of armed men, all in order of battle. These, after their pieces discharged, and that the armed men had three times marched about the stage, departed, and then the drums and flutes did cease. Hereby was signified tumults, rebellions, arms, and civil wars to follow, as fell in the realm of Great Britain, which, by the space of fifty years and more, continued in civil war between the nobility after the death of king Gorboduc and of his issues, for want of certain limitation in the succession of the crown, till the time of Dunwallo Molmutius, who reduced the land to monarchy.*

ACT V

SCENE I

CLOTYN. MANDUD. GWENARD. FERGUS. EUBULUS.

*Clot.* Did ever age bring forth such tyrant hearts?  
The brother hath bereft the brother's life,  
The mother, she hath dyed her cruel hands  
In blood of her own son; and now at last  
The people, lo, forgetting truth and love,  
Contemning quite both law and loyal heart,  
Ev'n they have slain their sovereign lord and queen.

*Man.* Shall this their traitorous crime unpunish'd rest?  
Ev'n yet they cease not, carried on with rage,  
In their rebellious routs, to threaten still  
A new bloodshed unto the prince's kin,  
To slay them all, and to uproot the race  
Both of the king and queen; so are they mov'd  
With Porrex' death, wherein they falsely charge  
The guiltless king, without desert at all;

10



And traitorously have murder'd him therefore,  
And eke the queen.

*Gwen.* Shall subjects dare with force

To work revenge upon their prince's fact?  
Admit the worst that may, as sure in this  
The deed was foul, the queen to slay her son, 20  
Shall yet the subject seek to take the sword,  
Arise against his lord, and slay his king?  
O wretched state, where those rebellious hearts  
Are not rent out ev'n from their living breasts,  
And with the body thrown unto the fowls,  
As carrion food, for terrour of the rest.

*Ferg.* There can no punishment be thought too great  
For this so grievous crime: let speed therefore  
Be used therein, for it behooveth so.

*Eub.* Ye all, my lords, I see, consent in one, 30  
And I as one consent with ye in all.

I hold it more than need, with sharpest law  
To punish this tumultuous bloody rage.  
For nothing more may shake the common state,  
Than sufferance of uproars without redress;  
Whereby how some kingdoms of mighty power,  
After great conquests made, and flourishing  
In fame and wealth, have been to ruin brought:  
I pray to Jove, that we may rather wail  
Such hap in them than witness in ourselves. 40  
Eke fully with the duke my mind agrees,<sup>1</sup>  
Though kings forget to govern as they ought,  
Yet subjects must obey as they are bound.

<sup>1</sup> The following lines are in the unauthorised edition of 1565:—

“That no cause serves, whereby the subject may  
Call to account the doings of his prince,  
Much less in blood by sword to work revenge,  
No more than may the hand cut off the head;  
In act nor speech, no not in secret thought  
The subject may rebel against his lord,  
Or judge of him that sits in Cæsar's seat,  
With grudging mind to damn those he mislikes.”

Warton, vol. iii. p. 370, attributes the suppression of these lines to Thomas Norton. He says, “It is well known that the Calvinists carried their ideas of reformation and refinement into government as well as religion; and it seems probable, that these eight verses were suppressed by Thomas Norton, Sackville's supposed assistant in the play, who was not only an active and, I believe, a sensible Puritan, but a licencer of the publication of books under the commission of the Bishop of London.”

But now, my lords, before ye farther wade,  
 Or spend your speech, what sharp revenge shall fall  
 By justice' plague on these rebellious wights;  
 Methinks ye rather should first search the way,  
 By which in time the rage of this uproar  
 Might be repress'd, and these great tumults ceas'd.  
 Even yet the life of Britain land doth hang  
 In traitors' balance of unequal weight. 50  
 Think not, my lords, the death of Gorboduc,  
 Nor yet Videna's blood, will cease their rage:  
 Ev'n our own lives, our wives, and children dear,  
 Our country, dear'st of all, in danger stands,  
 Now to be spoil'd, now, now made desolate,  
 And by ourselves a conquest to ensue.  
 For, give once sway unto the people's lusts,  
 To rush forth on, and stay them not in time,  
 And as the stream that rolleth down the hill, 60  
 So will they headlong run with raging thoughts  
 From blood to blood, from mischief unto more,  
 To ruin of the realm, themselves, and all:  
 So giddy are the common people's minds,  
 So glad of change, more wavering than the sea.  
 Ye see, my lords, what strength these rebels have,  
 What hugy number is assembled still:  
 For though the traitorous fact, for which they rose,  
 Be wrought and done, yet lodge they still in field;  
 So that, how far their furies yet will stretch, 70  
 Great cause we have to dread. That we may seek  
 By present battle to repress their power,  
 Speed must we use to levy force therefore;  
 For either they forthwith will mischief work,  
 Or their rebellious roars forthwith will cease.  
 These violent things may have no lasting long.  
 Let us, therefore, use this for present help;  
 Persuade by gentle speech, and offer grace  
 With gift of pardon, save unto the chief;  
 And that upon condition that forthwith 80  
 They yield the captains of their enterprise,  
 To bear such guerdon <sup>1</sup> of their traitorous fact  
 As may be both due vengeance to themselves,  
 And wholesome terrour to posterity.

<sup>1</sup> Reward, recompense.

This shall, I think, scatter the greatest part  
 That now are holden with desire of home,  
 Wearied in field with cold of winter's nights,  
 And some, no doubt, stricken with dread of law.  
 When this is once proclaimed, it shall make  
 The captains to mistrust the multitude,  
 Whose safety bids them to betray their heads;  
 And so much more, because the rascal routs,  
 In things of great and perilous attempts,  
 Are never trusty to the noble race.

90

And while we treat, and stand on terms of grace,  
 We shall both stay their furious rage the while,  
 And eke gain time, whose only help sufficeth  
 Withouten war to vanquish rebels' power.  
 In the meanwhile, make you in readiness  
 Such band of horsemen as ye may prepare.  
 Horsemen, you know, are not the commons' strength,  
 But are the force and store of noble men;  
 Whereby the unchosen and unarmèd sort  
 Of skillless rebels, whom none other power  
 But number makes to be of dreadful force,  
 With sudden brunt may quickly be oppress'd.  
 And if this gentle mean of proffer'd grace  
 With stubborn hearts cannot so far avail,  
 As to assuage their desp'rate courages;  
 Then do I wish such slaughter to be made,  
 As present age, and eke posterity,  
 May be adrad<sup>1</sup> with horreur of revenge  
 That justly then shall on these rebels fall.  
 This is, my lords, the sum of mine advice.

100

110

*Clot.* Neither this case admits debate at large;  
 And though it did, this speech that hath been said,  
 Hath well abridged the tale I would have told.  
 Fully with Eubulus do I consent  
 In all that he hath said: and if the same  
 To you, my lords, may seem for best advice,  
 I wish that it should straight be put in ure.

120

*Man.* My lords, then let us presently depart,  
 And follow this that liketh us so well.

[*Exeunt Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, and Eubulus.*]

*Ferg.* If ever time to gain a kingdom here

<sup>1</sup> Afraid.



Were offer'd man, now it is offer'd me.  
 The realm is reft both of their king and queen,  
 The offspring of the prince is slain and dead,  
 No issue now remains, the heir unknown,  
 The people are in arms and mutinies,  
 The nobles, they are busied how to cease  
 These great rebellious tumults and uproars;  
 And Britain land, now desert left alone  
 Amid these broils uncertain where to rest,  
 Offers herself unto that noble heart  
 That will or dare pursue to bear her crown.  
 Shall I, that am the Duke of Albany,  
 Descended from that line of noble blood,  
 Which hath so long flourish'd in worthy fame  
 Of valiant hearts, such as in noble breasts  
 Of right should rest above the baser sort,  
 Refuse to venture life to win a crown?  
 Whom shall I find enemies that will withstand  
 My fact herein, if I attempt by arms  
 To seek the same now in these times of broil?  
 These dukes' power can hardly well appease  
 The people that already are in arms.  
 But if, perhaps, my force be once in field,  
 Is not my strength in power above the best  
 Of all these lords now left in Britain land?  
 And though they should match me with power of men, 150  
 Yet doubtful is the chance of battles joined.  
 If victors of the field we may depart,  
 Ours is the sceptre then of Great Britain;  
 If slain amid the plain this body lie,  
 Mine enemies yet shall not deny me this,  
 But that I died giving the noble charge  
 To hazard life for conquest of a crown.  
 Forthwith, therefore, will I in post depart  
 To Albany, and raise in armour there  
 All power I can: and here my secret friends,  
 By secret practice shall solicit still,  
 To seek to win to me the people's hearts. 160

[Exit.]

## SCENE II

EUBULUS *solus*.

*Eub.* O Jove, how are these people's hearts abus'd!  
 What blind fury thus headlong carries them?  
 That though so many books, so many rolls  
 Of ancient time, record what grievous plagues  
 Light on these rebels aye, and though so oft  
 Their ears have heard their aged fathers tell  
 What just reward these traitors still receive;  
 Yea, though themselves have seen deep death and blood, 170  
 By strangling cord, and slaughter of the sword,  
 To such assign'd, yet can they not beware,  
 Yet cannot stay their lewd rebellious hands;  
 But suffering, lo, foul treason to distain  
 Their wretched minds, forget their loyal heart,  
 Reject all truth, and rise against their prince.  
 A ruthless case, that those, whom duty's bond,  
 Whom grafted law, by nature, truth, and faith,  
 Bound to preserve their country and their king,  
 Born to defend their commonwealth and prince, 180  
 Ev'n they should give consent thus to subvert  
 Thee, Britain land, and from thy womb should spring,  
 O native soil, those that will needs destroy  
 And ruin thee, and eke themselves in fine.  
 For lo, when once the dukes had offer'd grace  
 Of pardon sweet, the multitude, misled  
 By traitorous fraud of their ungracious heads,  
 One sort that saw the dangerous success  
 Of stubborn standing in rebellious war,  
 And knew the difference of prince's power 190  
 From headless number of tumultuous routs,  
 Whom common country's care, and private fear  
 Taught to repent the error of their rage,  
 Laid hands upon the captains of their band,  
 And brought them bound unto the mighty dukes:  
 And other sort, not trusting yet so well  
 The truth of pardon, or mistrusting more  
 Their own offence than that they could conceive  
 Such hope of pardon for so foul misdeed,

Or for that they their captains could not yield,  
 Who, fearing to be yielded, fled before,  
 Stole home by silence of the secret night:  
 The third unhappy and enraged sort  
 Of desp'rate hearts, who, stain'd in princes' blood,  
 From traitorous furour could not be withdrawn  
 By love, by law, by grace, ne yet by fear,  
 By proffer'd life, ne yet by threaten'd death,  
 With minds hopeless of life, dreadless of death,  
 Careless of country, and aweless of God,  
 Stood bent to fight, as furies did them move,  
 With violent death to close their traitorous life.  
 These all by power of horsemen were oppress'd,  
 And with revenging sword slain in the field,  
 Or with the strangling cord hang'd on the trees,  
 Where yet their carrion carcasses do preach  
 The fruits that rebels reap of their uproars,  
 And of the murder of their sacred prince.  
 But lo, where do approach the noble dukes  
 By whom these tumults have been thus appeas'd.

*Enter* CLOTYN, MANDUD, GWENARD, *and* AROSTUS.

*Clot.* I think the world will now at length beware  
 And fear to put on arms against their prince. 200

*Man.* If not, those traitorous hearts that dare rebel,  
 Let them behold the wide and hugy fields  
 With blood and bodies spread of rebels slain;  
 The lofty trees cloth'd with the corpses dead,  
 That, strangled with the cord, do hang thereon.

*Aros.* A just reward; such as all times before  
 Have ever lotted to those wretched folks.

*Gwen.* But what means he that cometh here so fast?

*Enter* NUNTIUS.

*Nun.* My lords, as duty and my troth doth move,  
 And of my country work a care in me,  
 That, if the spending of my breath avail'd  
 To do the service that my heart desires,  
 I would not shun to embrace a present death;  
 So have I now, in that wherein I thought  
 My travail might perform some good effect,  
 Ventur'd my life to bring these tidings here. 230



Fergus, the mighty duke of Albany,  
 Is now in arms, and lodgeth in the field  
 With twenty thousand men: hither he bends  
 His speedy march, and minds to invade the crown. 240  
 Daily he gathereth strength, and spreads abroad,  
 That to this realm no certain heir remains,  
 That Britain land is left without a guide,  
 That he the sceptre seeks, for nothing else  
 But to preserve the people and the land,  
 Which now remain as ship without a stern.  
 Lo, this is that which I have here to say.

*Clot.* Is this his faith? and shall he falsely thus  
 Abuse the vantage of unhappy times? 250  
 O wretched land, if his outrageous pride,  
 His cruel and untemper'd wilfulness,  
 His deep dissembling shows of false pretence,  
 Should once attain the crown of Britain land!  
 Let us, my lords, with timely force resist  
 The new attempt of this our common foe,  
 As we would quench the flames of common fire.

*Man.* Though we remain without a certain prince,  
 To wield the realm, or guide the wand'ring rule,  
 Yet now the common mother of us all, 260  
 Our native land, our country, that contains  
 Our wives, children, kindred, ourselves, and all  
 That ever is or may be dear to man,  
 Cries unto us to help ourselves and her.  
 Let us advance our powers to repress  
 This growing foe of all our liberties.

*Gwen.* Yea, let us so, my lords, with hasty speed.  
 And ye, O gods, send us the welcome death,  
 To shed our blood in field, and leave us not  
 In loathsome life to linger out our days, 270  
 To see the huge heaps of these unhaps,  
 That now roll down upon the wretched land,  
 Where empty place of princely governance,  
 No certain stay now left of doubtless heir,  
 Thus leave this guideless realm an open prey  
 To endless storms and waste of civil war.

*Aros.* That ye, my lords, do so agree in one,  
 To save your country from the violent reign  
 And wrongfully usurped tyranny

Of him that threatens conquest of you all, 280  
 To save your realm, and in this realm yourselves,  
 From foreign thraldom of so proud a prince,  
 Much do I praise; and I beseech the gods,  
 With happy honour to requite it you.  
 But, O my lords, sith now the heaven's wrath  
 Hath left this land the issue of their prince;  
 Sith of the body of our late sovereign lord  
 Remains no more, since the young kings be slain,  
 And of the title of descended crown  
 Uncertainly the divers minds do think 290  
 Even of the learned sort, and more uncertainly  
 Will partial fancy and affection deem;  
 But most uncertainly will climbing pride  
 And hope of reign withdraw to sundry parts  
 The doubtful right and hopeful lust to reign.  
 When once this noble service is achiev'd  
 For Britain land, the mother of ye all,  
 When once ye have with armed force repress'd  
 The proud attempts of this Albanian prince,  
 That threatens thraldom to your native land, 300  
 When ye shall vanquishers return from field,  
 And find the princely state an open prey  
 To greedy lust and to usurping power,  
 Then, then, my lords, if ever kindly care  
 Of antient honour of your ancestors,  
 Of present wealth and nobless of your stocks,  
 Yea of the lives and safety yet to come  
 Of your dear wives, your children, and yourselves,  
 Might move your noble hearts with gentle ruth,  
 Then, then, have pity on the torn estate; 310  
 Then help to salve the well-near hopeless sore;  
 Which ye shall do, if ye yourselves withhold  
 The slaying knife from your own mother's throat.  
 Her shall you save, and you, and yours in her,  
 If ye shall all with one assent forbear  
 Once to lay hand or take unto yourselves  
 The crown, by colour of pretended right,  
 Or by what other means soe'er it be,  
 Till first by common counsel of you all  
 In parliament, the regal diadem 320  
 Be set in certain place of governance;

In which your parliament, and in your choice,  
Prefer the right, my lords, without respect  
Of strength or friends, or whatsoever cause  
That may set forward any other's part.

For right will last, and wrong cannot endure.

Right mean I his or hers, upon whose name

The people rest by mean of native line,

Or by the virtue of some former law,

Already made their title to advance.

33°

Such one, my lords, let be your chosen king,

Such one so born within your native land;

Such one prefer, and in no wise admit

The heavy yoke of foreign governance:

Let foreign titles yield to public wealth.

And with that heart wherewith ye now prepare

Thus to withstand the proud invading foe,

With that same heart, my lords, keep out also

Unnatural thraldom of stranger's reign;

Ne suffer you, against the rules of kind,

34°

Your mother land to serve a foreign prince.

*Eub.* Lo, here the end of Brutus' royal line,

And lo, the entry to the woeful wreck

And utter ruin of this noble realm.

The royal king and eke his sons are slain;

No ruler rests within the regal seat;

The heir, to whom the sceptre 'longs, unknown;

That to each force of foreign princes' power,

Whom vantage of our wretched state may move

By sudden arms to gain so rich a realm,

35°

And to the proud and greedy mind at home,

Whom blinded lust to reign leads to aspire,

Lo, Britain realm is left an open prey,

A present spoil by conquest to ensue.

Who seeth not now how many rising minds

Do feed their thoughts with hope to reach a realm?

And who will not by force attempt to win

So great a gain, that hope persuades to have?

A simple colour shall for title serve.

Who wins the royal crown will want no right,

36°

Nor such as shall display by long descent

A lineal race to prove him lawful king.

In the meanwhile these civil arms shall rage,



And thus a thousand mischiefs shall unfold,  
 And far and near spread thee, O Britain land;  
 All right and law shall cease, and he that had  
 Nothing to-day, to-morrow shall enjoy  
 Great heaps of gold, and he that flow'd in wealth,  
 Lo, he shall be bereft of life and all;  
 And happiest he that then possesseth least. 370  
 The wives shall suffer rape, the maids deflour'd,  
 And children fatherless shall weep and wail;  
 With fire and sword thy native folk shall perish,  
 One kinsman shall bereave another's life,  
 The father shall unwitting slay the son,  
 The son shall slay the sire and know it not.  
 Women and maids the cruel soldier's sword  
 Shall pierce to death, and silly children lo,  
 That playing <sup>1</sup> in the streets and fields are found,  
 By violent hands shall close their latter day. 380  
 Whom shall the fierce and bloody soldier  
 Reserve to life? whom shall he spare from death?  
 Ev'n thou, O wretched mother, half alive,  
 Thou shalt behold thy dear and only child  
 Slain with the sword while he yet sucks thy breast.  
 Lo, guiltless blood shall thus each where be shed.  
 Thus shall the wasted soil yield forth no fruit,  
 But dearth and famine shall possess the land.  
 The towns shall be consum'd and burnt with fire,  
 The peopled cities shall wax desolate; 390  
 And thou, O Britain, whilom in renown,  
 Whilom in wealth and fame, shalt thus be torn,  
 Dismember'd thus, and thus be rent in twain,  
 Thus wasted and defac'd, spoil'd and destroy'd.  
 These be the fruits your civil wars will bring.  
 Hereto it comes when kings will not consent  
 To grave advice, but follow wilful will.  
 This is the end, when in fond princes' hearts  
 Flattery prevails, and sage rede hath no place:  
 These are the plagues, when murder is the mean 400  
 To make new heirs unto the royal crown.  
 Thus wreak the gods, when that the mother's wrath  
 Nought but the blood of her own child may swage;  
 These mischiefs spring when rebels will arise

<sup>1</sup> Play.—*Edit.* 1570.

To work revenge and judge their prince's fact.  
This, this ensues, when noble men do fail  
In loyal truth, and subjects will be kings.  
And this doth grow, when lo, unto the prince,  
Whom death or sudden hap of life bereaves,  
No certain heir remains, such certain heir, 410  
As not all only is the rightful heir,  
But to the realm is so made known to be;  
And troth thereby vested in subjects' hearts,  
To owe faith there where right is known to rest.  
Alas, in parliament what hope can be,  
When is of parliament no hope at all,  
Which, though it be assembled by consent,  
Yet is not likely with consent to end;  
While each one for himself, or for his friend,  
Against his foe, shall travail what he may; 420  
While now the state, left open to the man  
That shall with greatest force invade the same,  
Shall fill ambitious minds with gaping hope;  
When will they once with yielding hearts agree?  
Or in the while, how shall the realm be used?  
No, no: then parliament should have been holden,  
And certain heirs appointed to the crown,  
To stay the title of established right,  
And in the people plant obedience,  
While yet the prince did live, whose name and power 430  
By lawful summons and authority  
Might make a parliament to be of force,  
And might have set the state in quiet stay.  
But now, O happy man, whom speedy death  
Deprives of life, ne is enforc'd to see  
These hugy mischiefs, and these miseries,  
These civil wars, these murders, and these wrongs.  
Of justice, yet must God in fine restore  
This noble crown unto the lawful heir:  
For right will always live, and rise at length, 440  
But wrong can never take deep root to last.





ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THOMAS ARDEN, Gentleman, of <i>Feversham.</i>	RICHARD REEDE, a Sailor.
FRANKLIN, his Friend.	BLACK WILL } Murderers.
MOSBIE.	SHAKEBAG }
CLARKE, a Painter.	A PRENTICE.
ADAM FOWLE, Landlord of the <i>Flower-de-Luce.</i>	A FERRYMAN.
BRADSHAW, a Goldsmith.	LORD CHEINY, and his Men.
MICHAEL, Arden's Servant.	MAYOR OF FEVERSHAM, and Watch.
GREENE.	ALICE, Arden's Wife.
	SUSAN, Mosbie's Sister.

# ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

## ACT I

*A Room in Arden's House.*

*Enter ARDEN and FRANKLIN.*

- Franklin.* Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more!  
My gracious Lord, the Duke of Somerset,  
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,  
By letters patents from his Majesty,  
All the lands of the Abbey of Feversham.  
Here are the deeds, *[He hands them.]*  
Sealed and subscribed with his name and the king's:  
Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.
- Arden.* Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life; 10  
And but for thee how odious were this life,  
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,  
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes!  
Which makes me wish that for this veil of heaven  
The earth hung over my head and covered me.  
Love-letters pass 'twixt Mosbie and my wife,  
And they have privy meetings in the town:  
Nay, on his finger did I spy the ring  
Which at our marriage-day the priest put on.  
Can any grief be half so great as this?
- Franklin.* Comfort thyself, sweet friend; it is not strange 20  
That women will be false and wavering.
- Arden.* Ay, but to dote on such a one as he  
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.
- Franklin.* Why, what is he?
- Arden.* A botcher, and no better at the first;  
Who, by base brokage getting some small stock,  
Crept into service of a nobleman,  
And by his servile flattery and fawning  
Is now become the steward of his house,



And bravely jets it in his silken gown.

30

*Franklin.* No nobleman will countenance such a peasant.

*Arden.* Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.

But through his favour let him not grow proud;

For were he by the Lord Protector backed,

He should not make me to be pointed at.

I am by birth a gentleman of blood,

And that injurious ribald, that attempts

To violate my dear wife's chastity

(For dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)

Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile

40

See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,

Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,

Smear'd in the channels of his lustful blood.

*Franklin.* Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me

To ease thy grief and save her chastity:

Intreat her fair; sweet words are fittest engines

To race the flint walls of a woman's breast.

In any case be not too jealous,

Nor make no question of her love to thee;

But, as securely, presently take horse,

50

And lie with me at London all this term;

For women, when they may, will not,

But, being kept back, straight grow outrageous.

*Arden.* Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,

And call her forth and presently take leave.

How! Alice!

*Here enters ALICE.*

*Alice.* Husband, what mean you to get up so early?

Summer nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.

Had I been wake, you had not risen so soon.

*Arden.* Sweet love, thou knowest that we two, Ovid-like,

60

Have often chid the morning when it 'gan to peep,

And often wished that dark night's purblind steeds

Would pull her by the purple mantle back,

And cast her in the ocean to her love.

But this night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart:

I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

*Alice.* 'Tis like I was asleep when I named him,

For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

*Arden.* Ay, but you started up and suddenly,  
Instead of him, caught me about the neck.

*Alice.* Instead of him? why, who was there but you?  
And where but one is, how can I mistake?

*Franklin.* Arden, leave to urge her over-far.

*Arden.* Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream;  
Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.

*Alice.* Now I remember whereupon it came:  
Had we no talk of Mosbie yesternight?

*Franklin.* Mistress Alice, I heard you name him once or twice.

*Alice.* And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.

*Arden.* I know it did, and therefore let it pass. 80  
I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

*Alice.* But tell me, do you mean to stay there long?

*Arden.* No longer there till my affairs be done.

*Franklin.* He will not stay above a month at most.

*Alice.* A month? ay me! Sweet Arden, come again  
Within a day or two, or else I die.

*Arden.* I cannot long be from thee, gentle Alice.

Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field,

Franklin and I will down unto the quay;

For I have certain goods there to unload. 90

Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice;

For yet ere noon we'll take horse and away.

[*Exeunt Arden and Franklin.*]

*Alice.* Ere noon he means to take horse and away!

Sweet news is this. O that some airy spirit

Would in the shape and likeness of a horse

Gallop with Arden 'cross the Ocean,

And throw him from his back into the waves!

Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart:

And he usurps it, having nought but this,

That I am tied to him by marriage. 100

Love is a God, and marriage is but words;

And therefore Mosbie's title is the best.

Tush! whether it be or no, he shall be mine,

In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

*Here enters ADAM of the Flower-de-luce.*

And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-luce;

I hope he brings me tidings of my love.

—How now, Adam, what is the news with you?

Be not afraid; my husband is now from home.

*Adam.* He whom you wot of, Mosbie, Mistress Alice,

Is come to town, and sends you word by me

110

In any case you may not visit him.

*Alice.* Not visit him?

*Adam.* No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

*Alice.* But tell me, is he angry or displeased?

*Adam.* It should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

*Alice.* Were he as mad as raving Hercules,

I'll see him, I; and were thy house of force,

These hands of mine should race it to the ground,

Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

*Adam.* Nay, and you be so impatient, I'll be gone.

120

*Alice.* Stay, Adam, stay; thou wert wont to be my friend.

Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath;

Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,

With which we played for kisses many a time,

And when I lost, I won, and so did he;—

Such winning and such losing Jove send me!

And bid him, if his love do not decline,

To come this morning but along my door,

And as a stranger but salute me there:

This may he do without suspect or fear.

130

*Adam.* I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell. [*Exit Adam.*]

*Alice.* Do, and one day I'll make amends for all.—

I know he loves me well, but dares not come,

Because my husband is so jealous,

And these my narrow-prying neighbours blab,

Hinder our meetings when we would confer.

But, if I live, that block shall be removed,

And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth,

Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men,

Nor Arden's looks; as surely shall he die

140

As I abhor him and love only thee.

*Here enters MICHAEL.*

How now, Michael, whither are you going?

*Michael.* To fetch my master's nag.

I hope you'll think on me.

*Alice.* Ay; but, Michael, see you keep your oath,



And be as secret as you are resolute.

*Michael.* I'll see he shall not live above a week.

*Alice.* On that condition, Michael, here's my hand:

None shall have Mosbie's sister but thyself.

*Michael.* I understand the painter here hard by  
Hath made report that he and Sue is sure. 150

*Alice.* There's no such matter, Michael; believe it not.

*Michael.* But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart,  
With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth,  
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.  
Well, let her keep it! I shall find a fellow  
That can both write and read and make rhyme too.  
And if I do—well, I say no more:

I'll send from London such a taunting letter  
As she shall eat the heart he sent with salt 160  
And fling the dagger at the painter's head.

*Alice.* What needs all this? I say that Susan's thine.

*Michael.* Why, then I say that I will kill my master,  
Or anything that you will have me do.

*Alice.* But, Michael, see you do it cunningly.

*Michael.* Why, say I should be took, I'll ne'er confess  
That you know anything; and Susan, being a maid,  
May beg me from the gallows of the sheriff.

*Alice.* Trust not to that, Michael.

*Michael.* You cannot tell me, I have seen it, I. 170  
But, mistress, tell her, whether I live or die,  
I'll make her more worth than twenty painters can;  
For I will rid mine elder brother away,  
And then the farm of Bolton is mine own.  
Who would not venture upon house and land,  
When he may have it for a right down blow?

*Here enters MOSBIE.*

*Alice.* Yonder comes Mosbie. Michael, get thee gone,  
And let not him nor any know thy drifts. [*Exit Michael.*  
Mosbie, my love!

*Mosbie.* Away, I say, and talk not to me now. 180

*Alice.* A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.

'Tis yet but early days, thou needst not fear.

*Mosbie.* Where is your husband?

*Alice.* 'Tis now high water, and he is at the quay.

*Mosbie.* There let him be; henceforward know me not.

*Alice.* Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?

Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?

Have I for this given thee so many favours,

Incurred my husband's hate, and, out alas!

Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake?

And dost thou say "henceforward know me not"?

Remember, when I lock'd thee in my closet,

What were thy words and mine; did we not both

Decree to murder Arden in the night?

The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,

Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,

'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,

Arden to me was dearer than my soul,—

And shall be still: base peasant, get thee gone,

And boast not of thy conquest over me,

Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery!

For what hast thou to countenance my love,

Being descended of a noble house,

And matched already with a gentleman

Whose servant thou may'st be!—and so farewell.

*Mosbie.* Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see

That which I ever feared, and find too true:

A woman's love is as the lightning-flame,

Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.

To try thy constancy have I been strange;

Would I had never tried, but lived in hope!

*Alice.* What need'st thou try me whom thou ne'er found false?

*Mosbie.* Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

*Alice.* So lists the sailor to the mermaid's song,

So looks the traveller to the basilisk:

I am content for to be reconciled,

And that, I know, will be mine overthrow.

*Mosbie.* Thine overthrow? first let the world dissolve.

*Alice.* Nay, *Mosbie*, let me still enjoy thy love,

And happen what will, I am resolute.

My saving husband hoards up bags of gold

To make our children rich, and now is he

Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,

And he and Franklin will to London straight.

*Mosbie.* To London, *Alice*? if thou'lt be ruled by me,

We'll make him sure enough for coming there.

190

200

210

220

*Alice.* Ah, would we could!

*Mosbie.* I happened on a painter yesternight,  
The only cunning man of Christendom;  
For he can temper poison with his oil,  
That whoso looks upon the work he draws  
Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,  
Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.  
Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,  
That Arden may, by gazing on it, perish.

*Alice.* Ay, but Mosbie, that is dangerous,  
For thou, or I, or any other else,  
Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

*Mosbie.* Ay, but we'll have it covered with a cloth  
And hung up in the study for himself.

*Alice.* It may not be, for when the picture's drawn,  
Arden, I know, will come and show it me.

*Mosbie.* Fear not; we'll have that shall serve the turn.  
This is the painter's house; I'll call him forth.

*Alice.* But, Mosbie, I'll have no such picture, I.

*Mosbie.* I pray thee leave it to my discretion.  
How! Clarke!

*Here enters CLARKE.*

Oh, you are an honest man of your word! you served me well.

*Clarke.* Why, sir, I'll do it for you at any time,  
Provided, as you have given your word,  
I may have Susan Mosbie to my wife.  
For, as sharp-witted poets, whose sweet verse  
Make heavenly gods break off their nectar draughts  
And lay their ears down to the lowly earth,  
Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,  
So we that are the poets' favourites  
Must have a love: ay, Love is the painter's muse,  
That makes him frame a speaking countenance,  
A weeping eye that witnesses heart's grief.  
Then tell me, Master Mosbie, shall I have her?

*Alice.* 'Tis pity but he should; he'll use her well.

*Mosbie.* Clarke, here's my hand: my sister shall be thine.

*Clarke.* Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,  
You shall command my life, my skill, and all.



*Alice.* Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

*Mosbie.* Fear him not; leave; I have talked sufficient.

*Clarke.* You know not me that ask such questions.

Let it suffice I know you love him well,  
 And fain would have your husband made away:  
 Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind, 270  
 That rather than you'll live with him you hate,  
 You'll venture life, and die with him you love.  
 The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

*Alice.* Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed  
 But Mosbie's love. Might I without control  
 Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die:  
 But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

*Mosbie.* Enough, sweet Alice; thy kind words makes me melt,  
 Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike;  
 Some other poison would do better far. 280

*Alice.* Ay, such as might be put into his broth,  
 And yet in taste not to be found at all.

*Clarke.* I know your mind, and here I have it for you.  
 Put but a dram of this into his drink,  
 Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,  
 And he shall die within an hour after.

*Alice.* As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, next day  
 Thou and Susan shall be married.

*Mosbie.* And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of, Clarke.

*Clarke.* Yonder's your husband. Mosbie, I'll be gone. 290

*Here enters ARDEN and FRANKLIN.*

*Alice.* In good time see where my husband comes.

Master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself. [*Exit Clarke.*]

*Mosbie.* Master Arden, being at London yesternight,  
 The Abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,  
 Were offered me on some occasion  
 By Greene, one of Sir Antony Ager's men:  
 I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours?  
 Hath any other interest herein?

*Arden.* Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon.

Alice, make ready my breakfast, I must hence. 300

[*Exit Alice.*]

As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine  
 By letters patents from his Majesty.

But I must have a mandate for my wife;  
 They say you seek to rob me of her love:  
 Villain, what makes thou in her company?  
 She's no companion for so base a groom.

*Mosbie.* Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee;

But rather than I pocket up this wrong—

*Franklin.* What will you do, sir?

*Mosbie.* Revenge it on the proudest of you both.

310

[*Then Arden draws forth Mosbie's sword.*]

*Arden.* So, sirrah; you may not wear a sword,

The statute makes against artificers;

I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,

Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron,

For this shall go with me; and mark my words,

You goodman botcher, 'tis to you I speak:

The next time that I take thee near my house,

Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.

*Mosbie.* Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me:

I do appeal to God and to the world.

320

*Franklin.* Why, canst thou deny thou wert a botcher once?

*Mosbie.* Measure me what I am, not what I was.

*Arden.* Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,

A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant?

*Mosbie.* Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited

The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,

Hear me but speak: as I intend to live

With God and his elected saints in heaven,

I never meant more to solicit her;

And that she knows, and all the world shall see.

330

I loved her once;—sweet Arden, pardon me,

I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart!

But time hath quenched these over-raging coals;

And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house,

'Tis for my sister's sake, her waiting-maid,

And not for hers. Mayest thou enjoy her long:

Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me,

If I dishonour her or injure thee.

*Arden.* Mosbie, with these thy protestations

The deadly hatred of my heart's appeased,

340

And thou and I'll be friends, if this prove true.

As for the base terms I gave thee late,

Forget them, Mosbie: I had cause to speak,

When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent  
Make common table-talk of her and thee.

*Mosbie.* Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues?

*Franklin.* Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,  
Upon whose general bruit all honour hangs,  
Forbear his house.

*Arden.* Forbear it! nay, rather frequent it more: 35°  
The world shall see that I distrust her not.  
To warn him on the sudden from my house  
Were to confirm the rumour that is grown.

*Mosbie.* By my faith, sir, you say true,  
And therefore will I sojourn here a while,  
Until our enemies have talked their fill;  
And then, I hope, they'll cease, and at last confess  
How causeless they have injured her and me.

*Arden.* And I will lie at London all this term 36°  
To let them see how light I weigh their words.

*Here enters ALICE.*

*Alice.* Husband, sit down; your breakfast will be cold.

*Arden.* Come, Master Mosbie, will you sit with us?

*Mosbie.* I cannot eat, but I'll sit for company.

*Arden.* Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.

*Alice.* Husband, why pause ye? why eat you not?

*Arden.* I am not well; there's something in this broth  
That is not wholesome: didst thou make it, Alice?

*Alice.* I did, and that's the cause it likes not you.

*[Then she throws down the broth on the ground.]*

There's nothing that I do can please your taste;  
You were best to say I would have poisoned you. 37°

I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,  
But he imagines I have stepped awry.

Here's he that you cast in my teeth so oft:  
Now will I be convinced or purge myself.

I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,  
Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosbie, thou:  
What favour hast thou had more than a kiss  
At coming or departing from the town?

*Mosbie.* You wrong yourself and me to cast these doubts: 38°  
Your loving husband is not jealous.

*Arden.* Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill



But you'll accuse yourself?  
Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate;  
I'll take a little to prevent the worst.

*Franklin.* Do so, and let us presently take horse;  
My life for yours, ye shall do well enough.

*Alice.* Give me a spoon, I'll eat of it myself;  
Would it were full of poison to the brim,  
Then should my cares and troubles have an end.  
Was ever silly woman so tormented?

390

*Arden.* Be patient, sweet love; I mistrust not thee.

*Alice.* God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost;  
For never woman loved her husband better  
Than I do thee.

*Arden.* I know it, sweet Alice; cease to complain,  
Lest that in tears I answer thee again.

*Franklin.* Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

*Alice.* Forbear to wound me with that bitter word;  
Arden shall go to London in my arms.

*Arden.* Loth am I to depart, yet I must go.

400

*Alice.* Wilt thou to London, then, and leave me here?  
Ah, if thou love me, gentle Arden, stay.  
Yet, if thy business be of great import  
Go, if thou wilt, I'll bear it as I may;  
But write from London to me every week,  
Nay, every day, and stay no longer there  
Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.

*Arden.* I'll write unto thee every other tide,  
And so farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.

*Alice.* Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so;  
And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,  
In hope you'll hasten him home, I'll give you this.

410

[*And then she kisseth him.*]

*Franklin.* And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine.  
Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

*Mosbie.* I hope he is not jealous of me now.

*Arden.* No, Mosbie, no; hereafter think of me  
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

[*Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*]

*Alice.* I am glad he is gone; he was about to stay,  
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

*Mosbie.* Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.  
But what a villain is that painter Clarke!

420

*Alice.* Was it not a goodly poison that he gave?  
 Why, he's as well now as he was before.  
 It should have been some fine confection  
 That might have given the broth some dainty taste:  
 This powder was too gross and populous.

*Mosbie.* But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,  
 Then had he died and our love continued.

*Alice.* Why, so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he live.

*Mosbie.* It is impossible, for I have sworn 430  
 Never hereafter to solicit thee,  
 Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

*Alice.* Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee.  
 What? shall an oath make thee forsake my love?  
 As if I have not sworn as much myself  
 And given my hand unto him in the church!  
 Tush, Mosbie; oaths are words, and words is wind,  
 And wind is mutable: then, I conclude,  
 'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

*Mosbie.* Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet by your leave 440  
 I'll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

*Alice.* Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short;  
 For if thou beest as resolute as I,  
 We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.  
 In London many alehouse ruffians keep,  
 Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.  
 They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home.

*Here enters GREENE.*

*Mosbie.* Alice, what's he that comes yonder? knowest thou him?

*Alice.* Mosbie, be gone: I hope 'tis one that comes  
 To put in practice our intended drifts. [Exit Mosbie.]

*Greene.* Mistress Arden, you are well met. 451

I am sorry that your husband is from home,  
 When as my purposed journey was to him:  
 Yet all my labour is not spent in vain,  
 For I suppose that you can full discourse  
 And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

*Alice.* What is it, Master Greene? If that I may  
 Or can with safety, I will answer you.

*Greene.* I heard your husband hath the grant of late,  
 Confirmed by letters patents from the king, 460

Of all the lands of the Abbey of Feversham,  
Generally intituled, so that all former grants  
Are cut off; whereof I myself had one;  
But now my interest by that is void.  
This is all, Mistress Arden; is it true or no?

*Alice.* True, Master Greene; the lands are his in state,  
And whatsoever leases were before  
Are void for term of Master Arden's life;  
He hath the grant under the Chancery seal.

*Greene.* Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak, 470  
For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong  
To wring me from the little land I have.  
My living is my life, and only that  
Resteth remainder of my portion.  
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,  
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain;  
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,  
So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.  
But, seeing he hath ta'en my lands, I'll value life  
As careless as he is careful for to get: 480  
And tell him this from me, I'll be revenged,  
And so as he shall wish the Abbey lands  
Had rested still within their former state.

*Alice.* Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,  
And woe is me that any man should want!  
God knows 'tis not my fault; but wonder not  
Though he be hard to others, when to me,—  
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used.

*Greene.* Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl 490  
Use you unkindly? respects he not your birth,  
Your honourable friends, nor what you brought?  
Why, all Kent knows your parentage and what you are.

*Alice.* Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,  
I never live good day with him alone:  
When he's at home, then have I froward looks,  
Hard words and blows to mend the match withal;  
And though I might content as good a man,  
Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls;  
And when he's weary with his trugs at home,  
Then rides he straight to London; there, forsooth, 500  
He revels it among such filthy ones  
As counsels him to make away his wife.



Thus live I daily in continual fear,  
 In sorrow; so despairing of redress  
 As every day I wish with hearty prayer  
 That he or I were taken forth the world.

*Greene.* Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me  
 So fair a creature should be so abused.  
 Why, who would have thought the civil sir so sullen?  
 He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him, churl! 510  
 And if he live a day, he lives too long.  
 But frolic, woman! I shall be the man  
 Shall set you free from all this discontent;  
 And if the churl deny my interest  
 And will not yield my lease into my hand,  
 I'll pay him home, whatever hap to me.

*Alice.* But speak you as you think?

*Greene.* Ay, God's my witness, I mean plain dealing,  
 For I had rather die than lose my land.

*Alice.* Then, Master Greene, be counsellèd by me: 520  
 Indanger not yourself for such a churl,  
 But hire some cutter for to cut him short,  
 And here's ten pound to wager them withal;  
 When he is dead, you shall have twenty more,  
 And the lands whereof my husband is possess'd  
 Shall be intitled as they were before.

*Greene.* Will you keep promise with me?

*Alice.* Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.

*Greene.* Then here's my hand, I'll have him so dispatched.  
 I'll up to London straight, I'll thither post, 530  
 And never rest till I have compassed it.  
 Till then farewell.

*Alice.* Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.

[*Exit Greene.*]

And whosoever doth attempt the deed,  
 A happy hand I wish, and so farewell.—  
 All this goes well: Mosbie, I long for thee  
 To let thee know all that I have contrived.

*Here enters MOSBIE and CLARKE.*

*Mosbie.* How, now, Alice, what's the news?

*Alice.* Such as will content thee well, sweetheart.

*Mosbie.* Well, let them pass a while, and tell me, Alice, 540

How have you dealt and tempered with my sister?

What, will she have my neighbour Clarke, or no?

*Alice.* What, Master Mosbie! let him woo himself!

Think you that maids look not for fair words?

Go to her, Clarke; she's all alone within;

Michael my man is clean out of her books.

*Clarke.* I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in;

And if fair Susan and I can make a gree,

You shall command me to the uttermost,

As far as either goods or life may stretch.

[*Exit Clarke.*

*Mosbie.* Now, Alice, let's hear thy news.

55<sup>1</sup>

*Alice.* They be so good that I must laugh for joy,

Before I can begin to tell my tale.

*Mosbie.* Let's hear them, that I may laugh for company.

*Alice.* This morning, Master Greene, Dick Greene I mean,

From whom my husband had the Abbey land,

Came hither, railing, for to know the truth

Whether my husband had the lands by grant.

I told him all, whereat he stormed amain

And swore he would cry quittance with the churl,

56<sup>0</sup>

And, if he did deny his interest,

Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.

Whenas I saw his choler thus to rise,

I whetted on the gentleman with words;

And, to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew

To composition for my husband's death.

I gave him ten pound for to hire knaves,

By some device to make away the churl;

When he is dead, he should have twenty more

And repossess his former lands again.

57<sup>0</sup>

On this we 'greed, and he is ridden straight

To London, for to bring his death about.

*Mosbie.* But call you this good news?

*Alice.* Ay, sweetheart, be they not?

*Mosbie.* 'Twere cheerful news to hear the churl were dead;

But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill

You would be so forgetful of our state

To make recount of it to every groom.

What! to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,

Chiefly in case of murder, why, 'tis the way

To make it open unto Arden's self

And bring thyself and me to ruin both.

58<sup>0</sup>

Forewarned, forearmed; who threatens his enemy,  
Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

*Alice.* I did it for the best.

*Mosbie.* Well, seeing 'tis done, cheerly let it pass.

You know this Greene; is he not religious?

A man, I guess, of great devotion?

*Alice.* He is.

*Mosbie.* Then, sweet Alice, let it pass: I have a drift

Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

590

*Here enters CLARKE and SUSAN.*

*Alice.* How now, Clarke? have you found me false?

Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

*Clarke.* You did.

*Mosbie.* And what? wilt be a match?

*Clarke.* A match, i' faith, sir: ay, the day is mine.

The painter lays his colours to the life,

His pencil draws no shadows in his love.

Susan is mine.

*Alice.* You make her blush.

600

*Mosbie.* What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man?

*Susan.* It resteth in your grant; some words are past,

And haply we be grown unto a match,

If you be willing that it shall be so.

*Mosbie.* Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant:

You see my sister's yet at my dispose,

But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,

I am content my sister shall be yours.

*Clarke.* What is it, Master Mosbie?

*Mosbie.* I do remember once in secret talk

610

You told me how you could compound by art

A crucifix impoisoned,

That whoso look upon it should wax blind

And with the scent be stifled, that ere long

He should die poisoned that did view it well.

I would have you make me such a crucifix,

And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

*Clarke.* Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,

Yet, rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,

I'll do it, and with all the haste I may.

620

But for whom is it?



*Alice.* Leave that to us. Why, Clarke, is it possible  
That you should paint and draw it out yourself,  
The colours being baleful and impoisoned,  
And no ways prejudice yourself withal?

*Mosbie.* Well questioned, Alice; Clarke, how answer you that?

*Clarke.* Very easily: I'll tell you straight  
How I do work of these impoisoned drugs.

I fasten on my spectacles so close

As nothing can any way offend my sight;

Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,

So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,

And softly as another work I paint.

630

*Mosbie.* 'Tis very well; but against when shall I have it?

*Clarke.* Within this ten days.

*Mosbie.*

'Twill serve the turn.

Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.

I hope, now Master Arden is from home,

You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

*Alice.* Mosbie, you know, who's master of my heart,

He well may be the master of the house.

640

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*Country between Feversham and London.*

*Enter GREENE and BRADSHAW.*

*Bradshaw.* See you them that comes yonder, Master Greene?

*Greene.* Ay, very well: do you know them?

*Here enters BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG.*

*Bradshaw.* The one I know not, but he seems a knave

Chiefly for bearing the other company;

For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,

Lives not again upon the earth.

Black Will is his name. I tell you, Master Greene,

At Boulogne he and I were fellow-soldiers,

Where he played such pranks

As all the camp feared him for his villainy

I warrant you he bears so bad a mind

That for a crown he'll murder any man.

10

*Greene.* The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

*Will.* How now, fellow Bradshaw? Whither away so early?

*Bradshaw.* O Will, times are changed: no fellows now,

Though we were once together in the field;

Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.

*Will.* Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I fellow-soldiers at

Boulogne, where I was a corporal, and thou but a base

mercenary groom? No fellows now! because you are a

goldsmith and have a little plate in your shop! You were

glad to call me "fellow Will," and with a curtsey to the

earth, "One snatch, good corporal," when I stole the half

ox from John the victualer, and domineer'd with it amongst

good fellows in one night.

25

*Bradshaw.* Ay, Will, those days are past with me.

*Will.* Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that same

honourable mind still. Good neighbour Bradshaw, you

are too proud to be my fellow; but were it not that I see

more company coming down the hill, I would be fellows

with you once more, and share crowns with you too. But

let that pass, and tell me whither you go.

32

*Bradshaw.* To London, Will, about a piece of service,  
Wherein haply thou mayest pleasure me.

*Will.* What is it?

*Bradshaw.* Of late Lord Cheiny lost some plate,  
Which one did bring and sold it at my shop,  
Saying he served Sir Antony Cooke.  
A search was made, the plate was found with me,  
And I am bound to answer at the 'size. 40  
Now, Lord Cheiny solemnly vows, if law  
Will serve him, he'll hang me for his plate.  
Now I am going to London upon hope  
To find the fellow. Now, Will, I know  
Thou art acquainted with such companions.

*Will.* What manner of man was he?

*Bradshaw.* A lean-faced writhen knave,  
Hawk-nosed and very hollow-eyed,  
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows;  
Long hair down his shoulders curled; 50  
His chin was bare, but on his upper lip  
A mutchado, which he wound about his ear.

*Will.* What apparel had he?

*Bradshaw.* A watchet satin doublet all-to torn,  
The inner side did bear the greater show;  
A pair of thread-bare velvet hose, seam rent,  
A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,  
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off;  
'Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.

*Will.* Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember since we trolled the  
bowl at Sittingburgh, where I broke the tapster's head of  
the Lion with a cudgel stick? 62

*Shakebag.* Ay, very well, Will.

*Will.* Why, it was with the money that the plate was sold for.  
Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him that can tell  
thee who sold thy plate?

*Bradshaw.* Who, I pray thee, good Will?

*Will.* Why, 'twas one Jack Fitten. He's now in Newgate for  
stealing a horse, and shall be arraigned the next 'size.

*Bradshaw.* Why, then let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten forth,  
For I'll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate. 71  
This cheers my heart; Master Greene, I'll leave you,  
For I must to the Isle of Sheppy with speed.

*Greene.* Before you go, let me intreat you



To carry this letter to Mistress Arden of Feversham  
And humbly recommend me to herself.

*Bradshaw.* That will I, Master Greene, and so farewell.  
Here, Will, there's a crown for thy good news.

[*Exit Bradshaw.*]

*Will.* Farewell, Bradshaw; I'll drink no water for thy sake  
whilst this lasts.—Now, gentleman, shall we have your  
company to London? 81

*Greene.* Nay, stay, sirs:

A little more I needs must use your help,  
And in a matter of great consequence,  
Wherein if you'll be secret and profound,  
I'll give you twenty angels for your pains.

*Will.* How? twenty angels? give my fellow George Shakebag  
and me twenty angels? And if thou'lt have thy own father  
slain, that thou may'st inherit his land, we'll kill him.

*Shakebag.* Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy  
kin. 90

*Greene.* Well, this is it: Arden of Feversham  
Hath highly wronged me about the Abbey land,  
That no revenge but death will serve the turn.  
Will you two kill him? here's the angels down,  
And I will lay the platform of his death.

*Will.* Plat me no platforms; give me the money, and I'll stab  
him as he stands pissing against a wall, but I'll kill him.

*Shakebag.* Where is he?

*Greene.* He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.

*Shakebag.* He's dead as if he had been condemned by an Act of  
Parliament, if once Black Will and I swear his death. 101

*Greene.* Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,  
Ye shall have twenty more.

*Will.* My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that I might  
be set a work thus through the year, and that murder would  
grow to an occupation, that a man might follow without  
danger of law:—zounds, I warrant I should be warden of  
the company! Come, let us be going, and we'll bait at  
Rochester, where I'll give thee a gallon of sack to handsel the  
match withal. 110

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*London. A Street near St. Paul's.*

*Enter MICHAEL.*

*Michael.* I have gotten such a letter as will touch the painter;  
And thus it is:

*Here enters ARDEN and FRANKLIN and hears MICHAEL read this letter.*

“My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God you be in good health, as I Michael was at the making hereof. This is to certify you that as the turtle true, when she hath lost her mate, sitteth alone, so I, mourning for your absence, do walk up and down Paul's till one day I fell asleep and lost my master's pantofles. Ah, Mistress Susan, abolish that paltry painter, cut him off by the shins with a frowning look of your crabbed countenance, and think upon Michael, who, drunk with the dregs of your favour, will cleave as fast to your love as a plaster of pitch to a galled horse-back. Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather impetrate mercy of your meek hands, I end.  
“Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.”

*Arden.* Why, you paltry knave,  
Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,  
What haste my business craves to send to Kent?

*Franklin.* Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,  
Knowing your master hath no more but you, 130  
And do ye slack his business for your own?

*Arden.* Where is the letter, sirrah? let me see it.  
[*Then he gives him the letter.*]

See, Master Franklin, here's proper stuff:  
Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,  
A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth;  
Sirrah, let me hear no more of this,  
Nor for thy life once write to her a word.

*Here enters GREENE, WILL, and SHAKEBAG.*

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull?  
'Tis Mosbie's sister: come I once at home,  
I'll rouse her from remaining in my house.

Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul's;  
Come but a turn or two, and then away.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Greene.* The first is Arden, and that's his man,  
The other is Franklin, Arden's dearest friend.

*Will.* Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

*Greene.* Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case;  
But stand close, and take you fittest standing,  
And at his coming forth speed him:  
To the Nag's Head, there is this coward's haunt.

But now I'll leave you till the deed be done. [*Exit Greene.*]

*Shakebag.* If he be not paid his own, ne'er trust Shakebag. 151

*Will.* Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I'll run him through,  
and then to the Blackfriars, and there take water and away.

*Shakebag.* Why, that's the best; but see thou miss him not.

*Will.* How can I miss him, when I think on the forty angels I  
must have more?

*Here enters PRENTICE.*

*Prentice.* 'Tis very late; I were best shut up my stall, for here  
will be old filching, when the press comes forth of Paul's.

[*Then lets he down his window, and it breaks Black Will's  
head.*]

*Will.* Zounds, draw, Shakebag, I am almost killed.

*Prentice.* We'll tame you, I warrant.

160

*Will.* Zounds, I am tame enough already.

*Here enters ARDEN, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL.*

*Arden.* What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

*Franklin.* 'Tis nothing but some brabbling paltry fray,  
Devised to pick men's pockets in the throng.

*Arden.* Is't nothing else? come, Franklin, let's away. [*Exeunt.*]

*Will.* What 'mends shall I have for my broken head?

*Prentice.* Marry, this 'mends, that if you get you not away all the  
sooner, you shall be well beaten and sent to the Counter.

[*Exit Prentice.*]

*Will.* Well, I'll be gone, but look to your signs, for I'll pull them  
down all. Shakebag, my broken head grieves me not so  
much as by this means Arden hath escaped.

171



*Here enters GREENE.*

I had a glimpse of him and his companion.

*Greene.* Why, sirs, Arden's as well as I; I met him and Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. What, dare you not do it?

*Will.* Yes, sir, we dare do it; but, were my consent to give again, we would not do it under ten pound more. I value every drop of my blood at a French crown. I have had ten pound to steal a dog, and we have no more here to kill a man; but that a bargain is a bargain, and so forth, you should do it yourself. 180

*Greene.* I pray thee, how came thy head broke?

*Will.* Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not?

*Shakebag.* Standing against a stall, watching Arden's coming, a boy let down his shop-window, and broke his head; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the tumult Arden escaped us and passed by unthought on. But forbearance is no acquittance; another time we'll do it, I warrant thee.

*Greene.* I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,  
And let us bethink us on some other place  
Where Arden may be met with handsomely. 190  
Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn  
To kill the villain; think upon thine oath.

*Will.* Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths!  
But wouldst thou charm me to effect this deed,  
Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee;  
Say thou seest Mosbie kneeling at my knees,  
Offering me service for my high attempt,  
And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,  
Comes with a lowly curtsey to the earth,  
Saying "Take this but for thy quarterage, 200  
Such yearly tribute will I answer thee."  
Why, this would steel soft-mettled cowardice,  
With which Black Will was never tainted yet.  
I tell thee, Greene, the forlorn traveller,  
Whose lips are glued with summer's parching heat,  
Ne'er longed so much to see a running brook  
As I to finish Arden's tragedy.  
Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?  
From hence ne'er will I wash this bloody stain,  
Till Arden's heart be panting in my hand. 210

*Greene.* Why, that's well said; but what saith Shakebag?

*Shakebag.* I cannot paint my valour out with words:

But, give me place and opportunity,  
Such mercy as the starven lioness,  
When she is dry sucked of her eager young,  
Shows to the prey that next encounters her,  
On Arden so much pity would I take.

*Greene.* So should it fare with men of firm resolve.

And now, sirs, seeing that this accident  
Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success, 220  
Let us bethink us of some other place  
Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's blood.

*Here enters MICHAEL.*

See, yonder comes his man: and wot you what?  
The foolish knave's in love with Mosbie's sister,  
And for her sake, whose love he cannot get  
Unless Mosbie solicit his suit,  
The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.  
We'll question him, for he may stead us much,—  
How now, Michael, whether are you going?

*Michael.* My master hath new supped, 230  
And I am going to prepare his chamber.

*Greene.* Where supped Master Arden?

*Michael.* At the Nag's Head, at the eighteen pence ordinary.  
How now, Master Shakebag? what, Black Will! God's  
dear lady, how chance your face is so bloody?

*Will.* Go to, sirrah, there is a chance in it; this sauciness in  
you will make you be knocked.

*Michael.* Nay, an you be offended, I'll be gone.

*Greene.* Stay, Michael, you may not escape us so. 240  
Michael, I know you love your master well.

*Michael.* Why, so I do; but wherefore urge you that?

*Greene.* Because I think you love your mistress better.

*Michael.* So think not I; but say, i'faith, what, if I should?

*Shakebag.* Come to the purpose, Michael; we hear  
You have a pretty love in Feversham.

*Michael.* Why, have I two or three, what's that to thee!

*Will.* You deal too mildly with the peasant. Thus it is:  
'Tis known to us that you love Mosbie's sister;  
We know besides that you have ta'en your oath

To further Mosbie to your mistress' bed,  
 And kill your master for his sister's sake.  
 Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself  
 Was never fostered in the coast of Kent:  
 How comes it then that such a knave as you  
 Dare swear a matter of such consequence?

250

*Greene.* Ah, Will——

*Will.* Tush, give me leave, there's no more but this:

Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all;  
 And hadst thou or should'st thou utter it,  
 We have devised a complot under hand,  
 Whatever shall betide to any of us,  
 To send thee roundly to the devil of hell.  
 And therefore thus: I am the very man,  
 Marked in my birth-hour by the destinies,  
 To give an end to Arden's life on earth;  
 Thou but a member but to whet the knife  
 Whose edge must search the closet of his breast:  
 Thy office is but to appoint the place,  
 And train thy master to his tragedy;  
 Mine to perform it when occasion serves.

260

270

Then be not nice, but here devise with us  
 How and what way we may conclude his death.

*Shakebag.* So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy friend,  
 And by his friendship gain his sister's love.

*Greene.* So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,  
 And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.

*Michael.* Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,  
 Sith you have urged me so apparently,  
 That I have vowed my master Arden's death;  
 And he whose kindly love and liberal hand  
 Doth challenge nought but good deserts of me,  
 I will deliver over to your hands.

280

This night come to his house at Aldersgate:  
 The doors I'll leave unlock'd against you come.  
 No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,  
 Over the threshold to the inner court,  
 But on your left hand shall you see the stairs  
 That leads directly to my master's chamber:  
 There take him and dispose him as ye please,  
 Now it were good we parted company;  
 What I have promised, I will perform.

290



*Will.* Should you deceive us, 'twould go wrong with you.

*Michael.* I will accomplish all I have revealed.

*Will.* Come, let's go drink: choler makes me as dry as a dog.

[*Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakebag. Manet Michael.*]

*Michael.* Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down,

Whilst through the thicket of an arbour brake

The hunger-bitten wolf o'erpries his haunt

And takes advantage for to eat him up.

Ah, harmless Arden, how hast thou misdone,

That thus thy gentle life is levelled at?

300

The many good turns that thou hast done to me.

Now must I quittance with betraying thee.

I that should take the weapon in my hand

And buckler thee from ill-intending foes,

Do lead thee with a wicked fraudulent smile,

As unsuspected, to the slaughter-house.

So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress,

So have I promised to the slaughtermen;

And should I not deal currently with them,

Their lawless rage would take revenge on me.

310

Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once:

Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,

I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.

[*Exit Michael.*]

## ACT III

SCENE I.—*A Room in Franklin's House, at Aldersgate.*

*Enter ARDEN and FRANKLIN.*

*Arden.* No, Franklin, no: if fear or stormy threats,  
 If love of me or care of womanhood,  
 If fear of God or common speech of men,  
 Who mangle credit with their wounding words,  
 And couch dishonour as dishonour buds,  
 Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts,  
 No question then but she would turn the leaf  
 And sorrow for her dissolution;  
 But she is rooted in her wickedness,  
 Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed; 10  
 Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,  
 And reprehension makes her vice to grow  
 As Hydra's head that plenished by decay.  
 Her faults, methink, are painted in my face,  
 For every searching eye to overread;  
 And Mosbie's name, a scandal unto mine,  
 Is deeply trenchèd in my blushing brow.  
 Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,  
 My heart's grief rends my other powers  
 Worse than the conflict at the hour of death. 20

*Franklin.* Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament:  
 She will amend, and so your griefs will cease;  
 Or else she'll die, and so your sorrows end.  
 If neither of these two do haply fall,  
 Yet let your comfort be that others bear  
 Your woes, twice doubled all, with patience.

*Arden.* My house is irksome; there I cannot rest.

*Franklin.* Then stay with me in London; go not home.

*Arden.* Then that base Mosbie doth usurp my room  
 And makes his triumph of my being thence. 30  
 At home or not at home, where'er I be,  
 Here, here it lies, ah Franklin, here it lies  
 That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

*Here enters MICHAEL.*

*Franklin.* Forget your griefs a while; here comes your man.

*Arden.* What a-clock is't, sirrah?

*Michael.* Almost ten.

*Arden.* See, see, how runs away the weary time!

Come, Master Franklin, shall we go to bed?

*[Exeunt Arden and Michael. Manet Franklin.]*

*Franklin.* I pray you, go before: I'll follow you.

—Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy!

40

What pity-moving words, what deep-fetched sighs,

What grievous groans and overlading woes

Accompanies this gentle gentleman!

Now will he shake his care-oppressèd head,

Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth,

Ashamed to gaze upon the open world;

Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,

Looking that ways for redress of wrong:

Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief

And tells a story with his careful tongue;

50

Then comes his wife's dishonour in his thoughts

And in the middle cutteth off his tale,

Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.

So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,

Was never any lived and bare it so.

*Here enters MICHAEL.*

*Michael.* My master would desire you come to bed.

*Franklin.* Is he himself already in his bed?

*[Exit Franklin. Manet Michael.]*

*Michael.* He is, and fain would have the light away.

—Conflicting thoughts, encampèd in my breast,

Awake me with the echo of their strokes,

60

And I, a judge to censure either side,

Can give to neither wishèd victory.

My master's kindness pleads to me for life

With just demand, and I must grant it him:

My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,

For Susan's sake, the which I may not break,

For that is nearer than a master's love:



That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,  
 And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,  
 —Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent,—  
 Have sworn my death, if I infringe my vow,  
 A dreadful thing to be considered of.

70

Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair  
 Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,  
 And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,  
 Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths,  
 Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,  
 Art mangled by their ireful instruments.

Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,  
 And pitiless Black Will cries: "Stab the slave!  
 The peasant will detect the tragedy!"

80

The wrinkles in his foul death-threat'ning face  
 Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.

My death to him is but a merriment,  
 And he will murder me to make him sport.  
 He comes, he comes! ah, Master Franklin, help!  
 Call on the neighbours, or we are but dead!

*Here enters FRANKLIN and ARDEN.*

*Franklin.* What dismal outcry calls me from my rest?

*Arden.* What hath occasioned such a fearful cry?

Speak, Michael: hath any injured thee?

90

*Michael.* Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleep,  
 Upon the threshold leaning to the stairs,  
 I had a fearful dream that troubled me,  
 And in my slumber thought I was beset  
 With murderer thieves that came to rifle me.  
 My trembling joints witness my inward fear:  
 I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

*Arden.* So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard.

What? are the doors fast locked and all things safe?

*Michael.* I cannot tell; I think I locked the doors.

100

*Arden.* I like not this, but I'll go see myself.—

Ne'er trust me but the doors were all unlocked:

This negligence not half contenteth me.

Get you to bed, and if you love my favour,

Let me have no more such pranks as these.

Come, Master Franklin, let us go to bed.

*Franklin.* Ay, by my faith; the air is very cold.  
Michael, farewell; I pray thee dream no more.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Outside Franklin's house.*

*Here enters WILL, GREENE, and SHAKEBAG.*

- Shakebag.* Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,  
And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth, 110  
And with the black fold of her cloudy robe  
Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,  
In which sweet silence such as we triumph.  
The lazy minutes linger on their time,  
As loth to give due audit to the hour,  
Till in the watch our purpose be complete  
And Arden sent to everlasting night.  
Greene, get you gone, and linger here about,  
And at some hour hence come to us again,  
Where we will give you instance of his death. 120
- Greene.* Speed to my wish, whose will so e'er says no;  
And so I'll leave you for an hour or two. [*Exit Greene.*]
- Will.* I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing were done:  
I am so heavy that I can scarce go;  
This drowsiness in me bodes little good.
- Shakebag.* How now, Will? become a precisian?  
Nay, then let's go sleep, when bugs and fears  
Shall kill our courages with their fancy's work.
- Will.* Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much,  
And wrongs me too in telling me of fear. 130  
Were't not a serious thing we go about,  
It should be slipt till I had fought with thee,  
To let thee know I am no coward, I.  
I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.
- Shakebag.* Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly kind of fear,  
And savoured of a weak relenting spirit.  
Go forward now in that we have begun,  
And afterwards attempt me when thou darest.
- Will.* And if I do not, heaven cut me off!  
But let that pass, and show me to this house, 140  
Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakebag.
- Shakebag.* This is the door; but soft, methinks 'tis shut.

The villain Michael hath deceived us.

*Will.* Soft, let me see, Shakebag; 'tis shut indeed.

Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

*Shakebag.* It will not be; the white-livered peasant

Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

*Will.* And he shall buy his merriment as dear

As ever coistril bought so little sport:

Ne'er let this sword assist me when I need,

150

But rust and canker after I have sworn,

If I, the next time that I meet the hind,

Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.

*Shakebag.* And let me never draw a sword again,

Nor prosper in the twilight, cockshut light,

When I would fleece the wealthy passenger,

But lie and languish in a loathsome den,

Hated and spit at by the goers-by,

And in that death may die unpitied,

160

If I, the next time that I meet the slave,

Cut not the nose from off the coward's face

And trample on it for this villainy.

*Will.* Come, let's go seek out Greene; I know he'll swear.

*Shakebag.* He were a villain, an he would not swear.

'Twould make a peasant swear among his boys,

That ne'er durst say before but "yea" and "no,"

To be thus flouted of a coistril.

*Will.* Shakebag, let's seek out Greene, and in the morning

At the alehouse butting Arden's house

Watch the out-coming of that prick-eared cur,

170

And then let me alone to handle him.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*Room in Franklin's house as before.*

*Here enters ARDEN, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL.*

*Arden.* Sirrah, get you back to Billingsgate

And learn what time the tide will serve our turn;

Come to us in Paul's. First go make the bed,

And afterwards go hearken for the flood. [*Exit Michael.*]

Come, Master Franklin, you shall go with me.

This night I dreamt that, being in a park,

A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer,



And I upon a little rising hill  
 Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach. 180  
 Even there, methoughts, a gentle slumber took me,  
 And summoned all my parts to sweet repose;  
 But in the pleasure of this golden rest  
 An ill-thewed foster had removed the toil,  
 And rounded me with that beguiling home  
 Which late, methought, was pitched to cast the deer.  
 With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,  
 And at the noise another herdman came,  
 With falchion drawn, and bent it at my breast,  
 Crying aloud, "Thou art the game we seek!" 190  
 With this I woke and trembled every joint,  
 Like one obscured in a little bush,  
 That sees a lion foraging about,  
 And, when the dreadful forest-king is gone,  
 He pries about with timorous suspect  
 Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,  
 And will not think his person dangerless,  
 But quakes and shivers, though the cause be gone:  
 So, trust me, Franklin, when I did awake,  
 I stood in doubt whether I waked or no: 200  
 Such great impression took this fond surprise.  
 God grant this vision bedem me any good.

*Franklin.* This fantasy doth rise from Michael's fear,  
 Who being awaked with the noise he made,  
 His troubled senses yet could take no rest;  
 And this, I warrant you, procured your dream.

*Arden.* It may be so, God frame it to the best:  
 But oftentimes my dreams presage too true.

*Franklin.* To such as note their nightly fantasies,  
 Some one in twenty may incur belief; 210  
 But use it not, 'tis but a mockery.

*Arden.* Come, Master Franklin; we'll now walk in Paul's  
 And dine together at the ordinary,  
 And by my man's direction draw to the quay,  
 And with the tide go down to Feversham.  
 Say, Master Franklin, shall it not be so?

*Franklin.* At your good pleasure, sir; I'll bear you company.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Aldersgate.**Here enters MICHAEL at one door.**Here enters GREENE, WILL, and SHAKEBAG at another door.**Will.* Draw, Shakebag, for here's that villain Michael.*Greene.* First, Will, let's hear what he can say.*Will.* Speak, milksop slave, and never after speak.*Michael.* For God's sake, sirs, let me excuse myself:

220

For here I swear, by heaven and earth and all,

I did perform the utmost of my task,

And left the doors unbolted and unlocked.

But see the chance: Franklin and my master

Were very late conferring in the porch,

And Franklin left his napkin where he sat

With certain gold knit in it, as he said.

Being in bed, he did bethink himself,

And coming down he found the doors unshut:

230

He locked the gates, and brought away the keys,

For which offence my master rated me.

But now I am going to see what flood it is,

For with the tide my master will away;

Where you may front him well on Rainham Down,

A place well-fitting such a stratagem.

*Will.* Your excuse hath somewhat mollified my choler.

Why now, Greene, 'tis better now nor e'er it was.

*Greene.* But, Michael, is this true?*Michael.* As true as I report it to be true.

240

*Shakebag.* Then, Michael, this shall be your penance,

To feast us all at the Salutation,

Where we will plat our purpose thoroughly.

*Greene.* And, Michael, you shall bear no news of this tide,

Because they two may be in Rainham Down

Before your master.

*Michael.* Why, I'll agree to anything you'll have me,

So you will except of my company.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*Arden's House at Feversham.**Here enters MOSBIE.*

*Mosbie.* Disturbèd thoughts drives me from company  
 And dries my marrow with their watchfulness; 250  
 Continual trouble of my moody brain  
 Feebles my body by excess of drink,  
 And nips me as the bitter north-east wind  
 Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.  
 Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,  
 That tables not with foul suspicion;  
 And he but pines amongst his delicates,  
 Whose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent.  
 My golden time was when I had no gold;  
 Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure; 260  
 My daily toil begat me night's repose,  
 My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.  
 But since I climbed the top-bough of the tree  
 And sought to build my nest among the clouds,  
 Each gentle stirry gale doth shake my bed,  
 And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.  
 But whither doth contemplation carry me?  
 The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells,  
 Is hedged behind me that I cannot back,  
 But needs must on, although to danger's gate. 270  
 Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree;  
 For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up  
 To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.  
 And for his pains I'll hive him up a while,  
 And after smother him to have his wax:  
 Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.  
 Then is there Michael and the painter too,  
 Chief actors to Arden's overthrow;  
 Who when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,  
 They will insult upon me for my meed, 280  
 Or fright me by detecting of his end.  
 I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone  
 To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,  
 And then am I sole ruler of mine own.



Yet Mistress Arden lives; but she's myself,  
 And holy Church rites makes us two but one.  
 But what for that? I may not trust you, Alice:  
 You have supplanted Arden for my sake,  
 And will extirpen me to plant another.  
 'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,  
 And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.

290

*Here enters ALICE.*

But here she comes, and I must flatter her.  
 —How now, Alice? what, sad and passionate?  
 Make me partaker of thy pensiveness:  
 Fire divided burns with lesser force.

*Alice.* But I will dam that fire in my breast  
 Till by the force thereof my part consume.  
 Ah, Mosbie!

*Mosbie.* Such deep pathaires, like to a cannon's burst  
 Discharged against a ruined wall,  
 Breaks my relenting heart in thousand pieces.  
 Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore;  
 Thou know'st it well, and 'tis thy policy  
 To forge distressful looks to wound a breast  
 Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.  
 It is not love that loves to anger love.

300

*Alice.* It is not love that loves to murder love.

*Mosbie.* How mean you that?

*Alice.* Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

*Mosbie.* And then?

310

*Alice.* And then—conceal the rest, for 'tis too bad,  
 Lest that my words be carried with the wind,  
 And published in the world to both our shames.  
 I pray thee, Mosbie, let our springtime wither;  
 Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.  
 Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwixt us,  
 For how I blush and tremble at the thoughts!

*Mosbie.* What? are you changed?

*Alice.* Ay, to my former happy life again,  
 From title of an odious strumpet's name  
 To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife.  
 Ha, Mosbie! 'tis thou has rifled me of that  
 And made me slanderous to all my kin;

320

Even in my forehead is thy name ingraven,  
 A mean artificer, that low-born name.  
 I was bewitched: woe worth the hapless hour  
 And all the causes that enchanted me!

*Mosbie.* Nay, if you ban, let me breathe curses forth,  
 And if you stand so nicely at your fame,  
 Let me repent the credit I have lost. 33°  
 I have neglected matters of import  
 That would have staid me above thy state,  
 Forslowed advantages, and spurned at time:  
 Ay, Fortune's right hand Mosbie hath forsook  
 To take a wanton giglot by the left.  
 I left the marriage of an honest maid,  
 Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy wealth,  
 Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee:  
 This certain good I lost for changing bad,  
 And wrapt my credit in thy company. 34°  
 I was bewitched,—that is no theme of thine,  
 And thou unhallowed has enchanted me.  
 But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,  
 And put another sight upon these eyes  
 That showed my heart a raven for a dove.  
 Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now;  
 Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not;  
 And now the rain hath beaten off thy guilt,  
 Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.  
 It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,  
 But mads me that ever I thought thee fair. 35°  
 Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds;  
 I am too good to be thy favourite.

*Alice.* Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,  
 Which often hath been told me by my friends,  
 That Mosbie loves me not but for my wealth,  
 Which too incredulous I ne'er believed.  
 Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two;  
 I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.  
 Look on me, Mosbie, or I'll kill myself: 36°  
 Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.  
 If thou cry war, there is no peace for me;  
 I will do penance for offending thee,  
 And burn this prayer-book, where I here use  
 The holy word that had converted me.

See, Mosbie, I will tear away the leaves,  
 And all the leaves, and in this golden cover  
 Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;  
 And thereon will I chiefly meditate,  
 And hold no other sect but such devotion. 370  
 Wilt thou not look? is all thy love o'erwhelmed?  
 Wilt thou not hear? what malice stops thine ears?  
 Why speaks thou not? what silence ties thy tongue?  
 Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,  
 And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,  
 And spoke as smoothly as an orator,  
 When I have bid thee hear or see or speak,  
 And art thou sensible in none of these?  
 Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault,  
 And I deserve not Mosbie's muddy looks. 380  
 A fence of trouble is not thickened still:  
 Be clear again, I'll ne'er more trouble thee.

*Mosbie.* O no, I am a base artificer:  
 My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.  
 Mosbie? fie! no, not for a thousand pound.  
 Make love to you? why, 'tis unpardonable;  
 We beggars must not breathe where gentles are.

*Alice.* Sweet Mosbie is as gentle as a king,  
 And I too blind to judge him otherwise.  
 Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands, 390  
 Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns;  
 So, whatsoe'er my Mosbie's father was,  
 Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

*Mosbie.* Ah, how you women can insinuate,  
 And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue!  
 I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,  
 Provided I'll be tempted so no more.

*Here enters BRADSHAW.*

*Alice.* Then with thy lips seal up this new-made match.

*Mosbie.* Soft, Alice, here comes somebody.

*Alice.* How now, Bradshaw, what's the news with you? 400

*Bradshaw.* I have little news, but here's a letter  
 That Master Greene importuned me to give you.

*Alice.* Go in, Bradshaw; call for a cup of beer;  
 'Tis almost supper-time, thou shalt stay with us.

*[Exit Bradshaw.]*



*Then she reads the letter.*

“We have missed of our purpose at London, but shall perform it by the way. We thank our neighbour Bradshaw.—Yours, Richard Greene.”

How likes my love the tenor of this letter?

*Mosbie.* Well, were his date completed and expired.

*Alice.* Ah, would it were! Then comes my happy hour: 410

Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.

Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

*Mosbie.* Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI.—*Country near Rochester.*

*Here enters GREENE, WILL, and SHAKEBAG.*

*Shakebag.* Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness!

Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire?

*Will.* Then ask me if my nose be on my face,  
Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.

Zounds, here's a coil!

You were best swear me on the interrogatories

How many pistols I have took in hand, 420

Or whether I love the smell of gunpowder,

Or dare abide the noise the dag will make,

Or will not wink at flashing of the fire.

I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,

That I have took more purses in this down

Than e'er thou handledst pistols in thy life.

*Shakebag.* Ay, haply thou has picked more in a throng:

But, should I brag what booties I have took,

I think the overplus that's more than thine

Would mount to a greater sum of money 430

Then either thou or all thy kin are worth.

Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad

That carry a muscado in their tongue,

And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

*Will.* O Greene, intolerable!

It is not for mine honour to bear this.

Why, Shakebag, I did serve the king at Boulogne,

And thou canst brag of nothing that thou hast done.

*Shakebag.* Why, so can Jack of Feversham,  
That sounded for a fillip of the nose,  
When he that gave it him holloed in his ear,  
And he supposed a cannon-bullet hit him. 44°

*Then they fight.*

*Greene.* I pray you, sirs, list to Æsop's talk:  
Whilst two stout dogs were striving for a bone,  
There comes a cur and stole it from them both;  
So, while you stand striving on these terms of manhood,  
Arden escapes us, and deceives us all.

*Shakebag.* Why, he begun.

*Will.* And thou shalt find I'll end;  
I do but slip it until better time:  
But, if I do forget— 45°

*[Then he kneels down and holds up his hands to heaven.]*

*Greene.* Well, take your fittest standings, and once more  
Lime well your twigs to catch this wary bird.  
I'll leave you, and at your dag's discharge  
Make towards, like the longing water-dog  
That coucheth till the fowling-piece be off,  
Then seizeth on the prey with eager mood.  
Ah, might I see him stretching forth his limbs,  
As I have seen them beat their wings ere now!

*Shakebag.* Why, that thou shalt see, if he come this way.

*Greene.* Yes, that he doth, Shakebag, I warrant thee: 46°  
But brawl not when I am gone in any case.  
But, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes,  
And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour.

*[Exit Greene.]*

*Here enters ARDEN, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL.*

*Michael.* 'Twere best that I went back to Rochester:  
The horse halts downright; it were not good  
He travelled in such pain to Feversham;  
Removing of a shoe may haply help it:

*Arden.* Well, get you back to Rochester; but, sirrah, see  
Ye o'ertake us ere we come to Rainham Down,  
For 't will be very late ere we get home. 47°

*Michael.* Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will and Shakebag,

That thou shalt never go further than that down;  
 And therefore have I pricked the horse on purpose,  
 Because I would not view the massacre. [*Exit Michael.*]

*Arden.* Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

*Franklin.* I do assure you, sir, you task me much:

A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,  
 And on the sudden is my wind so short  
 As hindereth the passage of my speech;  
 So fierce a qualm yet ne'er assailed me.

480

*Arden.* Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly:

The annoyance of the dust or else some meat  
 You ate at dinner cannot brook with you.  
 I have been often so, and soon amended.

*Franklin.* Do you remember where my tale did leave?

*Arden.* Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.

*Franklin.* She being reprehended for the fact,

Witness produced that took her with the deed,  
 Her glove brought in which there she left behind,  
 And many other assured arguments,  
 Her husband asked her whether it were not so.

490

*Arden.* Her answer then? I wonder how she looked,  
 Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths,  
 And at the instant so approved upon her.

*Franklin.* First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,

Watching the drops that fell amain from thence;  
 Then softly draws she forth her handkercher,  
 And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face;  
 Them hemmed she out, to clear her voice should seem,  
 And with a majesty addressed herself

500

To encounter all their accusations.—

Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more;

This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.

*Arden.* Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down:

Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way;

I would you were in state to tell it out.

*Shakebag.* Stand close, Will, I hear them coming.

*Here enters LORD CHEINY with his men.*

*Will.* Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.

*L. Cheiny.* Is it so near night as it seems,

Or will this black-faced evening have a shower?

510



—What, Master Arden? you are well met,  
I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with you:  
You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppy.

*Arden.* Your honour's always! bound to do you service.

*L. Cheiny.* Come you from London, and ne'er a man with  
you?

*Arden.* My man's coming after, but here's  
My honest friend that came along with me.

*L. Cheiny.* My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.

*Franklin.* Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.

*L. Cheiny.* You and your friend come home and sup with  
me. 520

*Arden.* I beseech your honour pardon me;  
I have made a promise to a gentleman,  
My honest friend, to meet him at my house;  
The occasion is great, or else would I wait on you.

*L. Cheiny.* Will you come to-morrow and dine with me,  
And bring your honest friend along with you?  
I have divers matters to talk with you about.

*Arden.* To-morrow we'll wait upon your honour.

*L. Cheiny.* One of you stay my horse at the top of the hill.  
—What! Black Will? for whose purse wait you? 530  
Thou wilt be hanged in Kent, when all is done.

*Will.* Not hanged, God save your honour;  
I am your bedesman, bound to pray for you.

*L. Cheiny.* I think thou ne'er said'st prayer in all thy life.—  
One of you give him a crown:—  
And, sirrah, leave this kind of life;  
If thou beest tainted for a penny-matter,  
And come in question, surely thou wilt truss.  
—Come, Master Arden, let us be going;  
Your way and mine lies four miles together. 540

[*Exeunt. Manet Black Will and Shakebag.*]

*Will.* The devil break all your necks at four miles' end!  
Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger!  
His lordship chops me in,  
Even when my dag was levelled at his heart.  
I would his crown were molten down his throat.

*Shakebag.* Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.  
Did ever man escape as thou hast done?  
Well, I'll discharge my pistol at the sky,  
For by this bullet Arden might not die.

*Here enters GREENE.*

*Greene.* What, is he down? is he dispatched? 550

*Shakebag.* Ay, in health towards Feversham, to shame us all.

*Greene.* The devil he is! why, sirs, how escaped he?

*Shakebag.* When we were ready to shoot,

Comes my Lord Cheiny to prevent his death.

*Greene.* The Lord of Heaven hath preserved him.

*Will.* Preserved a fig! The Lord Cheiny hath preserved him,

And bids him to a feast to his house at Shorlow.

But by the way once more I'll meet with him,

And, if all the Cheinies in the world say no,

I'll have a bullet in his breast to-morrow. 560

Therefore come, Greene, and let us to Feversham.

*Greene.* Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden:

O, how she'll chafe when she hears of this!

*Shakebag.* Why, I'll warrant you she'll think we dare not do it.

*Will.* Why, then let us go, and tell her all the matter,

And plat the news to cut him off to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT IV

### SCENE I.—ARDEN'S *House at Feversham.*

*Here enters ARDEN and his wife, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL.*

*Arden.* See how the hours, the gardant of heaven's gate,  
Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds,  
That Sol may well discern the trampled path  
Wherein he wont to guide his golden car;  
The season fits; come, Franklin, let's away.

*Alice.* I thought you did pretend some special hunt,  
That made you thus cut short the time of rest.

*Arden.* It was no chase that made me rise so early,  
But, as I told thee yesternight, to go  
To the Isle of Sheppy, there to dine with my Lord Cheiny;  
For so his honour late commanded me. II,

*Alice.* Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses;  
Home is a wild cat to a wandering wit.  
The time hath been,—would God it were not past,—  
That honour's title nor a lord's command  
Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.  
But my deserts or your desires decay,  
Or both; yet if true love may seem desert,  
I merit still to have thy company,

*Franklin.* Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with us; 20  
I am sure his honour will welcome her  
And us the more for bringing her along.

*Arden.* Content; sirrah, saddle your mistress' nag.

*Alice.* No, begged favour merits little thanks;  
If I should go, our house would run away,  
Or else be stolen; therefore I'll stay behind.

*Arden.* Nay, see how mistaking you are! I pray thee, go.

*Alice.* No, no, not now.

*Arden.* Then let me leave thee satisfied in this,  
That time nor place nor persons alter me, 30  
But that I hold thee dearer than my life.

*Alice.* That will be seen by your quick return.



*Arden.* And that shall be ere night, and if I live.  
Farewell, sweet Alice, we mind to sup with thee.

[*Exit Alice.*]

*Franklin.* Come, Michael, are our horses ready?

*Michael.* Ay, your horse are ready, but I am not ready, for I have lost my purse, with six and thirty shillings in it, with taking up of my master's nag.

*Franklin.* Why, I pray you, let us go before,  
Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse. 40

*Arden.* Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the Isle of Sheppy  
To my Lord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.

[*Exeunt Arden and Franklin. Manet Michael.*]

*Michael.* So, fair weather after you, for before you lies Black Will and Shakebag in the broom close, too close for you: they'll be your ferrymen to long home.

*Here enters the Painter.*

But who is this? the painter, my corrival, that would needs win Mistress Susan.

*Clarke.* How now, Michael? how doth my mistress and all at home?

*Michael.* Who? Susan Mosbie? she is your mistress, too?

*Clarke.* Ay, how doth she and all the rest? 50

*Michael.* All's well but Susan; she is sick.

*Clarke.* Sick? Of what disease?

*Michael.* Of a great fever.

*Clarke.* A fear of what?

*Michael.* A great fever.

*Clarke.* A fever? God forbid!

*Michael.* Yes, faith, and of a lordaine, too, as big as yourself.

*Clarke.* O, Michael, the spleen prickles you. Go to, you carry an eye over Mistress Susan.

*Michael.* I' faith, to keep her from the painter. 60

*Clarke.* Why more from a painter than from a serving creature like yourself?

*Michael.* Because you painters make but a painting table of a pretty wench, and spoil her beauty with blotting.

*Clarke.* What mean you by that?

*Michael.* Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining of wench's petticoats, and we serving-men put horns to them to make them become sheep.

*Clarke.* Such another word will cost you a cuff or a knock.

*Michael.* What, with a dagger made of a pencil? Faith, 'tis too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win Susan. 71

*Clarke.* Would Susan's love lay upon this stroke.

[*Then he breaks Michael's head.*]

*Here enters MOSBIE, GREENE, and ALICE.*

*Alice.* I'll lay my life, this is for Susan's love.

Stayed you behind your master to this end?

Have you no other time to brable in

But now when serious matters are in hand?—

Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised?

*Clarke.* Ay, here it is; the very touch is death.

*Alice.* Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,

Will catch Master Arden,

80

And make him wise in death that lived a fool.

Why should he thrust his sickle in our corn,

Or what hath he to do with thee, my love,

Or govern me that am to rule myself?

Forsooth, for credit sake, I must leave thee!

Nay, he must leave to live that we may love,

May live, may love; for what is life but love?

And love shall last as long as life remains,

And life shall end before my love depart.

*Mosbie.* Why, what is love without true constancy? 90

Like to a pillar built of many stones,

Yet neither with good mortar well compact

Nor with cement to fasten it in the joints,

But that it shakes with every blast of wind,

And, being touched, straight falls unto the earth,

And buries all his haughty pride in dust.

No, let our love be rocks of adamant,

Which time nor place nor tempest can asunder.

*Greene.* Mosbie, leave protestations now,

And let us bethink us what we have to do. 100

Black Will and Shakebag I have placed i' the broom,

Close watching Arden's coming; let's to them

And see what they have done.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Kentish Coast opposite the Isle of Sheppy.*

*Here enters ARDEN and FRANKLIN.*

*Arden.* Oh, ferryman, where art thou?

*Here enters the Ferryman.*

*Ferryman.* Here, here, go before to the boat, and I will follow you.

*Arden.* We have great haste; I pray thee, come away.

*Ferryman.* Fie, what a mist is here!

*Arden.* This mist, my friend, is mystical,  
Like to a good companion's smoky brain,  
That was half drowned with new ale overnight. 110

*Ferryman.* 'Twere pity but his skull were opened to make more chimney room.

*Franklin.* Friend, what's thy opinion of this mist?

*Ferryman.* I think 'tis like to a curst wife in a little house, that never leaves her husband till she have driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes; then looks he as if his house were a-fire, or some of his friends dead.

*Arden.* Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

*Ferryman.* Perhaps, ay; perhaps, no: For my wife is as other women are, that is to say, governed by the moon. 120

*Franklin.* By the moon? how, I pray thee?

*Ferryman.* Nay, thereby lies a bargain, and you shall not have it fresh and fasting.

*Arden.* Yes, I pray thee, good ferryman.

*Ferryman.* Then for this once; let it be midsummer moon, but yet my wife has another moon.

*Franklin.* Another moon?

*Ferryman.* Ay, and it hath influences and eclipses.

*Arden.* Why, then, by this reckoning you sometimes play the man in the moon? 130

*Ferryman.* Ay, but you had not best to meddle with that moon, lest I scratch you by the face with my bramble-bush.

*Arden.* I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's away.

*Franklin.* And, sirrah, as we go, let us have some more of your bold yeomanry.

*Ferryman.* Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery. [*Exeunt.*]



SCENE III.—*Another place on the coast.*

*Here enters WILL at one door, and SHAKEBAG at another.*

*Shakebag.* Oh, Will, where art thou?

*Will.* Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth, where I cannot see my way for smoke.

*Shakebag.* I pray thee speak still that we may meet by the sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other, unless my feet see better than my eyes. 142

*Will.* Didst thou ever see better weather to run away with another man's wife, or play with a wench at pot finger?

*Shakebag.* No; this were a fine world for chandlers, if this weather would last; for then a man should never dine nor sup without candle-light. But, sirrah Will, what horses are those that passed?

*Will.* Why, didst thou hear any?

*Shakebag.* Ay, that I did. 150

*Will.* My life for thine, 'twas Arden, and his companion, and then all our labour's lost.

*Shakebag.* Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may haply lose their way as we have done, and then we may chance meet with them.

*Will.* Come, let us go on like a couple of blind pilgrims.

*[Then Shakebag falls into a ditch.]*

*Shakebag.* Help, Will, help, I am almost drowned.

*Here enters the Ferryman.*

*Ferryman.* Who's that that calls for help?

*Will.* 'Twas none here, 'twas thou thyself.

*Ferryman.* I came to help him that called for help. 160

Why, how now? who is this that's in the ditch?

You are well enough served to go without a guide such weather as this.

*Will.* Sirrah, what companies hath passed your ferry this morning?

*Ferryman.* None but a couple of gentlemen, that went to dine at my Lord Cheiny's.

*Will.* Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much?

*Ferryman.* Why, sir, will you have any letters carried to them?

*Will.* No, sir; get you gone.

*Ferryman.* Did you ever see such a mist as this? 170

*Will.* No, nor such a fool as will rather be hought than get his way.

*Ferryman.* Why, sir, this is no Hough-Monday; you are deceived.  
—What's his name, I pray you, sir?

*Shakebag.* His name is Black Will.

*Ferryman.* I hope to see him one day hanged upon a hill.

[*Exit Ferryman.*]

*Shakebag.* See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,  
Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

*Here enters GREENE, MOSBIE, and ALICE.*

*Mosbie.* Black Will and Shakebag, what make you here? 180  
What, is the deed done? is Arden dead?

*Will.* What could a blinded man perform in arms?  
Saw you not how till now the sky was dark,  
That neither horse nor man could be discerned?  
Yet did we hear their horses as they passed.

*Greene.* Have they escaped you, then, and passed the ferry?

*Shakebag.* Ay, for a while; but here we two will stay,  
And at their coming back meet with them once more.  
Zounds, I was ne'er so toiled in all my life  
In following so slight a task as this. 190

*Mosbie.* How cam'st thou so berayed?

*Will.* With making false footing in the dark;  
He needs would follow them without a guide.

*Alice.* Here's to pay for a fire and good cheer:  
Get you to Feversham to the Flower-de-luce,  
And rest yourselves until some other time.

*Greene.* Let me alone; it most concerns my state.

*Will.* Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn,  
In case we fall into a second fog.

[*Exeunt Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*]

*Mosbie.* These knaves will never do it, let us give it over. 200

*Alice.* First tell me how you like my new device:  
Soon, when my husband is returning back,  
You and I both marching arm in arm,  
Like loving friends, we'll meet him on the way,  
And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.  
When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,

I'll call those cutters forth your tenement,  
 Who, in a manner to take up the fray,  
 Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

*Mosbie.* A fine device! why, this deserves a kiss. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—*The open country.*

*Here enters DICK REEDE and a Sailor.*

*Sailor.* Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end:  
 His conscience is too liberal, and he too niggardly  
 To part from any thing may do thee good. 211

*Reede.* He is coming from Shorlow as I understand;  
 Here I'll intercept him, for at his house  
 He never will vouchsafe to speak with me.  
 If prayers and fair entreaties will not serve,  
 Or make no battery in his flinty breast,

*Here enters FRANKLIN, ARDEN, and MICHAEL.*

I'll curse the carle, and see what that will do.  
 See where he comes to further my intent!— 220  
 Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea;  
 My coming to you was about the plat  
 Of ground which wrongfully you detain from me.  
 Although the rent of it be very small,  
 Yet it will help my wife and children,  
 Which here I leave in Feversham, God knows,  
 Needy and bare: for Christ's sake, let them have it!

*Arden.* Franklin, hearest thou this fellow speak?  
 That which he craves I dearly bought of him,  
 Although the rent of it was ever mine.— 230  
 Sirrah, you that ask these questions,  
 If with thy clamorous impeaching tongue  
 Thou rail on me, as I have heard thou dost,  
 I'll lay thee up so close a twelve-month's day,  
 As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon.  
 Look to it, for, as surely as I live,  
 I'll banish pity if thou use me thus.

*Reede.* What, wilt thou do me wrong and threat me too,  
 Nay, then, I'll tempt thee, Arden, do thy worst.



God, I beseech thee, show some miracle  
 On thee or thine, in plaguing thee for this. 240  
 That plot of ground which thou detains from me,  
 I speak it in an agony of spirit,  
 Be ruinous and fatal unto thee!  
 Either there be butchered by thy dearest friends,  
 Or else be brought for men to wonder at,  
 Or thou or thine miscarry in that place,  
 Or there run mad and end thy cursèd days!

*Franklin.* Fie, bitter knave, bridle thine envious tongue;  
 For curses are like arrows shot upright, 250  
 Which falling down light on the shooter's head.

*Reede.* Light where they will! Were I upon the sea,  
 As oft I have in many a bitter storm,  
 And saw a dreadful southern flaw at hand,  
 The pilot quaking at the doubtful storm,  
 And all the sailors praying on their knees,  
 Even in that fearful time would I fall down,  
 And ask of God, whate'er betide of me,  
 Vengeance on Arden or some misevent  
 To show the world what wrong the carle hath done. 260  
 This charge I'll leave with my distressful wife,  
 My children shall be taught such prayers as these;  
 And thus I go, but leave my curse with thee.

[*Exeunt Reede and Sailor.*]

*Arden.* It is the railingest knave in Christendom,  
 And oftentimes the villain will be mad;  
 It greatly matters not what he says,  
 But I assure you I ne'er did him wrong.

*Franklin.* I think so, Master Arden.

*Arden.* Now that our horses are gone home before,  
 My wife may haply meet me on the way. 270  
 For God knows she is grown passing kind of late,  
 And greatly changed from  
 The old humour of her wonted frowardness,  
 And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

*Franklin.* Happy the change that alters for the best!  
 But see in any case you make no speech  
 Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny's,  
 Although most bounteous and liberal,  
 For that will make her think herself more wronged,  
 In that we did not carry her along; 280

For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

*Arden.* Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace,  
And take her unawares playing the cook;

*Here enters ALICE and MOSBIE.*

For I believe she'll strive to mend our cheer.

*Franklin.* Why, there's no better creatures in the world,  
Than women are when they are in good humours.

*Arden.* Who is that? Mosbie? what, so familiar?

Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,  
Untwine those arms.

*Alice.* Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine.

290

*Arden.* Ah, Mosbie! perjured beast! bear this and all!

*Mosbie.* And yet no horned beast; the horns are thine.

*Franklin.* O monstrous! Nay, then it is time to draw.

*Alice.* Help, help! they murder my husband.

*Here enters WILL and SHAKEBAG.*

*Shakebag.* Zounds, who injures Master Mosbie? Help, Will!  
I am hurt.

*Mosbie.* I may thank you, Mistress Arden, for this wound.

*[Exeunt Mosbie, Will, and Shakebag.]*

*Alice.* Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?

Ah, jealous harebrained man, what hast thou done!

When we, to welcome thee with intended sport,

Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,

300

Thou drew'st thy sword, enraged with jealousy,

And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from harm:

All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,

Both done but merrily to try thy patience.

And me unhappy that devised the jest,

Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood!

*Franklin.* Marry, God defend me from such a jest!

*Alice.* Could'st thou not see us friendly smile on thee,

When we joined arms, and when I kissed his cheek?

Hast thou not lately found me over-kind?

310

Did'st thou not hear me cry "they murder thee"?

Called I not help to set my husband free?

No, ears and all were witch'd; ah me accursed

To link in liking with a frantic man!

Henceforth I'll be thy slave, no more thy wife,  
 For with that name I never shall content thee.  
 If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light;  
 If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me;  
 If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding;  
 If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye:  
 Thus am I still, and shall be while I die.  
 Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment!

320

*Arden.* But is it for truth that neither thou nor he  
 Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour?

*Alice.* The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts.

*Arden.* Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this fault!  
 Forget but this and never see the like.  
 Impose me penance, and I will perform it,  
 For in thy discontent I find a death,—  
 A death tormenting more than death itself.

330

*Alice.* Nay, had'st thou loved me as thou dost pretend,  
 Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy friend,  
 Who going wounded from the place, he said  
 His skin was pierced only through my device;  
 And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault,  
 Thou would'st have followed him, and seen him dressed,  
 And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdome:  
 Ne'er shall my heart be eased till this be done.

*Arden.* Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy will,  
 Whate'er it be. For that I injured thee,  
 And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my offence;  
 Come thou thyself, and go along with me,  
 And be a mediator 'twixt us two.

340

*Franklin.* Why, Master Arden! know you what you do?  
 Will you follow him that hath dishonoured you?

*Alice.* Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal?

*Franklin.* Why, Mosbie taunted your husband with the horn.

*Alice.* Ay, after he had reviled him

By the injurious name of perjured beast:  
 He knew no wrong could spite a jealous man  
 More than the hateful naming of the horn.

350

*Franklin.* Suppose 'tis true; yet is it dangerous  
 To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.

*Alice.* A fault confessed is more than half amends;  
 But men of such ill spirit as yourself  
 Work crosses and debates 'twixt man and wife.



*Arden.* I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace:  
I know my wife counsels me for the best.  
I'll seek out Mosbie where his wound is dressed,  
And salve this hapless quarrel if I may.

360

[*Exeunt Arden and Alice.*]

*Franklin.* He whom the devil drives must go perforce.  
Poor gentleman, how soon he is bewitched!  
And yet, because his wife is the instrument,  
His friends must not be lavish in their speech.

[*Exit Franklin.*]

## ACT V

### SCENE I.—*A Street in Feversham.*

*Here enters WILL, SHAKEBAG, and GREENE.*

*Will.* Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a man?

*Greene.* I think we shall never do it; let us give it over.

*Shakebag.* Nay, Zounds! we'll kill him, though we be hanged at his door for our labour.

*Will.* Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived in London this twelve years, where I have made some go upon wooden legs for taking the wall on me; divers with silver noses for saying "There goes Black Will!" I have cracked as many blades as thou hast nuts.

*Greene.* O monstrous lie!

10

*Will.* Faith, in a manner I have. The bawdy-houses have paid me tribute; there durst not a whore set up, unless she have agreed with me first for opening her shop-windows. For a cross word of a tapster I have pierced one barrel after another with my dagger, and held him by the ears till all his beer hath run out. In Thames Street a brewer's cart was like to have run over me: I made no more ado, but went to the clerk and cut all the notches of his tallies and beat them about his head. I and my company have taken the constable from his watch, and carried him about the fields on a coltstaff. I have broken a sergeant's head with his own mace, and bailed whom I list with my sword and buckler. All the tenpenny-alehouses-men would stand every morning with a quart-pot in their hand, saying, "Will it please your worship drink?" He that had not done so, had been sure to have had his sign pulled down and his lattice borne away the next night. To conclude, what have I not done? yet cannot do this; doubtless, he is preserved by miracle.

*Here enters ALICE and MICHAEL.*

*Greene.* Hence, Will! here comes Mistress Arden.

*Alice.* Ah, gentle Michael, art thou sure they're friends?

30

*Michael.* Why, I saw them when they both shook hands.

When Mosbie bled, he even wept for sorrow,  
And railed on Franklin that was cause of all.

No sooner came the surgeon in at doors,

But my master took to his purse and gave him money,

And, to conclude, sent me to bring you word

That Mosbie, Franklin, Bradshaw, Adam Fowle,

With divers of his neighbours and his friends,

Will come and sup with you at our house this night. 40

*Alice.* Ah, gentle Michael, run thou back again,

And, when my husband walks into the fair,

Bid Mosbie steal from him and come to me;

And this night shall thou and Susan be made sure.

*Michael.* I'll go tell him.

*Alice.* And as thou goest, tell John cook of our guests,

And bid him lay it on, spare for no cost. [*Exit Michael.*]

*Will.* Nay, and there be such cheer, we will bid ourselves.—

Mistress Arden, Dick Greene and I do mean to sup with you.

*Alice.* And welcome shall you be. Ah, gentlemen, 50

How missed you of your purpose yesternight?

*Greene.* 'Twas 'long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain.

*Shakebag.* Thou dost me wrong; I did as much as any.

*Will.* Nay then, Mistress Arden, I'll tell you how it was:

When he should have locked with both his hilts,

He in a bravery flourished o'er his head;

With that comes Franklin at him lustily,

And hurts the slave; with that he slinks away.

Now his way had been to have come hand and feet, one  
and two round, at his costard; he like a fool bears his  
sword-point half a yard out of danger. I lie here for my  
life; if the devil come, and he have no more strength than I  
have fence, he shall never beat me from this ward, I'll stand  
to it; a buckler in a skilful hand is as good as a castle; nay,  
'tis better than a sconce, for I have tried it. 65

Mosbie, perceiving this, began to faint:

With that comes Arden with his arming sword,

And thrust him through the shoulder in a trice.

*Alice.* Ay, but I wonder why you both stood still.

*Will.* Faith, I was so amazed, I could not strike. 70

*Alice.* Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,

For every drop of his detested blood

I would have crammed in angels in thy fist,



And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms.

*Will.* Patient yourself, we cannot help it now.

Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,  
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.

*Here enters MOSBIE.*

*Alice.* It is impossible; but here comes he

That will, I hope, invent some surer means.

Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

80

*Mosbie.* Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour.

*Alice.* Ah, say not so; for when I saw thee hurt,

I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall,

And run at Arden; for I have sworn

That these mine eyes, offended with his sight,

Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.

This night I rose and walked about the chamber,

And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered him.

*Mosbie.* What, in the night? then had we been undone.

*Alice.* Why, how long shall he live?

90

*Mosbie.* Faith, Alice, no longer than this night.—

Black Will and Shakebag, will you two perform

The complot that I have laid?

*Will.* Ay, or else think me a villain.

*Greene.* And rather than you shall want, I'll help myself.

*Mosbie.* You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth,

And hold him with a long tale of strange news,

That he may not come home till supper-time.

I'll fetch Master Arden home, and we like friends

Will play a game or two at tables here.

100

*Alice.* But what of all this? how shall he be slain?

*Mosbie.* Why, Black Will and Shakebag locked within the  
counting-house

Shall at a certain watchword given rush forth.

*Will.* What shall the watchword be?

*Mosbie.* "Now I take you"; that shall be the word:

But come not forth before in any case.

*Will.* I warrant you. But who shall lock me in?

*Alice.* That will I do; thou'st keep the key thyself.

*Mosbie.* Come, Master Greene, go you along with me.

See all things ready, Alice, against we come.

110

*Alice.* Take no care for that; send you him home.

[*Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.*]

And if he e'er go forth again, blame me.  
 Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair;  
 Next unto Mosbie do I honour thee;  
 Instead of fair words and large promises  
 My hands shall play you golden harmony:  
 How like you this? say, will you do it, sirs?

*Will.* Ay, and that bravely, too. Mark my device:  
 Place Mosbie, being a stranger, in a chair,  
 And let your husband sit upon a stool,  
 That I may come behind him cunningly,  
 And with a towel pull him to the ground,  
 Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve;  
 That done, bear him behind the Abbey,  
 That those that find him murdered may suppose  
 Some slave or other killed him for his gold.

120

*Alice.* A fine device! you shall have twenty pound,  
 And, when he is dead, you shall have forty more,  
 And, lest you might be suspected staying here,  
 Michael shall saddle you two lusty geldings;  
 Ride whither you will, to Scotland, or to Wales,  
 I'll see you shall not lack, where'er you be.

130

*Will.* Such words would make one kill a thousand men!  
 Give me the key: which is the counting-house?

*Alice.* Here would I stay and still encourage you;  
 But that I know how resolute you are.

*Shakebag.* Tush, you are too faint-hearted; we must do it.

*Alice.* But Mosbie will be there, whose very looks  
 Will add unwonted courage to my thought,  
 And make me the first that shall adventure on him. 140

*Will.* Tush, get you gone; 'tis we must do the deed.  
 When this door opens next, look for his death.

[*Exeunt Will and Shakebag.*]

*Alice.* Ah, would he now were here that it might open!  
 I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,  
 That like the snakes of black Tisiphone  
 Sting me with their embracings! Mosbie's arms  
 Shall compass me, and, were I made a star,  
 I would have none other spheres but those.  
 There is no nectar but in Mosbie's lips!  
 Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me  
 Would grow love-sick, and from her watery bower  
 Fling down Endymion and snatch him up:

150

Then blame not me that slay a silly man  
Not half so lovely as Endymion.

*Here enters MICHAEL.*

*Michael.* Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

*Alice.* Who comes with him?

*Michael.* Nobody but Mosbie.

*Alice.* That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables, and when  
thou hast done, stand before the counting-house door.

*Michael.* Why so? 160

*Alice.* Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

*Michael.* What? shall he die to-night?

*Alice.* Ay, Michael.

*Michael.* But shall not Susan know it?

*Alice.* Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves.

*Michael.* That's brave. I'll go fetch the tables.

*Alice.* But, Michael, hark to me a word or two:

When my husband is come in, lock the street-door;  
He shall be murdered, or the guests come in.

*[Exit Michael.]*

*Here enters ARDEN and MOSBIE.*

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home? 170

Although I wished you to be reconciled,  
'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.

Black Will and Greene are his companions,  
And they are cutters, and may cut you short:  
Therefore I thought it good to make you friends.

But wherefore do you bring him hither now?

You have given me my supper with his sight.

*Mosbie.* Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

*Arden.* No, good master Mosbie; women will be prating.

Alice, bid him welcome; he and I are friends. 180

*Alice.* You may enforce me to it, if you will;

But I had rather die than bid him welcome.

His company hath purchased me ill friends,  
And therefore will I ne'er frequent it more.

*Mosbie.* —Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble!

*Arden.* Now he is here, you will not serve me so.

*Alice.* I pray you be not angry or displeas'd;

I'll bid him welcome, seeing you'll have it so.

You are welcome, Master Mosbie; will you sit down?



- Mosbie.* I know I am welcome to your loving husband; 190  
But for yourself, you speak not from your heart.
- Alice.* And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.
- Mosbie.* Pardon me, Master Arden; I'll away.
- Arden.* No, good Master Mosbie.
- Alice.* We shall have guests enough, though you go hence.
- Mosbie.* I pray you, Master Arden, let me go.
- Arden.* I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.
- Alice.* The doors are open, sir, you may be gone.
- Michael.* —Nay, that's a lie, for I have locked the doors.
- Arden.* Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine, I'll make them friends.  
And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout, 201  
You shall begin! frown not, I'll have it so.
- Alice.* I pray you meddle with that you have to do.
- Arden.* Why, Alice! how can I do too much for him  
Whose life I have endangered without cause?
- Alice.* 'Tis true; and, seeing 'twas partly through my means,  
I am content to drink to him for this once.  
Here, Master Mosbie! and I pray you, henceforth  
Be you as strange to me as I to you.  
Your company hath purchased me ill friends, 210  
And I for you, God knows, have undeserved  
Been ill spoken of in every place;  
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.
- Mosbie.* I'll see your husband in despite of you.  
Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven,  
Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night,  
I'll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.
- Arden.* Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.
- Alice.* Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear;  
And, on that condition, Mosbie, pledge me here. 220
- Mosbie.* Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.
- Arden.* Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?
- Alice.* It will by then you have played a game at tables.
- Arden.* Come, Master Mosbie, what shall we play for?
- Mosbie.* Three games for a French crown, sir, and please you.
- Arden.* Content.  
[Then they play at the tables. Enter Will and Shakebag.]
- Will.* —Can he not take him yet? what a spite is that?
- Alice.* —Not yet, Will; take heed he see thee not.
- Will.* —I fear he will spy me as I am coming.
- Michael.* —To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs. 230

*Mosbie.* One ace, or else I lose the game.

*Arden.* Marry, sir, there's two for failing.

*Mosbie.* Ah, Master Arden, "now I can take you."

[*Then Will pulls him down with a towel.*]

*Arden.* Mosbie! Michael! Alice! what will you do?

*Will.* Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else.

*Mosbie.* There's for the pressing iron you told me of.

[*Stabs him.*]

*Shakebag.* And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve.

[*Stabs him.*]

*Alice.* What! groans thou? nay, then give me the weapon!

Take this for hindering Mosbie's love and mine.

[*She stabs him.*]

*Michael.* O, mistress!

240

*Will.* Ah, that villain will betray us all.

*Mosbie.* Tush, fear him not; he will be secret.

*Michael.* Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?

*Shakebag.* In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,

The widow Chambly; I'll to her house now,

And if she will not give me harborough,

I'll make booty of the quean even to her smock.

*Will.* Shift for yourselves; we two will leave you now.

*Alice.* First lay the body in the counting-house.

[*Then they lay the body in the Counting-house.*]

*Will.* We have our gold; Mistress Alice, adieu;

250

Mosbie, farewell, and Michael, farewell too.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter SUSAN.*

*Susan.* Mistress, the guests are at the doors.

Hearken, they knock: what, shall I let them in?

*Alice.* Mosbie, go thou and bear them company. [*Exit Mosbie.*]

And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.

*Susan.* The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.

*Alice.* But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood;—

The more I strive, the more the blood appears!

*Susan.* What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell?

*Alice.* Because I blush not at my husband's death.

260

*Here enters MOSBIE.*

*Mosbie.* How now? what's the matter? is all well?

*Alice.* Ay, well, if Arden were alive again.

In vain we strive, for here his blood remains.

*Mosbie.* Why, strew rushes on it, can you not?

This wench doth nothing: fall unto the work.

*Alice.* 'Twas thou that made me murder him.

*Mosbie.* What of that?

*Alice.* Nay, nothing, *Mosbie*, so it be not known.

*Mosbie.* Keep thou it close, and 'tis impossible.

*Alice.* Ah, but I cannot! was he not slain by me?

270

My husband's death torments me at the heart.

*Mosbie.* It shall not long torment thee, gentle *Alice*;

I am thy husband, think no more of him.

*Here enters ADAM FOWLE and BRADSHAW.*

*Bradshaw.* How now, Mistress *Arden*? what ail you weep?

*Mosbie.* Because her husband is abroad so late.

A couple of ruffians threatened him yesternight,

And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.

*Adam.* Is't nothing else? tush, he'll be here anon.

*Here enters GREENE.*

*Greene.* Now, Mistress *Arden*, lack you any guests?

*Alice.* Ah, Master *Greene*, did you see my husband lately?

280

*Greene.* I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.

*Here enters FRANKLIN.*

*Alice.* I do not like this being out so late.—

Master *Franklin*, where did you leave my husband?

*Franklin.* Believe me I saw him not since morning.

Fear you not, he'll come anon; meantime

You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

*Alice.* Ay, so they shall; Master *Bradshaw*, sit you there;

I pray you, be content, I'll have my will.

Master *Mosbie*, sit you in my husband's seat.

*Michael.* —Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?

290

Or, an thou sayest the word, let us sit down too.

*Susan.* —Peace, we have other matters now in hand.

I fear me, *Michael*, all will be bewrayed.

*Michael.* —Tush, so it be known that I shall marry thee in the morning, I care not though I be hanged ere night. But to prevent the worst, I'll buy some ratsbane.

*Susan.* —Why, *Michael*, wilt thou poison thyself?



*Michael.* —No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll tell.

*Susan.* —Tush, Michael; fear not her, she's wise enough.

*Mosbie.* Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer.—

300

Mistress Arden, here's to your husband.

*Alice.* My husband!

*Franklin.* What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly?

*Alice.* Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came o'er my heart;

My husband being forth torments my mind.

I know something's amiss, he is not well;

Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

*Mosbie.* —She will undo us through her foolishness.

*Greene.* Fear not, Mistress Arden, he's well enough.

*Alice.* Tell not me; I know he is not well:

310

He was not wont for to stay thus late.

Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,

And if you find him, send him home to me,

And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.

*Franklin.* —I like not this; I pray God all be well.

I'll seek him out, and find him if I can.

[*Exeunt Franklin, Mosbie, and Greene.*]

*Alice.* —Michael, how shall I do to rid the rest away?

*Michael.* —Leave that to my charge, let me alone.

'Tis very late, Master Bradshaw,

And there are many false knaves abroad,

320

And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

*Bradshaw.* Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.

Therefore I pray thee light's forth and lend's a link.

[*Exeunt Bradshaw, Adam, and Michael.*]

*Alice.* Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay;

You know I do not love to be alone.

—Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come:

But wherefore should he come? Here is nought but fear;

Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

*Susan.* Alas, I counsel! fear frights away my wits.

[*Then they open the counting-house door,  
and look upon Arden.*]

*Alice.* See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies,

330

Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

*Susan.* My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

*Alice.* Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,

And let our salt tears be his obsequies.

*Here enters MOSBIE and GREENE.*

*Mosbie.* Now now, Alice, whither will you bear him?

*Alice.* Sweet Mosbie, art thou come? Then weep that will:  
I have my wish in that I joy thy sight.

*Greene.* Well, it behoves us to be circumspect.

*Mosbie.* Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered him.

*Alice.* Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life. 34°  
We'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

*Here enters MICHAEL.*

*Michael.* O mistress, the Mayor and all the watch  
Are coming towards our house with glaives and bills.

*Alice.* Make the door fast; let them not come in.

*Mosbie.* Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape?

*Alice.* Out at the back-door, over the pile of wood,  
And for one night lie at the Flower-de-luce.

*Mosbie.* That is the next way to betray myself.

*Greene.* Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me here,  
And cause suspicion, where else would be none. 35°

*Alice.* Why, take that way that Master Mosbie doth;  
But first convey the body to the fields.

*[Then they bear the body into the fields.]*

*Mosbie.* Until to-morrow, sweet Alice, now farewell:  
And see you confess nothing in any case.

*Greene.* Be resolute, Mistress Alice, betray us not,  
But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

*[Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.]*

*Alice.* Now, let the judge and juries do their worst:  
My house is clear, and now I fear them not.

*Susan.* As we went, it snowed all the way,  
Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied. 36°

*Alice.* Peace, fool, the snow will cover them again.

*Susan.* But it had done before we came back again.

*Alice.* Hark, hark, they knock! go, Michael, let them in.

*Here enters the MAYOR and the Watch.*

How now, Master Mayor, have you brought my husband  
home?

*Mayor.* I saw him come into your house an hour ago.



*Alice.* You are deceived; it was a Londoner.

*Mayor.* Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called Black Will?

*Alice.* I know none such: what mean these questions?

*Mayor.* I have the Council's warrant to apprehend him.

*Alice.* —I am glad it is no worse.

370

Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such?

*Mayor.* We are informed that here he is;

And therefore pardon us, for we must search.

*Alice.* Ay, search, and spare you not, through every room:

Were my husband at home, you would not offer this.

*Here enters FRANKLIN.*

Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad?

*Franklin.* Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.

*Alice.* Ah, by whom? Master Franklin, can you tell?

*Franklin.* I know not; but behind the Abbey

There he lies murdered in most piteous case.

380

*Mayor.* But, Master Franklin, are you sure 'tis he?

*Franklin.* I am too sure; would God I were deceived.

*Alice.* Find out the murderers, let them be known.

*Franklin.* Ay, so they shall: come you along with us.

*Alice.* Wherefore?

*Franklin.* Know you this hand-towel and this knife?

*Susan.* —Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence

Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.

*Michael.* —I was so afraid I knew not what I did:

I thought I had thrown them both into the well.

390

*Alice.* It is the pig's blood we had to supper.

But wherefore stay you? find out the murderers.

*Mayor.* I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.

*Alice.* I one of them? what mean such questions?

*Franklin.* I fear me he was murdered in this house

And carried to the fields; for from that place

Backwards and forwards may you see

The print of many feet within the snow.

And look about this chamber where we are,

And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;

400

For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,

Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

*Mayor.* Look in the place where he was wont to sit.



See, see! his blood! it is too manifest.

*Alice.* It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.

*Michael.* Ay, truly.

*Franklin.* It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed.

But if I live, thou and thy 'complices

Which have conspired and wrought his death shall rue it.

*Alice.* Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell 410

I loved him more than all the world beside.

But bring me to him, let me see his body.

*Franklin.* Bring that villain and Mosbie's sister too;

And one of you go to the Flower-de-luce,

And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him too. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*An obscure street in London.*

*Here enters SHAKEBAG solus.*

*Shakebag.* The widow Chambly in her husband's days I kept;

And now he's dead, she is grown so stout

She will not know her old companions.

I came thither, thinking to have had harbour

As I was wont, 420

And she was ready to thrust me out at doors;

But whether she would or no, I got me up,

And as she followed me, I spurned her down the stairs,

And broke her neck, and cut her tapster's throat,

And now I am going to fling them in the Thames.

I have the gold; what care I though it be known!

I'll cross the water and take sanctuary. [Exit.

SCENE III.—*Arden's house at Feversham.*

*Here enters the MAYOR, MOSBIE, ALICE, FRANKLIN, MICHAEL,  
and SUSAN.*

*Mayor.* See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies;

Confess this foul fault and be penitent.

*Alice.* Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say? 430

The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds;

This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth

Speaks as it falls, and asks me why I did it.

Forgive me, Arden: I repent me now,

The one took sanctuary, and, being sent for out,  
Was murdered in Southwark as he passed  
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.  
Black Will was burned in Flushing on a stage;  
Greene was hanged at Osbridge in Kent;  
The painter fled and how he died we know not.  
But this above the rest is to be noted:  
Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground  
Which he by force and violence held from Reede;  
And in the grass his body's print was seen  
Two years and more after the deed was done.  
Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked tragedy,  
Wherein no filèd points are foisted in  
To make it gracious to the ear or eye;  
For simple truth is gracious enough,  
And needs no other points of glosing stuff.

510

[Exit.]

DAVID AND BETHSABE



*The love of King David and Fair Bethsabe. With the Tragedie of Absalon. As it hath ben diuers times plaied on the stage. Written by George Peele. London, Printed by Adam Islip. 1599. 4to.*

This play was reprinted by Hawkins in the second volume of *The Origin of the English Drama*, 1773; and, excepting one or two errors of the press, the text was, on the whole, accurately given. Octavius Gilchrist (*Letter to Gifford on Ford's Works*, p. 11), talks rather too contemptuously of Hawkins.

# DAVID AND BETHSABE

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DAVID.	ABIATHAR, <i>a priest.</i>
AMNON, <i>son of David by Ahinoam.</i>	JONATHAN, <i>his son.</i>
CHILEAB, <i>son of David by Abigail.</i>	ACHITOPHEL, <i>chief counsellor to Absalon.</i>
ABSALON, <i>son of David by Maacah.</i>	CUSAY.
ADONIA, <i>son of David by Haggith.</i>	ITHAY.
SALOMON, <i>son of David by Bethsabe.</i>	SEMEI.
JOAB, <i>captain of the host to David,</i>	JETHRAY.
ABISAI,	HANON, <i>King of Ammon.</i>
AMASA, <i>nephew of David and son of his sister Abigail; captain of the host to Absalon.</i>	MACHAAS, <i>King of Gath.</i>
JONADAB, <i>nephew of David and son of his brother Shimeah; friend to Amnon.</i>	Messenger, Soldiers, Shepherds, and Attendants.
URIAS, <i>husband of Bethsabe, and a warrior in David's army.</i>	THAMAR, <i>daughter of David by Maacah.</i>
NATHAN, <i>a prophet.</i>	BETHSABE, <i>wife of Urias.</i>
SADOC, <i>high-priest.</i> <sup>1</sup>	Woman of Thecoa.
AHIMAAS, <i>his son.</i>	Concubines to David.
	Maid to Bethsabe.
	Chorus.

## THE LOVE OF DAVID AND FAIR BETHSABE, WITH THE TRAGEDY OF ABSALON.

### PROLOGUS

Of Israel's sweetest singer now I sing,  
His holy style and happy victories;  
Whose Muse was dipt in that inspiring dew  
Arch-angels stillèd from the breath of Jove,<sup>2</sup>  
Decking her temples with the glorious flowers  
Heavens rain'd on tops of Sion and Mount Sinai.

<sup>1</sup> So he is described in the play, p. 157—

“Sadoc, high-priest, preserver of the ark,” etc.

The 4to gives no list of *Dram. Pers.*

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to—Jehovah. See note on Marlowe's *Works*, p. 80, ed. Dyce, 1858, and note on Shakespeare's *Works*, vol. iv. p. 203, ed. Dyce.

Upon the bosom of his ivory lute  
 The cherubins and angels laid their breasts;  
 And, when his consecrated fingers struck  
 The golden wires of his ravishing harp, 10  
 He gave alarum to the host of heaven,  
 That, wing'd with lightning, brake the clouds, and cast  
 Their crystal armour at his conquering feet.  
 Of this sweet poet, Jove's musician,  
 And of his beauteous son, I prease <sup>1</sup> to sing.  
 Then help, divine Adonai, to conduct  
 Upon the wings of my well-temper'd verse  
 The hearers' minds above the towers of heaven,  
 And guide them so in this thrice-haughty flight,  
 Their mounting feathers scorch not with the fire 20  
 That none can temper but thy holy hand:  
 To thee for succour flies my feeble Muse,  
 And at thy feet her iron pen doth use.

*The Prologue-speaker, before going out, draws a curtain and discovers BETHSABE, with her Maid, bathing over a spring: she sings, and DAVID sits above viewing her.*

THE SONG.

Hot sun, cool fire, temper'd with sweet air,  
 Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair:  
 Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease me;  
 Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me, and please me:  
 Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,  
 Make not my glad cause cause of [my] mourning.  
     Let not my beauty's fire 30  
     Inflame unstaid desire,  
     Nor pierce any bright eye  
     That wandereth lightly.

*Beth.* Come, gentle Zephyr, trick'd with those perfumes  
 That erst in Eden sweeten'd Adam's love,  
 And stroke my bosom with thy <sup>2</sup> silken fan:  
 This shade, sun-proof, is yet no proof for thee;  
 Thy body, smoother than this waveless spring,  
 And purer than the substance of the same,

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, press.

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "the."



Can creep through that his lances cannot pierce: 40  
 Thou, and thy sister, soft and sacred Air,  
 Goddess of life, and governess of health,  
 Keep every fountain fresh and arbour sweet;  
 No brazen gate her passage can repulse,  
 Nor bushy<sup>1</sup> thicket bar thy subtle breath:  
 Then deck thee with thy loose delightsome robes,  
 And on thy wings bring delicate perfumes,  
 To play the wanton<sup>2</sup> with us through the leaves.

*Dav.* What tunes, what words, what looks, what wonders pierce  
 My soul, incensèd with a sudden fire? 50  
 What tree, what shade, what spring, what paradise,  
 Enjoys the beauty of so fair a dame?  
 Fair Eva, plac'd in perfect happiness,  
 Lending her praise-notes to the liberal heavens,  
 Struck with the accents of arch-angels' tunes,  
 Wrought not more pleasure to her husband's thoughts  
 Than this fair woman's words and notes to mine.  
 May that sweet plain that bears her pleasant weight  
 Be still enamell'd with discolour'd<sup>3</sup> flowers;  
 That precious fount bear sand of purest gold; 60  
 And, for the pebble, let the silver streams  
 That pierce earth's bowels to maintain the source,  
 Play upon rubies, sapphires, chrysolites;  
 The brims let be embrac'd with golden curls  
 Of moss that sleeps with sound the waters make  
 For joy to feed the fount with their recourse;  
 Let all the grass that beautifies her bower  
 Bear manna every morn instead of dew,  
 Or let the dew be sweeter far than that  
 That hangs, like chains of pearl, on Hermon hill, 70  
 Or balm which trickled from old Aaron's beard.—  
 Cusay, come up, and serve thy lord the king.

*Enter CUSAY above.*

*Cu.* What service doth my lord the king command?

*Dav.* See, Cusay, see the flower of Israel,  
 The fairest daughter that obeys the king  
 In all the land the Lord subdu'd to me;

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "bushly."—Qy. "busky" = bosky?

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "wantons."

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.*, variously coloured.

Fairer than Isaac's lover at the well,  
 Brighter than inside-bark of new-hewn cedar,  
 Sweeter than flames of fine-perfumèd<sup>1</sup> myrrh,  
 And comelier than the silver clouds that dance  
 On Zephyr's<sup>2</sup> wings before the King of Heaven.

80

*Cu.* Is it not Bethsabe the Hethite's wife,  
 Urias, now at Rabbah<sup>3</sup> siege with Joab?

*Dav.* Go know, and bring her quickly to the king;  
 Tell her, her graces have found grace with him.

*Cu.* I will, my lord.

[Exit.

*Dav.* Bright Bethsabe shall wash, in David's bower,  
 In water mix'd with purest almond-flower,  
 And bathe her beauty in the milk of kids:  
 Bright Bethsabe gives earth to my desires;<sup>4</sup>  
 Verdure to earth; and to that verdure flowers;  
 To flowers sweet odours; and to odours wings  
 That carry pleasures to the hearts of kings.

90

*Enter CUSAY, below, to BETHSABE, she starting as something affright.*

*Cu.* Fair Bethsabe, the King of Israel  
 From forth his princely tower hath seen thee bathe;  
 And thy sweet graces have found grace with him:  
 Come, then, and kneel unto him where he stands;  
 The king is gracious, and hath liberal hands.

*Beth.* Ah, what is Bethsabe to please the king?  
 Or what is David, that he should desire,  
 For fickle beauty's sake, his servant's wife?

100

*Cu.* David, thou know'st, fair dame, is wise and just,  
 Elected to the heart of Israel's God;  
 Then do not thou expostulate with him  
 For any action that contents his soul.

*Beth.* My lord the king, elect to God's own heart,

<sup>1</sup> *England's Parnassus*, 1600 (where this passage is given, p. 397, under the head "Descriptions of Beauty and Personage"), "fire-perfumèd."

<sup>2</sup> *England's Parnassus*, "Zephyrus'."

<sup>3</sup> In the earlier part of our play the 4to spells the name of this city "Rabath."

<sup>4</sup> Here "earth" (in spite of the repetitions, "earth, earth"; "verdure, verdure"; "flowers, flowers"; "odours, odours") seems unintelligible: but assuredly the right reading is not "birth"—as Mr. Collier boldly asserts that it is, *Hist. of the Engl. Stage*, p. 34, note, *Shakespeare*, vol. i. ed. 1858.

Should not his gracious jealousy incense  
Whose thoughts are chaste: I hate incontinence.

*Cu.* Woman, thou wrong'st the king, and doubt'st his honour,  
Whose truth maintains the crown of Israel, 110  
Making him stay that bade me bring thee straight.

*Beth.* The king's poor handmaid will obey my lord.

*Cu.* Then come, and do thy duty to his grace;  
And do what seemeth favour in his sight.

[*Exit, below, with Bethsabe.*]

*Dav.* Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,  
And brings my longings tangled in her hair.  
To joy<sup>1</sup> her love I'll build a kingly bower,  
Seated in hearing of a hundred streams,  
That, for their homage to her sovereign joys,<sup>2</sup>  
Shall, as the serpents fold into their nests 120  
In oblique turnings, wind their<sup>3</sup> nimble waves  
About the circles of her curious walks;  
And with their murmur summon easeful sleep  
To lay his golden sceptre on her brows.—  
Open the doors, and entertain my love;  
Open, I say, and, as you open, sing,  
Welcome, fair Bethsabe, King David's darling.

*Enter, above, CUSAY, with BETHSABE.*

Welcome, fair Bethsabe, King David's darling.  
Thy bones' fair covering, erst discover'd fair,  
And all mine eyes<sup>4</sup> with all thy beauties pierc'd: 130  
As heaven's bright eye burns most when most he climbs  
The crookèd zodiac with his fiery sphere,  
And shineth furthest from this earthly globe;  
So, since thy beauty scorch'd my conquer'd soul,  
I call'd thee nearer for my nearer cure.

*Beth.* Too near, my lord, was your unarmèd heart  
When furthest off my hapless beauty pierc'd;  
And would this dreary day had turn'd to night,  
Or that some pitchy cloud had cloak'd the sun,

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, enjoy.

<sup>2</sup> Is not this an error originating in the word "joy" a little above? The sense seems to require "charms."

<sup>3</sup> Walker's correction, *Crit. Exam. of the text of Shakespeare*, etc., vol. ii. p. 231.—The 4to "the."

<sup>4</sup> To connect this with what precedes, a friend would read "Have all mine eyes," etc.: but the probability is, that a line has dropt out.



Before their lights had caus'd my lord to see  
His name disparag'd and my chastity! 140

*Dav.* My love, if want of love have left thy soul  
A sharper sense of honour than thy king,  
(For love leads princes sometimes from their seats,)  
As erst my heart was hurt, displeasing thee,  
So come and taste thy ease with easing me.

*Beth.* One medicine cannot heal our different harms;  
But rather make both rankle at the bone:  
Then let the king be cunning in his cure,  
Lest flattering both, both perish in his hand. 150

*Dav.* Leave it to me, my dearest Bethsabe,  
Whose skill is conversant in deeper cures.—  
And, Cusay, haste thou to my servant Joab,  
Commanding him to send Urias home  
With all the speed can possibly be us'd.

*Cu.* Cusay will fly about the king's desire. [Exeunt.]

*Enter JOAB, ABISAI, URIAS, and others, with drum and ensign.*

*Joab.* Courage, ye mighty men of Israel,  
And charge your fatal instruments of war  
Upon the bosoms of proud Ammon's sons,  
That have disguis'd your king's ambassadors, 160  
Cut half their beards and half their garments off,  
In spite of Israel and his daughters' sons!  
Ye fight the holy battles of Jehovah,  
King David's God, and ours, and Jacob's God,  
That guides your weapons to their conquering strokes,  
Orders your footsteps, and directs your thoughts  
To stratagems that harbour victory:  
He casts his sacred eyesight from on high,  
And sees your foes run seeking for their deaths,  
Laughing their labours and their hopes to scorn; 170  
While 'twixt your bodies and their blunted swords  
He puts on armour of his honour's proof,  
And makes their weapons wound the senseless winds.

*Abis.* Before this city Rabbah we will lie,  
And shoot forth shafts as thick and dangerous  
As was the hail that Moses mix'd with fire,  
And threw with fury round about the fields,  
Devouring Pharaoh's friends and Egypt's fruits.

*Ur.* First, mighty captains, Joab and Abisai,  
Let us assault, and scale this kingly tower, 180  
Where all their conduits and their fountains are;  
Then we may easily take the city too.

*Joab.* Well hath Urias counsell'd our attempts;  
And as he spake us, so assault the tower:  
Let Hanon now, the king of Ammon's sons,<sup>1</sup>  
Repulse our conquering passage if he dare.

*Enter HANON, MACHAAS, and others, upon the walls.*

*Ha.* What would the shepherd's-dogs of Israel  
Snatch from the mighty issue of King Ammon,  
The valiant Ammonites and haughty Syrians?  
'Tis not your late successive victories 190  
Can make us yield, or quail our courages;  
But if ye dare assay to scale this tower,  
Our angry swords shall smite ye to the ground,  
And venge our losses on your hateful lives.

*Joab.* Hanon, thy father Nahas gave relief  
To holy David in his hapless exile,  
Livèd his fixèd date, and died in peace:  
But thou, instead of reaping his reward,  
Hast trod it under foot, and scorn'd our king;  
Therefore thy days shall end with violence, 200  
And to our swords thy vital blood shall cleave.

*Mach.* Hence, thou that bear'st poor Israel's shepherd's-hook,  
The proud lieutenant of that base-born king,  
And keep within the compass of his fold;  
For, if ye seek to feed on Ammon's fruits,  
And stray into the Syrians' fruitful meads,  
The mastives of our land shall worry<sup>2</sup> ye,  
And pull the weesels<sup>3</sup> from your greedy throats.

*Abis.* Who can endure these pagans' blasphemies?

*Ur.* My soul repines at this disparagement. 210

*Joab.* Assault, ye valiant men of David's host,  
And beat these railing dastards from their doors.

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "sonne."—Compare the third line of Joab's first speech in this scene, and more particularly, line 431, page 140.

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "werry."

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.*, weasands. (This word is spelt by some of our old writers "wesils.")

*Assault, and they win the tower ; and then JOAB speaks above.*

Thus have we won the tower, which we will keep,  
Maugre the sons of Ammon and of Syria.

*Enter CUSAY below.*

*Cu.* Where is Lord Joab, leader of the host?

*Joab.* Here is Lord Joab, leader of the host.

Cusay, come up, for we have won the hold.

*Cu.* In happy hour,<sup>1</sup> then, is Cusay come.

*CUSAY goes up.*

*Joab.* What news, then, brings Lord Cusay from the king?

*Cu.* His majesty commands thee out of hand 220  
To send him home Urias from the wars,  
For matter of some service he should do.

*Ur.* 'Tis for no choler hath surpris'd the king,  
I hope, Lord Cusay, 'gainst his servant's truth?

*Cu.* No; rather to prefer Urias' truth.

*Joab.* Here, take him with thee, then, and go in peace;  
And tell my lord the king that I have fought  
Against the city Rabbah with success,  
And scalèd where the royal palace is, 230  
The conduit-heads and all their sweetest springs:  
Then let him come in person to these walls,  
With all the soldiers he can bring besides,  
And take the city as his own exploit,  
Lest I surprise it, and the people give  
The glory of the conquest to my name.

*Cu.* We will, Lord Joab; and great Israel's God  
Bless in thy hands the battles of our king!

*Joab.* Farewell, Urias; haste away the king.

*Ur.* As sure as Joab breathes a victor here,  
Urias will haste him and his own return. 240

[*Exeunt Cusay and Urias.*]

*Abis.* Let us descend, and ope the palace' gate,  
Taking our soldiers in to keep the hold.

*Joab.* Let us, Abisai:—and, ye sons of Judah,  
Be valiant, and maintain your victory. [*Exeunt.*]

<sup>1</sup> A dissyllable here (and so spelt in the 4to—"hower").



*Enter* AMNON,<sup>1</sup> JONADAB, JETHRAY, and AMNON'S Page.

*Jonad.* What means my lord, the king's belovèd son,  
That wears upon his right triumphant arm  
The power of Israel for a royal favour,  
That holds upon the tables of his hands  
Banquets of honour and all thought's content,  
To suffer pale and grisly abstinence  
To sit and feed upon his fainting cheeks,  
And suck away the blood that cheers his looks? 250

*Am.* Ah, Jonadab, it is my sister's looks,  
On whose sweet beauty I bestow my blood,  
That make me look so amorously lean;  
Her beauty having seiz'd upon my heart,  
So merely<sup>2</sup> consecrate to her content,  
Sets now such guard about his vital blood,  
And views the passage with such piercing eyes,  
That none can scape to cheer my pining cheeks,  
But all is thought too little for her love. 260

*Jonad.* Then from her heart thy looks shall be reliev'd,  
And thou shalt joy<sup>3</sup> her as thy soul desires.

*Am.* How can it be, my sweet friend Jonadab,  
Since Thamar is a virgin and my sister?

*Jonad.* Thus it shall be: lie down upon thy bed,  
Feigning thee fever-sick and ill-at-ease;  
And when the king shall come to visit thee,  
Desire thy sister Thamar may be sent  
To dress some dainties for thy malady: 270  
Then when thou hast her solely with thyself,  
Enforce some favour to thy manly love.  
See where she comes: entreat her in with thee.

*Enter* THAMAR.

*Tha.* What aileth Amnon, with such sickly looks  
To daunt the favour<sup>4</sup> of his lovely face?

*Am.* Sweet Thamar, sick, and wish some wholesome cates  
Dress'd with the cunning of thy dainty hands.

<sup>1</sup> The 4to throughout "Ammon."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, wholly, absolutely.—The 4to "merrily."

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, enjoy.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, beauty.

*Tha.* That hath the king commanded at my hands:  
 Then come and rest thee, while I make thee ready  
 Some dainties easeful to thy crazèd soul. 280  
*Am.* I go, sweet sister, easèd with thy sight.

[*Exeunt Thamar, Amnon, Jethray, and Page.*]

*Jonad.* Why should a prince, whose power may command,  
 Obey the rebel passions of his love,  
 When they contend but 'gainst his conscience,  
 And may be govern'd or suppress'd by will?  
 Now, Amnon, loose those loving knots of blood,  
 That suck'd the courage from thy kingly heart,  
 And give it passage to thy wither'd cheeks.  
 Now, Thamar, ripen'd are the holy fruits  
 That grew on plants of thy virginity; 290  
 And rotten is thy name in Israel:  
 Poor Thamar, little did thy lovely hands  
 Foretell an action of such violence  
 As to contend with Amnon's lusty arms  
 Sinew'd with vigour of his kindless<sup>1</sup> love:  
 Fair Thamar, now dishonour hunts thy foot,  
 And follows thee through every covert shade,  
 Discovering thy shame and nakedness,  
 Even from the valleys of Jehosaphat  
 Up to the lofty mounts of Lebanon; 300  
 Where cedars, stirr'd with anger of the winds,  
 Sounding in storms the tale of thy disgrace,  
 Tremble with fury, and with murmur shake  
 Earth with their feet and with their heads the heavens,  
 Beating the clouds into their swiftest rack,<sup>2</sup>  
 To bear this wonder round about the world. [*Exit.*]

*Re-enter AMNON thrusting out THAMAR, and JETHRAY.*

*Am.* Hence from my bed, whose sight offends my soul  
 As doth the parbreak<sup>3</sup> of disgorgèd bears!  
*Tha.* Unkind, unprincely, and unmanly Amnon,  
 To force, and then refuse<sup>4</sup> thy sister's love, 310  
 Adding unto the fright of thy offence

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, unnatural.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, moving masses of vapour. "The winds in the upper region which move the clouds above (which we call the *rack*)," etc.—Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum, or A Naturall Historie*, § 115, p. 32, ed. 1658.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, vomit.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, reject.

The baneful torment of my publish'd shame!  
 O, do not this dishonour to thy love,  
 Nor clog thy soul with such increasing sin!  
 This second evil far exceeds the first.

*Am.* Jethray, come thrust this woman from my sight,  
 And bolt the door upon her if she strive. [Exit.

*Jeth.* Go, madam, go; away; you must be gone;  
 My lord hath done with you: I pray, depart.  
[Shuts her out.—Exit.

*Tha.* Whither, alas, ah, whither shall I fly, 320  
 With folded arms and all-amazèd soul?  
 Cast as was Eva from that glorious soil,  
 (Where all delights sat bating, wing'd with thoughts,  
 Ready to nestle in her naked breasts,)  
 To bare and barren vales with floods made waste,  
 To desert woods, and hills with lightning scorch'd,  
 With death, with shame, with hell, with horror sit;<sup>1</sup>  
 There will I wander from my father's face;  
 There Absalon, my brother Absalon,  
 Sweet Absalon shall hear his sister mourn; 330  
 There will I lure<sup>2</sup> with my windy sighs  
 Night-ravens and owls to rend my bloody side,  
 Which with a rusty weapon I will wound,  
 And make them passage to my panting heart.  
 Why talk'st thou, wretch, and leav'st the deed undone?  
 Rend hair and garments, as thy heart is rent  
 With inward fury of a thousand griefs,  
 And scatter them by these unhallow'd doors,  
 To figure Amnon's resting cruelty,  
 And tragic spoil of Thamar's chastity. 340

*Enter ABSALON.*

*Abs.* What causeth Thamar to exclaim so much?

*Tha.* The cause that Thamar shameth to disclose.

*Abs.* Say; I thy brother will revenge that cause.

*Tha.* Amnon, our father's son, hath forcèd me,  
 And thrusts me from him as the scorn of Israel.

*Abs.* Hath Amnon forcèd thee? by David's hand,  
 And by the covenant God hath made with him,

<sup>1</sup> An error, I believe: but *qy.* as to the right reading?

<sup>2</sup> Lure is here a dissyllable. The 4<sup>to</sup> "liue."



Amnon shall bear his violence to hell;  
 Traitor to heaven, traitor to David's throne,  
 Traitor to Absalon and Israel.

350

This fact hath Jacob's ruler seen from heaven,  
 And through a cloud of smoke and tower of fire,  
 As he rides vaunting him upon the greens,  
 Shall tear his chariot-wheels with violent winds,  
 And throw his body in the bloody sea;  
 At him the thunder shall discharge his bolt;  
 And his fair spouse, with bright and fiery wings,<sup>1</sup>  
 Sit ever burning on his hateful bones:

Myself, as swift as thunder or his spouse,  
 Will hunt occasion with a secret hate,  
 To work false Amnon an ungracious end.—

360

Go in, my sister; rest thee in my house;  
 And God in time shall take this shame from thee.

*Tha.* Nor God nor time will do that good for me.

[*Exit.*

*Enter DAVID with his train.*

*Dav.* My Absalon, what mak'st thou here alone,  
 And bear'st such discontentment in thy brows?

*Abs.* Great cause hath Absalon to be displeas'd,  
 And in his heart to shroud the wounds of wrath.

*Dav.* 'Gainst whom should Absalon be thus displeas'd?

*Abs.* 'Gainst wicked Amnon, thy ungracious son,  
 My brother and fair Thamar's by the king,  
 My step-brother by mother and by kind:<sup>2</sup>  
 He hath dishonour'd David's holiness,  
 And fix'd a blot of lightness on his throne,  
 Forcing my sister Thamar when he feign'd  
 A sickness, sprung from root of heinous lust.

370

*Dav.* Hath Amnon brought this evil on my house,  
 And suffer'd sin to smite his father's bones?  
 Smite, David, deadlier than the voice of heaven,  
 And let hate's fire be kindled in thy heart:  
 Frame in the arches of thy angry brows,  
 Making thy forehead, like a comet, shine,  
 To force false Amnon tremble at thy looks.

380

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins (Preface to *The Origin of the English Drama*, vol. i. p. 11) thinks this "a metaphor worthy of Æschylus."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, nature.

Sin, with his sevenfold crown and purple robe,  
 Begins his triumphs in my guilty throne;  
 There sits he watching with his hundred eyes  
 Our idle minutes and our wanton thoughts;  
 And with his baits, made of our frail desires,  
 Gives us the hook that hales our souls to hell:  
 But with the spirit of my kingdom's God  
 I'll thrust the flattering tyran<sup>1</sup> from his throne,  
 And scourge his bondslaves from my hallow'd court  
 With rods of iron and thorns of sharpen'd steel.  
 Then, Absalon, revenge not thou this sin;  
 Leave it to me, and I will chasten him.

390

*Abs.* I am content: then grant, my lord the king,  
 Himself with all his other lords would come  
 Up to my sheep-feast on the plain of Hazor.

*Dav.* Nay, my fair son, myself with all my lords  
 Will bring thee too much charge; yet some shall go. 400

*Abs.* But let my lord the king himself take pains;  
 The time of year is pleasant for your grace,  
 And gladsome summer in her shady robes,  
 Crownèd with roses and with painted<sup>2</sup> flowers,  
 With all her nymphs, shall entertain my lord,  
 That, from the thicket of my verdant groves,  
 Will sprinkle honey-dews about his breast,  
 And cast sweet balm upon his kingly head:  
 Then grant thy servant's boon, and go, my lord.

*Dav.* Let it content my sweet son Absalon,  
 That I may stay, and take my other lords. 410

*Abs.* But shall thy best-belovèd Amnon go?

*Dav.* What needeth it, that Amnon go with thee?

*Abs.* Yet do thy son and servant so much grace.

*Dav.* Amnon shall go, and all my other lords,  
 Because I will give grace to Absalon.

*Enter CUSAY and URIAS, with others.*

*Cu.* Pleaseth my lord the king, his servant Joab  
 Hath sent Urias from the Syrian wars.

*Dav.* Welcome, Urias, from the Syrian wars,  
 Welcome to David as his dearest lord.

420

<sup>1</sup> Tyran, for *tyrant*, is a form frequently used by our old poets.

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "planted."

*Ur.* Thanks be to Israel's God and David's grace,  
Urias finds such greeting with the king.

*Dav.* No other greeting shall Urias find  
As long as David sways th' elected seat  
And consecrated throne of Israel.  
Tell me, Urias, of my servant Joab;  
Fights he with truth the battles of our God,  
And for the honour of the Lord's anointed?

*Ur.* Thy servant Joab fights the chosen wars  
With truth, with honour, and with high success, 430  
And, 'gainst the wicked king of Ammon's sons,  
Hath, by the finger of our sovereign's God,  
Besieg'd the city Rabbah, and achiev'd  
The court of waters, where the conduits run,  
And all the Ammonites' delightsome springs:  
Therefore he wisheth David's mightiness  
Should number out the host of Israel,  
And come in person to the city Rabbah,  
That so her conquest may be made the king's,  
And Joab fight as his inferior. 440

*Dav.* This hath not God and Joab's prowess done  
Without Urias' valour,<sup>1</sup> I am sure,  
Who, since his true conversion from a Hethite  
To an adopted son of Israel,  
Hath fought like one whose arms were lift by heaven,  
And whose bright sword was edg'd with Israel's wrath.  
Go, therefore, home, Urias, take thy rest;  
Visit thy wife and household with the joys  
A victor and a favourite of the king's  
Should exercise with honour after arms. 450

*Ur.* Thy servant's bones are yet not half so craz'd,  
Nor constitute on such a sickly mould,  
That for so little service he should faint,  
And seek, as cowards, refuge of his home:  
Nor are his thoughts so sensually stirr'd,  
To stay the arms with which the Lord would smite  
And fill their circle with his conquer'd foes,  
For wanton bosom of a flattering wife.

*Dav.* Urias hath a beauteous sober wife,  
Yet young, and fram'd of tempting flesh and blood; 460  
Then, when the king hath summon'd thee from arms,

<sup>1</sup> The 4to " valours."



If thou unkindly shouldst refrain her bed,  
 Sin might be laid upon Urias' soul,  
 If Bethsabe by frailty hurt her fame:  
 Then go, Urias, solace in her love;  
 Whom God hath knit to thee, tremble to loose.

*Ur.* The king is much too tender of my ease:  
 The ark and Israel and Judah dwell  
 In palaces and rich pavilions;  
 But Joab and his brother in the fields,  
 Suffering the wrath of winter and the sun:  
 And shall Urias (of more shame than they)  
 Banquet, and loiter in the work of heaven?  
 As sure <sup>1</sup> as thy soul doth live, my lord,  
 Mine ears shall never lean to such delight,  
 When holy labour calls me forth to fight.

470

*Dav.* Then be it with Urias' manly heart  
 As best his fame may shine in Israel.

*Ur.* Thus shall Urias' heart be best content,  
 Till thou dismiss me back to Joab's bands:  
 This ground before the king my master's doors  
 Shall be my couch, and this unwearied arm  
 The proper pillow of a soldier's head;  
 For never will I lodge within my house,  
 Till Joab triumph in my secret vows.

480

[Lies down.]

*Dav.* Then fetch some flagons of our purest wine,  
 That we may welcome home our hardy friend  
 With full carouses to his fortunes past  
 And to the honours of his future arms;  
 Then will I send him back to Rabbah siege,  
 And follow with the strength of Israel.

490

*Enter one with flagons of wine.*

Arise, Urias; come and pledge the king.

*Ur.* If David think me worthy such a grace,  
 I will be bold and pledge my lord the king.

[Rises.]

*Dav.* Absalon and Cusay both shall drink  
 To good Urias and his happiness.

*Abs.* We will, my lord, to please Urias' soul.

*Dav.* I will begin, Urias, to thyself,  
 And all the treasure of the Ammonites,

<sup>1</sup> A dissyllable here.

Which here I promise to impart to thee,  
And bind that promise with a full carouse. 500  
[Drinks.]

*Ur.* What seemeth pleasant in my sovereign's eyes,  
That shall Urias do till he be dead.

*Dav.* Fill him the cup. [*Urias drinks.*—Follow, ye lords that  
love

Your sovereign's health, and do as he hath done.

*Abs.* Ill may he thrive, or live in Israel,  
That loves not David, or denies his charge.—  
Urias, here is to Abisai's health,  
Lord Joab's brother and thy loving friend.

[*Drinks.*

*Ur.* I pledge Lord Absalon and Abisai's health.

510  
[*Drinks.*

*Cu.* Here now, Urias, to the health of Joab,  
And to the pleasant journey we shall have  
When we return to mighty Rabbah siege.

[*Drinks.*

*Ur.* Cusay, I pledge thee all with all my heart.—  
Give me some drink, ye servants of the king;  
Give me my drink.

[*Drinks.*

*Dav.* Well done, my good Urias! drink thy fill,  
That in thy fulness David may rejoice.

*Ur.* I will, my lord.

*Abs.* Now, Lord Urias, one carouse to me.

520

*Ur.* No, sir, I'll drink to the king;  
Your father is a better man than you.

*Dav.* Do so, Urias; I will pledge thee straight,

*Ur.* I will indeed, my lord and sovereign;  
I'll <sup>1</sup> once in my days be so bold.

*Dav.* Fill him his glass.

*Ur.* Fill me my glass.<sup>2</sup>

*Dav.* Quickly, I say.

*Ur.* Quickly, I say.—Here, my lord, by your favour now I  
drink to you.

[*Drinks.*

*Dav.* I pledge thee, good Urias, presently.

[*Drinks.*

*Abs.* Here, then, Urias, once again for me,  
And to the health of David's children.

532  
[*Drinks.*

*Ur.* David's children!

*Abs.* Ay, David's children: wilt thou pledge me, man?

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "I."

<sup>2</sup> Here the 4to has a stage direction "*He giues him the glasse,*" which means, I suppose, that Urias gives the glass to the person who pours out the wine, to be filled.

*Ur.* Pledge me, man!

*Abs.* Pledge me, I say, or else thou lov'st us not.

*Ur.* What, do you talk? do you talk? I'll no more; I'll lie down here.

*Dav.* Rather, Urias, go thou home and sleep. 540

*Ur.* O, ho, sir! would you make me break my sentence? [*Lies down.*] Home, sir! no, indeed, sir: I'll sleep upon mine arm, like a soldier; sleep like a man as long as I live in Israel.

*Dav.* [*aside.*] If naught will serve to save his wife's renown,  
I'll send him with a letter unto Joab  
To put him in the forefront of the wars,  
That so my purposes may take effect.—

Help him in, sirs. [*Exeunt David and Absalon.*]

*Cu.* Come, rise, Urias; get thee in and sleep. 550

*Ur.* I will not go home, sir; that's flat.

*Cu.* Then come and rest thee upon David's bed.

*Ur.* On, afore, my lords, on, afore. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter CHORUS.*

*Chorus.* O proud revolt of a presumptuous man,  
Laying his bridle in the neck of sin,  
Ready to bear him past his grave to hell!  
Like as the fatal raven,<sup>1</sup> that in his voice  
Carries the dreadful summons of our deaths,  
Flies by the fair Arabian spiceries,  
Her pleasant gardens and delightsome parks,<sup>2</sup> 560

<sup>1</sup> Imitated from Du Bartas:

“Ainsi que les corbeaux d'vne penne venteuse  
Passans les bois pleurans de l'Arabie heureuse,  
Mesprisent les iardins et parcs delicieux,  
Qui de fleurs esmaillez vont parfumant les cieux,  
Ët s'arrestent, gloutons, sur la salle carcasse  
D'vn criminel rompu n'aguere à coups de masse,” etc.  
*L'Arche,—Premiere Partie au Second Jour de la Seconde  
Semaine, p. 270, ed. 1632, 12°.*

(In Chapman and Shirley's *Chabot, Admiral of France*, act iv. sc. 1, we find—

“like crows and carrion birds,  
They fly o'er flowery meads, clear springs, fair gardens,  
And stoop at carcasses”—

which I formerly supposed (see my note on Shirley's *Works*, vi. 132) to have been borrowed from the passage of our text, as I was not then acquainted with the lines of Du Bartas just cited.)

<sup>2</sup> *England's Parnassus*, 1600 (where several lines of his Chorus are given, p. 195, under the head “*Man*”), has “delightfull parts.”



Seeming to curse them with his hoarse exclams,  
 And yet doth stoop with hungry violence  
 Upon a piece of hateful carrion;  
 So wretched man, displeas'd with those delights  
 Would yield a quickening savour to his soul,  
 Pursues with eager and unstanchèd thirst  
 The greedy longings of his loathsome flesh.  
 If holy David so shook hands with sin,  
 What shall our baser spirits glory in?  
 This kingly <sup>1</sup> giving lust her rein  
 Pursues the sequel with a greater ill.  
 Urias in the forefront of the wars  
 Is murder'd by the hateful heathens' sword,  
 And David joys his too dear Bethsabe.  
 Suppose this past, and that the child is born,  
 Whose death the prophet solemnly doth mourn.

570

[Exit.

*Enter BETHSABE with her Maid.*<sup>2</sup>

*Beth.* Mourn, Bethsabe, bewail thy foolishness,  
 Thy sin, thy shame, the sorrow of thy soul:  
 Sin, shame, and sorrow swarm about thy soul;  
 And, in the gates and entrance of my heart,  
 Sadness, with wreathèd arms, hangs her complaint.  
 No comfort from the ten-string'd instrument,  
 The tinkling <sup>3</sup> cymbal, or the ivory lute;  
 Nor doth the sound of David's kingly harp  
 Make glad the broken heart of Bethsabe:  
 Jerusalem is fill'd with thy complaint,  
 And in the streets of Sion sits thy grief.  
 The babe is sick, sick to the death, I fear,  
 The fruit that sprung from thee to David's house;  
 Nor may the pot of honey and of oil  
 Glad David or his handmaid's countenance.  
 Urias—wo is me to think hereon!  
 For who is it among the sons of men  
 That saith not to my soul, "The king hath sinn'd;  
 David hath done amiss, and Bethsabe  
 Laid snares of death unto Urias' life"?

580

590

<sup>1</sup> A mutilated line. (In my former eds. I queried if "kingly" should be "king by.")

<sup>2</sup> Here the 4to "handmaid;" but see *ante*, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> The 4to "twinckling."

My sweet Urias, fall'n into the pit  
 Art thou, and gone even to the gates of hell  
 For Bethsabe, that wouldst not shroud her shame.  
 O, what is it to serve the lust of kings! 600  
 How lion-like th[e]y rage when we resist!  
 But, Bethsabe, in humbleness attend  
 The grace that God will to his handmaid send. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter DAVID in his gown, walking sadly; Servants attending.*

*Dav. [aside.]* The babe is sick, and sad is David's heart,  
 To see the guiltless bear the guilty's pain.  
 David, hang up thy harp; hang down thy head;  
 And dash thy ivory lute against the stones.  
 The dew, that on the hill of Hermon falls,  
 Rains not on Sion's tops and lofty towers;  
 The plains of Gath and Askaron rejoice,<sup>1</sup> 610  
 And David's thoughts are spent in pensiveness:  
 The babe is sick, sweet babe, that Bethsabe  
 With woman's pain brought forth to Israel.

*Enter NATHAN.*

But what saith Nathan to his lord the king?  
*Na.* Thus Nathan saith unto his lord the king.  
 There were two men both dwellers in one town:  
 The one was mighty, and exceeding rich  
 In oxen, sheep, and cattle of the field;  
 The other poor, having nor ox, nor calf,  
 Nor other cattle, save one little lamb 620  
 Which he had bought and nourish'd by the hand;  
 And it grew up, and fed with him and his,  
 And eat and drank as he and his were wont,  
 And in his bosom slept, and was to him<sup>2</sup>  
 As was his daughter or his dearest child.  
 There came a stranger to this wealthy man;  
 And he refus'd and spar'd to take his own,  
 Or of his store to dress or make him meat,  
 But took the poor man's sheep, partly, poor man's store,<sup>3</sup>  
 And dress'd it for this stranger in his house. 630  
 What, tell me, shall be done to him for this?

<sup>1</sup> This and the next line are transposed in the 4to.

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "liue."

<sup>3</sup> Some deep corruption here.

*Dav.* Now, as the Lord doth live, this wicked man  
Is judg'd and shall become the child of death;  
Fourfold to the poor man shall he restore,  
That without mercy took his lamb away.

*Na.* Thou art the man; and thou hast judg'd thyself.  
David, thus saith the Lord thy God by me:  
I thee anointed king in Israel,  
And sav'd thee from the tyranny of Saul;  
Thy master's house I gave thee to possess; 640  
His wives into thy bosom did I give,  
And Judah and Jerusalem withal;  
And might, thou know'st, if this had been too small,  
Have given thee more:

Wherefore, then, hast thou gone so far astray,  
And hast done evil, and sinnèd in my sight?  
Urias thou hast killèd with the sword;  
Yea, with the sword of the uncircumcis'd  
Thou hast him slain: wherefore, from this day forth,  
The sword shall never go from thee and thine; 650  
For thou hast ta'en this Hethite's wife to thee:  
Wherefore, behold, I will, saith Jacob's God,  
In thine own house stir evil up to thee;  
Yea, I before thy face will take thy wives,  
And give them to thy neighbour to possess:  
This shall be done to David in the day,  
That Israel openly may see thy shame,

*Dav.* Nathan, I have against the Lord, I have  
Sinnèd; O, sinnèd grievously! and, lo,  
From heaven's throne doth David throw himself, 660  
And groan and grovel to the gates of hell! [*Falls down.*]

*Na.* [*raising him.*] David, stand up: thus saith the Lord by me:  
David the king shall live, for he hath seen  
The true repentant sorrow of thy heart;  
But, for thou hast in this misdeed of thine  
Stirr'd up the enemies of Israel  
To triumph, and blaspheme the God of Hosts,  
And say, he set a wicked man to reign  
Over his lovèd people and his tribes,—  
The child shall surely die, that erst was born,  
His mother's sin, his kingly father's scorn. 670  
[*Exit.*]

<sup>1</sup> i.e., "disgrace, reproach." Walker's *Crit. Exam. of the text of Shakespeare*, etc., vol. ii. p. 81.



*Dav.* How just is Jacob's God in all his works!  
 But must it die that David loveth so?  
 O, that the Mighty One of Israel  
 Nill<sup>1</sup> change his doom, and says the babe must die!  
 Mourn, Israel, and weep in Sion-gates;  
 Wither, ye cedar-trees of Lebanon;  
 Ye sprouting almonds, with your flowering tops,  
 Droop, drown, and drench in Hebron's fearful streams:  
 The babe must die that was to David born, 680  
 His mother's sin, his kingly father's scorn. [*Sits sadly.*]

*Enter CUSAY.*

*First Serv.* What tidings bringeth Cusay to the king?

*Cu.* To thee, the servant of King David's court,  
 This bringeth Cusay, as the prophet spake;  
 The Lord hath surely stricken to the death  
 The child new-born by that Urias' wife,  
 That by the sons of Ammon erst was slain.

*First Serv.* Cusay, be still; the king is vexèd sore:  
 How shall he speed that brings this tidings first,  
 When, while the child was yet alive, we spake, 690  
 And David's heart would not be comforted?

*Dav.* Yea, David's heart will not be comforted!  
 What murmur ye, the servants of the king?  
 What tidings telleth Cusay to the king?  
 Say, Cusay, lives the child, or is he dead?

*Cu.* The child is dead, that of Urias' wife  
 David begat.

*Dav.* Urias' wife, saist thou?  
 The child is dead, then ceaseth David's shame:  
 Fetch me to eat, and give me wine to drink; 700  
 Water to wash, and oil to clear my looks;  
 Bring down your shalms, your cymbals, and your pipes;  
 Let David's harp and lute, his hand and voice,  
 Give laud to him that loveth Israel,  
 And sing his praise that shendeth<sup>2</sup> David's fame,

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, will not.

<sup>2</sup> "In the following passage," says Nares in his *Glossary*, "it [*shend*] seems to mean to protect, which must be considered as an error, being contrary to all analogy—

'This I must succour, this I must defend,  
 And from the wild boare's rooting ever *shend*.'

Brown, *Brit. Past.* part ii. p. 144."

In the passage just cited "*shend*" is certainly equivalent to "defend," as in our text "*shendeth*" is equivalent to "defendeth."

That put away his sin from out his sight,  
 And sent his shame into the streets of Gath.  
 Bring ye to me the mother of the babe,  
 That I may wipe the tears from off her face,  
 And give her comfort with this hand of mine, 710  
 And deck fair Bethsabe with ornaments,  
 That she may bear to me another son,  
 That may be lovèd of the Lord of Hosts;  
 For where he is, of force must David go,  
 But never may he come where David is.

*They bring in water, wine, and oil. Music and a banquet; and  
 enter BETHSABE.*

Fair Bethsabe, sit thou, and sigh no more:—  
 And sing and play, you servants of the king:  
 Now sleepeth David's sorrow with the dead,  
 And Bethsabe liveth to Israel.

*They use all solemnities together and sing, etc.*

Now arms and warlike engines for assault 720  
 Prepare at once, ye men of Israel,  
 Ye men of Judah and Jerusalem,  
 That Rabbah may be taken by the king,  
 Lest it be callèd after Joab's name,  
 Nor David's glory shine in Sion streets.  
 To Rabbah marcheth David with his men,  
 To chàstise Ammon and the wicked ones. [Exeunt.

*Enter ABSALON with several others.*

*Abs.* Set up your mules, and give them well to eat,  
 And let us meet our brothers at the feast.  
 Accursèd is the master of this feast, 730  
 Dishonour of the house of Israel,  
 His sister's slander, and his mother's shame:  
 Shame be his share that could such ill contrive,  
 To ravish Thamar, and, without a pause,  
 To drive her shamefully from out his house:  
 But may his wickedness find just reward!  
 Therefore doth Absalon conspire with you,  
 That Amnon die what time he sits to eat;

For in the holy temple have I sworn  
 Wreak of his villany in Thamar's rape.  
 And here he comes: bespeak him gently, all,  
 Whose death is deeply gravèd in my heart.

740

*Enter AMNON, ADONIA, and JONADAB.*

*Am.* Our shearers are not far from hence, I wot;  
 And Amnon to you all his brethren  
 Giveth such welcome as our fathers erst  
 Were wont in Judah and Jerusalem;—  
 But, specially, Lord Absalon, to thee,  
 The honour of thy house and progeny:  
 Sir down and dine with me, King David's son,  
 Thou fair young man, whose hairs shine in mine eye 750  
 Like golden wires of David's ivory lute.

*Abs.* Amnon, where be thy shearers and thy men,  
 That we may pour-in plenty of thy wines,<sup>1</sup>  
 And eat thy goats'-milk, and rejoice with thee?

*Am.* Here cometh Amnon's shearers and his men:—  
 Absalon, sit and <sup>2</sup>rejoice with me.

*Enter a company of Shepherds, who dance and sing.*

Drink, Absalon, in praise of Israel;  
 Welcome to Amnon's fields from David's court.

*Abs.* [*stabbing Amnon.*] Die with thy draught; perish, and die  
 accurs'd;

Dishonour to the honour of us all; 760  
 Die for the villany to Thamar done,  
 Unworthy thou to be King David's son! [*Exit with others.*]

*Jonad.* O, what hath Absalon for Thamar done,  
 Murder'd his brother, great King David's son!

*Ad.* Run, Jonadab, away, and make it known,  
 What cruelty this Absalon hath shown.  
 Amnon, thy brother Adonia shall  
 Bury thy body 'mong the dead men's bones;  
 And we will make complaint to Israel  
 Of Amnon's death and pride of Absalon.

770

[*Excunt.*]

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "vines."

<sup>2</sup> Qy. "sit down and," etc.?



*Enter* DAVID, JOAB, ABISAI, CUSAY, *and others, with drum and ensign against* RABBAH.

*Dav.* This is the town of the uncircumcis'd,  
The city of the kingdom, this is it,  
Rabbah, where wicked Hanon sitteth king.  
Despoil this king, this Hanon of his crown;  
Unpeople Rabbah and the streets thereof;  
For in their blood, and slaughter of the slain,  
Lieth the honour of King David's line.  
Joab, Abisai, and the rest of you,  
Fight ye this day for great Jerusalem.

*Enter* HANON *and others on the walls.*

*Joab.* And see where Hanon shows him on the walls; 780  
Why, then, do we forbear to give assault,  
That Israel may, as it is promisèd,  
Subdue the daughters of the Gentiles' tribes?  
All this must be perform'd by David's hand.

*Dav.* Hark to me, Hanon, and remember well:  
As sure as He doth live that kept my host,  
What time our young men, by the pool of Gibeon,  
Went forth against the strength of Isboeth,  
And twelve to twelve did with their weapons play;  
So sure <sup>1</sup> art thou and thy men of war 790  
To feel the sword of Israel this day,  
Because thou hast defied Jacob's God,  
And suffer'd Rabbah with the Philistine  
To rail upon the tribe of Benjamin.

*Ha.* Hark, man: as sure as Saul thy master fell,  
And gor'd his sides upon the mountain-tops,  
And Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchisua,  
Water'd the dales and deeps of Askaron  
With bloody streams, that from Gilboa ran  
In channels through the wilderness of Ziph, 800  
What time the sword of the uncircumcis'd  
Was drunken with the blood of Israel;  
So sure shall David perish with his men  
Under the walls of Rabbah, Hanon's town.

<sup>1</sup> A dissyllable here.

*Joab.* Hanon, the God of Israel hath said,  
 David the king shall wear that crown of thine  
 That weighs a talent of the finest gold,  
 And triumph in the spoil of Hanon's town,  
 When Israel shall hale thy people hence,  
 And turn them to the tile-kiln, man and child, 810  
 And put them under harrows made of iron,  
 And hew their bones with axes, and their limbs  
 With iron swords divide and tear in twain.  
 Hanon, this shall be done to thee and thine,  
 Because thou hast defied Israel.—  
 To arms, to arms, that Rabbah feel revenge,  
 And Hanon's town become King David's spoil!

*Alarum, excursions, assault; exeunt. Then the trumpets sound,  
 and re-enter DAVID with HANON'S crown, JOAB, etc.*

*Dav.* Now clattering arms and wrathful storms of war  
 Have thunder'd over Rabbah's razèd towers;  
 The wreakful ire of great Jehovah's arm, 820  
 That for his people made the gates to rend,  
 And cloth'd the cherubins in fiery coats  
 To fight against the wicked Hanon's town.  
 Pay thanks, ye men of Judah, to the King,  
 The God of Sion and Jerusalem,  
 That hath exalted Israel to this,  
 And crownèd David with this diadem.

*Joab.* Beauteous and bright is he among the tribes;  
 As when the sun,<sup>1</sup> attir'd in glistening robe,  
 Comes dancing from his oriental gate, 830  
 And bridegroom-like hurls through the gloomy air  
 His radiant beams, such doth King David show,  
 Crown'd with the honour of his enemies' town,  
 Shining in riches like the firmament,  
 The starry vault that overhangs the earth:

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, who (Preface to *The Origin of the English Drama*, vol. i. p. 11) justly praises this simile, had forgotten the following lines of Spenser:

“ At last, the golden orientall gate  
 Of greatest heaven gan to open fayre;  
 And Phoebus, fresh as brydegrome to his mate,  
 Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie hayre;  
 And hurld his glistring beams through gloomy ayre.”  
*The Faerie Queene*, B. 1. c. 5, st. 2.

So looketh David King of Israel.

*Abis.* Joab, why doth not David mount his throne  
Whom heaven hath beautified with Hanon's crown?  
Sound trumpets, shalms, and instruments of praise,  
To Jacob's God for David's victory.

840

[*Trumpets, etc.*]

*Enter* JONADAB.

*Jonad.* Why doth the King of Israel rejoice?  
Why sitteth David crown'd with Rabbah's rule?  
Behold, there hath great heaviness befall'n  
In Amnon's fields by Absalon's misdeed;  
And Amnon's shearers and their feast of mirth  
Absalon hath o'erturnèd with his sword;  
Nor liveth any of King David's sons  
To bring this bitter tidings to the king.

*Dav.* Ay me, how soon are David's triumphs dash'd,  
How suddenly declineth David's pride!  
As doth the daylight settle in the west,  
So dim is David's glory and his gite.<sup>1</sup>  
Die, David; for to thee is left no seed  
That may revive thy name in Israel.

850

*Jonad.* In Israel is left of David's seed.  
Comfort your lord, you servants of the king.—  
Behold, thy sons return in mourning weeds,  
And only Amnon Absalon hath slain.

*Enter* ADONIA with other Sons of DAVID.

*Dav.* Welcome, my sons; dearer to me you are  
Than is this golden crown or Hanon's spoil.  
O, tell me, then, tell me, my sons, I say,  
How cometh it to pass that Absalon  
Hath slain his brother Amnon with the sword?

860

*Ad.* Thy sons, O king, went up to Amnon's fields,  
To feast with him and eat his bread and oil;  
And Absalon upon his mule doth come,  
And to his men he saith, "When Amnon's heart  
Is merry and secure, then strike him dead,

<sup>1</sup> Gite in the present passage, as well as in the following line of our author's *Tale of Troy*, seems to mean—splendour, brightness:

"Done is thy pride, dim is thy glorious gite."



Because he forcèd Thamar shamefully,  
 And hated her, and threw her forth his doors." 870  
 And this did he; and they with him conspire,  
 And kill thy son in wreak of Thamar's wrong.

*Dav.* How long shall Judah and Jerusalem  
 Complain, and water Sion with their tears!  
 How long shall Israel lament in vain,  
 And not a man among the mighty ones  
 Will hear the sorrows of King David's heart!  
 Amnon, thy life was pleasing to thy lord,  
 As to mine ears the music of my lute,  
 Or songs that David tuneth to his harp; 880  
 And Absalon hath ta'en from me away  
 The gladness of my sad distressed soul.

[*Exeunt Joab and some others.*<sup>1</sup>

*Enter Woman of Thecoa.*<sup>2</sup>

*Wo. of T. [kneeling.]* God save King David, King of Israel,  
 And bless the gates of Sion for his sake!

*Dav.* Woman, why mournest thou? rise from the earth;  
 Tell me what sorrow hath befall'n thy soul.

*Wo. of T. [rising.]* Thy servant's soul, O king, is troubled sore,  
 And grievous is the anguish of her heart;  
 And from Thecoa doth thy handmaid come.

*Dav.* Tell me, and say, thou woman of Thecoa, 890  
 What aileth thee or what is come to pass.

*Wo. of T.* Thy servant is a widow in Thecoa.  
 Two sons thy handmaid had; and they, my lord,  
 Fought in the field, where no man went betwixt,  
 And so the one did smite and slay the other.

And, lo, behold, the kindred doth arise,  
 And cry on him<sup>3</sup> that smote his brother,  
 That he therefore may be the child of death;  
 "For we will follow and destroy the heir."

So will they quench that sparkle that is left, 900  
 And leave nor name nor issue on the earth

<sup>1</sup> The 4to has "*Exeunt omnes. Manet David.*" But see David's last speech on page 155, line 957.

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "*widdow of Thecoa*"; but she is only a *pretended widow*.

<sup>3</sup> Some slight omission here. The words of Scripture are: "And they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also," etc.  
 —*Sec. Samuel*, xiv. 7.

To me or to thy handmaid's husband dead.

*Dav.* Woman, return; go home unto thy house:

I will take order that thy son be safe.

If any man say otherwise than well,

Bring him to me, and I shall chástise him;

For, as the Lord doth live, shall not a hair

Shed from thy son or fall upon the earth.

Woman, to God alone belongs revenge:

Shall, then, the kindred slay him for his sin?

910

*Wo. of T.* Well hath King David to his handmaid spoke:

But wherefore, then, hast thou determinèd

So hard a part against the righteous tribes,

To follow and pursue the banishèd,

Whenas <sup>1</sup> to God alone belongs revenge?

Assuredly thou saist against thyself:

Therefore call home again the banishèd;

Call home the banishèd, that he may live,

And raise to thee some fruit in Israel.

*Dav.* Thou woman of Thecoa, answer me,

920

Answer me one thing I shall ask of thee:

Is not the hand of Joab in this work?

Tell me, is not his finger in this fact?

*Wo. of T.* It is, my lord; his hand is in this work:

Assure thee, Joab, captain of thy host,

Hath put these words into thy handmaid's mouth;

And thou art as an angel from on high,

To understand the meaning of my heart:

Lo, where he cometh to his lord the king.

*Re-enter JOAB.*

*Dav.* Say, Joab, didst thou send this woman in

930

To put this parable for Absalon?

*Joab.* Joab, my lord, did bid this woman speak,

And she hath said; and thou hast understood.

*Dav.* I have, and am content to do the thing.

Go fetch my son, that he may live with me.

*Joab.* [*kneeling.*] Now God be blessèd for King David's life!

Thy servant Joab hath found grace with thee,

In that thou sparest Absalon thy child.

[*Rises.*]

A beautiful and fair young man is he,

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, When.

In all his body is no blemish seen;  
 His hair is like the wire of David's harp,  
 That twines about his bright and ivory neck;  
 In Israel is not such a goodly man;  
 And here I bring him to entreat for grace.

94°

## JOAB brings in ABSALON.

*Dav.* Hast thou<sup>1</sup> slain in the fields of Hazor—  
 Ah, Absalon, my son! ah, my son, Absalon!  
 But wherefore do I vex thy spirit so?  
 Live, and return from Gesur to thy house;  
 Return from Gesur to Jerusalem:  
 What boots it to be bitter to thy soul?  
 Amnon is dead, and Absalon survives.

95°

*Abs.* Father, I have offended Israel,  
 I have offended David and his house;  
 For Thamar's wrong hath Absalon misdone:  
 But David's heart is free from sharp revenge,  
 And Joab hath got grace for Absalon.

*Dav.* Depart with me, you men of Israel,  
 You that have follow'd Rabbah with the sword,  
 And ransack Ammon's richest treasures.—  
 Live, Absalon, my son, live once in peace:  
 Peace [be] with thee, and with Jerusalem!

96°

[*Exeunt all except Absalon.*]

*Abs.* David is gone, and Absalon remains,  
 Flowering in pleasant spring-time of his youth:  
 Why liveth Absalon and is not honour'd  
 Of tribes and elders and the mightiest ones,  
 That round about his temples he may wear  
 Garlands and wreaths set on with reverence;  
 That every one that hath a cause to plead  
 Might come to Absalon and call for right?  
 Then in the gates of Sion would I sit,  
 And publish laws in great Jerusalem;  
 And not a man should live in all the land  
 But Absalon would do him reason's due:  
 Therefore I shall address me, as I may,  
 To love the men and tribes of Israel.

97°

[*Exit.*]

<sup>1</sup> Qy. "Hast thou slain Amnon in the fields of Hazor?" for I cannot think that this line of nine syllables is to be defended on the supposition that David here avoids mentioning the name of his murdered son.



*Enter* DAVID, ITHAY, SADOC, AHIMAAS, JONATHAN, *and others* ;  
DAVID *barefoot, with some loose covering over his head ; and*  
*all mourning.*

*Dav.* Proud lust, the bloodiest traitor to our souls,  
Whose greedy throat nor earth, air, sea, or heaven,  
Can glut or satisfy with any store,  
Thou art the cause these torments suck my blood,  
Piercing with venom of thy poison'd eyes 980  
The strength and marrow of my tainted bones.  
To punish Pharaoh and his cursèd host,  
The waters shrunk <sup>1</sup> at great Adonai's voice,  
And sandy bottom of the sea appear'd,  
Offering his service at his servant's feet ;  
And, to inflict a plague on David's sin,  
He makes his bowels traitors to his breast,  
Winding about his heart with mortal gripes.  
Ah, Absalon, the wrath of heaven inflames  
Thy scorchèd bosom with ambitious heat, 990  
And Satan sets thee on a lofty <sup>2</sup> tower,  
Showing thy thoughts the pride of Israel,  
Of choice to cast thee on her ruthless stones !—  
Weep with me, then, ye sons of Israel ;  
Lie down with David, and with David mourn  
Before the Holy One that sees our hearts ;

*[Lies down, and all the rest after him.*

Season this heavy soil with showers of tears,  
And fill the face of every flower with dew ;  
Weep, Israel, for David's soul dissolves,  
Lading the fountains of his drownèd eyes, 1000  
And pours her substance on the senseless earth.  
*Sa.* Weep, Israel ; O, weep for David's soul,  
Strewing the ground with hair and garments torn,  
For tragic witness of your hearty woes !  
*Ahi.* O, would our eyes were conduits to our hearts,  
And that our hearts were seas of liquid blood,  
To pour in streams upon this holy mount,  
For witness we would die for David's woes !  
*Jonath.* Then should this Mount of Olives seem a plain  
Drown'd with a sea, that with our sighs should roar, 1010

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "shrinke."

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "lustie."

And, in the murmur of his mounting waves,  
Report our bleeding sorrows to the heavens,  
For witness we would die for David's woes.

*Ith.* Earth cannot weep enough for David's woes:  
Then weep, you heavens, and, all you clouds, dissolve,  
That piteous stars may see our miseries,  
And drop their golden tears upon the ground,  
For witness how they weep for David's woes.

*Sa.* Now let my sovereign raise his prostrate bones,  
And mourn not as a faithless man would do;  
But be assur'd that Jacob's righteous God,  
That promis'd never to forsake your throne,  
Will still be just and pure <sup>1</sup> in his vows.

1020

*Dav.* Sadoc, high-priest, preserver of the ark,  
Whose sacred virtue keeps the chosen crown,  
I know my God is spotless in his vows,  
And that these hairs shall greet my grave in peace:  
But that my son should wrong his tender'd soul,  
And fight against his father's happiness,  
Turns all my hopes into despair of him,  
And that despair feeds all my veins with grief.

1030

*Ith.* Think of it, David, as a fatal plague  
Which grief preserveth, but preventeth not;  
And turn thy drooping eyes upon the troops  
That, of affection to thy worthiness,  
Do swarm about the person of the king:  
Cherish their valours and their zealous loves  
With pleasant looks and sweet encouragements.

*Dav.* Methinks the voice of Ithay fills mine ears.

*Ith.* Let not the voice of Ithay loathe thine ears,  
Whose heart would balm thy bosom with his tears.

1040

*Dav.* But wherefore go'st thou to the wars with us?

Thou art a stranger here in Israel,  
And son to Achis, mighty King of Gath;  
Therefore return, and with thy father stay:  
Thou cam'st but yesterday; and should I now  
Let thee partake these troubles here with us?  
Keep both thyself and all thy soldiers safe:  
Let me abide the hazards of these arms,  
And God requite the friendship thou hast show'd.

1050

*Ith.* As sure as Israel's God gives David life,

<sup>1</sup> A disyllable here.



What place or peril shall contain the king,  
The same will I thay share in life and death.

*Dav.* Then, gentle Ithay, be thou still with us,  
A joy to David, and a grace to Israel.—  
Go, Sadoc, now, and bear the ark of God  
Into the great Jerusalem again:  
If I find favour in his gracious eyes,  
Then will he lay his hand upon my heart  
Yet once again before I visit death;  
Giving it strength, and virtue to mine eyes,  
To taste the comforts and behold the form  
Of his fair ark and holy tabernacle:  
But, if he say, "My wonted love is worn,  
And I have no delight in David now,"  
Here lie I armèd with an humble heart  
T' embrace the pains that anger shall impose,  
And kiss the sword my lord shall kill me with.  
Then, Sadoc, take Ahimaas thy son,  
With Jonathan son to Abiathar;  
And in these fields will I repose myself,  
Till they return from you some certain news.

1060

*Sa.* Thy servants will with joy obey the king,  
And hope to cheer his heart with happy news.

1070

[*Exeunt Sadoc, Ahimaas, and Jonathan.*]

*Ith.* Now that it be no grief unto the king,  
Let me for good inform his majesty,  
That, with unkind and graceless Absalon,  
Achitophel your ancient counsellor  
Directs the state of this rebellion.

*Dav.* Then doth it aim with danger at my crown.—  
O thou, that hold'st his raging bloody bound  
Within the circle of the silver moon,  
That girds earth's centre with his watery scarf,  
Limit the counsel of Achitophel,  
No bounds extending to my soul's distress,  
But turn his wisdom into foolishness!

1080

*Enter CUSAY with his coat turned and head covered.*

*Cu.* Happiness and honour to my lord the king!

*Dav.* What happiness or honour may betide  
His state that toils in my extremities?



*Cu.* O, let my gracious sovereign cease these griefs,  
Unless he wish his servant Cusay's death,  
Whose life depends upon my lord's relief!  
Then let my presence with my sighs perfume  
The pleasant closet of my sovereign's soul.

1090

*Dav.* No, Cusay, no; thy presence unto me  
Will be a burden, since I tender thee,  
And cannot brook <sup>1</sup> thy sighs for David's sake:  
But if thou turn to fair Jerusalem,  
And say to Absalon, as thou hast been  
A trusty friend unto his father's seat,  
So thou wilt be to him, and call him king,  
Achitophel's counsel may be brought to naught.  
Then having Sadoc and Abiathar,  
All three may learn the secrets of my son,  
Sending the message by Ahimaas,  
And friendly Jonathan, who both are there.

1100

*Cu.* Then rise, referring the success to heaven.<sup>2</sup>

*Dav.* Cusay, I rise; though with unwieldy bones  
I carry arms against my Absalon.

[*Exeunt.*]

*ABSALON, AMASA, ACHITOPHEL, with the Concubines of DAVID, and others, are discovered in great state; ABSALON crowned.*

*Abs.* Now you that were my father's concubines,  
Liquor to his inchaste and lustful fire,  
Have seen his honour shaken in his house,  
Which I possess in sight of all the world;  
I bring ye forth for foils to my renown,  
And to eclipse the glory of your king,  
Whose life is with his honour fast enclos'd  
Within the entrails of a jetty cloud,  
Whose dissolution shall pour down in showers  
The substance of his life and swelling pride:  
Then shall the stars light earth with rich aspects,  
And heaven shall burn in love with Absalon,  
Whose beauty will suffice to chase <sup>3</sup> all mists,  
And clothe the sun's sphere with a triple fire,  
Sooner than his clear eyes should suffer stain,  
Or be offended with a lowering day.

1110

1120

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "breake."

<sup>2</sup> This line is given in the 4to to David.

<sup>3</sup> The 4to "chast."

- First Conc.* Thy father's honour, graceless Absalon,  
 And ours thus beaten with thy violent arms,  
 Will cry for vengeance to the host of heaven,  
 Whose power is ever arm'd against the proud,  
 And will dart plagues at thy aspiring head 1130  
 For doing this disgrace to David's throne.
- Second Conc.* To David's throne, to David's holy throne,  
 Whose sceptre angels guard with swords of fire,  
 And sit as eagles on his conquering fist,  
 Ready to prey upon his enemies:  
 Then think not thou, the captain of his foes,  
 Wert thou much swifter than Azahell<sup>1</sup> was,  
 That could outpace the nimble-footed roe,  
 To scape the fury of their thumping beaks  
 Or dreadful scope of their commanding wings. 1140
- Ach.* Let not my lord the King of Israel  
 Be angry with a silly woman's threats;  
 But, with the pleasure he hath erst enjoy'd,  
 Turn them into their cabinets again,  
 Till David's conquest be their overthrow.
- Abs.* Into your bowers, ye daughters of disdain,  
 Gotten by fury of unbridled lust,  
 And wash your couches with your mourning tears,  
 For grief that David's kingdom is decay'd.
- First Conc.* No, Absalon, his kingdom is enchain'd 1150  
 Fast to the finger of great Jacob's God,  
 Which will not loose it for a rebel's love.
- [*Exeunt Concubines.*]
- Ama.* If I might give advice unto the king,  
 These concubines should buy their taunts with blood.
- Abs.* Amasa, no; but let thy martial sword  
 Empty the veins<sup>2</sup> of David's armèd men,  
 And let these foolish women scape our hands  
 To recompense the shame they have sustain'd.  
 First, Absalon was by the trumpet's sound  
 Proclaim'd through Hebron King of Israel; 1160  
 And now is set in fair Jerusalem  
 With còmplete state and glory of a crown:  
 Fifty fair footmen by my chariot run,

<sup>1</sup> "And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe."—*Sec. Samuel*, ii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "paines."

And to the air whose rupture rings my fame,  
 Where'er I ride, they offer reverence.  
 Why should not Absalon, that in his face  
 Carries the final purpose of his God,  
 That is, to work him grace in Israel,  
 Endeavour to achieve with all his strength  
 The state that most may satisfy his joy,  
 Keeping his statutes and his covenants pure?  
 His thunder is entangled in my hair,  
 And with my beauty is his lightning quench'd:  
 I am the man he made to glory in,  
 When by the errors of my father's sin  
 He lost the path that led into the land  
 Wherewith our chosen ancestors were bless'd.

1170

*Enter CUSAY.*

*Cu.* Long may the beauteous King of Israel live,  
 To whom the people do by thousands swarm!

*Abs.* What meaneth Cusay so to greet his foe?  
 Is this the love thou show'st<sup>1</sup> to David's soul,  
 To whose assistance thou hast vow'd thy life?  
 Why leav'st thou him in this extremity?

1180

*Cu.* Because the Lord and Israel chooseth thee;  
 And as before I serv'd thy father's turn  
 With counsel acceptable in his sight,  
 So likewise will I now obey his son.

*Abs.* Then welcome, Cusay, to King Absalon.—  
 And now, my lords and loving counsellors,  
 I think it time to exercise our arms  
 Against forsaken David and his host.  
 Give counsel first, my good Achitophel,  
 What times and orders we may best observe  
 For prosperous manage of these high exploits.

1190

*Ach.* Let me choose out twelve thousand valiant men:  
 And, while the night hides with her sable mists  
 The close endeavours cunning soldiers use,  
 I will assault thy discontented sire;  
 And, while with weakness of their weary arms,  
 Surcharg'd with toil, to shun thy sudden power,  
 The people fly in huge disorder'd troops

1200

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "shewdst."



To save their lives, and leave the king alone,  
Then will I smite him with his latest wound,  
And bring the people to thy feet in peace.

*Abs.* Well hath Achitophel given his advice.

Yet let us hear what Cusay counsels us,  
Whose great experience is well worth the ear.

*Cu.* Though wise Achitophel be much more meet  
To purchase hearing with my lord the king,  
For all his former counsels, than myself, 1210  
Yet, not offending Absalon or him,  
This time it is not good nor worth pursuit;  
For, well thou know'st, thy father's men are strong,  
Chafing as she-bears robbèd of their whelps:  
Besides, the king himself a valiant man,  
Train'd up in feats and stratagems of war;  
And will not, for prevention of the worst,  
Lodge with the common soldiers in the field;  
But now, I know, his wonted policies  
Have taught him lurk within some secret cave, 1220  
Guarded with all his stoutest soldiers;  
Which, if the forefront of his battle faint,  
Will yet give out that Absalon doth fly,  
And so thy soldiers be discouragèd:  
David himself withal, whose angry heart  
Is as a lion's lettèd of his walk,  
Will fight himself, and all his men to one,  
Before a few shall vanquish him by fear.  
My counsel therefore is, with trumpet's sound  
To gather men from Dan to Bersabe, 1230  
That they may march in number like sea-sands,  
That nestle close in [one] another's neck:  
So shall we come upon him in our strength,  
Like to the dew that falls in showers from heaven,  
And leave him not a man to march withal.  
Besides, if any city succour him,  
The numbers of our men shall fetch us ropes,  
And we will pull it down the river's stream,  
That not a stone be left to keep us out.

*Abs.* What says my lord to Cusay's counsel now? 1240

*Ama.* I fancy Cusay's counsel better far  
Than that is given us from Achitophel;  
And so, I think, doth every soldier here.

*All.* Cusay's counsel is better than Achitophel's.

*Abs.* Then march we after Cusay's counsel all:  
Sound trumpets through the bounds of Israel,  
And muster all the men will serve the king,  
That Absalon may glut his longing soul  
With sole fruition of his father's crown.

*Ach.* [*aside.*] Ill shall they fare that follow thy attempts, 1250  
That scorns the counsel of Achitophel.

[*Exeunt all except Cusay.*]

*Cu.* Thus hath the power of Jacob's jealous God  
Fulfill'd his servant David's drifts by me,  
And brought Achitophel's advice to scorn.

*Enter SADOE, ABIATHAR, AHIMAAS, and JONATHAN.*

*Sa.* God save Lord Cusay, and direct his zeal  
To purchase David's conquest 'gainst his son!

*Abi.* What secrets hast thou glean'd from Absalon?

*Cu.* These, sacred priests that bear the ark of God:—  
Achitophel advis'd him in the night  
To let him choose twelve thousand fighting men, 1260  
And he would come on David at unwares,  
While he was weary with his violent toil:  
But I advis'd to get a greater host,  
And gather men from Dan to Bersabe,  
To come upon him strongly in the fields.  
Then send Ahimaas and Jonathan  
To signify these secrets to the king,  
And will<sup>1</sup> him not to stay this night abroad;  
But get him over Jordan presently,  
Lest he and all his people kiss the sword. 1270

*Sa.* Then go, Ahimaas and Jonathan,  
And straight convey this message to the king.

*Ahi.* Father, we will, if Absalon's chief spies  
Prevent not this device, and stay us here. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Semei.*

*Sem.* The man of Israel that hath rul'd as king,  
Or rather as the tyrant of the land,  
Bolstering his hateful head upon the throne

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, desire.

That God unworthily hath bless'd him with,  
 Shall now, I hope, lay it as low as hell,  
 And be depos'd from his detested chair. 1280  
 O, that my bosom could by nature bear  
 A sea of poison, to be pour'd upon  
 His cursèd head that sacred balm hath grac'd  
 And consecrated King of Israel!  
 Or would my breath were made the smoke of hell,  
 Infected with the sighs of damnèd souls,  
 Or with the reeking of that serpent's gorge  
 That feeds on adders, toads, and venomous roots,  
 That, as I open'd my revenging lips  
 To curse the shepherd for his tyranny, 1290  
 My words might cast rank poison to his pores,  
 And make his swoln and rankling sinews crack,  
 Like to the combat-blows that break the clouds  
 When Jove's<sup>1</sup> stout champions fight with fire.  
 See where he cometh that my soul abhors!  
 I have prepar'd my pocket full of stones  
 To cast at him, mingled with earth and dust,  
 Which, bursting with disdain, I greet him with.

*Enter DAVID, JOAB, ABISAI, ITHAY, and others.*

Come forth, thou murderer and wicked man:  
 The lord hath brought upon thy cursèd head 1300  
 The guiltless blood of Saul and all his sons,  
 Whose royal throne thy baseness hath usurp'd;  
 And, to revenge it deeply on thy soul,  
 The Lord hath given the kingdom to thy son,  
 And he shall wreak the traitorous wrongs of Saul:  
 Even as thy sin hath still importun'd heaven,  
 So shall thy murders and adultery  
 Be punish'd in the sight of Israel,  
 As thou deserv'st, with blood, with death, and hell.  
 Hence, murderer, hence! 1310

*[Throws<sup>2</sup> stones and earth at David.]*

*Abis.* Why doth [t]his dead dog curse my lord the king?  
 Let me alone to take away his head.

<sup>1</sup> A mutilated line.

<sup>2</sup> In the 4to this stage direction and the end of the speech are confounded thus:

"Hence murtherer, hence, he threw at him."



- Dav.* Why meddleth thus the son of Zeruia  
 To interrupt the action of our God?  
 Semei useth me with this reproach  
 Because the Lord hath sent him to reprove  
 The sins of David, printed in his brows  
 With blood, that blusheth for his conscience' guilt;  
 Who dares, then, ask him why he curseth me?
- Sem.* If, then, thy conscience tell thee thou hast sinn'd, 1320  
 And that thy life is odious to the world,  
 Command thy followers to shun thy face;  
 And by thyself here make away thy soul,  
 That I may stand and glory in thy shame
- Dav.* I am not desperate, Semei, like thyself,  
 But trust unto the covenant of my God,  
 Founded on mercy, with repentance built,  
 And finish'd with the glory of my soul.
- Sem.* A murderer, and hope for mercy in thy end!  
 Hate and destruction sit upon thy brows 1330  
 To watch the issue of thy damnèd ghost,  
 Which with thy latest gasp they'll take and tear,  
 Hurling in every pain of hell a piece.  
 Hence, murderer, thou shame to Israel,  
 Foul lecher, drunkard, plague to heaven and earth!  
 [*Throws again at David.*]
- Joab.* What, is it piety in David's thoughts,  
 So to abhor from laws of policy  
 In this extremity of his distress,  
 To give his subjects cause of carelessness?  
 Send hence the dog with sorrow to his grave. 1340
- Dav.* Why should the sons of Zeruia seek to check<sup>1</sup>  
 His spirit, which the Lord hath thus inspir'd?  
 Behold, my son which issu'd from my flesh,  
 With equal fury seeks to take my life:  
 How much more then the son of Jemini,  
 Chiefly since he doth naught but God's command?  
 It may be, he will look on me this day  
 With gracious eyes, and for his cursing bless  
 The heart of David in his bitterness.
- Sem.* What, dost thou fret my soul with sufferance? 1350

<sup>1</sup> "The sons of Zeruia," be it remembered, are Abisai (who a little before has said "Let me alone to take away his [Semei's] head") and Joab.—In this line "seek to" would seem to be an interpolation.

O, that the souls of Isboseth and Abner,  
 Which thou sent'st swimming to their graves in blood,  
 With wounds fresh bleeding, gasping for revenge,  
 Were here to execute my burning hate!  
 But I will hunt thy foot with curses still:  
 Hence, monster, murderer, mirror of contempt!

[Throws again at David.]

*Enter AHIMAAS and JONATHAN.*

*Ahi.* Long life to David, to his enemies death!

*Dav.* Welcome, Ahimaas and Jonathan:

What news sends Cusay to thy lord the king?

*Ahi.* Cusay would wish<sup>1</sup> my lord the king

1360

To pass the river Jordan presently,  
 Lest he and all his people perish here;  
 For wise Achitophel hath counsell'd Absalon

To take advantage of your weary arms,  
 And come this night upon you in the fields.  
 But yet the Lord hath made his counsel scorn,  
 And Cusay's policy with praise preferr'd;  
 Which was to number every Israelite,  
 And so assault you in their pride of strength.

*Jonath.* Abiathar besides entreats the king

1370

To send his men of war against his son,  
 And hazard not his person in the field.

*Dav.* Thanks to Abiathar, and to you both,

And to my Cusay, whom the Lord requite;  
 But ten times treble thanks to his soft hand  
 Whose pleasant touch hath made my heart to dance,  
 And play him praises in my zealous breast,  
 That turn'd the counsel of Achitophel  
 After the prayers of his servant's lips.

Now will we pass the river all this night,  
 And in the morning sound the voice of war,  
 The voice of bloody and unkindly war.

1380

*Joab.* Then tell us how thou wilt divide thy men,  
 And who shall have the special charge herein.

*Dav.* Joab, thyself shall for thy charge conduct  
 The first third part of all my valiant men;  
 The second shall Abisai's valour lead;

<sup>1</sup> Another mutilated line.

The third fair Ithay, which I most should grace  
 For comfort he hath done to David's woes;  
 And I myself will follow in the midst.

1390

*Ith.* That let not David; for, though we should fly,  
 Ten thousand of us were not half so much  
 Esteem'd with David's enemies as himself:  
 Thy people, loving thee, deny thee this.

*Dav.* What seems them best, then, that will David do.

But now, my lords and captains, hear his voice  
 That never yet pierc'd piteous heaven in vain;  
 Then let it not slip lightly through your ears;—  
 For my sake spare the young man Absalon.

Joab, thyself didst once use friendly words

1400

To reconcile my heart incens'd to him;  
 If, then, thy love be to thy kinsman sound,  
 And thou wilt prove a perfect Israelite,  
 Friend him with deeds, and touch no hair of him,—

Not that fair hair with which the wanton winds  
 Delight to play, and love to make it curl,

Wherein the nightingales would build their nests,

And make sweet bowers in every golden tress

To sing their lover every night asleep:

O, spoil not, Joab, Jove's fair ornaments,

1410

Which he hath sent to solace David's soul!

The best, ye see, my lords, are swift to sin;

To sin our feet are wash'd with milk of roes,<sup>1</sup>

And dried again with coals of lightning.<sup>2</sup>

O Lord, thou see'st the proudest sin's poor slave,

And with his bridle<sup>3</sup> pull'st him to the grave!

For my sake, then, spare lovely Absalon.

*Ith.* We will, my lord, for thy sake favour him.

[*Exeunt.*]

<sup>1</sup> Walker, who (*Shakespeare's Versification*, etc., p. 18) quotes this as if the reading of the old copy was "*milk of roses*," justly calls it "a strange passage."

<sup>2</sup> Lightning is here a trisyllable. (Indeed, the 4to has "lightening.")

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Collier, quoting the present passage in his *Hist. of Eng. Dram. Poetry*, iii. 204, gives,

"And with his bridle pulls him to the grave;"

remarking (*ibid*): "This line, as printed by the Rev. Mr. Dyce, exhibits almost the solitary verbal blemish of his edition: it there stands,

'And with his bridle pull'st him to the grave:'

as if David, addressing the Lord, said, 'Thou pull'st man to the grave with the bridle of sin;' whereas the meaning is, that 'sin with his bridle pulls man to the grave.' The passage would read better, could we alter *and* in the last line to 'who.'"



*Enter ACHITOPHEL with a halter.*

*Ach.* Now hath Achitophel order'd his house,  
 And taken leave of every pleasure there: 1420  
 Hereon depend Achitophel's delights,  
 And in this circle must his life be clos'd.  
 The wise Achitophel, whose counsel prov'd  
 Ever as sound for fortunate success  
 As if men ask'd the oracle of God,  
 Is now us'd like the fool of Israel:  
 Then set thy angry soul upon her wings,  
 And let her fly into the shade of death;  
 And for my death let heaven for ever weep,  
 Making huge floods upon the land I leave, 1430  
 To ravish them and all their fairest fruits.  
 Let all the sighs I breath'd for this disgrace,  
 Hang on my hedges like eternal mists,  
 As mourning garments for their master's death.  
 Ope, earth, and take thy miserable son  
 Into the bowels of thy cursèd womb:  
 Once in a surfeit thou didst spew him forth;  
 Now for fell hunger suck him in again,  
 And be his body poison to thy veins.  
 And now, thou hellish instrument of heaven, 1440  
 Once execute th' arrest of Jove's just doom,  
 And stop his breath<sup>1</sup> that curseth Israel. [Exit.

*Enter ABSALON, with AMASA and the rest of his train.*

*Abs.* Now for the crown and throne of Israel,  
 To be confirm'd with virtue of my sword,  
 And writ with David's blood upon the blade.  
 Now, Jove, let forth the golden firmament,  
 And look on him, with all thy fiery eyes,  
 Which thou hast made to give their glories light:  
 To show thou lov'st the virtue of thy hand,  
 Let fall a wreath of stars upon my head, 1450  
 Whose influence may govern Israel  
 With state exceeding all her other kings.  
 Fight, lords and captains, that your sovereign's face

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "breast."

May shine in honour brighter than the sun;  
 And with the virtue of my beauteous rays  
 Make this fair land as fruitful as the fields  
 That with sweet milk and honey overflow'd.  
 God, in the whizzing of a pleasant wind,  
 Shall march upon the tops of mulberry-trees,<sup>1</sup>  
 To cool all breasts that burn with any griefs,  
 As whilom he was good to Moses' men. 1460  
 By day the Lord shall sit within a cloud,  
 To guide your footsteps to the fields of joy;  
 And in the night a pillar, bright as fire,  
 Shall go before you, like a second sun,  
 Wherein the essence of his godhead is;  
 That day and night you may be brought to peace,  
 And never swerve from that delightsome path  
 That leads your souls to perfect happiness.  
 This shall he do for joy when I am king. 1470  
 Then fight, brave captains, that these joys may fly  
 Into your bosoms with sweet victory. [Exeunt.

*The battle ; and then ABSALON hangs by the hair.*<sup>2</sup>

*Abs.* What angry angel, sitting in these shades,  
 Hath laid his cruel hands upon my hair,  
 And holds my body thus 'twixt heaven and earth?  
 Hath Absalon no soldier near his hand  
 That may untwine me this unpleasant curl,  
 Or wound this tree that ravisheth his lord?  
 O God, behold the glory of thy hand,  
 And choicest fruit of nature's workmanship, 1480  
 Hang, like a rotten branch, upon this tree,  
 Fit for the axe and ready for the fire!  
 Since thou withhold'st all ordinary help  
 To loose my body from this bond of death,  
 O, let my beauty fill these senseless plants  
 With sense and power to loose me from this plague,

<sup>1</sup> "And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone first before thee," etc.—*First Chron.* xiv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> The following entry occurs in Henslowe's *Diary*, under Oct. 1602:  
 "Pd for poleyas and workmanship for to hange Absalome . xiiijd."  
 p. 241, ed. Shake. Soc. Does Henslowe allude to the present play, or to some other drama in which Absalon was "hung"?

And work some wonder to prevent his death  
Whose life thou mad'st a special miracle!

*Enter JOAB with a Soldier.*

- Sold.* My lord, I saw the young Prince Absalon  
Hang by the hair upon a shady oak, 1490  
And could by no means get himself unloos'd.
- Joab.* Why slew'st thou not the wicked Absalon,  
That rebel to his father and to heaven,  
That so I might have given thee for thy pains  
Ten silver shekels<sup>1</sup> and a golden waist?<sup>2</sup>
- Sold.* Not for a thousand shekels would I slay  
The son of David, whom his father charg'd  
Nor thou, Abisai, nor the son of Gath,<sup>3</sup>  
Should touch with stroke of deadly violence. 1500  
The charge was given in hearing of us all;  
And, had I done it, then, I know, thyself,  
Before thou wouldst abide the king's rebuke,  
Wouldst have accus'd me as a man of death.
- Joab.* I must not now stand trifling here with thee.
- Abs.* Help, Joab, help, O, help thy Absalon!  
Let not thy angry thoughts be laid in blood,  
In blood of him that sometimes nourish'd thee,  
And soften'd thy sweet heart with friendly love:  
O, give me once again my father's sight,  
My dearest father and my princely sovereign! 1510  
That, shedding tears of blood before his face,  
The ground may witness, and the heavens record,  
My last submission sound and full of ruth.
- Joab.* Rebel to nature, hate to heaven and earth!  
Shall I give help to him that thirsts the soul  
Of his dear father and my sovereign lord?  
Now see, the Lord hath tangled in a tree  
The health and glory of thy stubborn heart,  
And made thy pride curb'd with a senseless plant:  
Now, Absalon, how doth the Lord regard 1520  
The beauty whereupon thy hope was built,  
And which thou thought'st his grace did glory in?  
Find'st thou not now, with fear of instant death,

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "sickles."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, girdle.—The 4to "wast."

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, the native of Gath, viz. Ithai (Ittai).



That God affects not any painted shape  
 Or goodly personage, when the virtuous soul  
 Is stuff'd with naught but pride and stubbornness?  
 But, preach I to thee, while I should revenge  
 Thy cursèd sin that staineth Israel,  
 And makes her fields blush with her children's blood?  
 Take that as part of thy deservèd plague,  
 Which worthily no torment can inflict. 153°

[Stabs him

*Abs.* O Joab, Joab, cruel, ruthless Joab!

Herewith thou wound'st thy kingly sovereign's heart,  
 Whose heavenly temper hates his children's blood,  
 And will be sick, I know, for Absalon.

O, my dear father, that thy melting eyes  
 Might pierce this thicket to behold thy son,  
 Thy dearest son, gor'd with a mortal dart!  
 Yet, Joab, pity me: pity my father, Joab;  
 Pity his soul's distress that mourns my life,  
 And will be dead, I know, to hear my death. 154°

*Joab.* If he were so remorseful<sup>1</sup> of thy state,  
 Why sent he me against thee with the sword?  
 All Joab means to pleasure thee withal  
 Is, to despatch thee quickly of thy pain:  
 Hold, Absalon, Joab's pity is in this;  
 In this, proud Absalon, is Joab's love.

[Stabs him again; and then exit with Soldier.

*Abs.* Such love, such pity Israel's God send thee,  
 And for his love to David pity me!  
 Ah, my dear father, see thy bowels bleed;  
 See death assault thy dearest Absalon;  
 See, pity, pardon, pray for Absalon!

155°

*Enter five or six Soldiers.*

*First Sold.* See where the rebel in his glory hangs.—  
 Where is the virtue of thy beauty, Absalon?  
 Will any of us here now fear thy looks,  
 Or be in love with that thy golden hair  
 Wherein was wrapt rebellion 'gainst thy sire,  
 And cords prepar'd to stop thy father's breath?  
 Our captain Joab hath begun to us;  
 And here's an end to thee and all thy sins. 156°

[They stab Absalon; who dies.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, compassionate.

Come, let us take the beauteous rebel down,  
 And in some ditch, amidst this darksome wood,  
 Bury his bulk<sup>1</sup> beneath a heap of stones,  
 Whose stony heart did hunt his father's death.

*Re-enter, in triumph with drum and ensign, JOAB; ABISAI and Soldiers.*

*Joab.* Well done, tall<sup>2</sup> soldiers! take the traitor down,  
 And in this miry ditch inter his bones,  
 Covering his hateful breast with heaps of stones.  
 This shady thicket of dark Ephraim  
 Shall ever lower on his cursèd grave;  
 Night-ravens and owls shall ring his fatal knell, 1570  
 And sit exclaiming on his damnèd soul;  
 There shall they heap their preys of carrion,  
 Till all his grave be clad with stinking bones,  
 That it may loathe the sense of every man:  
 So shall his end breed horror to his name,  
 And to his traitorous fact eternal shame. [Exeunt.

*Enter Chorus.*

*Chorus.* O dreadful precedent of his just doom,  
 Whose holy heart is never touch'd with ruth  
 Of fickle beauty or of glorious shape,<sup>3</sup>  
 But with the virtue of an upright soul, 1580  
 Humble and zealous in his inward thoughts,  
 Though in his person loathsome and deform'd!  
 Now, since this story lends us other store,  
 To make a third discourse of David's life,  
 Adding thereto his most renownèd death,  
 And all their deaths that at his death he judg'd,  
 Here end we this, and what here wants to please,  
 We will supply with treble willingness.<sup>4</sup> [Exit.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, body.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, brave.

<sup>3</sup> The 4to "shapes."

<sup>4</sup> In the 4to, after this speech of the Chorus, the page ends with the following fragment, which belongs to some earlier scene of the play that has been lost:

*" Absalon with three or foure of his seruants or gentlemen.*

*Abs.* What boots it Absalon, vnhappy Absalon,  
 Sighing I say what boots it Absalon,  
 To haue disclos'd a farre more worthy wombe

Then "

*Trumpets sound. Enter JOAB, AHIMAAS, CUSAY; AMASA, with all the other followers of ABSALON.*

*Joab.* Soldiers of Israel, and ye sons of Judah,  
 That have contended in these irksome broils, 1590  
 And ript old Israel's bowels with your swords;  
 The godless general of your stubborn arms  
 Is brought by Israel's helper to the grave,  
 A grave of shame, and scorn of all the tribes:  
 Now, then, to save your honours from the dust,  
 And keep your bloods in temper by your bones,  
 Let Joab's ensign shroud your manly heads,  
 Direct your eyes, your weapons, and your hearts,  
 To guard the life of David from his foes.  
 Error hath mask'd your much-too-forward minds, 1600  
 And you have sinn'd against the chosen state,  
 Against his life, for whom your lives are bless'd,  
 And follow'd an usurper to the field;  
 In whose just death your deaths are threaten'd;  
 But Joab pities your disorder'd souls,  
 And therefore offers pardon, peace, and love,  
 To all that will be friendly reconcil'd  
 To Israel's weal, to David, and to heaven.  
 Amasa, thou art leader of the host  
 That under Absalon have rais'd their arms; 1610  
 Then be a captain wise and politic,  
 Careful and loving for thy soldiers' lives,  
 And lead them to this honourable league.

*Ama.* I will;<sup>1</sup> at least, I'll do my best:  
 And for the gracious offer thou hast made  
 I give thee thanks, as much as for my head.—  
 Then, you deceiv'd poor souls of Israel,  
 Since now ye see the errors you incurr'd,  
 With thanks and due submission be appeas'd;  
 And as ye see your captain's precedent, 1620  
 Here cast we, then, our swords at Joab's feet,  
 Submitting with all zeal and reverence  
 Our goods and bodies to his gracious hands.

[*Kneels with others.*

*Joab.* Stand up, and take ye all your swords again:  
 [All stand up.]

<sup>1</sup> Qy. "Joab, I will," etc.? or "I will, my lord," etc.



David and Joab shall be bless'd herein.

*Ahi.* Now let me go inform my lord the king  
How God hath freed him from his enemies.

*Joab.* Another time, Ahimaas, not now.—  
But, Cusay, go thyself, and tell the king  
The happy message of our good success.

*Cu.* I will, my lord, and thank thee for thy grace.

1630  
[*Exit.*]

*Ahi.* What if thy servant should go too, my lord?

*Joab.* What news hast thou to bring since he is gone?

*Ahi.* Yet do Ahimaas so much content,  
That he may run about so sweet a charge.

*Joab.* Run, if thou wilt; and peace be with thy steps.

[*Exit Ahimaas.*]

Now follow, that you may salute the king  
With humble hearts and reconcilèd souls.

*Ama.* We follow, Joab, to our gracious king;  
And him our swords shall honour to our deaths.

1640  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter* DAVID, BETHSABE, SALOMON, NATHAN, ADONIA, CHILEAB,  
*with their train.*

*Beth.* What means my lord, the lamp of Israel,  
From whose bright eyes all eyes receive their light,  
To dim the glory of his sweet aspect,<sup>1</sup>  
And paint his countenance with his heart's distress?  
Why should his thoughts retain a sad conceit,  
When every pleasure kneels before his throne,  
And sues for sweet acceptance with his grace?  
Take but your lute, and make the mountains dance,  
Retrieve the sun's sphere, and restrain the clouds,  
Give ears to trees, make savage lions tame,  
Impose still silence to the loudest winds,  
And fill the fairest day with foulest storms:  
Then why should passions of much meaner power  
Bear head against the heart of Israel?

1650

*Dav.* Fair Bethsabe, thou mightst increase the strength  
Of these thy arguments, drawn from my skill,  
By urging thy sweet sight to my conceits,  
Whose virtue ever serv'd for sacred balm  
To cheer my pinings past all earthly joys:  
But, Bethsabe, the daughter of the Highest,

1660

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "aspects."

Whose beauty builds the towers of Israel,  
 She that in chains of pearl and unicorn  
 Leads at her train the ancient golden world,  
 The world that Adam held in paradise,  
 Whose breath refineth all infectious airs,  
 And makes the meadows smile at her repair,—  
 She, she, my dearest <sup>1</sup> Bethsabe,  
 Fair Peace, the goddess of our graces here,  
 Is fled the streets of fair Jerusalem,  
 The fields of Israel, and the heart of David,  
 Leading my comforts in her golden chains,  
 Link'd to the life and soul of Absalon.

1670

*Beth.* Then is the pleasure of my sovereign's heart  
 So wrapt within the bosom of that son,  
 That Salomon, whom Israel's God affects,  
 And gave the name unto him for his love,  
 Should be no salve to comfort David's soul?

*Dav.* Salomon, my love, is David's lord; <sup>2</sup>  
 Our God hath nam'd him lord of Israel:  
 In him (for that, and since he is thy son,)  
 Must David needs be pleasèd at the heart;  
 And he shall surely sit upon my throne.  
 But Absalon, the beauty of my bones,  
 Fair Absalon, the counterfeit <sup>3</sup> of love,  
 Sweet Absalon, the image of content,  
 Must claim a portion in his father's care,  
 And be in life and death King David's son.

1680

*Nath.* Yet, as my lord hath said, let Salomon reign,  
 Whom God in naming hath anointed king,  
 Now is he apt to learn th' eternal laws,  
 Whose knowledge being rooted in his youth  
 Will beautify his age with glorious fruits;  
 While Absalon, incens'd with graceless pride,  
 Usurps and stains the kingdom with his sin:  
 Let Salomon be made thy staff of age,  
 Fair Israel's rest, and honour of thy race.

1690

*Dav.* Tell me, my Salomon, wilt thou embrace  
 Thy father's precepts gravèd in thy heart,  
 And satisfy my zeal to thy renown  
 With practice of such sacred principles

1700

<sup>1</sup> Qy. "She, she, alas, my dearest," etc.?

<sup>2</sup> Corrupted.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., portrait.

As shall concern the state of Israel?

*Sal.* My royal father, if the heavenly zeal,  
Which for my welfare feeds upon your soul,  
Were not sustain'd with virtue of mine own;  
If the sweet accents of your cheerful voice  
Should not each hour <sup>1</sup> beat upon mine ears  
As sweetly as the breath of heaven to him  
That gaspeth scorched with the summer's sun;  
I should be guilty of unpardon'd sin,  
Fearing the plague of heaven and shame of earth: 1710  
But since I vow myself to learn the skill  
And holy secrets of his mighty hand  
Whose cunning tunes the music of my soul,  
It would content me, father, first to learn  
How the Eternal fram'd the firmament;  
Which bodies lend <sup>2</sup> their influence by fire,  
And which are fill'd with hoary winter's ice;  
What sign is rainy, and what star is fair;  
Why by the rules of true proportion  
The year is still divided into months, 1720  
The months to days, the days to certain hours;  
What fruitful race shall fill the future world;  
Or for what time shall this round building stand;  
What magistrates, what kings shall keep in awe  
Men's minds with bridles of th' eternal law.

*Dav.* Wade not too far, my boy, in waves so <sup>3</sup> deep:  
The feeble eyes of our aspiring thoughts  
Behold things present, and record things past;  
But things to come exceed our human reach,  
And are not painted yet in angels' eyes: 1730  
For those, submit thy sense, and say—"Thou power,  
That now art framing of the future world,  
Know'st all to come, not by the course of heaven,  
By frail conjectures of inferior signs,  
By monstrous floods, by flights and flocks of birds,  
By bowels of a sacrificèd beast,  
Or by the figures of some hidden art;  
But by a true and natural presage,  
Laying the ground and perfect architect <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A dissyllable here. (The 4to "hower.")

<sup>2</sup> The 4to "lead."

<sup>3</sup> The 4to "too."

<sup>4</sup> Qy. "archetype"? unless Peele uses the former word in the sense of the latter.



Of all our actions now before thine eyes,  
From Adam to the end of Adam's seed: 1740

O heaven, protect my weakness with thy strength!

So look on me that I may view thy face,

And see these secrets written in thy brows.

O sun, come dart thy rays upon my moon!

That now mine eyes, eclipsèd to the earth,

May brightly be refin'd and shine to heaven;

Transform me from this flesh, that I may live,

Before my death, regenerate with thee.

O thou great God, ravish my earthly spirit! 1750

That for the time a more than human skill

May feed the organons of all my sense;

That, when I think, thy thoughts may be my guide,

And, when I speak, I may be made by choice

The perfect echo of thy heavenly voice."

Thus say, my son, and thou shalt learn them all.

*Sal.* A secret fury ravisheth my soul,

Lifting my mind above her human bounds;

And, as the eagle, rousèd from her stand

With violent hunger, towering in the air, 1760

Seizeth her feather'd prey, and thinks to feed,

But seeing then a cloud beneath her feet,

Lets fall the fowl, and is emboldenèd

With eyes intentive to bedare <sup>1</sup> the sun,

And styeth <sup>2</sup> close unto his stately sphere;

So Salomon, mounted on the burning wings

Of zeal divine, lets fall his mortal food,

And cheers his senses with celestial air,

Treads in the golden starry labyrinth,

And holds his eyes fix'd on Jehovah's brows. 1770

Good father, teach me further what to do.

*Nath.* See, David, how his haughty spirit mounts,

Even now of height to wield a diadem:

Then make him promise that he may succeed,

And rest old Israel's bones from broils of war.

*Dav.* Nathan, thou prophet, sprung from Jesse's root,

I promise thee and lovely Bethsabe,

My Salomon shall govern after me.

*Beth.* He that hath touch'd thee with this righteous thought

Preserve the harbour of thy thoughts in peace! 1780

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, defy.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, soareth, ascendeth.

*Enter Messenger.*

*Mess.* My lord, thy servants of the watch have seen  
One running hitherward from forth the wars.

*Dav.* If he be come alone, he bringeth news.

*Mess.* Another hath thy servant seen, my lord,  
Whose running much resembles Sadoc's son.

*Dav.* He is a good man, and good tidings brings.

*Enter AHIMAAS.*

*Ahi.* Peace and content be with my lord the king,  
Whom Israel's God hath bless'd with victory.

*Dav.* Tell me, Ahimaas, lives my Absalon?

*Ahi.* I saw a troop of soldiers gatherèd,  
But know not what the tumult might import.

1790

*Dav.* Stand by, until some other may inform  
The heart of David with a happy truth.

*Enter CUSAY.*

*Cu.* Happiness and honour live with David's soul,  
Whom God hath bless'd with conquest of his foes.

*Dav.* But, Cusay, lives the young man Absalon?

*Cu.* The stubborn enemies to David's peace,  
And all that cast their darts against his crown,  
Fare ever like the young man Absalon!

For as he rid the woods of Ephraim,  
Which fought for thee as much as all thy men,  
His hair was tangled in a shady oak;  
And hanging there, by Joab and his men  
Sustain'd the stroke of well deservèd death.

1800

*Dav.* Hath Absalon sustain'd the stroke of death?

Die, David, for the death of Absalon,  
And make these cursèd news the bloody darts  
That through his bowels rip thy wretched breast.  
Hence, David, walk the solitary woods,  
And in some cedar's shade the thunder slew,  
And fire from heaven hath made his branches black,  
Sit mourning the decease of Absalon:  
Against the body of that blasted plant  
In thousand shivers break thy ivory lute,

1810

Hanging thy stringless harp upon his boughs;  
 And through the hollow sapless sounding trunk  
 Bellow the torments that perplex thy soul.  
 There let the winds sit sighing till they burst;  
 Let tempest, muffled with a cloud of pitch,  
 Threaten the forests with her hellish face,  
 And, mounted fiercely on her iron wings,  
 Rend up the wretched engine by the roots  
 That held my dearest Absalon to death.  
 Then let them toss my broken lute to heaven,  
 Even to his hands that beats me with the strings,  
 To show how sadly his poor shepherd sings.

1820

[Goes to his pavilion and sits close a while.

*Beth.* Die, Bethsabe, to see thy David mourn,  
 To hear his tunes of anguish and of hell,  
 O, help, my David, help thy Bethsabe,  
 Whose heart is piercèd with thy breathy swords,<sup>1</sup>  
 And bursts with burden of ten thousand griefs!

1830

[Lies down.

Now sit thy sorrows sucking of my blood:  
 O, that it might be poison to their powers,  
 And that their lips might draw my bosom dry,  
 So David's love might ease him, though she die!

*Nath.* These violent passions come not from above;  
 David and Bethsabe offend the Highest,  
 To mourn in this immeasurable sort.

*Dav.* [looking forth.] O Absalon, Absalon! O my son, my son!  
 Would God that I had died for Absalon!  
 But he is dead; ah, dead! Absalon is dead:  
 And David lives to die for Absalon.

1840

[Sits close again.

*Enter* JOAB, ABISAI, ITHAY, and their train.

*Joab.* Why lies the queen so prostrate on the ground?  
 Why is this company so tragic-hu'd?  
 Why is the king now absent from his men,

<sup>1</sup> "We suggest whether it should not be 'breathed words;' but if the text is suffered to remain, we can only say, that 'thy breathy swords,' for 'the swords of thy breath,' is more barbaric than anything which we have met with in Peele." *Rev. J. Milford—Gent. Mag.* for Feb., 1833, p. 103. "Barbaric" as the expression may be, I nevertheless believe that it is the genuine reading.



And marcheth not in triumph through the gates?

[Unfolds the pavilion.

David, awake; if sleep have shut thine eyes,

Sleep of affection, that thou canst not see

The honour offer'd to the victor's head:

Joab brings conquest piercèd on his spear,

1850

And joy from all the tribes of Israel.

*Dav.* Thou man of blood, thou sepulchre of death,

Whose marble breast intombs<sup>1</sup> my bowels quick,

Did I not charge thee, nay, entreat thy hand,

Even for my sake, to spare my Absalon?

And hast thou now, in spite of David's health,

And scorn to do my heart some happiness,

Given him the sword and spilt his purple soul?

*Joab.* What, irks it David, that he victor breathes,

That Juda and the fields of Israel

1860

Should cleanse their faces from their children's blood?

What, art thou weary of thy royal rule?

Is Israel's throne a serpent in thine eyes,

And he that set thee there so far from thanks,

That thou must curse his servant for his sake?

Hast thou not said that, as the morning light,

The cloudless morning, so should be thine house,

And not as flowers by the brightest rain

Which grow up quickly and as quickly fade?

Hast thou not said, the wicked are as thorns,

1870

That cannot be preservèd<sup>2</sup> with the hand,

And that the man shall touch them must be arm'd

With coats of iron and garments made of steel,

Or with the shaft of a defencèd spear?

<sup>1</sup> The 4to "intombe."

<sup>2</sup> *Qy.* "repressèd"?—The passage of Scripture to which our author here alludes is as follows:

"And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

"Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

"But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands [The Vulgate "*quæ non tolluntur manibus*"]:

"But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear," etc.—*Sec. Samuel*, xxiii. 4, sqq.

And art thou angry he is now cut off  
 That led the guiltless swarming to their deaths,  
 And was more wicked than an host of men?  
 Advance thee from thy melancholy den,  
 And deck thy body with thy blissful robes,  
 Or, by the Lord that sways the heaven I swear, 1880  
 I'll lead thine armies to another king  
 Shall cheer them for their princely chivalry,  
 And not sit daunted, frowning in the dark,  
 When his fair looks, with oil and wine refresh'd,  
 Should dart into their bosoms gladsome beams,  
 And fill their stomachs with triumphant feasts;  
 That when elsewhere stern war shall sound his trump,  
 And call another battle to the field,  
 Fame still may bring thy valiant soldiers home,  
 And for their service happily confess 1890  
 She wanted worthy trumps to sound their prowess:  
 Take thou this course and live; refuse and die.

*Abis.* Come, brother, let him sit there till he sink;  
 Some other shall advance the name of Joab.

[*Offers to go out with Joab.*]

*Beth.* [*rising.*] O, stay, my lords, stay! David mourns no more,  
 But riseth to give honour to your acts.

*Dav.* [*rising, and coming from his pavilion.*] Then happy art thou,  
 David's fairest son,  
 That, freed from the yoke of earthly toils,  
 And séquester'd from sense of human sins,  
 Thy soul shall joy<sup>1</sup> the sacred cabinet 1900  
 Of those divine ideas that present  
 Thy changèd spirit with a heaven of bliss.  
 Then thou art gone; ah, thou art gone, my son!  
 To heaven, I hope, my Absalon is gone:  
 Thy soul there plac'd in honour of the saints,  
 Or angels clad with immortality,  
 Shall reap a sevenfold grace for all thy griefs;  
 Thy eyes, now no more eyes but shining stars,  
 Shall deck the flaming heavens with novel lamps;  
 There shalt thou taste the drink of seraphins, 1910  
 And cheer thy feelings with archangels' food;  
 Thy day of rest, thy holy sabbath-day,  
 Shall be eternal; and, the curtain drawn,

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, enjoy.

Thou shalt behold thy sovereign face to face,  
With wonder, knit in triple unity,  
Unity infinite and innumerable.—

Courage, brave captains! Joab's tale hath stirr'd,  
And made the suit of Israel preferr'd.

*Joab.* Bravely resolv'd, and spoken like a king:

Now may old Israel and his daughters sing.

1920

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



THE SPANISH TRAGEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Ghost of Andrea, a Spanish nobleman, Revenge.	} <i>Chorus.</i>	ALEXANDRO, } <i>Portuguese Noblemen.</i> VILLUPPO, } Two Portuguese.
KING OF SPAIN.		PEDRINGANO, <i>Bellimperia's servant.</i>
CYPRIAN DUKE OF CASTILE, <i>his brother.</i>		CHRISTOPHIL, <i>Bellimperia's custodian.</i>
LORENZO, <i>the Duke's son.</i>		Lorenzo's Page.
BELLIMPERIA, <i>Lorenzo's sister.</i>		SERBERINE, <i>Balthazar's servant.</i>
VICEROY OF PORTUGAL.		Isabella's Maid.
BALTHAZAR, <i>his son.</i>		Messenger.
DON PEDRO, <i>the Viceroy's brother.</i>		Hangman.
HIERONIMO, <i>Marshal of Spain.</i>		Three Kings and three Knights in the first Dumb-show.
ISABELLA, <i>his wife.</i>		Hymen and two torch-bearers in the second.
HORATIO, <i>their son.</i>		BAZARDO, <i>a Painter.</i>
Spanish General.		PEDRO and JAQUES, <i>Hieronimo's servants.</i>
Deputy.		Army. Banquet. Royal suites.
DON BAZULTO, <i>an old man.</i>		Noblemen. Halberdiers. Officers.
Three Citizens.		Three Watchmen. Trumpets. Servants, etc.
Portuguese Ambassador.		

# THE SPANISH TRAGEDY

## ACT I

### SCENE I.—*Induction.*

*Enter the Ghost of Andrea, and with him Revenge.*

*Ghost.* When this eternal substance of my soul  
Did live imprison'd in my wanton flesh,  
Each in their function serving other's need,  
I was a courtier in the Spanish court:  
My name was Don Andrea; my descent,  
Though not ignoble, yet inferior far  
To gracious fortunes of my tender youth.  
For there in prime and pride of all my years,  
By duteous service and deserving love,  
In secret I possess'd a worthy dame, 10  
Which hight sweet Bellimperia by name.  
But, in the harvest of my summer joys,  
Death's winter nipp'd the blossoms of my bliss,  
Forcing divorce betwixt my love and me.  
For in the late conflict with Portingal  
My valour drew me into danger's mouth,  
Till life to death made passage through my wounds,  
When I was slain, my soul descended straight  
To pass the flowing stream of Acheron;  
But churlish Charon, only boatman there, 20  
Said that, my rites of burial not perform'd,  
I might not sit amongst his passengers.  
Ere Sol had slept three nights in Thetis' lap,  
And slak'd his smoking chariot in her flood,  
By Don Horatio, our knight marshal's son,  
My funerals and obsequies were done.  
Then was the ferryman of hell content  
To pass me over to the slimy strand,  
That leads to fell Avernus' ugly waves.



There, pleasing Cerberus with honey'd speech, 30  
 I pass'd the perils of the foremost porch.  
 Not far from hence, amidst ten thousand souls,  
 Sat Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanth;  
 To whom no sooner 'gan I make approach,  
 To crave a passport for my wand'ring ghost,  
 But Minos, in graven leaves of lottery,  
 Drew forth the manner of my life and death.  
 "This knight," quoth he, "both liv'd and died in love;  
 And for his love tried fortune of the wars;  
 And by war's fortune lost both love and life." 40  
 "Why then," said Aeacus, "convey him hence,  
 To walk with lovers in our fields of love,  
 And spend the course of everlasting time  
 Under green myrtle-trees and cypress shades."  
 "No, no," said Rhadamanth, "it were not well,  
 With loving souls to place a martialist:  
 He died in war, and must to martial fields,  
 Where wounded Hector lives in lasting pain,  
 And Achilles' Myrmidons do scour the plain."  
 Then Minos, mildest censor of the three, 50  
 Made this device to end the difference:  
 "Send him," quoth he, "to our infernal king,  
 To doom him as best seems his majesty."  
 To this effect my passport straight was drawn.  
 In keeping on my way to Pluto's court,  
 Through dreadful shades of ever-glooming night,  
 I saw more sights than thousand tongues can tell,  
 Or pens can write, or mortal hearts can think.  
 Three ways there were: that on the right-hand side  
 Was ready way unto the 'foresaid fields, 60  
 Where lovers live and bloody martialists;  
 But either sort contain'd within his bounds.  
 The left-hand path, declining fearfully,  
 Was ready downfall to the deepest hell,  
 Where bloody Furies shakes their whips of steel,  
 And poor Ixion turns an endless wheel;  
 Where usurers are chok'd with melting gold,  
 And wantons are embrac'd with ugly snakes,  
 And murd'ers groan with never-killing wounds,  
 And perjurd wights scalded in boiling lead, 70  
 And all foul sins with torments overwhelm'd.

'Twi'xt these two ways I trod the middle path,  
 Which brought me to the fair Elysian green,  
 In midst whereof there stands a stately tower,  
 The walls of brass, the gates of adamant:  
 Here finding Pluto with his Proserpine,  
 I show'd my passport, humbled on my knee;  
 Whereat fair Proserpine began to smile,  
 And begg'd that only she might give my doom:  
 Pluto was pleas'd, and seal'd it with a kiss. 80  
 Forthwith, Revenge, she rounded thee in th' ear,  
 And bad thee lead me through the gates of horn,  
 Where dreams have passage in the silent night.  
 No sooner had she spoke, but we were here—  
 I wot not how—in twinkling of an eye.

*Revenge.* Then know, Andrea, that thou art arriv'd  
 Where thou shalt see the author of thy death,  
 Don Balthazar, the prince of Portingal,  
 Depriv'd of life by Bellimperia.  
 Here sit we down to see the mystery, 90  
 And serve for Chorus in this tragedy.

SCENE II.—*The Court of Spain.*

*Enter SPANISH KING, General, CASTILE, and HIERONIMO.*

*King.* Now say, lord General, how fares our camp?

*Gen.* All well, my sovereign liege, except some few  
 That are deceas'd by fortune of the war.

*King.* But what portends thy cheerful countenance,  
 And posting to our presence thus in haste?  
 Speak, man, hath fortune given us victory?

*Gen.* Victory, my liege, and that with little loss.

*King.* Our Portingals will pay us tribute then?

*Gen.* Tribute and wonted homage therewithal. 100

*King.* Then bless'd be heaven and guider of the heavens,  
 From whose fair influence such justice flows.

*Cast.* *O multum dilecte Deo, tibi militat aether,  
 Et conjuratae curvato poplite gentes  
 Succumbunt; recti soror est victoria juris.*

*King.* Thanks to my loving brother of Castile.  
 But, General, unfold in brief discourse

Your form of battle and your war's success,  
 That, adding all the pleasure of thy news  
 Unto the height of former happiness,  
 With deeper wage and greater dignity  
 We may reward thy blissful chivalry.

110

*Gen.* Where Spain and Portugal do jointly knit  
 Their frontiers, leaning on each other's bound,  
 There met our armies in their proud array:  
 Both furnish'd well, both full of hope and fear,  
 Both menacing alike with daring shows,  
 Both vaunting sundry colours of device,  
 Both cheerly sounding trumpets, drums, and fifes,  
 Both raising dreadful clamours to the sky,  
 That valleys, hills, and rivers made rebound,  
 And heav'n itself was frighted with the sound.  
 Our battles both were pitch'd in squadron form,  
 Each corner strongly fenc'd with wings of shot;  
 But ere we join'd and came to push of pike,  
 I brought a squadron of our readiest shot  
 From out our rearward, to begin the fight:  
 They brought another wing t' encounter us.  
 Meanwhile, our ordnance play'd on either side,  
 And captains strove to have their valours tried.  
 Don Pedro, their chief horsemen's colonel,  
 Did with his cornet bravely make attempt  
 To break the order of our battle ranks:  
 But Don Rogero, worthy man of war,  
 March'd forth against him with our musketeers,  
 And stopp'd the malice of his fell approach.  
 While they maintain hot skirmish to and fro,  
 Both battles join, and fall to handy-blows,  
 Their violent shot resembling th' ocean's rage,  
 When, roaring loud, and with a swelling tide,  
 It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks,  
 And gapes to swallow neighbour-bounding lands.  
 Now while Bellona rageth here and there,  
 Thick storms of bullets ran like winter's hail,  
 And shiver'd lances dark the troubled air.

120

130

140

*Pede pes et cuspide cuspis;*

*Arma sonant armis, vir petiturque viro.*

On every side drop captains to the ground,  
 And soldiers, some ill-maim'd, some slain outright:



Here falls a body sunder'd from his head,  
 There legs and arms lie bleeding on the grass, 150  
 Mingled with weapons and unbowell'd steeds,  
 That scatt'ring overspread the purple plain.  
 In all this turmoil, three long hours and more,  
 The victory to neither part inclin'd;  
 Till Don Andrea, with his brave lanciers,  
 In their main battle made so great a breach,  
 That, half dismay'd, the multitude retir'd:  
 But Balthazar, the Portingals' young prince,  
 Brought rescue, and encourag'd them to stay. 160  
 Here-hence the fight was eagerly renew'd,  
 And in that conflict was Andrea slain:  
 Brave man at arms, but weak to Balthazar.  
 Yet while the prince, insulting over him,  
 Breath'd out proud vaunts, sounding to our reproach,  
 Friendship and hardy valour, join'd in one,  
 Prick'd forth Horatio, our knight marshal's son,  
 To challenge forth that prince in single fight.  
 Not long between these twain the fight endur'd,  
 But straight the prince was beaten from his horse, 170  
 And forc'd to yield him prisoner to his foe.  
 When he was taken, all the rest they fled,  
 And our carbines pursu'd them to the death,  
 Till, Phœbus waving to the western deep,  
 Our trumpeters were charg'd to sound retreat.

*King.* Thanks, good lord General, for these good news;  
 And for some argument of more to come,  
 Take this and wear it for thy sovereign's sake.

[Gives him his chain.

But tell me now, hast thou confirm'd a peace?

*Gen.* No peace, my liege, but peace conditional, 180  
 That if with homage tribute be well paid,  
 The fury of your forces will be stay'd:  
 And to this peace their viceroy hath subscrib'd,

[Gives the King a paper.

And made a solemn vow that, during life,  
 His tribute shall be truly paid to Spain.

*King.* These words, these deeds, become thy person well.  
 But now, knight marshal, frolic with thy king,  
 For 'tis thy son that wins this battle's prize.

*Hier.* Long may he live to serve my sovereign liege,

And soon decay, unless he serve my liege.

190

*King.* Nor thou, nor he, shall die without reward.

[*A tucket afar off.*

What means the warning of this trumpet's sound?

*Gen.* This tells me that your grace's men of war,  
Such as war's fortune hath reserv'd from death,  
Come marching on towards your royal seat,  
To show themselves before your majesty:  
For so I gave in charge at my depart.  
Whereby by demonstration shall appear,  
That all, except three hundred or few more,  
Are safe return'd, and by their foes enrich'd.

200

*The Army enters ; BALTHAZAR, between LORENZO and HORATIO, captive.*

*King.* A gladsome sight! I long to see them here.

[*They enter and pass by.*

Was that the warlike prince of Portingal,  
That by our nephew was in triumph led?

*Gen.* It was, my liege, the prince of Portingal.

*King.* But what was he that on the other side  
Held him by th' arm, as partner of the prize?

*Hier.* That was my son, my gracious sovereign;  
Of whom though from his tender infancy  
My loving thoughts did never hope but well,  
He never pleas'd his father's eyes till now,  
Nor fill'd my heart with over-cloying joys.

210

*King.* Go, let them march once more about these walls,  
That, staying them, we may confer and talk  
With our brave prisoner and his double guard.  
Hieronimo, it greatly pleaseth us  
That in our victory thou have a share,  
By virtue of thy worthy son's exploit.  
Bring hither the young prince of Portingal:  
The rest march on; but, ere they be dismiss'd,  
We will bestow on every soldier  
Two ducats and on every leader ten,  
That they may know our largess welcomes them.

220

[*Enter again.*

[*Exeunt all but Balthazar, Lorenzo, and Horatio.*  
Welcome, Don Balthazar! welcome, nephew!  
And thou, Horatio, thou art welcome too.

Young prince, although thy father's hard misdeeds,  
 In keeping back the tribute that he owes,  
 Deserve but evil measure at our hands,  
 Yet shalt thou know that Spain is honourable.

*Bal.* The trespass that my father made in peace  
 Is now controll'd by fortune of the wars;  
 And cards once dealt, it boots not ask why so.  
 His men are slain, a weak'ning to his realm;  
 His colours seiz'd, a blot unto his name;  
 His son distress'd, a cor'sive to his heart:  
 These punishments may clear his late offence.

230

*King.* Ay, Balthazar, if he observe this truce,  
 Our peace will grow the stronger for these wars.  
 Meanwhile live thou, though not in liberty,  
 Yet free from bearing any servile yoke;  
 For in our hearing thy deserts were great,  
 And in our sight thyself art gracious.

240

*Bal.* And I shall study to deserve this grace.

*King.* But tell me—for their holding makes me doubt—  
 To which of these twain art thou prisoner?

*Lor.* To me, my liege.

*Hor.* To me, my sovereign.

*Lor.* This hand first took his courser by the reins.

*Hor.* But first my lance did put him from his horse.

*Lor.* I seiz'd his weapon, and enjoy'd it first.

*Hor.* But first I forc'd him lay his weapons down.

*King.* Let go his arm, upon our privilege.

250

[*They let him go.*]

Say, worthy prince, to whether did'st thou yield?

*Bal.* To him in courtesy, to this perforce:

He spake me fair, this other gave me strokes;

He promis'd life, this other threaten'd death;

He won my love, this other conquer'd me,

And, truth to say, I yield myself to both.

*Hier.* But that I know your grace for just and wise,

And might seem partial in this difference,

Enforc'd by nature and by law of arms

My tongue should plead for young Horatio's right:

260

He hunted well that was a lion's death,

Not he that in a garment wore his skin;

So hares may pull dead lions by the beard.

*King.* Content thee, marshal, thou shalt have no wrong;



And, for thy sake, thy son shall want no right.  
Will both abide the censure of my doom?

*Lor.* I crave no better than your grace awards.

*Hor.* Nor I, although I sit beside my right.

*King.* Then, by my judgment, thus your strife shall end:

You both deserve, and both shall have reward. 270

Nephew, thou took'st his weapon and his horse:

His weapons and his horse are thy reward.

Horatio, thou did'st force him first to yield:

His ransom therefore is thy valour's fee;

Appoint the sum, as you shall both agree.

But, nephew, thou shalt have the prince in guard,

For thine estate best fitteth such a guest:

Horatio's house were small for all his train.

Yet, in regard thy substance passeth his,

And that just guerdon may befall desert, 280

To him we yield the armour of the prince.

How likes Don Balthazar of this device?

*Bal.* Right well, my liege, if this proviso were,

That Don Horatio bear us company,

Whom I admire and love for chivalry.

*King.* Horatio, leave him not that loves thee so.—

Now let us hence to see our soldiers paid,

And feast our prisoner as our friendly guest. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*The Court of Portugal.*

*Enter VICEROY, ALEXANDRO, VILLUPPO.*

*Vic.* Is our ambassador despatch'd for Spain?

*Alex.* Two days, my liege, are past since his depart. 290

*Vic.* And tribute-payment gone along with him?

*Alex.* Ay, my good lord.

*Vic.* Then rest we here awhile in our unrest,

And feed our sorrows with some inward sighs;

For deepest cares break never into tears.

But wherefore sit I in a regal throne?

This better fits a wretch's endless moan.

[Falls to the ground.]

Yet this is higher than my fortunes reach,

And therefore better than my state deserves.

Ay, ay, this earth, image of melancholy,  
Seeks him whom fates adjudge to misery.  
Here let me lie; now am I at the lowest.

300

*Qui jacet in terra, non habet unde cadat.*

*In me consumpsit vires fortuna nocendo :*

*Nil superest ut jam possit obesse magis.*

Yes, Fortune may bereave me of my crown:  
Here, take it now;—let Fortune do her worst,  
She will not rob me of this sable weed:

O no, she envies none but pleasant things.

Such is the folly of spiteful chance!

310

Fortune is blind, and sees not my deserts;

So is she deaf, and hears not my laments;

And could she hear, yet is she wilful-mad,

And therefore will not pity my distress.

Suppose that she could pity me, what then?

What help can be expected at her hands

Whose foot is standing on a rolling stone,

And mind more mutable than fickle winds?

Why wail I then, where's hope of no redress?

O yes, complaining makes my grief seem less.

320

My late ambition hath distain'd my faith;

My breach of faith occasion'd bloody wars;

Those bloody wars have spent my treasure;

And with my treasure my people's blood;

And with their blood, my joy and best belov'd,

My best belov'd, my sweet and only son.

O, wherefore went I not to war myself?

The cause was mine; I might have died for both:

My years were mellow, his but young and green;

My death were natural, but his was forc'd.

330

*Alex.* No doubt, my liege, but still the prince survives.

*Vic.* Survives! ay, where?

*Alex.* In Spain—a prisoner by mischance of war.

*Vic.* Then they have slain him for his father's fault.

*Alex.* That were a breach to common law of arms.

*Vic.* They reckon no laws that meditate revenge.

*Alex.* His ransom's worth will stay from foul revenge.

*Vic.* No; if he liv'd, the news would soon be here.

*Alex.* Nay, evil news fly faster still than good.

*Vic.* Tell me no more of news; for he is dead.

340

*Vil.* My sovereign, pardon the author of ill news,

And I'll bewray the fortune of thy son.

*Vic.* Speak on, I'll guerdon thee, whate'er it be:

Mine ear is ready to receive ill news;

My heart grown hard 'gainst mischief's battery.

Stand up, I say, and tell thy tale at large.

*Vil.* Then hear that truth which these mine eyes have seen:

When both the armies were in battle join'd,

Don Balthazar, amidst the thickest troops,

To win renown did wondrous feats of arms:

350

Amongst the rest I saw him, hand to hand,

In single fight with their lord-general;

Till Alexandro, that here counterfeits,

Under the colour of a duteous friend

Discharg'd his pistol at the prince's back,

As though he would have slain their general:

But therewithal Don Balthazar fell down;

And when he fell, then we began to fly:

But, had he liv'd, the day had sure been ours.

*Alex.* O wicked forgery! O trait'rous miscreant!

360

*Vic.* Hold thou thy peace! But now, Villuppo, say,

Where then became the carcase of my son?

*Vil.* I saw them drag it to the Spanish tents.

*Vic.* Ay, ay, my nightly dreams have told me this.—

Thou false, unkind, unthankful, trait'rous beast,

Wherein had Balthazar offended thee

That thou shouldst thus betray him to our foes?

Was't Spanish gold that blear'd so thine eyes

That thou couldst see no part of our deserts?

Perchance, because thou art Terceira's lord,

370

Thou hadst some hope to wear this diadem,

If first my son and then myself were slain;

But thy ambitious thought shall break thy neck.

Ay, this was it that made thee spill his blood:

*[Takes the crown and puts it on again.]*

But I'll now wear it till thy blood be spilt.

*Alex.* Vouchsafe, dread sovereign, to hear me speak.

*Vic.* Away with him; his sight is second hell.

Keep him till we determine of his death:

If Balthazar be dead, he shall not live.

Villuppo, follow us for thy reward.

*[Exit Viceroy.]*

381

*Vil.* Thus have I with an envious, forged tale

Deceiv'd the king, betray'd mine enemy,

And hope for guerdon of my villany.

*[Exit.]*



## SCENE IV

*Enter HORATIO and BELLIMPERIA.*

*Bel.* Signior Horatio, this is the place and hour,  
Wherein I must entreat thee to relate  
The circumstance of Don Andrea's death,  
Who, living, was my garland's sweetest flower,  
And in his death hath buried my delights.

*Hor.* For love of him and service to yourself,  
I will refuse this heavy doleful charge; 390  
Yet tears and sighs, I fear, will hinder me.  
When both our armies were enjoin'd in fight,  
Your worthy chevalier amidst the thickest,  
For glorious cause still aiming at the fairest,  
Was at the last by young Don Balthazar  
Encounter'd hand to hand: their fight was long,  
Their hearts were great, their clamours menacing,  
Their strength alike, their strokes both dangerous.  
But wrathful Nemesis, that wicked power,  
Envyng at Andrea's praise and worth, 400  
Cut short his life, to end his praise and worth.  
She, she herself, disguis'd in armour's mask—  
As Pallas was before proud Pergamus—  
Brought in a fresh supply of halberdiers,  
Which paunch'd his horse, and ding'd him to the ground.  
Then young Don Balthazar with ruthless rage,  
Taking advantage of his foe's distress,  
Did finish what his halberdiers begun,  
And left not, till Andrea's life was done.  
Then, though too late, incens'd with just remorse, 410  
I with my band set forth against the prince,  
And brought him prisoner from his halberdiers.

*Bel.* Would thou hadst slain him that so slew my love!  
But then was Don Andrea's carcase lost?

*Hor.* No, that was it for which I chiefly strove,  
Nor stepp'd I back till I recover'd him:  
I took him up, and wound him in mine arms;  
And wielding him unto my private tent,  
There laid him down, and dew'd him with my tears,

And sigh'd and sorrow'd as became a friend.  
 But neither friendly sorrow, sighs, nor tears  
 Could win pale Death from his usurp'd right.  
 Yet this I did, and less I could not do:

42°

I saw him honour'd with due funeral.  
 This scarf I pluck'd from off his lifeless arm,  
 And wear it in remembrance of my friend.

*Bel.* I know the scarf: would he had kept it still;  
 For had he liv'd, he would have kept it still,  
 And worn it for his Bellimperia's sake:

For 'twas my favour at his last depart.  
 But now wear thou it both for him and me;  
 For after him thou hast deserv'd it best.

43°

But for thy kindness in his life and death,  
 Be sure, while Bellimperia's life endures,  
 She will be Don Horatio's thankful friend.

*Hor.* And, madam, Don Horatio will not slack  
 Humbly to serve fair Bellimperia.

But now, if your good liking stand thereto,  
 I'll crave your pardon to go seek the prince;  
 For so the duke, your father, gave me charge.

44°

*Bel.* Ay, go, Horatio, leave me here alone;  
 For solitude best fits my cheerless mood.

[Exit *Hor.*]

Yet what avails to wail Andrea's death,  
 From whence Horatio proves my second love?  
 Had he not lov'd Andrea as he did,

He could not sit in Bellimperia's thoughts.  
 But how can love find harbour in my breast,  
 Till I revenge the death of my belov'd?

Yes, second love shall further my revenge!  
 I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend,

45°

The more to spite the prince that wrought his end,  
 And where Don Balthazar, that slew my love,  
 Himself now pleads for favour at my hands,

He shall, in rigour of my just disdain,  
 Reap long repentance for his murd'rous deed.  
 For what was 't else but murd'rous cowardice,

So many to oppress one valiant knight,  
 Without respect of honour in the fight?  
 And here he comes that murder'd my delight.

*Enter LORENZO and BALTHAZAR.*

- Lor. Sister, what means this melancholy walk? 460  
 Bel. That for a while I wish no company.  
 Lor. But here the prince is come to visit you.  
 Bel. That argues that he lives in liberty.  
 Bal. No, madam, but in pleasing servitude.  
 Bel. Your prison then, belike, is your conceit.  
 Bal. Ay, by conceit my freedom is enthral'd.  
 Bel. Then with conceit enlarge yourself again.  
 Bal. What, if conceit have laid my heart to gage?  
 Bel. Pay that you borrow'd, and recover it.  
 Bal. I die, if it return from whence it lies. 470  
 Bel. A heartless man, and live? A miracle!  
 Bal. Ay, lady, love can work such miracles.  
 Lor. Tush, tush, my lord! let go these ambages,  
 And in plain terms acquaint her with your love.  
 Bel. What boots complaint, when there's no remedy?  
 Bal. Yes, to your gracious self must I complain,  
 In whose fair answer lies my remedy;  
 On whose perfection all my thoughts attend;  
 On whose aspect mine eyes find beauty's bower;  
 In whose translucent breast my heart is lodg'd. 480  
 Bel. Alas, my lord, these are but words of course,  
 And but device to drive me from this place.  
   [*She, in going in, lets fall her glove, which*  
   *Horatio, coming out, takes up.*]
- Hor. Madam, your glove.  
 Bel. Thanks, good Horatio; take it for thy pains.  
 Bal. Signior Horatio stoop'd in happy time!  
 Hor. I reap'd more grace than I deserv'd or hop'd.  
 Lor. My lord, be not dismay'd for what is past:  
 You know that women oft are humorous;  
 These clouds will overblow with little wind:  
 Let me alone, I'll scatter them myself. 490  
 Meanwhile, let us devise to spend the time  
 In some delightful sports and revelling.  
 Hor. The king, my lords, is coming hither straight,  
 To feast the Portingal ambassador;  
 Things were in readiness before I came.  
 Bal. Then here it fits us to attend the king,



To welcome hither our ambassador,  
And learn my father and my country's health.

## SCENE V

*Enter the Banquet, Trumpets, the KING, and Ambassador.*

*King.* See, lord Ambassador, how Spain entertains  
Their prisoner Balthazar, thy viceroy's son: 500  
We pleasure more in kindness than in wars.

*Amb.* Sad is our king, and Portugal laments,  
Supposing that Don Balthazar is slain.

*Bal.* So am I!—slain by beauty's tyranny.  
You see, my lord, how Balthazar is slain:  
I frolic with the Duke of Castile's son,  
Wrapp'd every hour in pleasures of the court,  
And grac'd with favours of his majesty.

*King.* Put off your greetings, till our feast be done;  
Now come and sit with us, and taste our cheer. 510  
*[Sit to the banquet.*

Sit down, young prince, you are our second guest;  
Brother, sit down; and, nephew, take your place.  
Signior Horatio, wait thou upon our cup;  
For well thou hast deserv'd to be honour'd.  
Now, lordings, fall to; Spain is Portugal,  
And Portugal is Spain: we both are friends;  
Tribute is paid, and we enjoy our right.  
But where is old Hieronimo, our marshal?  
He promis'd us, in honour of our guest,  
To grace our banquet with some pompous jest. 520

*Enter HIERONIMO with a drum, three knights, each his scutcheon; then he fetches three kings, they take their crowns and them captive.*

Hieronimo, this masque contents mine eye,  
Although I sound not well the mystery.

*Hier.* The first arm'd knight, that hung his scutcheon up,  
*[He takes the scutcheon and gives it to the King.]*  
Was English Robert, Earl of Gloucester,  
Who, when King Stephen bore sway in Albion,

Arriv'd with five and twenty thousand men  
 In Portingal, and by success of war  
 Enforc'd the king, then but a Saracen,  
 To bear the yoke of the English monarchy.

*King.* My lord of Portingal, by this you see 53<sup>o</sup>  
 That which may comfort both your king and you,  
 And make your late discomfort seem the less.  
 But say, Hieronimo, what was the next?

*Hier.* The second knight, that hung his scutcheon up,  
 [*He doth as he did before.*]

Was Edmond, Earl of Kent in Albion,  
 When English Richard wore the diadem.  
 He came likewise, and razèd Lisbon walls,  
 And took the King of Portingal in fight;  
 For which and other such-like service done  
 He after was created Duke of York. 54<sup>o</sup>

*King.* This is another special argument,  
 That Portingal may deign to bear our yoke,  
 When it by little England hath been yok'd.  
 But now, Hieronimo, what were the last?

*Hier.* The third and last, not least, in our account,  
 [*Doing as before.*]

Was, as the rest, a valiant Englishman,  
 Brave John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster,  
 As by his scutcheon plainly may appear.  
 He with a puissant army came to Spain,  
 And took our King of Castile prisoner. 55<sup>o</sup>

*Amb.* This is an argument for our viceroy  
 That Spain may not insult for her success,  
 Since English warriors likewise conquer'd Spain,  
 And made them bow their knees to Albion.

*King.* Hieronimo, I drink to thee for this device,  
 Which hath pleas'd both the ambassador and me:  
 Pledge me, Hieronimo, if thou love thy king.

[*Takes the cup of Horatio.*]

My lord, I fear we sit but over-long,  
 Unless our dainties were more delicate;  
 But welcome are you to the best we have. 56<sup>o</sup>  
 Now let us in, that you may be despatch'd:  
 I think our council is already set. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

## SCENE VI

Ghost of Andrea, Revenge.

*Andrea.* Come we for this from depth of underground,  
To see him feast that gave me my death's wound?  
These pleasant sights are sorrow to my soul:  
Nothing but league, and love, and banqueting?

*Revenge.* Be still, Andrea; ere we go from hence,  
I'll turn their friendship into fell despite,  
Their love to mortal hate, their day to night,  
Their hope into despair, their peace to war,  
Their joys to pain, their bliss to misery.

570



## ACT II

### SCENE I

*Enter LORENZO and BALTHAZAR.*

*Lor.* My lord, though Bellimperia seem thus coy,  
Let reason hold you in your wonted joy:  
In time the savage bull sustains the yoke,  
In time all haggard hawks will stoop to lure,  
In time small wedges cleave the hardest oak,  
In time the flint is pierc'd with softest shower,  
And she in time will fall from her disdain,  
And rue the suff'rance of your friendly pain.

*Bal.* No, she is wilder, and more hard withal,  
Than beast, or bird, or tree, or stony wall. 10  
But wherefore blot I Bellimperia's name?  
It is my fault, not she, that merits blame.  
My feature is not to content her sight,  
My words are rude, and work her no delight.  
The lines I send her are but harsh and ill,  
Such as do drop from Pan and Marsyas' quill.  
My presents are not of sufficient cost,  
And being worthless, all my labour's lost.  
Yet might she love me for my valiancy: 20  
Ay, but that's slander'd by captivity.  
Yet might she love me to content her sire:  
Ay, but her reason masters his desire.  
Yet might she love me as her brother's friend:  
Ay, but her hopes aim at some other end.  
Yet might she love me to uprear her state:  
Ay, but perhaps she hopes some nobler mate.  
Yet might she love me as her beauty's thrall:  
Ay, but I fear she cannot love at all.

*Lor.* My lord, for my sake leave this ecstasy,  
And doubt not but we'll find some remedy. 30  
Some cause there is that lets you not be lov'd;  
First that must needs be known, and then remov'd.

What, if my sister love some other knight?

*Bal.* My summer's day will turn to winter's night.

*Lor.* I have already found a stratagem,  
To sound the bottom of this doubtful theme.  
My lord, for once you shall be rul'd by me;  
Hinder me not, whate'er you hear or see.  
By force or fair means will I cast about  
To find the truth of all this question out. 40  
Ho, Pedringano!

*Ped.* *Signior!*

*Lor.* *Vien qui presto.*

*Enter PEDRINGANO.*

*Ped.* Hath your lordship any service to command me?

*Lor.* Ay, Pedringano, service of import;  
And—not to spend the time in trifling words—  
Thus stands the case: It is not long, thou know'st,  
Since I did shield thee from my father's wrath,  
For thy conveyance in Andrea's love,  
For which thou wert adjudg'd to punishment: 50  
I stood betwixt thee and thy punishment,  
And since, thou know'st how I have favour'd thee.  
Now to these favours will I add reward,  
Not with fair words, but store of golden coin,  
And lands and living join'd with dignities,  
If thou but satisfy my just demand:  
Tell truth, and have me for thy lasting friend.

*Ped.* Whate'er it be your lordship shall demand,  
My bounden duty bids me tell the truth,  
If case it lie in me to tell the truth. 60

*Lor.* Then, Pedringano, this is my demand:  
Whom loves my sister Bellimperia?  
For she reposeth all her trust in thee.  
Speak, man, and gain both friendship and reward:  
I mean, whom loves she in Andrea's place?

*Ped.* Alas, my lord, since Don Andrea's death  
I have no credit with her as before;  
And therefore know not, if she love or no.

*Lor.* Nay, if thou dally, then I am thy foe, [*Draws his sword.*]  
And fear shall force what friendship cannot win: 70  
Thy death shall bury what thy life conceals;

Thou diest for more esteeming her than me.

*Ped.* O, stay, my lord.

*Lor.* Yet speak the truth, and I will guerdon thee,  
And shield thee from whatever can ensue,  
And will conceal whate'er proceeds from thee.  
But if thou dally once again, thou diest.

*Ped.* If madam Bellimperia be in love—

*Lor.* What, villain! ifs and ands?

*Ped.* O, stay, my lord, she loves Horatio.

80

[*Balthazar starts back.*]

*Lor.* What, Don Horatio, our knight marshal's son?

*Ped.* Even him, my lord.

*Lor.* Now say, but how know'st thou he is her love?  
And thou shalt find me kind and liberal:  
Stand up, I say, and fearless tell the truth.

*Ped.* She sent him letters, which myself perus'd,  
Full-fraught with lines and arguments of love,  
Preferring him before Prince Balthazar.

*Lor.* Swear on this cross that what thou say'st is true;  
And that thou wilt conceal what thou hast told.

90

*Ped.* I swear to both, by him that made us all.

*Lor.* In hope thine oath is true, here's thy reward:  
But if I prove thee perjur'd and unjust,  
This very sword, whereon thou took'st thine oath,  
Shall be the worker of thy tragedy.

*Ped.* What I have said is true, and shall—for me—  
Be still conceal'd from Bellimperia.  
Besides, your honour's liberality  
Deserves my duteous service, ev'n till death.

*Lor.* Let this be all that thou shalt do for me:  
Be watchful, when and where these lovers meet,  
And give me notice in some secret sort.

100

*Ped.* I will, my lord.

*Lor.* Then shalt thou find that I am liberal.  
Thou know'st that I can more advance thy state  
Than she; be therefore wise, and fail me not.  
Go and attend her, as thy custom is,  
Lest absence make her think thou dost amiss.

[*Exit Pedringano.*]

Why so: *tam armis quam ingenio*:  
Where words prevail not, violence prevails;  
But gold doth more than either of them both.

110



How likes Prince Balthazar this stratagem?

*Bal.* Both well and ill; it makes me glad and sad:

Glad, that I know the hind'rer of my love;

Sad, that I fear she hates me whom I love.

Glad, that I know on whom to be reveng'd;

Sad, that she'll fly me, if I take revenge.

Yet must I take revenge, or die myself,

For love resisted grows impatient.

I think Horatio be my destin'd plague:

120

First, in his hand he brandishèd a sword,

And with that sword he fiercely wagèd war,

And in that war he gave me dang'rous wounds,

And by those wounds he forcèd me to yield,

And by my yielding I became his slave.

Now in his mouth he carries pleasing words,

Which pleasing words do harbour sweet conceits,

Which sweet conceits are lim'd with sly deceits,

Which sly deceits smooth Bellimperia's ears,

And through her ears dive down into her heart,

130

And in her heart set him, where I should stand.

Thus hath he ta'en my body by his force,

And now by sleight would captivate my soul:

But in his fall I'll tempt the destinies,

And either lose my life, or win my love.

*Lor.* Let's go, my lord; your staying stays revenge.

Do you but follow me, and gain your love:

Her favour must be won by his remove.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

*Enter HORATIO and BELLIMPERIA.*

*Hor.* Now, madam, since by favour of your love

Our hidden smoke is turn'd to open flame,

140

And that with looks and words we feed our thought

(Two chief contents, where more cannot be had):

Thus, in the midst of love's fair blandishments,

Why show you sign of inward languishments?

[*Pedringano showeth all to the Prince and  
Lorenzo, placing them in secret.*]

*Bel.* My heart, sweet friend, is like a ship at sea: