O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend

The brightest heaven of invention,

A kingdom for a stage, princes to act

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,

Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,

Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire

Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,

The flat unraised spirits that have dared

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth

So great an object: can this cockpit hold

The vasty fields of France? or may we cram

Within this wooden O the very casques

That did affright the air at Agincourt?

O, pardon! since a crooked figure may

Attest in little place a million;

And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,

On your imaginary forces work.

Suppose within the girdle of these walls

Are now confined two mighty monarchies,

Whose high upreared and abutting fronts

The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:

Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;

Into a thousand parts divide on man,

And make imaginary puissance;

Think when we talk of horses, that you see them

Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;

For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,

Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,

Turning the accomplishment of many years

Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,

Admit me Chorus to this history;

Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,

Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Exit

SCENE I. London. An ante-chamber in the KING'S palace.

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, and the BISHOP OF ELY

CANTERBURY

My lord, I'll tell you; that self bill is urged,

Which in the eleventh year of the last king's reign

Was like, and had indeed against us pass'd,

But that the scambling and unquiet time

Did push it out of farther question.

ELY

But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?

CANTERBURY

It must be thought on. If it pass against us,

We lose the better half of our possession:

For all the temporal lands which men devout

By testament have given to the church

Would they strip from us; being valued thus:

As much as would maintain, to the king's honour,

Full fifteen earls and fifteen hundred knights,

Six thousand and two hundred good esquires;

And, to relief of lazars and weak age,

Of indigent faint souls past corporal toil.

A hundred almshouses right well supplied;

And to the coffers of the king beside,

A thousand pounds by the year: thus runs the bill.

ELY

This would drink deep.

CANTERBURY

'Twould drink the cup and all.

ELY

But what prevention?

CANTERBURY

The king is full of grace and fair regard.

ELY

And a true lover of the holy church.

CANTERBURY

The courses of his youth promised it not.

The breath no sooner left his father's body,

But that his wildness, mortified in him,

Seem'd to die too; yea, at that very moment

Consideration, like an angel, came

And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him,

Leaving his body as a paradise,

To envelop and contain celestial spirits.

Never was such a sudden scholar made;

Never came reformation in a flood,

With such a heady currance, scouring faults

Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness

So soon did lose his seat and all at once

As in this king.

ELY

We are blessed in the change.

CANTERBURY

Hear him but reason in divinity,

And all-admiring with an inward wish

You would desire the king were made a prelate:

Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,

You would say it hath been all in all his study:

List his discourse of war, and you shall hear

A fearful battle render'd you in music:

Turn him to any cause of policy,

The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,

Familiar as his garter: that, when he speaks,

The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,

And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,

To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences;

So that the art and practic part of life

Must be the mistress to this theoric:

Which is a wonder how his grace should glean it,

Since his addiction was to courses vain,

His companies unletter'd, rude and shallow,

His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports,

And never noted in him any study,

Any retirement, any sequestration

From open haunts and popularity.

ELY

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle

And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best

Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality:

And so the prince obscured his contemplation

Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,

Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,

Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty.

CANTERBURY

It must be so; for miracles are ceased;

And therefore we must needs admit the means

How things are perfected.

ELY

But, my good lord,

How now for mitigation of this bill

Urged by the commons? Doth his majesty

Incline to it, or no?

CANTERBURY

He seems indifferent,

Or rather swaying more upon our part

Than cherishing the exhibiters against us;

For I have made an offer to his majesty,

Upon our spiritual convocation

And in regard of causes now in hand,

Which I have open'd to his grace at large,

As touching France, to give a greater sum

Than ever at one time the clergy yet

Did to his predecessors part withal.

ELY

How did this offer seem received, my lord?

CANTERBURY

With good acceptance of his majesty;

Save that there was not time enough to hear,

As I perceived his grace would fain have done,

The severals and unhidden passages

Of his true titles to some certain dukedoms

And generally to the crown and seat of France

Derived from Edward, his great-grandfather.

ELY

What was the impediment that broke this off?

CANTERBURY

The French ambassador upon that instant

Craved audience; and the hour, I think, is come

To give him hearing: is it four o'clock?

ELY

It is.

CANTERBURY

Then go we in, to know his embassy;

Which I could with a ready guess declare,

Before the Frenchman speak a word of it.

ELY

I'll wait upon you, and I long to hear it.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The same. The Presence chamber.

Enter KING HENRY V, GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, WARWICK, WESTMORELAND, and Attendants

KING HENRY V

Where is my gracious Lord of Canterbury?

EXETER

Not here in presence.

KING HENRY V

Send for him, good uncle.

WESTMORELAND

Shall we call in the ambassador, my liege?

KING HENRY V

Not yet, my cousin: we would be resolved,

Before we hear him, of some things of weight

That task our thoughts, concerning us and France.

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, and the BISHOP of ELY

CANTERBURY

God and his angels guard your sacred throne

And make you long become it!

KING HENRY V

Sure, we thank you.

My learned lord, we pray you to proceed

And justly and religiously unfold

Why the law Salique that they have in France

Or should, or should not, bar us in our claim:

And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,

That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,

Or nicely charge your understanding soul

With opening titles miscreate, whose right

Suits not in native colours with the truth;

For God doth know how many now in health

Shall drop their blood in approbation

Of what your reverence shall incite us to.

Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,

How you awake our sleeping sword of war:

We charge you, in the name of God, take heed;

For never two such kingdoms did contend

Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops

Are every one a woe, a sore complaint

'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords

That make such waste in brief mortality.

Under this conjuration, speak, my lord;

For we will hear, note and believe in heart

That what you speak is in your conscience wash'd

As pure as sin with baptism.

CANTERBURY

Then hear me, gracious sovereign, and you peers,

That owe yourselves, your lives and services

To this imperial throne. There is no bar

To make against your highness' claim to France

But this, which they produce from Pharamond,

'In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant:'

'No woman shall succeed in Salique land:'

Which Salique land the French unjustly gloze

To be the realm of France, and Pharamond

The founder of this law and female bar.

Yet their own authors faithfully affirm

That the land Salique is in Germany,

Between the floods of Sala and of Elbe;

Where Charles the Great, having subdued the Saxons,

There left behind and settled certain French;

Who, holding in disdain the German women

For some dishonest manners of their life,

Establish'd then this law; to wit, no female

Should be inheritrix in Salique land:

Which Salique, as I said, 'twixt Elbe and Sala,

Is at this day in Germany call'd Meisen.

Then doth it well appear that Salique law

Was not devised for the realm of France:

Nor did the French possess the Salique land

Until four hundred one and twenty years

After defunction of King Pharamond,

Idly supposed the founder of this law;

Who died within the year of our redemption

Four hundred twenty-six; and Charles the Great

Subdued the Saxons, and did seat the French

Beyond the river Sala, in the year

Eight hundred five. Besides, their writers say,

King Pepin, which deposed Childeric,

Did, as heir general, being descended

Of Blithild, which was daughter to King Clothair,

Make claim and title to the crown of France.

Hugh Capet also, who usurped the crown

Of Charles the duke of Lorraine, sole heir male

Of the true line and stock of Charles the Great,

To find his title with some shows of truth,

'Through, in pure truth, it was corrupt and naught,

Convey'd himself as heir to the Lady Lingare,

Daughter to Charlemain, who was the son

To Lewis the emperor, and Lewis the son

Of Charles the Great. Also King Lewis the Tenth,

Who was sole heir to the usurper Capet,

Could not keep quiet in his conscience,

Wearing the crown of France, till satisfied

That fair Queen Isabel, his grandmother,

Was lineal of the Lady Ermengare,

Daughter to Charles the foresaid duke of Lorraine:

By the which marriage the line of Charles the Great

Was re-united to the crown of France.

So that, as clear as is the summer's sun.

King Pepin's title and Hugh Capet's claim,

King Lewis his satisfaction, all appear

To hold in right and title of the female:

So do the kings of France unto this day;

Howbeit they would hold up this Salique law

To bar your highness claiming from the female,

And rather choose to hide them in a net

Than amply to imbar their crooked titles

Usurp'd from you and your progenitors.

KING HENRY V

May I with right and conscience make this claim?

CANTERBURY

The sin upon my head, dread sovereign!

For in the book of Numbers is it writ,

When the man dies, let the inheritance

Descend unto the daughter. Gracious lord,

Stand for your own; unwind your bloody flag;

Look back into your mighty ancestors:

Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,

From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,

And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,

Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,

Making defeat on the full power of France,

Whiles his most mighty father on a hill

Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp

Forage in blood of French nobility.

O noble English. that could entertain

With half their forces the full Pride of France

And let another half stand laughing by,

All out of work and cold for action!

ELY

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead

And with your puissant arm renew their feats:

You are their heir; you sit upon their throne;

The blood and courage that renowned them

Runs in your veins; and my thrice-puissant liege

Is in the very May-morn of his youth,

Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises.

EXETER

Your brother kings and monarchs of the earth

Do all expect that you should rouse yourself,

As did the former lions of your blood.

WESTMORELAND

They know your grace hath cause and means and might;

So hath your highness; never king of England

Had nobles richer and more loyal subjects,

Whose hearts have left their bodies here in England

And lie pavilion'd in the fields of France.

CANTERBURY

O, let their bodies follow, my dear liege,

With blood and sword and fire to win your right;

In aid whereof we of the spiritualty

Will raise your highness such a mighty sum

As never did the clergy at one time

Bring in to any of your ancestors.

KING HENRY V

We must not only arm to invade the French,

But lay down our proportions to defend

Against the Scot, who will make road upon us

With all advantages.

CANTERBURY

They of those marches, gracious sovereign,

Shall be a wall sufficient to defend

Our inland from the pilfering borderers.

KING HENRY V

We do not mean the coursing snatchers only,

But fear the main intendment of the Scot,

Who hath been still a giddy neighbour to us;

For you shall read that my great-grandfather

Never went with his forces into France

But that the Scot on his unfurnish'd kingdom

Came pouring, like the tide into a breach,

With ample and brim fulness of his force,

Galling the gleaned land with hot assays,

Girding with grievous siege castles and towns;

That England, being empty of defence,

Hath shook and trembled at the ill neighbourhood.

CANTERBURY

She hath been then more fear'd than harm'd, my liege;

For hear her but exampled by herself:

When all her chivalry hath been in France

And she a mourning widow of her nobles,

She hath herself not only well defended

But taken and impounded as a stray

The King of Scots; whom she did send to France,

To fill King Edward's fame with prisoner kings

And make her chronicle as rich with praise

As is the ooze and bottom of the sea

With sunken wreck and sunless treasuries.

WESTMORELAND

But there's a saying very old and true,

'If that you will France win,

Then with Scotland first begin:'

For once the eagle England being in prey,

To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot

Comes sneaking and so sucks her princely eggs,

Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,

To tear and havoc more than she can eat.

EXETER

It follows then the cat must stay at home:

Yet that is but a crush'd necessity,

Since we have locks to safeguard necessaries,

And pretty traps to catch the petty thieves.

While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,

The advised head defends itself at home;

For government, though high and low and lower,

Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,

Congreeing in a full and natural close,

Like music.

CANTERBURY

Therefore doth heaven divide

The state of man in divers functions,

Setting endeavour in continual motion;

To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,

Obedience: for so work the honey-bees,

Creatures that by a rule in nature teach

The act of order to a peopled kingdom.

They have a king and officers of sorts;

Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,

Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,

Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,

Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,

Which pillage they with merry march bring home

To the tent-royal of their emperor;

Who, busied in his majesty, surveys

The singing masons building roofs of gold,

The civil citizens kneading up the honey,

The poor mechanic porters crowding in

Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,

The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,

Delivering o'er to executors pale

The lazy yawning drone. I this infer,

That many things, having full reference

To one consent, may work contrariously:

As many arrows, loosed several ways,

Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;

As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;

As many lines close in the dial's centre;

So may a thousand actions, once afoot.

End in one purpose, and be all well borne

Without defeat. Therefore to France, my liege.

Divide your happy England into four;

Whereof take you one quarter into France,

And you withal shall make all Gallia shake.

If we, with thrice such powers left at home,

Cannot defend our own doors from the dog,

Let us be worried and our nation lose

The name of hardiness and policy.

KING HENRY V

Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.

Exeunt some Attendants

Now are we well resolved; and, by God's help,

And yours, the noble sinews of our power,

France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,

Or break it all to pieces: or there we'll sit,

Ruling in large and ample empery

O'er France and all her almost kingly dukedoms,

Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,

Tombless, with no remembrance over them:

Either our history shall with full mouth

Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave,

Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth,

Not worshipp'd with a waxen epitaph.

Enter Ambassadors of France

Now are we well prepared to know the pleasure

Of our fair cousin Dauphin; for we hear

Your greeting is from him, not from the king.

First Ambassador

May't please your majesty to give us leave

Freely to render what we have in charge;

Or shall we sparingly show you far off

The Dauphin's meaning and our embassy?

KING HENRY V

We are no tyrant, but a Christian king;

Unto whose grace our passion is as subject

As are our wretches fetter'd in our prisons:

Therefore with frank and with uncurbed plainness

Tell us the Dauphin's mind.

First Ambassador

Thus, then, in few.

Your highness, lately sending into France,

Did claim some certain dukedoms, in the right

Of your great predecessor, King Edward the Third.

In answer of which claim, the prince our master

Says that you savour too much of your youth,

And bids you be advised there's nought in France

That can be with a nimble galliard won;

You cannot revel into dukedoms there.

He therefore sends you, meeter for your spirit,

This tun of treasure; and, in lieu of this,

Desires you let the dukedoms that you claim

Hear no more of you. This the Dauphin speaks.

KING HENRY V

What treasure, uncle?

Tennis-balls, my liege.

KING HENRY V

We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;

His present and your pains we thank you for:

When we have march'd our rackets to these balls,

We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set

Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.

Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler

That all the courts of France will be disturb'd

With chaces. And we understand him well,

How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,

Not measuring what use we made of them.

We never valued this poor seat of England;

And therefore, living hence, did give ourself

To barbarous licence; as 'tis ever common

That men are merriest when they are from home.

But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,

Be like a king and show my sail of greatness

When I do rouse me in my throne of France:

For that I have laid by my majesty

And plodded like a man for working-days,

But I will rise there with so full a glory

That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,

Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.

And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his

Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones; and his soul

Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance

That shall fly with them: for many a thousand widows

Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands;

Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;

And some are yet ungotten and unborn

That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.

But this lies all within the will of God,

To whom I do appeal; and in whose name

Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on,

To venge me as I may and to put forth

My rightful hand in a well-hallow'd cause.

So get you hence in peace; and tell the Dauphin

His jest will savour but of shallow wit,

When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.

Convey them with safe conduct. Fare you well.

KING HENRY V

We hope to make the sender blush at it.

Therefore, my lords, omit no happy hour

That may give furtherance to our expedition;

For we have now no thought in us but France,

Save those to God, that run before our business.

Therefore let our proportions for these wars

Be soon collected and all things thought upon

That may with reasonable swiftness add

More feathers to our wings; for, God before,

We'll chide this Dauphin at his father's door.

Therefore let every man now task his thought,

That this fair action may on foot be brought.

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye,

That thou consum'st thy self in single life?

Ah, if thou issueless shalt hap to die,

The world will wail thee like a makeless wife,

The world will be thy widow and still weep,

That thou no form of thee hast left behind,

When every private widow well may keep,

By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind:

Look what an unthrift in the world doth spend

Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;

But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,

And kept unused the user so destroys it:

No love toward others in that bosom sits

That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

10

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any

Who for thy self art so unprovident.

Grant if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,

But that thou none lov'st is most evident:

For thou art so possessed with murd'rous hate,

That 'gainst thy self thou stick'st not to conspire,

Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate

Which to repair should be thy chief desire:

O change thy thought, that I may change my mind,

Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love?

Be as thy presence is gracious and kind,

Or to thy self at least kind-hearted prove,

Make thee another self for love of me,

That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

11

As fast as thou shalt wane so fast thou grow'st,

In one of thine, from that which thou departest,

And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st,

Thou mayst call thine, when thou from youth convertest,

Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase,

Without this folly, age, and cold decay,

If all were minded so, the times should cease,

And threescore year would make the world away:

Let those whom nature hath not made for store,

Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish:

Look whom she best endowed, she gave thee more;

Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:

She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby,

Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,

And see the brave day sunk in hideous night,

When I behold the violet past prime,

And sable curls all silvered o'er with white:

When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,

Which erst from heat did canopy the herd

And summer's green all girded up in sheaves

Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard:

Then of thy beauty do I question make

That thou among the wastes of time must go,

Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,

And die as fast as they see others grow,

And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence

Save breed to brave him, when he takes thee hence.

13

O that you were your self, but love you are

No longer yours, than you your self here live,

Against this coming end you should prepare,

And your sweet semblance to some other give.

So should that beauty which you hold in lease

Find no determination, then you were

Your self again after your self's decease,

When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.

Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,

Which husbandry in honour might uphold,

Against the stormy gusts of winter's day

And barren rage of death's eternal cold?

O none but unthrifts, dear my love you know,

You had a father, let your son say so.

14

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck,

And yet methinks I have astronomy,

But not to tell of good, or evil luck,

Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality,

Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell;

Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,

Or say with princes if it shall go well

By oft predict that I in heaven find.

But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,

And constant stars in them I read such art

As truth and beauty shall together thrive

If from thy self, to store thou wouldst convert:

Or else of thee this I prognosticate,

Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

15

When I consider every thing that grows

Holds in perfection but a little moment.

That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment.

When I perceive that men as plants increase,

Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky:

Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,

And wear their brave state out of memory.

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay,

Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,

Where wasteful time debateth with decay

To change your day of youth to sullied night,

And all in war with Time for love of you,

As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

16

But wherefore do not you a mightier way

Make war upon this bloody tyrant Time?

And fortify your self in your decay

With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?

Now stand you on the top of happy hours,

And many maiden gardens yet unset,

With virtuous wish would bear you living flowers,

Much liker than your painted counterfeit:

So should the lines of life that life repair

Which this (Time's pencil) or my pupil pen

Neither in inward worth nor outward fair

Can make you live your self in eyes of men.

To give away your self, keeps your self still,

And you must live drawn by your own sweet skill.

17

Who will believe my verse in time to come

If it were filled with your most high deserts?

Though yet heaven knows it is but as a tomb

Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts:

If I could write the beauty of your eyes,

And in fresh numbers number all your graces,

The age to come would say this poet lies,

Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces.

So should my papers (yellowed with their age)

Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,

And your true rights be termed a poet's rage,

And stretched metre of an antique song.

But were some child of yours alive that time,

You should live twice in it, and in my rhyme.

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimmed,

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,

Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

19

Devouring Time blunt thou the lion's paws,

And make the earth devour her own sweet brood,

Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,

And burn the long-lived phoenix, in her blood,

Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,

And do whate'er thou wilt swift-footed Time

To the wide world and all her fading sweets:

But I forbid thee one most heinous crime,

O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,

Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen,

Him in thy course untainted do allow,

For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.

Yet do thy worst old Time: despite thy wrong,

My love shall in my verse ever live young.

20

A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,

Hast thou the master mistress of my passion,

A woman's gentle heart but not acquainted

With shifting change as is false women's fashion,

An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling:

Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth,

A man in hue all hues in his controlling,

Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.

And for a woman wert thou first created,

Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,

And by addition me of thee defeated,

By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.

But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,

Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

21

So is it not with me as with that muse,

Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse,

Who heaven it self for ornament doth use,

And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,

Making a couplement of proud compare

With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems:

With April's first-born flowers and all things rare,

That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.

O let me true in love but truly write,

And then believe me, my love is as fair,

As any mother's child, though not so bright

As those gold candles fixed in heaven's air:

Let them say more that like of hearsay well,

I will not praise that purpose not to sell.

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,

So long as youth and thou are of one date,

But when in thee time's furrows I behold,

Then look I death my days should expiate.

For all that beauty that doth cover thee,

Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,

Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me,

How can I then be elder than thou art?

O therefore love be of thyself so wary,

As I not for my self, but for thee will,

Bearing thy heart which I will keep so chary

As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.

Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain,

Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

23

As an unperfect actor on the stage,

Who with his fear is put beside his part,

Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,

Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;

So I for fear of trust, forget to say,

The perfect ceremony of love's rite,

And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,

O'ercharged with burthen of mine own love's might:

O let my looks be then the eloquence,

And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,

Who plead for love, and look for recompense,

More than that tongue that more hath more expressed.

O learn to read what silent love hath writ,

To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

24

Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled,

Thy beauty's form in table of my heart,

My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,

And perspective it is best painter's art.

For through the painter must you see his skill,

To find where your true image pictured lies,

Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,

That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes:

Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done,

Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me

Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun

Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;

Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,

They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars,

Of public honour and proud titles boast,

Whilst I whom fortune of such triumph bars

Unlooked for joy in that I honour most;

Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread,

But as the marigold at the sun's eye,

And in themselves their pride lies buried,

For at a frown they in their glory die.

The painful warrior famoused for fight,

After a thousand victories once foiled,

Is from the book of honour razed quite,

And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:

Then happy I that love and am beloved

Where I may not remove nor be removed.

26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage

Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit;

To thee I send this written embassage

To witness duty, not to show my wit.

Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine

May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it;

But that I hope some good conceit of thine

In thy soul's thought (all naked) will bestow it:

Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,

Points on me graciously with fair aspect,

And puts apparel on my tattered loving,

To show me worthy of thy sweet respect,

Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,

Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,

The dear respose for limbs with travel tired,

But then begins a journey in my head

To work my mind, when body's work's expired.

For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)

Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,

And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,

Looking on darkness which the blind do see.

Save that my soul's imaginary sight

Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,

Which like a jewel (hung in ghastly night)

Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.

Lo thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,

For thee, and for my self, no quiet find.

28

How can I then return in happy plight

That am debarred the benefit of rest?

When day's oppression is not eased by night,

But day by night and night by day oppressed.

And each (though enemies to either's reign)

Do in consent shake hands to torture me,

The one by toil, the other to complain

How far I toil, still farther off from thee.

I tell the day to please him thou art bright,

And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven:

So flatter I the swart-complexioned night,

When sparkling stars twire not thou gild'st the even.

But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,

And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger

29

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,

I all alone beweep my outcast state,

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,

And look upon my self and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least,

Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate,

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,

I summon up remembrance of things past,

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,

And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:

Then can I drown an eye (unused to flow)

For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,

And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,

And moan th' expense of many a vanished sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,

And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er

The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,

Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee (dear friend)

All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

31

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,

Which I by lacking have supposed dead,

And there reigns love and all love's loving parts,

And all those friends which I thought buried.

How many a holy and obsequious tear

Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye,

As interest of the dead, which now appear,

But things removed that hidden in thee lie.

Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,

Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,

Who all their parts of me to thee did give,

That due of many, now is thine alone.

Their images I loved, I view in thee,

And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

32

If thou survive my well-contented day,

When that churl death my bones with dust shall cover

And shalt by fortune once more re-survey

These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover:

Compare them with the bett'ring of the time,

And though they be outstripped by every pen,

Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,

Exceeded by the height of happier men.

O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought,

'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,

A dearer birth than this his love had brought

To march in ranks of better equipage:

But since he died and poets better prove,

Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love'.

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen,

Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,

Kissing with golden face the meadows green;

Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy:

Anon permit the basest clouds to ride,

With ugly rack on his celestial face,

And from the forlorn world his visage hide

Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:

Even so my sun one early morn did shine,

With all triumphant splendour on my brow,

But out alack, he was but one hour mine,

The region cloud hath masked him from me now.

Yet him for this, my love no whit disdaineth,

Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,

And make me travel forth without my cloak,

To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,

Hiding thy brav'ry in their rotten smoke?

'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,

To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,

For no man well of such a salve can speak,

That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:

Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief,

Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss,

Th' offender's sorrow lends but weak relief

To him that bears the strong offence's cross.

Ah but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,

And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done,

Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud,

Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,

And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.

All men make faults, and even I in this,

Authorizing thy trespass with compare,

My self corrupting salving thy amiss,

Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:

For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,

Thy adverse party is thy advocate,

And 'gainst my self a lawful plea commence:

Such civil war is in my love and hate,

That I an accessary needs must be,

To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

36

Let me confess that we two must be twain,

Although our undivided loves are one:

So shall those blots that do with me remain,

Without thy help, by me be borne alone.

In our two loves there is but one respect,

Though in our lives a separable spite,

Which though it alter not love's sole effect,

Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.

I may not evermore acknowledge thee,

Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,

Nor thou with public kindness honour me,

Unless thou take that honour from thy name:

But do not so, I love thee in such sort,

As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

37

As a decrepit father takes delight,

To see his active child do deeds of youth,

So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite

Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.

For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,

Or any of these all, or all, or more

Entitled in thy parts, do crowned sit,

I make my love engrafted to this store:

So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,

Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give,

That I in thy abundance am sufficed,

And by a part of all thy glory live:

Look what is best, that best I wish in thee,

This wish I have, then ten times happy me.

38

How can my muse want subject to invent

While thou dost breathe that pour'st into my verse,

Thine own sweet argument, too excellent,

For every vulgar paper to rehearse?

O give thy self the thanks if aught in me,

Worthy perusal stand against thy sight,

For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,

When thou thy self dost give invention light?

Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth

Than those old nine which rhymers invocate,

And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth

Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

If my slight muse do please these curious days,

The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

39

O how thy worth with manners may I sing,

When thou art all the better part of me?

What can mine own praise to mine own self bring:

And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?

Even for this, let us divided live,

And our dear love lose name of single one,

That by this separation I may give:

That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone:

O absence what a torment wouldst thou prove,

Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave,

To entertain the time with thoughts of love,

Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive.

And that thou teachest how to make one twain,

By praising him here who doth hence remain.

40

Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all,

What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?

No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call,

All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more:

Then if for my love, thou my love receivest,

I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest,

But yet be blamed, if thou thy self deceivest

By wilful taste of what thy self refusest.

I do forgive thy robbery gentle thief

Although thou steal thee all my poverty:

And yet love knows it is a greater grief

To bear greater wrong, than hate's known injury.

Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,

Kill me with spites yet we must not be foes.

41

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,

When I am sometime absent from thy heart,

Thy beauty, and thy years full well befits,

For still temptation follows where thou art.

Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,

Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed.

And when a woman woos, what woman's son,

Will sourly leave her till he have prevailed?

Ay me, but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,

And chide thy beauty, and thy straying youth,

Who lead thee in their riot even there

Where thou art forced to break a twofold truth:

Hers by thy beauty tempting her to thee,

Thine by thy beauty being false to me.

42

That thou hast her it is not all my grief,

And yet it may be said I loved her dearly,

That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,

A loss in love that touches me more nearly.

Loving offenders thus I will excuse ye,

Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her,

And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,

Suff'ring my friend for my sake to approve her.

If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,

And losing her, my friend hath found that loss,

Both find each other, and I lose both twain,

And both for my sake lay on me this cross,

But here's the joy, my friend and I are one,

Sweet flattery, then she loves but me alone.

43

When most I wink then do mine eyes best see,

For all the day they view things unrespected,

But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,

And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.

Then thou whose shadow shadows doth make bright

How would thy shadow's form, form happy show,

To the clear day with thy much clearer light,

When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!

How would (I say) mine eyes be blessed made,

By looking on thee in the living day,

When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade,

Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!

All days are nights to see till I see thee,

And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

44

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,

Injurious distance should not stop my way,

For then despite of space I would be brought,

From limits far remote, where thou dost stay,

No matter then although my foot did stand

Upon the farthest earth removed from thee,

For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,

As soon as think the place where he would be.

But ah, thought kills me that I am not thought

To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,

But that so much of earth and water wrought,

I must attend, time's leisure with my moan.

Receiving nought by elements so slow,

But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

45

The other two, slight air, and purging fire,

Are both with thee, wherever I abide,

The first my thought, the other my desire,

These present-absent with swift motion slide.

For when these quicker elements are gone

In tender embassy of love to thee,

My life being made of four, with two alone,

Sinks down to death, oppressed with melancholy.

Until life's composition be recured,

By those swift messengers returned from thee,

Who even but now come back again assured,

Of thy fair health, recounting it to me.

This told, I joy, but then no longer glad,

I send them back again and straight grow sad.

46

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,

How to divide the conquest of thy sight,

Mine eye, my heart thy picture's sight would bar,

My heart, mine eye the freedom of that right,

My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,

(A closet never pierced with crystal eyes)

But the defendant doth that plea deny,

And says in him thy fair appearance lies.

To side this title is impanelled

A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,

And by their verdict is determined

The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part.

As thus, mine eye's due is thy outward part,

And my heart's right, thy inward love of heart.

47

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,

And each doth good turns now unto the other,

When that mine eye is famished for a look,

Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother;

With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,

And to the painted banquet bids my heart:

Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,

And in his thoughts of love doth share a part.

So either by thy picture or my love,

Thy self away, art present still with me,

For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,

And I am still with them, and they with thee.

Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight

Awakes my heart, to heart's and eye's delight.

48

How careful was I when I took my way,

Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,

That to my use it might unused stay

From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!

But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,

Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,

Thou best of dearest, and mine only care,

Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.

Thee have I not locked up in any chest,

Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,

Within the gentle closure of my breast,

From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part,

And even thence thou wilt be stol'n I fear,

For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

49

Against that time (if ever that time come)

When I shall see thee frown on my defects,

When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,

Called to that audit by advised respects,

Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass,

And scarcely greet me with that sun thine eye,

When love converted from the thing it was

Shall reasons find of settled gravity;

Against that time do I ensconce me here

Within the knowledge of mine own desert,

And this my hand, against my self uprear,

To guard the lawful reasons on thy part,

To leave poor me, thou hast the strength of laws,

Since why to love, I can allege no cause.

50

How heavy do I journey on the way,

When what I seek (my weary travel's end)

Doth teach that case and that repose to say

'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.'

The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,

Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,

As if by some instinct the wretch did know

His rider loved not speed being made from thee:

The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,

That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,

Which heavily he answers with a groan,

More sharp to me than spurring to his side,

For that same groan doth put this in my mind,

My grief lies onward and my joy behind.

51

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence,

Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed,

From where thou art, why should I haste me thence?

Till I return of posting is no need.

O what excuse will my poor beast then find,

When swift extremity can seem but slow?

Then should I spur though mounted on the wind,

In winged speed no motion shall I know,

Then can no horse with my desire keep pace,

Therefore desire (of perfect'st love being made)

Shall neigh (no dull flesh) in his fiery race,

But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade,

Since from thee going, he went wilful-slow,

Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.

52

So am I as the rich whose blessed key,

Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,

The which he will not every hour survey,

For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.

Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,

Since seldom coming in that long year set,

Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,

Or captain jewels in the carcanet.

So is the time that keeps you as my chest

Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,

To make some special instant special-blest,

By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.

Blessed are you whose worthiness gives scope,

Being had to triumph, being lacked to hope.

53

What is your substance, whereof are you made,

That millions of strange shadows on you tend?

Since every one, hath every one, one shade,

And you but one, can every shadow lend:

Describe Adonis and the counterfeit,

Is poorly imitated after you,

On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,

And you in Grecian tires are painted new:

Speak of the spring, and foison of the year,

The one doth shadow of your beauty show,

The other as your bounty doth appear,

And you in every blessed shape we know.

In all external grace you have some part,

But you like none, none you for constant heart.

54

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,

By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem

For that sweet odour, which doth in it live:

The canker blooms have full as deep a dye,

As the perfumed tincture of the roses,

Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly,

When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:

But for their virtue only is their show,

They live unwooed, and unrespected fade,

Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so,

Of their sweet deaths, are sweetest odours made:

And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,

When that shall vade, by verse distills your truth.

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry,

Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn:

The living record of your memory.

'Gainst death, and all-oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth, your praise shall still find room,

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So till the judgment that your self arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

56

Sweet love renew thy force, be it not said

Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,

Which but to-day by feeding is allayed,

To-morrow sharpened in his former might.

So love be thou, although to-day thou fill

Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,

To-morrow see again, and do not kill

The spirit of love, with a perpetual dulness:

Let this sad interim like the ocean be

Which parts the shore, where two contracted new,

Come daily to the banks, that when they see:

Return of love, more blest may be the view.

Or call it winter, which being full of care,

Makes summer's welcome, thrice more wished, more rare.

57

Being your slave what should I do but tend,

Upon the hours, and times of your desire?

I have no precious time at all to spend;

Nor services to do till you require.

Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,

Whilst I (my sovereign) watch the clock for you,

Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,

When you have bid your servant once adieu.

Nor dare I question with my jealous thought,

Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,

But like a sad slave stay and think of nought

Save where you are, how happy you make those.

So true a fool is love, that in your will,

(Though you do any thing) he thinks no ill.

58

That god forbid, that made me first your slave,

I should in thought control your times of pleasure,

Or at your hand th' account of hours to crave,

Being your vassal bound to stay your leisure.

O let me suffer (being at your beck)

Th' imprisoned absence of your liberty,

And patience tame to sufferance bide each check,

Without accusing you of injury.

Be where you list, your charter is so strong,

That you your self may privilage your time

To what you will, to you it doth belong,

Your self to pardon of self-doing crime.

I am to wait, though waiting so be hell,

Not blame your pleasure be it ill or well.

59

If there be nothing new, but that which is,

Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,

Which labouring for invention bear amis

The second burthen of a former child!

O that record could with a backward look,

Even of five hundred courses of the sun,

Show me your image in some antique book,

Since mind at first in character was done.

That I might see what the old world could say,

To this composed wonder of your frame,

Whether we are mended, or whether better they,

Or whether revolution be the same.

O sure I am the wits of former days,

To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,

So do our minutes hasten to their end,

Each changing place with that which goes before,

In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Nativity once in the main of light,

Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,

Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,

And Time that gave, doth now his gift confound.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,

And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,

Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,

And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.

And yet to times in hope, my verse shall stand

Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

61

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open

My heavy eyelids to the weary night?

Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,

While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?

Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee

So far from home into my deeds to pry,

To find out shames and idle hours in me,

The scope and tenure of thy jealousy?

O no, thy love though much, is not so great,

It is my love that keeps mine eye awake,

Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,

To play the watchman ever for thy sake.

For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,

From me far off, with others all too near.

62

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,

And all my soul, and all my every part;

And for this sin there is no remedy,

It is so grounded inward in my heart.

Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,

No shape so true, no truth of such account,

And for my self mine own worth do define,

As I all other in all worths surmount.

But when my glass shows me my self indeed

beated and chopt with tanned antiquity,

Mine own self-love quite contrary I read:

Self, so self-loving were iniquity.

'Tis thee (my self) that for my self I praise,

Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

63

Against my love shall be as I am now

With Time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn,

When hours have drained his blood and filled his brow

With lines and wrinkles, when his youthful morn

Hath travelled on to age's steepy night,

And all those beauties whereof now he's king

Are vanishing, or vanished out of sight,

Stealing away the treasure of his spring:

For such a time do I now fortify

Against confounding age's cruel knife,

That he shall never cut from memory

My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.

His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,

And they shall live, and he in them still green.

64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced

The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age,

When sometime lofty towers I see down-rased,

And brass eternal slave to mortal rage.

When I have seen the hungry ocean gain

Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,

And the firm soil win of the watery main,

Increasing store with loss, and loss with store.

When I have seen such interchange of State,

Or state it self confounded, to decay,

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate

That Time will come and take my love away.

This thought is as a death which cannot choose

But weep to have, that which it fears to lose.

65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,

But sad mortality o'ersways their power,

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

O how shall summer's honey breath hold out,

Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,

When rocks impregnable are not so stout,

Nor gates of steel so strong but time decays?

O fearful meditation, where alack,

Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?

Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,

Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O none, unless this miracle have might,

That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

66

Tired with all these for restful death I cry,

As to behold desert a beggar born,

And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,

And purest faith unhappily forsworn,

And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,

And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,

And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,

And strength by limping sway disabled

And art made tongue-tied by authority,

And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,

And simple truth miscalled simplicity,

And captive good attending captain ill.

Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,

Save that to die, I leave my love alone.

67

Ah wherefore with infection should he live,

And with his presence grace impiety,

That sin by him advantage should achieve,

And lace it self with his society?

Why should false painting imitate his cheek,

And steal dead seeming of his living hue?

Why should poor beauty indirectly seek,

Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?

Why should he live, now nature bankrupt is,

Beggared of blood to blush through lively veins,

For she hath no exchequer now but his,

And proud of many, lives upon his gains?

O him she stores, to show what wealth she had,

In days long since, before these last so bad.

68

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,

When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,

Before these bastard signs of fair were born,

Or durst inhabit on a living brow:

Before the golden tresses of the dead,

The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,

To live a second life on second head,

Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:

In him those holy antique hours are seen,

Without all ornament, it self and true,

Making no summer of another's green,

Robbing no old to dress his beauty new,

And him as for a map doth Nature store,

To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

69

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view,

Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend:

All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,

Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.

Thy outward thus with outward praise is crowned,

But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,

In other accents do this praise confound

By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.

They look into the beauty of thy mind,

And that in guess they measure by thy deeds,

Then churls their thoughts (although their eyes were kind)

To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:

But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,

The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

70

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,

For slander's mark was ever yet the fair,

The ornament of beauty is suspect,

A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.

So thou be good, slander doth but approve,

Thy worth the greater being wooed of time,

For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,

And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.

Thou hast passed by the ambush of young days,

Either not assailed, or victor being charged,

Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,

To tie up envy, evermore enlarged,

If some suspect of ill masked not thy show,

Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead,

Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell

Give warning to the world that I am fled

From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:

Nay if you read this line, remember not,

The hand that writ it, for I love you so,

That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,

If thinking on me then should make you woe.

O if (I say) you look upon this verse,

When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,

Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;

But let your love even with my life decay.

Lest the wise world should look into your moan,

And mock you with me after I am gone.

72

O lest the world should task you to recite,

What merit lived in me that you should love

After my death (dear love) forget me quite,

For you in me can nothing worthy prove.

Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,

To do more for me than mine own desert,

And hang more praise upon deceased I,

Than niggard truth would willingly impart:

O lest your true love may seem false in this,

That you for love speak well of me untrue,

My name be buried where my body is,

And live no more to shame nor me, nor you.

For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,

And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,

When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,

Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

74

But be contented when that fell arrest,

Without all bail shall carry me away,

My life hath in this line some interest,

Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.

When thou reviewest this, thou dost review,

The very part was consecrate to thee,

The earth can have but earth, which is his due,

My spirit is thine the better part of me,

So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,

The prey of worms, my body being dead,

The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,

Too base of thee to be remembered,

The worth of that, is that which it contains,

And that is this, and this with thee remains.

75

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,

Or as sweet-seasoned showers are to the ground;

And for the peace of you I hold such strife

As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found.

Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon

Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure,

Now counting best to be with you alone,

Then bettered that the world may see my pleasure,

Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,

And by and by clean starved for a look,

Possessing or pursuing no delight

Save what is had, or must from you be took.

Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,

Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

76

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?

So far from variation or quick change?

Why with the time do I not glance aside

To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?

Why write I still all one, ever the same,

And keep invention in a noted weed,

That every word doth almost tell my name,

Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?

O know sweet love I always write of you,

And you and love are still my argument:

So all my best is dressing old words new,

Spending again what is already spent:

For as the sun is daily new and old,

So is my love still telling what is told.

77

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,

Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste,

These vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,

And of this book, this learning mayst thou taste.

The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,

Of mouthed graves will give thee memory,

Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know,

Time's thievish progress to eternity.

Look what thy memory cannot contain,

Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find

Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain,

To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.

These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,

Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.

78

So oft have I invoked thee for my muse,

And found such fair assistance in my verse,

As every alien pen hath got my use,

And under thee their poesy disperse.

Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,

And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,

Have added feathers to the learned's wing,

And given grace a double majesty.

Yet be most proud of that which I compile,

Whose influence is thine, and born of thee,

In others' works thou dost but mend the style,

And arts with thy sweet graces graced be.

But thou art all my art, and dost advance

As high as learning, my rude ignorance.

79

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,

My verse alone had all thy gentle grace,

But now my gracious numbers are decayed,

And my sick muse doth give an other place.

I grant (sweet love) thy lovely argument

Deserves the travail of a worthier pen,

Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,

He robs thee of, and pays it thee again,

He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word,

From thy behaviour, beauty doth he give

And found it in thy cheek: he can afford

No praise to thee, but what in thee doth live.

Then thank him not for that which he doth say,

Since what he owes thee, thou thy self dost pay.

80

O how I faint when I of you do write,

Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,

And in the praise thereof spends all his might,

To make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame.

But since your worth (wide as the ocean is)

The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,

My saucy bark (inferior far to his)

On your broad main doth wilfully appear.

Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,

Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride,

Or (being wrecked) I am a worthless boat,

He of tall building, and of goodly pride.

Then if he thrive and I be cast away,

The worst was this, my love was my decay.

81

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,

Or you survive when I in earth am rotten,

From hence your memory death cannot take,

Although in me each part will be forgotten.

Your name from hence immortal life shall have,

Though I (once gone) to all the world must die,

The earth can yield me but a common grave,

When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie,

Your monument shall be my gentle verse,

Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,

And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,

When all the breathers of this world are dead,

You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)

Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

82

I grant thou wert not married to my muse,

And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook

The dedicated words which writers use

Of their fair subject, blessing every book.

Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,

Finding thy worth a limit past my praise,

And therefore art enforced to seek anew,

Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.

And do so love, yet when they have devised,

What strained touches rhetoric can lend,

Thou truly fair, wert truly sympathized,

In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend.

And their gross painting might be better used,

Where cheeks need blood, in thee it is abused.

83

I never saw that you did painting need,

And therefore to your fair no painting set,

I found (or thought I found) you did exceed,

That barren tender of a poet's debt:

And therefore have I slept in your report,

That you your self being extant well might show,

How far a modern quill doth come too short,

Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.

This silence for my sin you did impute,

Which shall be most my glory being dumb,

For I impair not beauty being mute,

When others would give life, and bring a tomb.

There lives more life in one of your fair eyes,

Than both your poets can in praise devise.

84

Who is it that says most, which can say more,

Than this rich praise, that you alone, are you?

In whose confine immured is the store,

Which should example where your equal grew.

Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,

That to his subject lends not some small glory,

But he that writes of you, if he can tell,

That you are you, so dignifies his story.

Let him but copy what in you is writ,

Not making worse what nature made so clear,

And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,

Making his style admired every where.

You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,

Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

85

My tongue-tied muse in manners holds her still,

While comments of your praise richly compiled,

Reserve their character with golden quill,

And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.

I think good thoughts, whilst other write good words,

And like unlettered clerk still cry Amen,

To every hymn that able spirit affords,

In polished form of well refined pen.

Hearing you praised, I say 'tis so, 'tis true,

And to the most of praise add something more,

But that is in my thought, whose love to you

(Though words come hindmost) holds his rank before,

Then others, for the breath of words respect,

Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

86

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,

Bound for the prize of (all too precious) you,

That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,

Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?

Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write,

Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?

No, neither he, nor his compeers by night

Giving him aid, my verse astonished.

He nor that affable familiar ghost

Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,

As victors of my silence cannot boast,

I was not sick of any fear from thence.

But when your countenance filled up his line,

Then lacked I matter, that enfeebled mine.

87

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,

And like enough thou know'st thy estimate,

The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing:

My bonds in thee are all determinate.

For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,

And for that riches where is my deserving?

The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,

And so my patent back again is swerving.

Thy self thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,

Or me to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking,

So thy great gift upon misprision growing,

Comes home again, on better judgement making.

Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter,

In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

88

When thou shalt be disposed to set me light,

And place my merit in the eye of scorn,

Upon thy side, against my self I'll fight,

And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn:

With mine own weakness being best acquainted,

Upon thy part I can set down a story

Of faults concealed, wherein I am attainted:

That thou in losing me, shalt win much glory:

And I by this will be a gainer too,

For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,

The injuries that to my self I do,

Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.

Such is my love, to thee I so belong,

That for thy right, my self will bear all wrong.

89

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,

And I will comment upon that offence,

Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt:

Against thy reasons making no defence.

Thou canst not (love) disgrace me half so ill,

To set a form upon desired change,

As I'll my self disgrace, knowing thy will,

I will acquaintance strangle and look strange:

Be absent from thy walks and in my tongue,

Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,

Lest I (too much profane) should do it wronk:

And haply of our old acquaintance tell.

For thee, against my self I'll vow debate,

For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

90

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,

Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross,

join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,

And do not drop in for an after-loss:

Ah do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,

Come in the rearward of a conquered woe,

Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,

To linger out a purposed overthrow.

If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,

When other petty griefs have done their spite,

But in the onset come, so shall I taste

At first the very worst of fortune's might.

And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,

Compared with loss of thee, will not seem so.

91

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,

Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,

Some in their garments though new-fangled ill:

Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse.

And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,

Wherein it finds a joy above the rest,

But these particulars are not my measure,

All these I better in one general best.

Thy love is better than high birth to me,

Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' costs,

Of more delight than hawks and horses be:

And having thee, of all men's pride I boast.

Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take,

All this away, and me most wretchcd make.

92

But do thy worst to steal thy self away,

For term of life thou art assured mine,

And life no longer than thy love will stay,

For it depends upon that love of thine.

Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,

When in the least of them my life hath end,

I see, a better state to me belongs

Than that, which on thy humour doth depend.

Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,

Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie,

O what a happy title do I find,

Happy to have thy love, happy to die!

But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot?

Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

93

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,

Like a deceived husband, so love's face,

May still seem love to me, though altered new:

Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place.

For there can live no hatred in thine eye,

Therefore in that I cannot know thy change,

In many's looks, the false heart's history

Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange.

But heaven in thy creation did decree,

That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell,

Whate'er thy thoughts, or thy heart's workings be,

Thy looks should nothing thence, but sweetness tell.

How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,

If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show.

94

They that have power to hurt, and will do none,

That do not do the thing, they most do show,

Who moving others, are themselves as stone,

Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow:

They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,

And husband nature's riches from expense,

Tibey are the lords and owners of their faces,

Others, but stewards of their excellence:

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,

Though to it self, it only live and die,

But if that flower with base infection meet,

The basest weed outbraves his dignity:

For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds,

Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.

95

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,

Which like a canker in the fragrant rose,

Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!

O in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!

That tongue that tells the story of thy days,

(Making lascivious comments on thy sport)

Cannot dispraise, but in a kind of praise,

Naming thy name, blesses an ill report.

O what a mansion have those vices got,

Which for their habitation chose out thee,

Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,

And all things turns to fair, that eyes can see!

Take heed (dear heart) of this large privilege,

The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

96

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness,

Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport,

Both grace and faults are loved of more and less:

Thou mak'st faults graces, that to thee resort:

As on the finger of a throned queen,

The basest jewel will be well esteemed:

So are those errors that in thee are seen,

To truths translated, and for true things deemed.

How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,

If like a lamb he could his looks translate!

How many gazers mightst thou lead away,

if thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state!

But do not so, I love thee in such sort,

As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

97

How like a winter hath my absence been

From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!

What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!

What old December's bareness everywhere!

And yet this time removed was summer's time,

The teeming autumn big with rich increase,

Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,

Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:

Yet this abundant issue seemed to me

But hope of orphans, and unfathered fruit,

For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,

And thou away, the very birds are mute.

Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,

That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,

When proud-pied April (dressed in all his trim)

Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing:

That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.

Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell

Of different flowers in odour and in hue,

Could make me any summer's story tell:

Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:

Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,

Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose,

They were but sweet, but figures of delight:

Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.

Yet seemed it winter still, and you away,

As with your shadow I with these did play.

99

The forward violet thus did I chide,

Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,

If not from my love's breath? The purple pride

Which on thy soft check for complexion dwells,

In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.

The lily I condemned for thy hand,

And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair,

The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,

One blushing shame, another white despair:

A third nor red, nor white, had stol'n of both,

And to his robbery had annexed thy breath,

But for his theft in pride of all his growth

A vengeful canker eat him up to death.

More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,

But sweet, or colour it had stol'n from thee.

100

Where art thou Muse that thou forget'st so long,

To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?

Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,

Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light?

Return forgetful Muse, and straight redeem,

In gentle numbers time so idly spent,

Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,

And gives thy pen both skill and argument.

Rise resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,

If time have any wrinkle graven there,

If any, be a satire to decay,

And make time's spoils despised everywhere.

Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life,

So thou prevent'st his scythe, and crooked knife.

101

O truant Muse what shall be thy amends,

For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?

Both truth and beauty on my love depends:

So dost thou too, and therein dignified:

Make answer Muse, wilt thou not haply say,

'Truth needs no colour with his colour fixed,

Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay:

But best is best, if never intermixed'?

Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?

Excuse not silence so, for't lies in thee,

To make him much outlive a gilded tomb:

And to be praised of ages yet to be.

Then do thy office Muse, I teach thee how,

To make him seem long hence, as he shows now.

102

My love is strengthened though more weak in seeming,

I love not less, though less the show appear,

That love is merchandized, whose rich esteeming,

The owner's tongue doth publish every where.

Our love was new, and then but in the spring,

When I was wont to greet it with my lays,

As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,

And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:

Not that the summer is less pleasant now

Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,

But that wild music burthens every bough,

And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.

Therefore like her, I sometime hold my tongue:

Because I would not dull you with my song.

103

Alack what poverty my muse brings forth,

That having such a scope to show her pride,

The argument all bare is of more worth

Than when it hath my added praise beside.

O blame me not if I no more can write!

Look in your glass and there appears a face,

That over-goes my blunt invention quite,

Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.

Were it not sinful then striving to mend,

To mar the subject that before was well?

For to no other pass my verses tend,

Than of your graces and your gifts to tell.

And more, much more than in my verse can sit,

Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

104

To me fair friend you never can be old,

For as you were when first your eye I eyed,

Such seems your beauty still: three winters cold,

Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,

Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned,

In process of the seasons have I seen,

Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,

Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.

Ah yet doth beauty like a dial hand,

Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived,

So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand

Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.

For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred,

Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

105

Let not my love be called idolatry,

Nor my beloved as an idol show,

Since all alike my songs and praises be

To one, of one, still such, and ever so.

Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,

Still constant in a wondrous excellence,

Therefore my verse to constancy confined,

One thing expressing, leaves out difference.

Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,

Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words,

And in this change is my invention spent,

Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.

Fair, kind, and true, have often lived alone.

Which three till now, never kept seat in one.

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time,

I see descriptions of the fairest wights,

And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,

In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights,

Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,

Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,

I see their antique pen would have expressed,

Even such a beauty as you master now.

So all their praises are but prophecies

Of this our time, all you prefiguring,

And for they looked but with divining eyes,

They had not skill enough your worth to sing:

For we which now behold these present days,

Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul,

Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,

Can yet the lease of my true love control,

Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.

The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,

And the sad augurs mock their own presage,

Incertainties now crown themselves assured,

And peace proclaims olives of endless age.

Now with the drops of this most balmy time,

My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,

Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,

While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.

And thou in this shalt find thy monument,

When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

108

What's in the brain that ink may character,

Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit,

What's new to speak, what now to register,

That may express my love, or thy dear merit?

Nothing sweet boy, but yet like prayers divine,

I must each day say o'er the very same,

Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,

Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.

So that eternal love in love's fresh case,

Weighs not the dust and injury of age,

Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,

But makes antiquity for aye his page,

Finding the first conceit of love there bred,

Where time and outward form would show it dead.

109

O never say that I was false of heart,

Though absence seemed my flame to qualify,

As easy might I from my self depart,

As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:

That is my home of love, if I have ranged,

Like him that travels I return again,

Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,

So that my self bring water for my stain,

Never believe though in my nature reigned,

All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,

That it could so preposterously be stained,

To leave for nothing all thy sum of good:

For nothing this wide universe I call,

Save thou my rose, in it thou art my all.

110

Alas 'tis true, I have gone here and there,

And made my self a motley to the view,

Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,

Made old offences of affections new.

Most true it is, that I have looked on truth

Askance and strangely: but by all above,

These blenches gave my heart another youth,

And worse essays proved thee my best of love.

Now all is done, have what shall have no end,

Mine appetite I never more will grind

On newer proof, to try an older friend,

A god in love, to whom I am confined.

Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,

Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

111

O for my sake do you with Fortune chide,

The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,

That did not better for my life provide,

Than public means which public manners breeds.

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,

And almost thence my nature is subdued

To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:

Pity me then, and wish I were renewed,

Whilst like a willing patient I will drink,

Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection,

No bitterness that I will bitter think,

Nor double penance to correct correction.

Pity me then dear friend, and I assure ye,

Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

112

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill,

Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow,

For what care I who calls me well or ill,

So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?

You are my all the world, and I must strive,

To know my shames and praises from your tongue,

None else to me, nor I to none alive,

That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.

In so profound abysm I throw all care

Of others' voices, that my adder's sense,

To critic and to flatterer stopped are:

Mark how with my neglect I do dispense.

You are so strongly in my purpose bred,

That all the world besides methinks are dead.

113

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,

And that which governs me to go about,

Doth part his function, and is partly blind,

Seems seeing, but effectually is out:

For it no form delivers to the heart

Of bird, of flower, or shape which it doth latch,

Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,

Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch:

For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,

The most sweet favour or deformed'st creature,

The mountain, or the sea, the day, or night:

The crow, or dove, it shapes them to your feature.

Incapable of more, replete with you,

My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.

114

Or whether doth my mind being crowned with you

Drink up the monarch's plague this flattery?

Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,

And that your love taught it this alchemy?

To make of monsters, and things indigest,

Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,

Creating every bad a perfect best

As fast as objects to his beams assemble:

O 'tis the first, 'tis flattery in my seeing,

And my great mind most kingly drinks it up,

Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,

And to his palate doth prepare the cup.

If it be poisoned, 'tis the lesser sin,

That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

115

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,

Even those that said I could not love you dearer,

Yet then my judgment knew no reason why,

My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer,

But reckoning time, whose millioned accidents

Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,

Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,

Divert strong minds to the course of alt'ring things:

Alas why fearing of time's tyranny,

Might I not then say 'Now I love you best,'

When I was certain o'er incertainty,

Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?

Love is a babe, then might I not say so

To give full growth to that which still doth grow.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments, love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove.

O no, it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come,

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom:

If this be error and upon me proved,

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

117

Accuse me thus, that I have scanted all,

Wherein I should your great deserts repay,

Forgot upon your dearest love to call,

Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day,

That I have frequent been with unknown minds,

And given to time your own dear-purchased right,

That I have hoisted sail to all the winds

Which should transport me farthest from your sight.

Book both my wilfulness and errors down,

And on just proof surmise, accumulate,

Bring me within the level of your frown,

But shoot not at me in your wakened hate:

Since my appeal says I did strive to prove

The constancy and virtue of your love.

118

Like as to make our appetite more keen

With eager compounds we our palate urge,

As to prevent our maladies unseen,

We sicken to shun sickness when we purge.

Even so being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,

To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding;

And sick of welfare found a kind of meetness,

To be diseased ere that there was true needing.

Thus policy in love t' anticipate

The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,

And brought to medicine a healthful state

Which rank of goodness would by ill be cured.

But thence I learn and find the lesson true,

Drugs poison him that so feil sick of you.

119

What potions have I drunk of Siren tears

Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,

Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,

Still losing when I saw my self to win!

What wretched errors hath my heart committed,

Whilst it hath thought it self so blessed never!

How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted

In the distraction of this madding fever!

O benefit of ill, now I find true

That better is, by evil still made better.

And ruined love when it is built anew

Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.

So I return rebuked to my content,

And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

120

That you were once unkind befriends me now,

And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,

Needs must I under my transgression bow,

Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.

For if you were by my unkindness shaken

As I by yours, y'have passed a hell of time,

And I a tyrant have no leisure taken

To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.

O that our night of woe might have remembered

My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,

And soon to you, as you to me then tendered

The humble salve, which wounded bosoms fits!

But that your trespass now becomes a fee,

Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

121

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed,

When not to be, receives reproach of being,

And the just pleasure lost, which is so deemed,

Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.

For why should others' false adulterate eyes

Give salutation to my sportive blood?

Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,

Which in their wills count bad what I think good?

No, I am that I am, and they that level

At my abuses, reckon up their own,

I may be straight though they themselves be bevel;

By their rank thoughts, my deeds must not be shown

Unless this general evil they maintain,

All men are bad and in their badness reign.

122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain

Full charactered with lasting memory,

Which shall above that idle rank remain

Beyond all date even to eternity.

Or at the least, so long as brain and heart

Have faculty by nature to subsist,

Till each to razed oblivion yield his part

Of thee, thy record never can be missed:

That poor retention could not so much hold,

Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score,

Therefore to give them from me was I bold,

To trust those tables that receive thee more:

To keep an adjunct to remember thee

Were to import forgetfulness in me.

123

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change,

Thy pyramids built up with newer might

To me are nothing novel, nothing strange,

They are but dressings Of a former sight:

Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire,

What thou dost foist upon us that is old,

And rather make them born to our desire,

Than think that we before have heard them told:

Thy registers and thee I both defy,

Not wond'ring at the present, nor the past,

For thy records, and what we see doth lie,

Made more or less by thy continual haste:

This I do vow and this shall ever be,

I will be true despite thy scythe and thee.

124

If my dear love were but the child of state,

It might for Fortune's bastard be unfathered,

As subject to time's love or to time's hate,

Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gathered.

No it was builded far from accident,

It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls

Under the blow of thralled discontent,

Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls:

It fears not policy that heretic,

Which works on leases of short-numbered hours,

But all alone stands hugely politic,

That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.

To this I witness call the fools of time,

Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

125

Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,

With my extern the outward honouring,

Or laid great bases for eternity,

Which proves more short than waste or ruining?

Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour

Lose all, and more by paying too much rent

For compound sweet; forgoing simple savour,

Pitiful thrivers in their gazing spent?

No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,

And take thou my oblation, poor but free,

Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,

But mutual render, only me for thee.

Hence, thou suborned informer, a true soul

When most impeached, stands least in thy control.

126

O thou my lovely boy who in thy power,

Dost hold Time's fickle glass his fickle hour:

Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st,

Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st.

If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)

As thou goest onwards still will pluck thee back,

She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill

May time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.

Yet fear her O thou minion of her pleasure,

She may detain, but not still keep her treasure!

Her audit (though delayed) answered must be,

And her quietus is to render thee.

127

In the old age black was not counted fair,

Or if it were it bore not beauty's name:

But now is black beauty's successive heir,

And beauty slandered with a bastard shame,

For since each hand hath put on nature's power,

Fairing the foul with art's false borrowed face,

Sweet beauty hath no name no holy bower,

But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.

Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,

Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem,

At such who not born fair no beauty lack,

Slandering creation with a false esteem,

Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,

That every tongue says beauty should look so.

128

How oft when thou, my music, music play'st,

Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds

With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st

The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,

Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap,

To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,

Whilst my poor lips which should that harvest reap,

At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.

To be so tickled they would change their state

And situation with those dancing chips,

O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,

Making dead wood more blest than living lips,

Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,

Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

129

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame

Is lust in action, and till action, lust

Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody full of blame,

Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,

Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight,

Past reason hunted, and no sooner had

Past reason hated as a swallowed bait,

On purpose laid to make the taker mad.

Mad in pursuit and in possession so,

Had, having, and in quest, to have extreme,

A bliss in proof and proved, a very woe,

Before a joy proposed behind a dream.

All this the world well knows yet none knows well,

To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,

Coral is far more red, than her lips red,

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun:

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head:

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks,

And in some perfumes is there more delight,

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know,

That music hath a far more pleasing sound:

I grant I never saw a goddess go,

My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.

And yet by heaven I think my love as rare,

As any she belied with false compare.

131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,

As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;

For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart

Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.

Yet in good faith some say that thee behold,

Thy face hath not the power to make love groan;

To say they err, I dare not be so bold,

Although I swear it to my self alone.

And to be sure that is not false I swear,

A thousand groans but thinking on thy face,

One on another's neck do witness bear

Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.

In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,

And thence this slander as I think proceeds.

132

Thine eyes I love, and they as pitying me,

Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain,

Have put on black, and loving mourners be,

Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.

And truly not the morning sun of heaven

Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,

Nor that full star that ushers in the even

Doth half that glory to the sober west

As those two mourning eyes become thy face:

O let it then as well beseem thy heart

To mourn for me since mourning doth thee grace,

And suit thy pity like in every part.

Then will I swear beauty herself is black,

And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

133

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan

For that deep wound it gives my friend and me;

Is't not enough to torture me alone,

But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?

Me from my self thy cruel eye hath taken,

And my next self thou harder hast engrossed,

Of him, my self, and thee I am forsaken,

A torment thrice three-fold thus to be crossed:

Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,

But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail,

Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard,

Thou canst not then use rigour in my gaol.

And yet thou wilt, for I being pent in thee,

Perforce am thine and all that is in me.

134

So now I have confessed that he is thine,

And I my self am mortgaged to thy will,

My self I'll forfeit, so that other mine,

Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still:

But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,

For thou art covetous, and he is kind,

He learned but surety-like to write for me,

Under that bond that him as fist doth bind.

The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,

Thou usurer that put'st forth all to use,

And sue a friend, came debtor for my sake,

So him I lose through my unkind abuse.

Him have I lost, thou hast both him and me,

He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,

And 'Will' to boot, and 'Will' in over-plus,

More than enough am I that vex thee still,

To thy sweet will making addition thus.

Wilt thou whose will is large and spacious,

Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?

Shall will in others seem right gracious,

And in my will no fair acceptance shine?

The sea all water, yet receives rain still,

And in abundance addeth to his store,

So thou being rich in will add to thy will

One will of mine to make thy large will more.

Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill,

Think all but one, and me in that one 'Will.'

136

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,

Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy 'Will',

And will thy soul knows is admitted there,

Thus far for love, my love-suit sweet fulfil.

'Will', will fulfil the treasure of thy love,

Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one,

In things of great receipt with case we prove,

Among a number one is reckoned none.

Then in the number let me pass untold,

Though in thy store's account I one must be,

For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold,

That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.

Make but my name thy love, and love that still,

And then thou lov'st me for my name is Will.

137

Thou blind fool Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,

That they behold and see not what they see?

They know what beauty is, see where it lies,

Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.

If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks,

Be anchored in the bay where all men ride,

Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,

Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?

Why should my heart think that a several plot,

Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?

Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not

To put fair truth upon so foul a face?

In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,

And to this false plague are they now transferred.

138

When my love swears that she is made of truth,

I do believe her though I know she lies,

That she might think me some untutored youth,

Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.

Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,

Although she knows my days are past the best,

Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue,

On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed:

But wherefore says she not she is unjust?

And wherefore say not I that I am old?

O love's best habit is in seeming trust,

And age in love, loves not to have years told.

Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,

And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

139

O call not me to justify the wrong,

That thy unkindness lays upon my heart,

Wound me not with thine eye but with thy tongue,

Use power with power, and slay me not by art,

Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere; but in my sight,

Dear heart forbear to glance thine eye aside,

What need'st thou wound with cunning when thy might

Is more than my o'erpressed defence can bide?

Let me excuse thee, ah my love well knows,

Her pretty looks have been mine enemies,

And therefore from my face she turns my foes,

That they elsewhere might dart their injuries:

Yet do not so, but since I am near slain,

Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

140

Be wise as thou art cruel, do not press

My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain:

Lest sorrow lend me words and words express,

The manner of my pity-wanting pain.

If I might teach thee wit better it were,

Though not to love, yet love to tell me so,

As testy sick men when their deaths be near,

No news but health from their physicians know.

For if I should despair I should grow mad,

And in my madness might speak ill of thee,

Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,

Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.

That I may not be so, nor thou belied,

Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

141

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,

For they in thee a thousand errors note,

But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,

Who in despite of view is pleased to dote.

Nor are mine cars with thy tongue's tune delighted,

Nor tender feeling to base touches prone,

Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited

To any sensual feast with thee alone:

But my five wits, nor my five senses can

Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,

Who leaves unswayed the likeness of a man,

Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be:

Only my plague thus far I count my gain,

That she that makes me sin, awards me pain.

142

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,

Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving,

O but with mine, compare thou thine own state,

And thou shalt find it merits not reproving,

Or if it do, not from those lips of thine,

That have profaned their scarlet ornaments,

And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,

Robbed others' beds' revenues of their rents.

Be it lawful I love thee as thou lov'st those,

Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee,

Root pity in thy heart that when it grows,

Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.

If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,

By self-example mayst thou be denied.

143

Lo as a careful huswife runs to catch,

One of her feathered creatures broke away,

Sets down her babe and makes all swift dispatch

In pursuit of the thing she would have stay:

Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,

Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent,

To follow that which flies before her face:

Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;

So run'st thou after that which flies from thee,

Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind,

But if thou catch thy hope turn back to me:

And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind.

So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will,

If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

144

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,

Which like two spirits do suggest me still,

The better angel is a man right fair:

The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.

To win me soon to hell my female evil,

Tempteth my better angel from my side,

And would corrupt my saint to be a devil:

Wooing his purity with her foul pride.

And whether that my angel be turned fiend,

Suspect I may, yet not directly tell,

But being both from me both to each friend,

I guess one angel in another's hell.

Yet this shall I ne'er know but live in doubt,

Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

145

Those lips that Love's own hand did make,

Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate',

To me that languished for her sake:

But when she saw my woeful state,

Straight in her heart did mercy come,

Chiding that tongue that ever sweet,

Was used in giving gentle doom:

And taught it thus anew to greet:

'I hate' she altered with an end,

That followed it as gentle day,

Doth follow night who like a fiend

From heaven to hell is flown away.

'I hate', from hate away she threw,

And saved my life saying 'not you'.

146

Poor soul the centre of my sinful earth,

My sinful earth these rebel powers array,

Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth

Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?

Why so large cost having so short a lease,

Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?

Shall worms inheritors of this excess

Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?

Then soul live thou upon thy servant's loss,

And let that pine to aggravate thy store;

Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;

Within be fed, without be rich no more,

So shall thou feed on death, that feeds on men,

And death once dead, there's no more dying then.

147

My love is as a fever longing still,

For that which longer nurseth the disease,

Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,

Th' uncertain sickly appetite to please:

My reason the physician to my love,

Angry that his prescriptions are not kept

Hath left me, and I desperate now approve,

Desire is death, which physic did except.

Past cure I am, now reason is past care,

And frantic-mad with evermore unrest,

My thoughts and my discourse as mad men's are,

At random from the truth vainly expressed.

For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,

Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

148

O me! what eyes hath love put in my head,

Which have no correspondence with true sight,

Or if they have, where is my judgment fled,

That censures falsely what they see aright?

If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,

What means the world to say it is not so?

If it be not, then love doth well denote,

Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,

How can it? O how can love's eye be true,

That is so vexed with watching and with tears?

No marvel then though I mistake my view,

The sun it self sees not, till heaven clears.

O cunning love, with tears thou keep'st me blind,

Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

149

Canst thou O cruel, say I love thee not,

When I against my self with thee partake?

Do I not think on thee when I forgot

Am of my self, all-tyrant, for thy sake?

Who hateth thee that I do call my friend,

On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon,

Nay if thou lour'st on me do I not spend

Revenge upon my self with present moan?

What merit do I in my self respect,

That is so proud thy service to despise,

When all my best doth worship thy defect,

Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?

But love hate on for now I know thy mind,

Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

150

O from what power hast thou this powerful might,

With insufficiency my heart to sway,

To make me give the lie to my true sight,

And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?

Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,

That in the very refuse of thy deeds,

There is such strength and warrantise of skill,

That in my mind thy worst all best exceeds?

Who taught thee how to make me love thee more,

The more I hear and see just cause of hate?

O though I love what others do abhor,

With others thou shouldst not abhor my state.

If thy unworthiness raised love in me,

More worthy I to be beloved of thee.

151

Love is too young to know what conscience is,

Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?

Then gentle cheater urge not my amiss,

Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.

For thou betraying me, I do betray

My nobler part to my gross body's treason,

My soul doth tell my body that he may,

Triumph in love, flesh stays no farther reason,

But rising at thy name doth point out thee,

As his triumphant prize, proud of this pride,

He is contented thy poor drudge to be,

To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.

No want of conscience hold it that I call,

Her love, for whose dear love I rise and fall.

152

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,

But thou art twice forsworn to me love swearing,

In act thy bed-vow broke and new faith torn,

In vowing new hate after new love bearing:

But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,

When I break twenty? I am perjured most,

For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee:

And all my honest faith in thee is lost.

For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness:

Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy,

And to enlighten thee gave eyes to blindness,

Or made them swear against the thing they see.

For I have sworn thee fair: more perjured I,

To swear against the truth so foul a be.

153

Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep,

A maid of Dian's this advantage found,

And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep

In a cold valley-fountain of that ground:

Which borrowed from this holy fire of Love,

A dateless lively heat still to endure,

And grew a seeting bath which yet men prove,

Against strange maladies a sovereign cure:

But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,

The boy for trial needs would touch my breast,

I sick withal the help of bath desired,

And thither hied a sad distempered guest.

But found no cure, the bath for my help lies,

Where Cupid got new fire; my mistress' eyes.

154

The little Love-god lying once asleep,

Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,

Whilst many nymphs that vowed chaste life to keep,

Came tripping by, but in her maiden hand,

The fairest votary took up that fire,

Which many legions of true hearts had warmed,

And so the general of hot desire,

Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarmed.

This brand she quenched in a cool well by,

Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,

Growing a bath and healthful remedy,

For men discased, but I my mistress' thrall,

Came there for cure and this by that I prove,

Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

THE END

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1603

ALLS WELL THAT ENDS WELL

by William Shakespeare

Dramatis Personae

KING OF FRANCE

THE DUKE OF FLORENCE

BERTRAM, Count of Rousillon

LAFEU, an old lord

PAROLLES, a follower of Bertram

TWO FRENCH LORDS, serving with Bertram

STEWARD, Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

LAVACHE, a clown and Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

A PAGE, Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, mother to Bertram

HELENA, a gentlewoman protected by the Countess

A WIDOW OF FLORENCE.

DIANA, daughter to the Widow

VIOLENTA, neighbour and friend to the Widow

MARIANA, neighbour and friend to the Widow

Lords, Officers, Soldiers, etc., French and Florentine

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SCENE:

Rousillon; Paris; Florence; Marseilles

ACT I. SCENE 1.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, HELENA, and LAFEU, all in black

COUNTESS. In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

BERTRAM. And I in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew;

but I must attend his Majesty's command, to whom I am now in

ward, evermore in subjection.

LAFEU. You shall find of the King a husband, madam; you, sir, a

father. He that so generally is at all times good must of

necessity hold his virtue to you, whose worthiness would stir it

up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is such

abundance.

COUNTESS. What hope is there of his Majesty's amendment?

LAFEU. He hath abandon'd his physicians, madam; under whose

practices he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other

advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

COUNTESS. This young gentlewoman had a father- O, that 'had,' how

sad a passage 'tis!-whose skill was almost as great as his

honesty; had it stretch'd so far, would have made nature

immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for

the King's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of

the King's disease.

LAFEU. How call'd you the man you speak of, madam?

COUNTESS. He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his

great right to be so- Gerard de Narbon.

LAFEU. He was excellent indeed, madam; the King very lately spoke

of him admiringly and mourningly; he was skilful enough to have

liv'd still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

BERTRAM. What is it, my good lord, the King languishes of?

LAFEU. A fistula, my lord.

BERTRAM. I heard not of it before.

LAFEU. I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the

daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

COUNTESS. His sole child, my lord, and bequeathed to my

overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education

promises; her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts

fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities,

there commendations go with pity-they are virtues and traitors

too. In her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives

her honesty, and achieves her goodness.

LAFEU. Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

COUNTESS. 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in.

The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the

tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No

more of this, Helena; go to, no more, lest it be rather thought

you affect a sorrow than to have-

HELENA. I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too.

LAFEU. Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead: excessive

grief the enemy to the living.

COUNTESS. If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it

soon mortal.

BERTRAM. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

LAFEU. How understand we that?

COUNTESS. Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father

In manners, as in shape! Thy blood and virtue

Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness

Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,

Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy

Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend

Under thy own life's key; be check'd for silence,

But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,

That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down,

Fall on thy head! Farewell. My lord,

'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord,

Advise him.

LAFEU. He cannot want the best

That shall attend his love.

COUNTESS. Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram. Exit

BERTRAM. The best wishes that can be forg'd in your thoughts be

servants to you! [To HELENA] Be comfortable to my mother, your

mistress, and make much of her.

LAFEU. Farewell, pretty lady; you must hold the credit of your

father. Exeunt BERTRAM and LAFEU

HELENA. O, were that all! I think not on my father;

And these great tears grace his remembrance more

Than those I shed for him. What was he like?

I have forgot him; my imagination

Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.

I am undone; there is no living, none,

If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one

That I should love a bright particular star

And think to wed it, he is so above me.

In his bright radiance and collateral light

Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.

Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself:

The hind that would be mated by the lion

Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague,

To see him every hour; to sit and draw

His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,

In our heart's table-heart too capable

Of every line and trick of his sweet favour.

But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy

Must sanctify his relics. Who comes here?

Enter PAROLLES

[Aside] One that goes with him. I love him for his sake;

And yet I know him a notorious liar,

Think him a great way fool, solely a coward;

Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him

That they take place when virtue's steely bones

Looks bleak i' th' cold wind; withal, full oft we see

Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

PAROLLES. Save you, fair queen!

HELENA. And you, monarch!

PAROLLES. No.

HELENA. And no.

PAROLLES. Are you meditating on virginity?

HELENA. Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you; let me ask you a

question. Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it

against him?

PAROLLES. Keep him out.

HELENA. But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant in the

defence, yet is weak. Unfold to us some warlike resistance.

PAROLLES. There is none. Man, setting down before you, will

undermine you and blow you up.

HELENA. Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers-up!

Is there no military policy how virgins might blow up men?

PAROLLES. Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown

up; marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves

made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth

of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational

increase; and there was never virgin got till virginity was first

lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Virginity

by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it

is ever lost. 'Tis too cold a companion; away with't.

HELENA. I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a

virgin.

PAROLLES. There's little can be said in 't; 'tis against the rule

of nature. To speak on the part of virginity is to accuse your

mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs

himself is a virgin; virginity murders itself, and should be

buried in highways, out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate

offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a

cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with

feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud,

idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the

canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by't. Out with't.

Within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly

increase; and the principal itself not much the worse. Away

with't.

HELENA. How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

PAROLLES. Let me see. Marry, ill to like him that ne'er it likes.

'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept,

the less worth. Off with't while 'tis vendible; answer the time

of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of

fashion, richly suited but unsuitable; just like the brooch and

the toothpick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your

pie and your porridge than in your cheek. And your virginity,

your old virginity, is like one of our French wither'd pears: it

looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a wither'd pear; it was

formerly better; marry, yet 'tis a wither'd pear. Will you

anything with it?

HELENA. Not my virginity yet.

There shall your master have a thousand loves,

A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,

A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,

A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,

A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;

His humble ambition, proud humility,

His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,

His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world

Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms

That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he-

I know not what he shall. God send him well!

The court's a learning-place, and he is one-

PAROLLES. What one, i' faith?

HELENA. That I wish well. 'Tis pity-

PAROLLES. What's pity?

HELENA. That wishing well had not a body in't

Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born,

Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,

Might with effects of them follow our friends

And show what we alone must think, which never

Returns us thanks.

Enter PAGE

PAGE. Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you. Exit PAGE

PAROLLES. Little Helen, farewell; if I can remember thee, I will

think of thee at court.

HELENA. Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

PAROLLES. Under Mars, I.

HELENA. I especially think, under Mars.

PAROLLES. Why under Man?

HELENA. The wars hath so kept you under that you must needs be born

under Mars.

PAROLLES. When he was predominant.

HELENA. When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

PAROLLES. Why think you so?

HELENA. You go so much backward when you fight.

PAROLLES. That's for advantage.

HELENA. So is running away, when fear proposes the safety: but the

composition that your valour and fear makes in you is a virtue of

a good wing, and I like the wear well.

PAROLLES. I am so full of business I cannot answer thee acutely. I

will return perfect courtier; in the which my instruction shall

serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's

counsel, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else

thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes

thee away. Farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers;

when thou hast none, remember thy friends. Get thee a good

husband and use him as he uses thee. So, farewell.

Exit

HELENA. Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,

Which we ascribe to heaven. The fated sky

Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull

Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.

What power is it which mounts my love so high,

That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?

The mightiest space in fortune nature brings

To join like likes, and kiss like native things.

Impossible be strange attempts to those

That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose

What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove

To show her merit that did miss her love?

The King's disease-my project may deceive me,

But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me. Exit

ACT I. SCENE 2.

Paris. The KING'S palace

Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING OF FRANCE, with letters,

and divers ATTENDANTS

KING. The Florentines and Senoys are by th' ears;

Have fought with equal fortune, and continue

A braving war.

FIRST LORD. So 'tis reported, sir.

KING. Nay, 'tis most credible. We here receive it,

A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,

With caution, that the Florentine will move us

For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend

Prejudicates the business, and would seem

To have us make denial.

FIRST LORD. His love and wisdom,

Approv'd so to your Majesty, may plead

For amplest credence.

KING. He hath arm'd our answer,

And Florence is denied before he comes;

Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see

The Tuscan service, freely have they leave

To stand on either part.

SECOND LORD. It well may serve

A nursery to our gentry, who are sick

For breathing and exploit.

KING. What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

FIRST LORD. It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,

Young Bertram.

KING. Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;

Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,

Hath well compos'd thee. Thy father's moral parts

Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

BERTRAM. My thanks and duty are your Majesty's.

KING. I would I had that corporal soundness now,

As when thy father and myself in friendship

First tried our soldiership. He did look far

Into the service of the time, and was

Discipled of the bravest. He lasted long;

But on us both did haggish age steal on,

And wore us out of act. It much repairs me

To talk of your good father. In his youth

He had the wit which I can well observe

To-day in our young lords; but they may jest

Till their own scorn return to them unnoted

Ere they can hide their levity in honour.

So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness

Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,

His equal had awak'd them; and his honour,

Clock to itself, knew the true minute when

Exception bid him speak, and at this time

His tongue obey'd his hand. Who were below him

He us'd as creatures of another place;

And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,

Making them proud of his humility

In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man

Might be a copy to these younger times;

Which, followed well, would demonstrate them now

But goers backward.

BERTRAM. His good remembrance, sir,

Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb;

So in approof lives not his epitaph

As in your royal speech.

KING. Would I were with him! He would always say-

Methinks I hear him now; his plausive words

He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them

To grow there, and to bear- 'Let me not live'-

This his good melancholy oft began,

On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,

When it was out-'Let me not live' quoth he

'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff

Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses

All but new things disdain; whose judgments are

Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies

Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd.

I, after him, do after him wish too,

Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,

I quickly were dissolved from my hive,

To give some labourers room.

SECOND LORD. You're loved, sir;

They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

KING. I fill a place, I know't. How long is't, Count,

Since the physician at your father's died?

He was much fam'd.

BERTRAM. Some six months since, my lord.

KING. If he were living, I would try him yet-

Lend me an arm-the rest have worn me out

With several applications. Nature and sickness

Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, Count;

My son's no dearer.

BERTRAM. Thank your Majesty. Exeunt [Flourish]

ACT I. SCENE 3.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS, STEWARD, and CLOWN

COUNTESS. I will now hear; what say you of this gentlewoman?

STEWARD. Madam, the care I have had to even your content I wish

might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours; for then we

wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings,

when of ourselves we publish them.

COUNTESS. What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah. The

complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe; 'tis my

slowness that I do not, for I know you lack not folly to commit

them and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

CLOWN. 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNTESS. Well, sir.

CLOWN. No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of

the rich are damn'd; but if I may have your ladyship's good will

to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNTESS. Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

CLOWN. I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNTESS. In what case?

CLOWN. In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage; and I

think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o'

my body; for they say bames are blessings.

COUNTESS. Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

CLOWN. My poor body, madam, requires it. I am driven on by the

flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNTESS. Is this all your worship's reason?

CLOWN. Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

COUNTESS. May the world know them?

CLOWN. I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh

and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent.

COUNTESS. Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

CLOWN. I am out o' friends, madam, and I hope to have friends for

my wife's sake.

COUNTESS. Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

CLOWN. Y'are shallow, madam-in great friends; for the knaves come

to do that for me which I am aweary of. He that ears my land

spares my team, and gives me leave to in the crop. If I be his

cuckold, he's my drudge. He that comforts my wife is the

cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and

blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood

is my friend; ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men

could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in

marriage; for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the

papist, howsome'er their hearts are sever'd in religion, their

heads are both one; they may jowl horns together like any deer

i' th' herd.

COUNTESS. Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouth'd and calumnious knave?

CLOWN. A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way:

For I the ballad will repeat,

Which men full true shall find:

Your marriage comes by destiny,

Your cuckoo sings by kind.

COUNTESS. Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon.

STEWARD. May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you.

Of her I am to speak.

COUNTESS. Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen

I mean.

CLOWN. [Sings]

'Was this fair face the cause' quoth she

'Why the Grecians sacked Troy?

Fond done, done fond,

Was this King Priam's joy?'

With that she sighed as she stood,

With that she sighed as she stood,

And gave this sentence then:

'Among nine bad if one be good,

Among nine bad if one be good,

There's yet one good in ten.'

COUNTESS. What, one good in ten? You corrupt the song, sirrah.

CLOWN. One good woman in ten, madam, which is a purifying o' th'

song. Would God would serve the world so all the year! We'd find

no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten,

quoth 'a! An we might have a good woman born before every blazing

star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man

may draw his heart out ere 'a pluck one.

COUNTESS. You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

CLOWN. That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done!

Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will

wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart.

I am going, forsooth. The business is for Helen to come hither.

Exit

COUNTESS. Well, now.

STEWARD. I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNTESS. Faith I do. Her father bequeath'd her to me; and she

herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as

much love as she finds. There is more owing her than is paid; and

more shall be paid her than she'll demand.

STEWARD. Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she

wish'd me. Alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own

words to her own ears; she thought, I dare vow for her, they

touch'd not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your

son. Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such

difference betwixt their two estates; Love no god, that would not

extend his might only where qualities were level; Diana no queen

of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surpris'd without

rescue in the first assault, or ransom afterward. This she

deliver'd in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard

virgin exclaim in; which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you

withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you

something to know it.

COUNTESS. YOU have discharg'd this honestly; keep it to yourself.

Many likelihoods inform'd me of this before, which hung so

tott'ring in the balance that I could neither believe nor

misdoubt. Pray you leave me. Stall this in your bosom; and I

thank you for your honest care. I will speak with you further

anon. Exit STEWARD

Enter HELENA

Even so it was with me when I was young.

If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn

Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;

Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.

It is the show and seal of nature's truth,

Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth.

By our remembrances of days foregone,

Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.

Her eye is sick on't; I observe her now.

HELENA. What is your pleasure, madam?

COUNTESS. You know, Helen,

I am a mother to you.

HELENA. Mine honourable mistress.

COUNTESS. Nay, a mother.

Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother,'

Methought you saw a serpent. What's in 'mother'

That you start at it? I say I am your mother,

And put you in the catalogue of those

That were enwombed mine. 'Tis often seen

Adoption strives with nature, and choice breeds

A native slip to us from foreign seeds.

You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,

Yet I express to you a mother's care.

God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood

To say I am thy mother? What's the matter,

That this distempered messenger of wet,

The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye?

Why, that you are my daughter?

HELENA. That I am not.

COUNTESS. I say I am your mother.

HELENA. Pardon, madam.

The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother:

I am from humble, he from honoured name;

No note upon my parents, his all noble.

My master, my dear lord he is; and I

His servant live, and will his vassal die.

He must not be my brother.

COUNTESS. Nor I your mother?

HELENA. You are my mother, madam; would you were-

So that my lord your son were not my brother-

Indeed my mother! Or were you both our mothers,

I care no more for than I do for heaven,

So I were not his sister. Can't no other,

But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

COUNTESS. Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law.

God shield you mean it not! 'daughter' and 'mother'

So strive upon your pulse. What! pale again?

My fear hath catch'd your fondness. Now I see

The myst'ry of your loneliness, and find

Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis gross

You love my son; invention is asham'd,

Against the proclamation of thy passion,

To say thou dost not. Therefore tell me true;

But tell me then, 'tis so; for, look, thy cheeks

Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes

See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours

That in their kind they speak it; only sin

And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,

That truth should be suspected. Speak, is't so?

If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew;

If it be not, forswear't; howe'er, I charge thee,

As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,

To tell me truly.

HELENA. Good madam, pardon me.

COUNTESS. Do you love my son?

HELENA. Your pardon, noble mistress.

COUNTESS. Love you my son?

HELENA. Do not you love him, madam?

COUNTESS. Go not about; my love hath in't a bond

Whereof the world takes note. Come, come, disclose

The state of your affection; for your passions

Have to the full appeach'd.

HELENA. Then I confess,

Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,

That before you, and next unto high heaven,

I love your son.

My friends were poor, but honest; so's my love.

Be not offended, for it hurts not him

That he is lov'd of me; I follow him not

By any token of presumptuous suit,

Nor would I have him till I do deserve him;

Yet never know how that desert should be.

I know I love in vain, strive against hope;

Yet in this captious and intenible sieve

I still pour in the waters of my love,

And lack not to lose still. Thus, Indian-like,

Religious in mine error, I adore

The sun that looks upon his worshipper

But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,

Let not your hate encounter with my love,

For loving where you do; but if yourself,

Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,

Did ever in so true a flame of liking

Wish chastely and love dearly that your Dian

Was both herself and Love; O, then, give pity

To her whose state is such that cannot choose

But lend and give where she is sure to lose;

That seeks not to find that her search implies,

But, riddle-like, lives sweetly where she dies!

COUNTESS. Had you not lately an intent-speak truly-

To go to Paris?

HELENA. Madam, I had.

COUNTESS. Wherefore? Tell true.

HELENA. I will tell truth; by grace itself I swear.

You know my father left me some prescriptions

Of rare and prov'd effects, such as his reading

And manifest experience had collected

For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me

In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,

As notes whose faculties inclusive were

More than they were in note. Amongst the rest

There is a remedy, approv'd, set down,

To cure the desperate languishings whereof

The King is render'd lost.

COUNTESS. This was your motive

For Paris, was it? Speak.

HELENA. My lord your son made me to think of this,

Else Paris, and the medicine, and the King,

Had from the conversation of my thoughts

Haply been absent then.

COUNTESS. But think you, Helen,

If you should tender your supposed aid,

He would receive it? He and his physicians

Are of a mind: he, that they cannot help him;

They, that they cannot help. How shall they credit

A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,

Embowell'd of their doctrine, have let off

The danger to itself?

HELENA. There's something in't

More than my father's skill, which was the great'st

Of his profession, that his good receipt

Shall for my legacy be sanctified

By th' luckiest stars in heaven; and, would your honour

But give me leave to try success, I'd venture

The well-lost life of mine on his Grace's cure.

By such a day and hour.

COUNTESS. Dost thou believe't?

HELENA. Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNTESS. Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love,

Means and attendants, and my loving greetings

To those of mine in court. I'll stay at home,

And pray God's blessing into thy attempt.

Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,

What I can help thee to thou shalt not miss. Exeunt

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ACT II. SCENE 1.

Paris. The KING'S palace

Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING with divers young LORDS taking leave

for the Florentine war; BERTRAM and PAROLLES; ATTENDANTS

KING. Farewell, young lords; these war-like principles

Do not throw from you. And you, my lords, farewell;

Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all,

The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis receiv'd,

And is enough for both.

FIRST LORD. 'Tis our hope, sir,

After well-ent'red soldiers, to return

And find your Grace in health.

KING. No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart

Will not confess he owes the malady

That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords;

Whether I live or die, be you the sons

Of worthy Frenchmen; let higher Italy-

Those bated that inherit but the fall

Of the last monarchy-see that you come

Not to woo honour, but to wed it; when

The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,

That fame may cry you aloud. I say farewell.

SECOND LORD. Health, at your bidding, serve your Majesty!

KING. Those girls of Italy, take heed of them;

They say our French lack language to deny,

If they demand; beware of being captives

Before you serve.

BOTH. Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING. Farewell. [To ATTENDANTS] Come hither to me.

The KING retires attended

FIRST LORD. O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

PAROLLES. 'Tis not his fault, the spark.

SECOND LORD. O, 'tis brave wars!

PAROLLES. Most admirable! I have seen those wars.

BERTRAM. I am commanded here and kept a coil with

'Too young' and next year' and "Tis too early.'

PAROLLES. An thy mind stand to 't, boy, steal away bravely.

BERTRAM. I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,

Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,

Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn

But one to dance with. By heaven, I'll steal away.

FIRST LORD. There's honour in the theft.

PAROLLES. Commit it, Count.

SECOND LORD. I am your accessary; and so farewell.

BERTRAM. I grow to you, and our parting is a tortur'd body.

FIRST LORD. Farewell, Captain.

SECOND LORD. Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

PAROLLES. Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good sparks and

lustrous, a word, good metals: you shall find in the regiment of

the Spinii one Captain Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of

war, here on his sinister cheek; it was this very sword

entrench'd it. Say to him I live; and observe his reports for me.

FIRST LORD. We shall, noble Captain.

PAROLLES. Mars dote on you for his novices! Exeunt LORDS

What will ye do?

Re-enter the KING

BERTRAM. Stay; the King!

PAROLLES. Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords; you have

restrain'd yourself within the list of too cold an adieu. Be more

expressive to them; for they wear themselves in the cap of the

time; there do muster true gait; eat, speak, and move, under the

influence of the most receiv'd star; and though the devil lead

the measure, such are to be followed. After them, and take a more

dilated farewell.

BERTRAM. And I will do so.

PAROLLES. Worthy fellows; and like to prove most sinewy sword-men.

Exeunt BERTRAM and PAROLLES

Enter LAFEU

LAFEU. [Kneeling] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

KING. I'll fee thee to stand up.

LAFEU. Then here's a man stands that has brought his pardon.

I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy;

And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING. I would I had; so I had broke thy pate,

And ask'd thee mercy for't.

LAFEU. Good faith, across!

But, my good lord, 'tis thus: will you be cur'd

Of your infirmity?

KING. No.

LAFEU. O, will you eat

No grapes, my royal fox? Yes, but you will

My noble grapes, an if my royal fox

Could reach them: I have seen a medicine

That's able to breathe life into a stone,

Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary

With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch

Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay,

To give great Charlemain a pen in's hand

And write to her a love-line.

KING. What her is this?

LAFEU. Why, Doctor She! My lord, there's one arriv'd,

If you will see her. Now, by my faith and honour,

If seriously I may convey my thoughts

In this my light deliverance, I have spoke

With one that in her sex, her years, profession,

Wisdom, and constancy, hath amaz'd me more

Than I dare blame my weakness. Will you see her,

For that is her demand, and know her business?

That done, laugh well at me.

KING. Now, good Lafeu,

Bring in the admiration, that we with the

May spend our wonder too, or take off thine

By wond'ring how thou took'st it.

LAFEU. Nay, I'll fit you,

And not be all day neither. Exit LAFEU

KING. Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Re-enter LAFEU with HELENA

LAFEU. Nay, come your ways.

KING. This haste hath wings indeed.

LAFEU. Nay, come your ways;

This is his Majesty; say your mind to him.

A traitor you do look like; but such traitors

His Majesty seldom fears. I am Cressid's uncle,

That dare leave two together. Fare you well. Exit

KING. Now, fair one, does your business follow us?

HELENA. Ay, my good lord.

Gerard de Narbon was my father,

In what he did profess, well found.

KING. I knew him.

HELENA. The rather will I spare my praises towards him;

Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death

Many receipts he gave me; chiefly one,

Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,

And of his old experience th' only darling,

He bade me store up as a triple eye,

Safer than mine own two, more dear. I have so:

And, hearing your high Majesty is touch'd

With that malignant cause wherein the honour

Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,

I come to tender it, and my appliance,

With all bound humbleness.

KING. We thank you, maiden;

But may not be so credulous of cure,

When our most learned doctors leave us, and

The congregated college have concluded

That labouring art can never ransom nature

From her inaidable estate-I say we must not

So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,

To prostitute our past-cure malady

To empirics; or to dissever so

Our great self and our credit to esteem

A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

HELENA. My duty then shall pay me for my pains.

I will no more enforce mine office on you;

Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts

A modest one to bear me back again.

KING. I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful.

Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I give

As one near death to those that wish him live.

But what at full I know, thou know'st no part;

I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HELENA. What I can do can do no hurt to try,

Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.

He that of greatest works is finisher

Oft does them by the weakest minister.

So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,

When judges have been babes. Great floods have flown

From simple sources, and great seas have dried

When miracles have by the greatest been denied.

Oft expectation fails, and most oft there

Where most it promises; and oft it hits

Where hope is coldest, and despair most fits.

KING. I must not hear thee. Fare thee well, kind maid;

Thy pains, not us'd, must by thyself be paid;

Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HELENA. Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd.

It is not so with Him that all things knows,

As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows;

But most it is presumption in us when

The help of heaven we count the act of men.

Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent;

Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.

I am not an impostor, that proclaim

Myself against the level of mine aim;

But know I think, and think I know most sure,

My art is not past power nor you past cure.

KING. Art thou so confident? Within what space

Hop'st thou my cure?

HELENA. The greatest Grace lending grace.

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring

Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring,

Ere twice in murk and occidental damp

Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp,

Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass

Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,

What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,

Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

KING. Upon thy certainty and confidence

What dar'st thou venture?

HELENA. Tax of impudence,

A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame,

Traduc'd by odious ballads; my maiden's name

Sear'd otherwise; ne worse of worst-extended

With vilest torture let my life be ended.

KING. Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak

His powerful sound within an organ weak;

And what impossibility would slay

In common sense, sense saves another way.

Thy life is dear; for all that life can rate

Worth name of life in thee hath estimate:

Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all

That happiness and prime can happy call.

Thou this to hazard needs must intimate

Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.

Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try,

That ministers thine own death if I die.

HELENA. If I break time, or flinch in property

Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die;

And well deserv'd. Not helping, death's my fee;

But, if I help, what do you promise me?

KING. Make thy demand.

HELENA. But will you make it even?

KING. Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of heaven.

HELENA. Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand

What husband in thy power I will command.

Exempted be from me the arrogance

To choose from forth the royal blood of France,

My low and humble name to propagate

With any branch or image of thy state;

But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know

Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

KING. Here is my hand; the premises observ'd,

Thy will by my performance shall be serv'd.

So make the choice of thy own time, for I,

Thy resolv'd patient, on thee still rely.

More should I question thee, and more I must,

Though more to know could not be more to trust,

From whence thou cam'st, how tended on. But rest

Unquestion'd welcome and undoubted blest.

Give me some help here, ho! If thou proceed

As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.

[Flourish. Exeunt]

ACT II. SCENE 2.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN

COUNTESS. Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your

breeding.

CLOWN. I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught. I know my

business is but to the court.

COUNTESS. To the court! Why, what place make you special, when you

put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

CLOWN. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may

easily put it off at court. He that cannot make a leg, put off's

cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip,

nor cap; and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for

the court; but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

COUNTESS. Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all questions.

CLOWN. It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks-the pin

buttock, the quatch buttock, the brawn buttock, or any buttock.

COUNTESS. Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

CLOWN. As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your

French crown for your taffety punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's

forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, a morris for Mayday,

as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding

quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's

mouth; nay, as the pudding to his skin.

COUNTESS. Have you, I, say, an answer of such fitness for all

questions?

CLOWN. From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit

any question.

COUNTESS. It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit

all demands.

CLOWN. But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should

speak truth of it. Here it is, and all that belongs to't. Ask me

if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

COUNTESS. To be young again, if we could, I will be a fool in

question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir,

are you a courtier?

CLOWN. O Lord, sir!-There's a simple putting off. More, more, a

hundred of them.

COUNTESS. Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

CLOWN. O Lord, sir!-Thick, thick; spare not me.

COUNTESS. I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

CLOWN. O Lord, sir!-Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

COUNTESS. You were lately whipp'd, sir, as I think.

CLOWN. O Lord, sir!-Spare not me.

COUNTESS. Do you cry 'O Lord, sir!' at your whipping, and 'spare

not me'? Indeed your 'O Lord, sir!' is very sequent to your

whipping. You would answer very well to a whipping, if you were

but bound to't.

CLOWN. I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord, sir!' I see

thing's may serve long, but not serve ever.

COUNTESS. I play the noble housewife with the time,

To entertain it so merrily with a fool.

CLOWN. O Lord, sir!-Why, there't serves well again.

COUNTESS. An end, sir! To your business: give Helen this,

And urge her to a present answer back;

Commend me to my kinsmen and my son. This is not much.

CLOWN. Not much commendation to them?

COUNTESS. Not much employment for you. You understand me?

CLOWN. Most fruitfully; I am there before my legs.

COUNTESS. Haste you again. Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 3.

Paris. The KING'S palace

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

LAFEU. They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical

persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and

causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors,

ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit

ourselves to an unknown fear.

PAROLLES. Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot

out in our latter times.

BERTRAM. And so 'tis.

LAFEU. To be relinquish'd of the artists-

PAROLLES. So I say-both of Galen and Paracelsus.

LAFEU. Of all the learned and authentic fellows-

PAROLLES. Right; so I say.

LAFEU. That gave him out incurable-

PAROLLES. Why, there 'tis; so say I too.

LAFEU. Not to be help'd-

PAROLLES. Right; as 'twere a man assur'd of a-

LAFEU. Uncertain life and sure death.

PAROLLES. Just; you say well; so would I have said.

LAFEU. I may truly say it is a novelty to the world.

PAROLLES. It is indeed. If you will have it in showing, you shall

read it in what-do-ye-call't here.

LAFEU. [Reading the ballad title] 'A Showing of a Heavenly

Effect in an Earthly Actor.'

PAROLLES. That's it; I would have said the very same.

LAFEU. Why, your dolphin is not lustier. 'Fore me, I speak in

respect-

PAROLLES. Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange; that is the brief

and the tedious of it; and he's of a most facinerious spirit that

will not acknowledge it to be the-

LAFEU. Very hand of heaven.

PAROLLES. Ay; so I say.

LAFEU. In a most weak-

PAROLLES. And debile minister, great power, great transcendence;

which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone

the recov'ry of the King, as to be-

LAFEU. Generally thankful.

Enter KING, HELENA, and ATTENDANTS

PAROLLES. I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the King.

LAFEU. Lustig, as the Dutchman says. I'll like a maid the better,

whilst I have a tooth in my head. Why, he's able to lead her a

coranto.

PAROLLES. Mort du vinaigre! Is not this Helen?

LAFEU. 'Fore God, I think so.

KING. Go, call before me all the lords in court.

Exit an ATTENDANT

Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side;

And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense

Thou has repeal'd, a second time receive

The confirmation of my promis'd gift,

Which but attends thy naming.

Enter three or four LORDS

Fair maid, send forth thine eye. This youthful parcel

Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,

O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice

I have to use. Thy frank election make;

Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

HELENA. To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress

Fall, when love please. Marry, to each but one!

LAFEU. I'd give bay Curtal and his furniture

My mouth no more were broken than these boys',

And writ as little beard.

KING. Peruse them well.

Not one of those but had a noble father.

HELENA. Gentlemen,

Heaven hath through me restor'd the King to health.

ALL. We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

HELENA. I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest

That I protest I simply am a maid.

Please it your Majesty, I have done already.

The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me:

'We blush that thou shouldst choose; but, be refused,

Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever,

We'll ne'er come there again.'

KING. Make choice and see:

Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

HELENA. Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly,

And to imperial Love, that god most high,

Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit?

FIRST LORD. And grant it.

HELENA. Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.

LAFEU. I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-ace for my

life.

HELENA. The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes,

Before I speak, too threat'ningly replies.

Love make your fortunes twenty times above

Her that so wishes, and her humble love!

SECOND LORD. No better, if you please.

HELENA. My wish receive,

Which great Love grant; and so I take my leave.

LAFEU. Do all they deny her? An they were sons of mine I'd have

them whipt; or I would send them to th' Turk to make eunuchs of.

HELENA. Be not afraid that I your hand should take;

I'll never do you wrong for your own sake.

Blessing upon your vows; and in your bed

Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

LAFEU. These boys are boys of ice; they'll none have her.

Sure, they are bastards to the English; the French ne'er got 'em.

HELENA. You are too young, too happy, and too good,

To make yourself a son out of my blood.

FOURTH LORD. Fair one, I think not so.

LAFEU. There's one grape yet; I am sure thy father drunk wine-but

if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen; I have known

thee already.

HELENA. [To BERTRAM] I dare not say I take you; but I give

Me and my service, ever whilst I live,

Into your guiding power. This is the man.

KING. Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she's thy wife.

BERTRAM. My wife, my liege! I shall beseech your Highness,

In such a business give me leave to use

The help of mine own eyes.

KING. Know'st thou not, Bertram,

What she has done for me?

BERTRAM. Yes, my good lord;

But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING. Thou know'st she has rais'd me from my sickly bed.

BERTRAM. But follows it, my lord, to bring me down

Must answer for your raising? I know her well:

She had her breeding at my father's charge.

A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain

Rather corrupt me ever!

KING. 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which

I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,

Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,

Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off

In differences so mighty. If she be

All that is virtuous-save what thou dislik'st,

A poor physician's daughter-thou dislik'st

Of virtue for the name; but do not so.

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,

The place is dignified by the doer's deed;

Where great additions swell's, and virtue none,

It is a dropsied honour. Good alone

Is good without a name. Vileness is so:

The property by what it is should go,

Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;

In these to nature she's immediate heir;

And these breed honour. That is honour's scorn

Which challenges itself as honour's born

And is not like the sire. Honours thrive

When rather from our acts we them derive

Than our fore-goers. The mere word's a slave,

Debauch'd on every tomb, on every grave

A lying trophy; and as oft is dumb

Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb

Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?

If thou canst like this creature as a maid,

I can create the rest. Virtue and she

Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

BERTRAM. I cannot love her, nor will strive to do 't.

KING. Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.

HELENA. That you are well restor'd, my lord, I'm glad.

Let the rest go.

KING. My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,

I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,

Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift,

That dost in vile misprision shackle up

My love and her desert; that canst not dream

We, poising us in her defective scale,

Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know

It is in us to plant thine honour where

We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt;

Obey our will, which travails in thy good;

Believe not thy disdain, but presently

Do thine own fortunes that obedient right

Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;

Or I will throw thee from my care for ever

Into the staggers and the careless lapse

Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate

Loosing upon thee in the name of justice,

Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

BERTRAM. Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit

My fancy to your eyes. When I consider

What great creation and what dole of honour

Flies where you bid it, I find that she which late

Was in my nobler thoughts most base is now

The praised of the King; who, so ennobled,

Is as 'twere born so.

KING. Take her by the hand,

And tell her she is thine; to whom I promise

A counterpoise, if not to thy estate

A balance more replete.

BERTRAM. I take her hand.

KING. Good fortune and the favour of the King

Smile upon this contract; whose ceremony

Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,

And be perform'd to-night. The solemn feast

Shall more attend upon the coming space,

Expecting absent friends. As thou lov'st her,

Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.

Exeunt all but LAFEU and PAROLLES who stay behind,

commenting of this wedding

LAFEU. Do you hear, monsieur? A word with you.

PAROLLES. Your pleasure, sir?

LAFEU. Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.

PAROLLES. Recantation! My Lord! my master!

LAFEU. Ay; is it not a language I speak?

PAROLLES. A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody

succeeding. My master!

LAFEU. Are you companion to the Count Rousillon?

PAROLLES. To any count; to all counts; to what is man.

LAFEU. To what is count's man: count's master is of another style.

PAROLLES. You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too

old.

LAFEU. I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which title age

cannot bring thee.

PAROLLES. What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

LAFEU. I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise

fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might

pass. Yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly

dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden. I

have now found thee; when I lose thee again I care not; yet art

thou good for nothing but taking up; and that thou'rt scarce

worth.

PAROLLES. Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee-

LAFEU. Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy

trial; which if-Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good

window of lattice, fare thee well; thy casement I need not open,

for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.

PAROLLES. My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

LAFEU. Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

PAROLLES. I have not, my lord, deserv'd it.

LAFEU. Yes, good faith, ev'ry dram of it; and I will not bate thee

a scruple.

PAROLLES. Well, I shall be wiser.

LAFEU. Ev'n as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack

o' th' contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf and

beaten, thou shalt find what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I

have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my

knowledge, that I may say in the default 'He is a man I know.'

PAROLLES. My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

LAFEU. I would it were hell pains for thy sake, and my poor doing

eternal; for doing I am past, as I will by thee, in what motion

age will give me leave. Exit

PAROLLES. Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me:

scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must be patient; there

is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can

meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a

lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have of-

I'll beat him, and if I could but meet him again.

Re-enter LAFEU

LAFEU. Sirrah, your lord and master's married; there's news for

you; you have a new mistress.

PAROLLES. I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some

reservation of your wrongs. He is my good lord: whom I serve

above is my master.

LAFEU. Who? God?

PAROLLES. Ay, sir.

LAFEU. The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up

thy arms o' this fashion? Dost make hose of thy sleeves? Do other

servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose

stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat

thee. Methink'st thou art a general offence, and every man should

beat thee. I think thou wast created for men to breathe

themselves upon thee.

PAROLLES. This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

LAFEU. Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel

out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond, and no true traveller;

you are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the

commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are

not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you.

Exit

Enter BERTRAM

PAROLLES. Good, very, good, it is so then. Good, very good; let it

be conceal'd awhile.

BERTRAM. Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!

PAROLLES. What's the matter, sweetheart?

BERTRAM. Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,

I will not bed her.

PAROLLES. What, what, sweetheart?

BERTRAM. O my Parolles, they have married me!

I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

PAROLLES. France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits

The tread of a man's foot. To th' wars!

BERTRAM. There's letters from my mother; what th' import is I know

not yet.

PAROLLES. Ay, that would be known. To th' wars, my boy, to th'

wars!

He wears his honour in a box unseen

That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,

Spending his manly marrow in her arms,

Which should sustain the bound and high curvet

Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions!

France is a stable; we that dwell in't jades;

Therefore, to th' war!

BERTRAM. It shall be so; I'll send her to my house,

Acquaint my mother with my hate to her,

And wherefore I am fled; write to the King

That which I durst not speak. His present gift

Shall furnish me to those Italian fields

Where noble fellows strike. War is no strife

To the dark house and the detested wife.

PAROLLES. Will this capriccio hold in thee, art sure?

BERTRAM. Go with me to my chamber and advise me.

I'll send her straight away. To-morrow

I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

PAROLLES. Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard:

A young man married is a man that's marr'd.

Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go.

The King has done you wrong; but, hush, 'tis so. Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 4.

Paris. The KING'S palace

Enter HELENA and CLOWN

HELENA. My mother greets me kindly; is she well?

CLOWN. She is not well, but yet she has her health; she's very

merry, but yet she is not well. But thanks be given, she's very

well, and wants nothing i' th' world; but yet she is not well.

HELENA. If she be very well, what does she ail that she's not very

well?

CLOWN. Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HELENA. What two things?

CLOWN. One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly!

The other, that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly!

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES. Bless you, my fortunate lady!

HELENA. I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good

fortunes.

PAROLLES. You had my prayers to lead them on; and to keep them on,

have them still. O, my knave, how does my old lady?

CLOWN. So that you had her wrinkles and I her money, I would she

did as you say.

PAROLLES. Why, I say nothing.

CLOWN. Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes

out his master's undoing. To say nothing, to do nothing, to know

nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your

title, which is within a very little of nothing.

PAROLLES. Away! th'art a knave.

CLOWN. You should have said, sir, 'Before a knave th'art a knave';

that's 'Before me th'art a knave.' This had been truth, sir.

PAROLLES. Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

CLOWN. Did you find me in yourself, sir, or were you taught to find

me? The search, sir, was profitable; and much fool may you find

in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of

laughter.

PAROLLES. A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.

Madam, my lord will go away to-night:

A very serious business calls on him.

The great prerogative and rite of love,

Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge;

But puts it off to a compell'd restraint;

Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets,

Which they distil now in the curbed time,

To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy

And pleasure drown the brim.

HELENA. What's his else?

PAROLLES. That you will take your instant leave o' th' King,

And make this haste as your own good proceeding,

Strength'ned with what apology you think

May make it probable need.

HELENA. What more commands he?

PAROLLES. That, having this obtain'd, you presently

Attend his further pleasure.

HELENA. In everything I wait upon his will.

PAROLLES. I shall report it so.

HELENA. I pray you. Exit PAROLLES

Come, sirrah. Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 5.

Paris. The KING'S palace

Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM

LAFEU. But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

BERTRAM. Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

LAFEU. You have it from his own deliverance.

BERTRAM. And by other warranted testimony.

LAFEU. Then my dial goes not true; I took this lark for a bunting.

BERTRAM. I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge,

and accordingly valiant.

LAFEU. I have then sinn'd against his experience and transgress'd

against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since I

cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes; I pray you

make us friends; I will pursue the amity

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES. [To BERTRAM] These things shall be done, sir.

LAFEU. Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

PAROLLES. Sir!

LAFEU. O, I know him well. Ay, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman, a

very good tailor.

BERTRAM. [Aside to PAROLLES] Is she gone to the King?

PAROLLES. She is.

BERTRAM. Will she away to-night?

PAROLLES. As you'll have her.

BERTRAM. I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,

Given order for our horses; and to-night,

When I should take possession of the bride,

End ere I do begin.

LAFEU. A good traveller is something at the latter end of a dinner;

but one that lies three-thirds and uses a known truth to pass a

thousand nothings with, should be once heard and thrice beaten.

God save you, Captain.

BERTRAM. Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?

PAROLLES. I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's

displeasure.

LAFEU. You have made shift to run into 't, boots and spurs and all,

like him that leapt into the custard; and out of it you'll run

again, rather than suffer question for your residence.

BERTRAM. It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

LAFEU. And shall do so ever, though I took him at's prayers.

Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of me: there can be no

kernal in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes;

trust him not in matter of heavy consequence; I have kept of them

tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur; I have spoken

better of you than you have or will to deserve at my hand; but we

must do good against evil. Exit

PAROLLES. An idle lord, I swear.

BERTRAM. I think so.

PAROLLES. Why, do you not know him?

BERTRAM. Yes, I do know him well; and common speech

Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELENA

HELENA. I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,

Spoke with the King, and have procur'd his leave

For present parting; only he desires

Some private speech with you.

BERTRAM. I shall obey his will.

You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,

Which holds not colour with the time, nor does

The ministration and required office

On my particular. Prepar'd I was not

For such a business; therefore am I found

So much unsettled. This drives me to entreat you

That presently you take your way for home,

And rather muse than ask why I entreat you;

For my respects are better than they seem,

And my appointments have in them a need

Greater than shows itself at the first view

To you that know them not. This to my mother.

[Giving a letter]

'Twill be two days ere I shall see you; so

I leave you to your wisdom.

HELENA. Sir, I can nothing say

But that I am your most obedient servant.

BERTRAM. Come, come, no more of that.

HELENA. And ever shall

With true observance seek to eke out that

Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd

To equal my great fortune.

BERTRAM. Let that go.

My haste is very great. Farewell; hie home.

HELENA. Pray, sir, your pardon.

BERTRAM. Well, what would you say?

HELENA. I am not worthy of the wealth I owe,

Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is;

But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal

What law does vouch mine own.

BERTRAM. What would you have?

HELENA. Something; and scarce so much; nothing, indeed.

I would not tell you what I would, my lord.

Faith, yes:

Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.

BERTRAM. I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

HELENA. I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

BERTRAM. Where are my other men, monsieur?

Farewell! Exit HELENA

Go thou toward home, where I will never come

Whilst I can shake my sword or hear the drum.

Away, and for our flight.

PAROLLES. Bravely, coragio! Exeunt

<<THIS ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM

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ACT III. SCENE 1.

Florence. The DUKE's palace

Flourish. Enter the DUKE OF FLORENCE, attended; two

FRENCH LORDS, with a TROOP OF SOLDIERS

DUKE. So that, from point to point, now have you hear

The fundamental reasons of this war;

Whose great decision hath much blood let forth

And more thirsts after.

FIRST LORD. Holy seems the quarrel

Upon your Grace's part; black and fearful

On the opposer.

DUKE. Therefore we marvel much our cousin France

Would in so just a business shut his bosom

Against our borrowing prayers.

SECOND LORD. Good my lord,

The reasons of our state I cannot yield,

But like a common and an outward man

That the great figure of a council frames

By self-unable motion; therefore dare not

Say what I think of it, since I have found

Myself in my incertain grounds to fail

As often as I guess'd.

DUKE. Be it his pleasure.

FIRST LORD. But I am sure the younger of our nature,

That surfeit on their ease, will day by day

Come here for physic.

DUKE. Welcome shall they be

And all the honours that can fly from us

Shall on them settle. You know your places well;

When better fall, for your avails they fell.

To-morrow to th' field. Flourish. Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 2.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN

COUNTESS. It hath happen'd all as I would have had it, save that he

comes not along with her.

CLOWN. By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy

man.

COUNTESS. By what observance, I pray you?

CLOWN. Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and

sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a

man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a

song.

COUNTESS. Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come.

[Opening a letter]

CLOWN. I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court. Our old ling

and our Isbels o' th' country are nothing like your old ling and

your Isbels o' th' court. The brains of my Cupid's knock'd out;

and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

COUNTESS. What have we here?

CLOWN. E'en that you have there. Exit

COUNTESS. [Reads] 'I have sent you a daughter-in-law; she hath

recovered the King and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded

her; and sworn to make the "not" eternal. You shall hear I am run

away; know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough

in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.

Your unfortunate son,

BERTRAM.'

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy,

To fly the favours of so good a king,

To pluck his indignation on thy head

By the misprizing of a maid too virtuous

For the contempt of empire.

Re-enter CLOWN

CLOWN. O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers

and my young lady.

COUNTESS. What is the -matter?

CLOWN. Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your

son will not be kill'd so soon as I thought he would.

COUNTESS. Why should he be kill'd?

CLOWN. So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does the

danger is in standing to 't; that's the loss of men, though it be

the getting of children. Here they come will tell you more. For my

part, I only hear your son was run away. Exit

Enter HELENA and the two FRENCH GENTLEMEN

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Save you, good madam.

HELENA. Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Do not say so.

COUNTESS. Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen-

I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief

That the first face of neither, on the start,

Can woman me unto 't. Where is my son, I pray you?

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Madam, he's gone to serve the Duke of Florence.

We met him thitherward; for thence we came,

And, after some dispatch in hand at court,

Thither we bend again.

HELENA. Look on this letter, madam; here's my passport.

[Reads] 'When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which

never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body

that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a "then" I

write a "never."

This is a dreadful sentence.

COUNTESS. Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Ay, madam;

And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pains.

COUNTESS. I prithee, lady, have a better cheer;

If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,

Thou robb'st me of a moiety. He was my son;

But I do wash his name out of my blood,

And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he?

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Ay, madam.

COUNTESS. And to be a soldier?

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Such is his noble purpose; and, believe 't,

The Duke will lay upon him all the honour

That good convenience claims.

COUNTESS. Return you thither?

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

HELENA. [Reads] 'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'

'Tis bitter.

COUNTESS. Find you that there?

HELENA. Ay, madam.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. 'Tis but the boldness of his hand haply, which

his heart was not consenting to.

COUNTESS. Nothing in France until he have no wife!

There's nothing here that is too good for him

But only she; and she deserves a lord

That twenty such rude boys might tend upon,

And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him?

SECOND GENTLEMAN. A servant only, and a gentleman

Which I have sometime known.

COUNTESS. Parolles, was it not?

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Ay, my good lady, he.

COUNTESS. A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.

My son corrupts a well-derived nature

With his inducement.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Indeed, good lady,

The fellow has a deal of that too much

Which holds him much to have.

COUNTESS. Y'are welcome, gentlemen.

I will entreat you, when you see my son,

To tell him that his sword can never win

The honour that he loses. More I'll entreat you

Written to bear along.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. We serve you, madam,

In that and all your worthiest affairs.

COUNTESS. Not so, but as we change our courtesies.

Will you draw near? Exeunt COUNTESS and GENTLEMEN

HELENA. 'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'

Nothing in France until he has no wife!

Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France

Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't

That chase thee from thy country, and expose

Those tender limbs of thine to the event

Of the non-sparing war? And is it I

That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou

Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark

Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,

That ride upon the violent speed of fire,

Fly with false aim; move the still-piecing air,

That sings with piercing; do not touch my lord.

Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;

Whoever charges on his forward breast,

I am the caitiff that do hold him to't;

And though I kill him not, I am the cause

His death was so effected. Better 'twere

I met the ravin lion when he roar'd

With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere

That all the miseries which nature owes

Were mine at once. No; come thou home, Rousillon,

Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,

As oft it loses all. I will be gone.

My being here it is that holds thee hence.

Shall I stay here to do 't? No, no, although

The air of paradise did fan the house,

And angels offic'd all. I will be gone,

That pitiful rumour may report my flight

To consolate thine ear. Come, night; end, day.

For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away. Exit

ACT III. SCENE 3.

Florence. Before the DUKE's palace

Flourish. Enter the DUKE OF FLORENCE, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, SOLDIERS,

drum and trumpets

DUKE. The General of our Horse thou art; and we,

Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence

Upon thy promising fortune.

BERTRAM. Sir, it is

A charge too heavy for my strength; but yet

We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake

To th' extreme edge of hazard.

DUKE. Then go thou forth;

And Fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,

As thy auspicious mistress!

BERTRAM. This very day,

Great Mars, I put myself into thy file;

Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove

A lover of thy drum, hater of love. Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 4.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS and STEWARD

COUNTESS. Alas! and would you take the letter of her?

Might you not know she would do as she has done

By sending me a letter? Read it again.

STEWARD. [Reads] 'I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone.

Ambitious love hath so in me offended

That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,

With sainted vow my faults to have amended.

Write, write, that from the bloody course of war

My dearest master, your dear son, may hie.

Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far

His name with zealous fervour sanctify.

His taken labours bid him me forgive;

I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth

From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,

Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth.

He is too good and fair for death and me;

Whom I myself embrace to set him free.'

COUNTESS. Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words!

Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much

As letting her pass so; had I spoke with her,

I could have well diverted her intents,

Which thus she hath prevented.

STEWARD. Pardon me, madam;

If I had given you this at over-night,

She might have been o'er ta'en; and yet she writes

Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNTESS. What angel shall

Bless this unworthy husband? He cannot thrive,

Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear

And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath

Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,

To this unworthy husband of his wife;

Let every word weigh heavy of her worth

That he does weigh too light. My greatest grief,

Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.

Dispatch the most convenient messenger.

When haply he shall hear that she is gone

He will return; and hope I may that she,

Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,

Led hither by pure love. Which of them both

Is dearest to me I have no skill in sense

To make distinction. Provide this messenger.

My heart is heavy, and mine age is weak;

Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak. Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 5.

Without the walls of Florence

A tucket afar off. Enter an old WIDOW OF FLORENCE, her daughter DIANA,

VIOLENTA, and MARIANA, with other CITIZENS

WIDOW. Nay, come; for if they do approach the city we shall lose

all the sight.

DIANA. They say the French count has done most honourable service.

WIDOW. It is reported that he has taken their great'st commander;

and that with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother. [Tucket]

We have lost our labour; they are gone a contrary way. Hark! you

may know by their trumpets.

MARIANA. Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the

report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this French earl; the

honour of a maid is her name, and no legacy is so rich as

honesty.

WIDOW. I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited by a

gentleman his companion.

MARIANA. I know that knave, hang him! one Parolles; a filthy

officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl. Beware of

them, Diana: their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all

these engines of lust, are not the things they go under; many a

maid hath been seduced by them; and the misery is, example, that

so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that

dissuade succession, but that they are limed with the twigs that

threatens them. I hope I need not to advise you further; but I

hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there

were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

DIANA. You shall not need to fear me.

Enter HELENA in the dress of a pilgrim

WIDOW. I hope so. Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lie

at my house: thither they send one another. I'll question her.

God save you, pilgrim! Whither are bound?

HELENA. To Saint Jaques le Grand.

Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?

WIDOW. At the Saint Francis here, beside the port.

HELENA. Is this the way?

[A march afar]

WIDOW. Ay, marry, is't. Hark you! They come this way.

If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,

But till the troops come by,

I will conduct you where you shall be lodg'd;

The rather for I think I know your hostess

As ample as myself.

HELENA. Is it yourself?

WIDOW. If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HELENA. I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

WIDOW. You came, I think, from France?

HELENA. I did so.

WIDOW. Here you shall see a countryman of yours

That has done worthy service.

HELENA. His name, I pray you.

DIANA. The Count Rousillon. Know you such a one?

HELENA. But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him;

His face I know not.

DIANA. What some'er he is,

He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,

As 'tis reported, for the King had married him

Against his liking. Think you it is so?

HELENA. Ay, surely, mere the truth; I know his lady.

DIANA. There is a gentleman that serves the Count

Reports but coarsely of her.

HELENA. What's his name?

DIANA. Monsieur Parolles.

HELENA. O, I believe with him,

In argument of praise, or to the worth

Of the great Count himself, she is too mean

To have her name repeated; all her deserving

Is a reserved honesty, and that

I have not heard examin'd.

DIANA. Alas, poor lady!

'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife

Of a detesting lord.

WIDOW. I sweet, good creature, wheresoe'er she is

Her heart weighs sadly. This young maid might do her

A shrewd turn, if she pleas'd.

HELENA. How do you mean?

May be the amorous Count solicits her

In the unlawful purpose.

WIDOW. He does, indeed;

And brokes with all that can in such a suit

Corrupt the tender honour of a maid;

But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard

In honestest defence.

Enter, with drum and colours, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and the

whole ARMY

MARIANA. The gods forbid else!

WIDOW. So, now they come.

That is Antonio, the Duke's eldest son;

That, Escalus.

HELENA. Which is the Frenchman?

DIANA. He-

That with the plume; 'tis a most gallant fellow.

I would he lov'd his wife; if he were honester

He were much goodlier. Is't not a handsome gentleman?

HELENA. I like him well.

DIANA. 'Tis pity he is not honest. Yond's that same knave

That leads him to these places; were I his lady

I would poison that vile rascal.

HELENA. Which is he?

DIANA. That jack-an-apes with scarfs. Why is he melancholy?

HELENA. Perchance he's hurt i' th' battle.

PAROLLES. Lose our drum! well.

MARIANA. He's shrewdly vex'd at something.

Look, he has spied us.

WIDOW. Marry, hang you!

MARIANA. And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

Exeunt BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and ARMY

WIDOW. The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you

Where you shall host. Of enjoin'd penitents

There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,

Already at my house.

HELENA. I humbly thank you.

Please it this matron and this gentle maid

To eat with us to-night; the charge and thanking

Shall be for me, and, to requite you further,

I will bestow some precepts of this virgin,

Worthy the note.

BOTH. We'll take your offer kindly. Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 6.

Camp before Florence

Enter BERTRAM, and the two FRENCH LORDS

SECOND LORD. Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him have his way.

FIRST LORD. If your lordship find him not a hiding, hold me no more

in your respect.

SECOND LORD. On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BERTRAM. Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

SECOND LORD. Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge,

without any malice, but to speak of him as my kinsman, he's a

most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly

promise-breaker, the owner of no one good quality worthy your

lordship's entertainment.

FIRST LORD. It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in his

virtue, which he hath not, he might at some great and trusty

business in a main danger fail you.

BERTRAM. I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

FIRST LORD. None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which

you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

SECOND LORD. I with a troop of Florentines will suddenly surprise

him; such I will have whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy.

We will bind and hoodwink him so that he shall suppose no other

but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries when

we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship present at

his examination; if he do not, for the promise of his life and in

the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you and

deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that

with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my

judgment in anything.

FIRST LORD. O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum; he

says he has a stratagem for't. When your lordship sees the bottom

of his success in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of

ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's

entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

Enter PAROLLES

SECOND LORD. O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of

his design; let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

BERTRAM. How now, monsieur! This drum sticks sorely in your

disposition.

FIRST LORD. A pox on 't; let it go; 'tis but a drum.

PAROLLES. But a drum! Is't but a drum? A drum so lost! There was

excellent command: to charge in with our horse upon our own

wings, and to rend our own soldiers!

FIRST LORD. That was not to be blam'd in the command of the

service; it was a disaster of war that Caesar himself could not

have prevented, if he had been there to command.

BERTRAM. Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success.

Some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to

be recovered.

PAROLLES. It might have been recovered.

BERTRAM. It might, but it is not now.

PAROLLES. It is to be recovered. But that the merit of service is

seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have

that drum or another, or 'hic jacet.'

BERTRAM. Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur. If you think

your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour

again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprise,

and go on; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit. If you

speed well in it, the Duke shall both speak of it and extend to

you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost

syllable of our worthiness.

PAROLLES. By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BERTRAM. But you must not now slumber in it.

PAROLLES. I'll about it this evening; and I will presently pen

down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself

into my mortal preparation; and by midnight look to hear further

from me.

BERTRAM. May I be bold to acquaint his Grace you are gone about it?

PAROLLES. I know not what the success will be, my lord, but the

attempt I vow.

BERTRAM. I know th' art valiant; and, to the of thy soldiership,

will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAROLLES. I love not many words. Exit

SECOND LORD. No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange

fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems to undertake this

business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do,

and dares better be damn'd than to do 't.

FIRST LORD. You do not know him, my lord, as we do. Certain it is

that he will steal himself into a man's favour, and for a week

escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you find him out,

you have him ever after.

BERTRAM. Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of this that

so seriously he does address himself unto?

SECOND LORD. None in the world; but return with an invention, and

clap upon you two or three probable lies. But we have almost

emboss'd him. You shall see his fall to-night; for indeed he is

not for your lordship's respect.

FIRST LORD. We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him.

He was first smok'd by the old Lord Lafeu. When his disguise and

he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him; which you

shall see this very night.

SECOND LORD. I must go look my twigs; he shall be caught.

BERTRAM. Your brother, he shall go along with me.

SECOND LORD. As't please your lordship. I'll leave you. Exit

BERTRAM. Now will I lead you to the house, and show you

The lass I spoke of.

FIRST LORD. But you say she's honest.

BERTRAM. That's all the fault. I spoke with her but once,

And found her wondrous cold; but I sent to her,

By this same coxcomb that we have i' th' wind,

Tokens and letters which she did re-send;

And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature;

Will you go see her?

FIRST LORD. With all my heart, my lord. Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 7.

Florence. The WIDOW'S house

Enter HELENA and WIDOW

HELENA. If you misdoubt me that I am not she,

I know not how I shall assure you further

But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

WIDOW. Though my estate be fall'n, I was well born,

Nothing acquainted with these businesses;

And would not put my reputation now

In any staining act.

HELENA. Nor would I wish you.

FIRST give me trust the Count he is my husband,

And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken

Is so from word to word; and then you cannot,

By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,

Err in bestowing it.

WIDOW. I should believe you;

For you have show'd me that which well approves

Y'are great in fortune.

HELENA. Take this purse of gold,

And let me buy your friendly help thus far,

Which I will over-pay and pay again

When I have found it. The Count he woos your daughter

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,

Resolv'd to carry her. Let her in fine consent,

As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.

Now his important blood will nought deny

That she'll demand. A ring the County wears

That downward hath succeeded in his house

From son to son some four or five descents

Since the first father wore it. This ring he holds

In most rich choice; yet, in his idle fire,

To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,

Howe'er repented after.

WIDOW. Now I see

The bottom of your purpose.

HELENA. You see it lawful then. It is no more

But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,

Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;

In fine, delivers me to fill the time,

Herself most chastely absent. After this,

To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns

To what is pass'd already.

WIDOW. I have yielded.

Instruct my daughter how she shall persever,

That time and place with this deceit so lawful

May prove coherent. Every night he comes

With musics of all sorts, and songs compos'd

To her unworthiness. It nothing steads us

To chide him from our eaves, for he persists

As if his life lay on 't.

HELENA. Why then to-night

Let us assay our plot; which, if it speed,

Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,

And lawful meaning in a lawful act;

Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.

But let's about it. Exeunt

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ACT IV. SCENE 1.

Without the Florentine camp

Enter SECOND FRENCH LORD with five or six other SOLDIERS in ambush

SECOND LORD. He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner.

When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will;

though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must

not seem to understand him, unless some one among us, whom we

must produce for an interpreter.

FIRST SOLDIER. Good captain, let me be th' interpreter.

SECOND LORD. Art not acquainted with him? Knows he not thy voice?

FIRST SOLDIER. No, sir, I warrant you.

SECOND LORD. But what linsey-woolsey has thou to speak to us again?

FIRST SOLDIER. E'en such as you speak to me.

SECOND LORD. He must think us some band of strangers i' th'

adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all

neighbouring languages, therefore we must every one be a man of

his own fancy; not to know what we speak one to another, so we

seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs' language,

gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must

seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes; to beguile two

hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES. Ten o'clock. Within these three hours 'twill be time

enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a

very plausive invention that carries it. They begin to smoke me;

and disgraces have of late knock'd to often at my door. I find my

tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars

before it, and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my

tongue.

SECOND LORD. This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was

guilty of.

PAROLLES. What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery

of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and

knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and

say I got them in exploit. Yet slight ones will not carry it.

They will say 'Came you off with so little?' And great ones I

dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put

you into a butterwoman's mouth, and buy myself another of

Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

SECOND LORD. Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that

he is?

PAROLLES. I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn,

or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

SECOND LORD. We cannot afford you so.

PAROLLES. Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in

stratagem.

SECOND LORD. 'Twould not do.

PAROLLES. Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripp'd.

SECOND LORD. Hardly serve.

PAROLLES. Though I swore I leap'd from the window of the citadel-

SECOND LORD. How deep?

PAROLLES. Thirty fathom.

SECOND LORD. Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

PAROLLES. I would I had any drum of the enemy's; I would swear I

recover'd it.

SECOND LORD. You shall hear one anon. [Alarum within]

PAROLLES. A drum now of the enemy's!

SECOND LORD. Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

ALL. Cargo, cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.

PAROLLES. O, ransom, ransom! Do not hide mine eyes.

[They blindfold him]

FIRST SOLDIER. Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAROLLES. I know you are the Muskos' regiment,

And I shall lose my life for want of language.

If there be here German, or Dane, Low Dutch,

Italian, or French, let him speak to me;

I'll discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

FIRST SOLDIER. Boskos vauvado. I understand thee, and can speak thy

tongue. Kerely-bonto, sir, betake thee to thy faith, for

seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.

PAROLLES. O!

FIRST SOLDIER. O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulche.

SECOND LORD. Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

FIRST SOLDIER. The General is content to spare thee yet;

And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on

To gather from thee. Haply thou mayst inform

Something to save thy life.

PAROLLES. O, let me live,

And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,

Their force, their purposes. Nay, I'll speak that

Which you will wonder at.

FIRST SOLDIER. But wilt thou faithfully?

PAROLLES. If I do not, damn me.

FIRST SOLDIER. Acordo linta.

Come on; thou art granted space.

Exit, PAROLLES guarded. A short alarum within

SECOND LORD. Go, tell the Count Rousillon and my brother

We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled

Till we do hear from them.

SECOND SOLDIER. Captain, I will.

SECOND LORD. 'A will betray us all unto ourselves-

Inform on that.

SECOND SOLDIER. So I will, sir.

SECOND LORD. Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

Florence. The WIDOW'S house

Enter BERTRAM and DIANA

BERTRAM. They told me that your name was Fontibell.

DIANA. No, my good lord, Diana.

BERTRAM. Titled goddess;

And worth it, with addition! But, fair soul,

In your fine frame hath love no quality?

If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,

You are no maiden, but a monument;

When you are dead, you should be such a one

As you are now, for you are cold and stern;

And now you should be as your mother was

When your sweet self was got.

DIANA. She then was honest.

BERTRAM. So should you be.

DIANA. No.

My mother did but duty; such, my lord,

As you owe to your wife.

BERTRAM. No more o'that!

I prithee do not strive against my vows.

I was compell'd to her; but I love the

By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever

Do thee all rights of service.

DIANA. Ay, so you serve us

Till we serve you; but when you have our roses

You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves,

And mock us with our bareness.

BERTRAM. How have I sworn!

DIANA. 'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,

But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.

What is not holy, that we swear not by,

But take the High'st to witness. Then, pray you, tell me:

If I should swear by Jove's great attributes

I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths

When I did love you ill? This has no holding,

To swear by him whom I protest to love

That I will work against him. Therefore your oaths

Are words and poor conditions, but unseal'd-

At least in my opinion.

BERTRAM. Change it, change it;

Be not so holy-cruel. Love is holy;

And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts

That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,

But give thyself unto my sick desires,

Who then recovers. Say thou art mine, and ever

My love as it begins shall so persever.

DIANA. I see that men make ropes in such a scarre

That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

BERTRAM. I'll lend it thee, my dear, but have no power

To give it from me.

DIANA. Will you not, my lord?

BERTRAM. It is an honour 'longing to our house,

Bequeathed down from many ancestors;

Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world

In me to lose.

DIANA. Mine honour's such a ring:

My chastity's the jewel of our house,

Bequeathed down from many ancestors;

Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world

In me to lose. Thus your own proper wisdom

Brings in the champion Honour on my part

Against your vain assault.

BERTRAM. Here, take my ring;

My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine,

And I'll be bid by thee.

DIANA. When midnight comes, knock at my chamber window;

I'll order take my mother shall not hear.

Now will I charge you in the band of truth,

When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,

Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me:

My reasons are most strong; and you shall know them

When back again this ring shall be deliver'd.

And on your finger in the night I'll put

Another ring, that what in time proceeds

May token to the future our past deeds.

Adieu till then; then fail not. You have won

A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

BERTRAM. A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.

Exit

DIANA. For which live long to thank both heaven and me!

You may so in the end.

My mother told me just how he would woo,

As if she sat in's heart; she says all men

Have the like oaths. He had sworn to marry me

When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie with him

When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,

Marry that will, I live and die a maid.

Only, in this disguise, I think't no sin

To cozen him that would unjustly win. Exit

ACT IV. SCENE 3.

The Florentine camp

Enter the two FRENCH LORDS, and two or three SOLDIERS

SECOND LORD. You have not given him his mother's letter?

FIRST LORD. I have deliv'red it an hour since. There is something

in't that stings his nature; for on the reading it he chang'd

almost into another man.

SECOND LORD. He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off

so good a wife and so sweet a lady.

FIRST LORD. Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure

of the King, who had even tun'd his bounty to sing happiness to

him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly

with you.

SECOND LORD. When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave

of it.

FIRST LORD. He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence,

of a most chaste renown; and this night he fleshes his will in

the spoil of her honour. He hath given her his monumental ring,

and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

SECOND LORD. Now, God delay our rebellion! As we are ourselves,

what things are we!

FIRST LORD. Merely our own traitors. And as in the common course of

all treasons we still see them reveal themselves till they attain

to their abhorr'd ends; so he that in this action contrives

against his own nobility, in his proper stream, o'erflows

himself.

SECOND LORD. Is it not meant damnable in us to be trumpeters of our

unlawful intents? We shall not then have his company to-night?

FIRST LORD. Not till after midnight; for he is dieted to his hour.

SECOND LORD. That approaches apace. I would gladly have him see his

company anatomiz'd, that he might take a measure of his own

judgments, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit.

FIRST LORD. We will not meddle with him till he come; for his

presence must be the whip of the other.

SECOND LORD. In the meantime, what hear you of these wars?

FIRST LORD. I hear there is an overture of peace.

SECOND LORD. Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

FIRST LORD. What will Count Rousillon do then? Will he travel

higher, or return again into France?

SECOND LORD. I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether

of his counsel.

FIRST LORD. Let it be forbid, sir! So should I be a great deal

of his act.

SECOND LORD. Sir, his wife, some two months since, fled from his

house. Her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand;

which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she

accomplish'd; and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature

became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last

breath, and now she sings in heaven.

FIRST LORD. How is this justified?

SECOND LORD. The stronger part of it by her own letters, which

makes her story true even to the point of her death. Her death

itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was

faithfully confirm'd by the rector of the place.

FIRST LORD. Hath the Count all this intelligence?

SECOND LORD. Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from

point, to the full arming of the verity.

FIRST LORD. I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of this.

SECOND LORD. How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our

losses!

FIRST LORD. And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in

tears! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquir'd for

him shall at home be encount'red with a shame as ample.

SECOND LORD. The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill

together. Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipt them

not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherish'd by

our virtues.

Enter a MESSENGER

How now? Where's your master?

SERVANT. He met the Duke in the street, sir; of whom he hath taken

a solemn leave. His lordship will next morning for France. The

Duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the King.

SECOND LORD. They shall be no more than needful there, if they were

more than they can commend.

FIRST LORD. They cannot be too sweet for the King's tartness.

Here's his lordship now.

Enter BERTRAM

How now, my lord, is't not after midnight?

BERTRAM. I have to-night dispatch'd sixteen businesses, a month's

length apiece; by an abstract of success: I have congied with the

Duke, done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourn'd for

her; writ to my lady mother I am returning; entertain'd my

convoy; and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many

nicer needs. The last was the greatest, but that I have not ended

yet.

SECOND LORD. If the business be of any difficulty and this morning

your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

BERTRAM. I mean the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it

hereafter. But shall we have this dialogue between the Fool and

the Soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module has

deceiv'd me like a double-meaning prophesier.

SECOND LORD. Bring him forth. [Exeunt SOLDIERS] Has sat i' th'

stocks all night, poor gallant knave.

BERTRAM. No matter; his heels have deserv'd it, in usurping his

spurs so long. How does he carry himself?

SECOND LORD. I have told your lordship already the stocks carry

him. But to answer you as you would be understood: he weeps like

a wench that had shed her milk; he hath confess'd himself to

Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time of his

remembrance to this very instant disaster of his setting i' th'

stocks. And what think you he hath confess'd?

BERTRAM. Nothing of me, has 'a?

SECOND LORD. His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his

face; if your lordship be in't, as I believe you are, you must

have the patience to hear it.

Enter PAROLLES guarded, and

FIRST SOLDIER as interpreter

BERTRAM. A plague upon him! muffled! He can say nothing of me.

SECOND LORD. Hush, hush! Hoodman comes. Portotartarossa.

FIRST SOLDIER. He calls for the tortures. What will you say without

'em?

PAROLLES. I will confess what I know without constraint; if ye

pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.

FIRST SOLDIER. Bosko chimurcho.

SECOND LORD. Boblibindo chicurmurco.

FIRST SOLDIER. YOU are a merciful general. Our General bids you

answer to what I shall ask you out of a note.

PAROLLES. And truly, as I hope to live.

FIRST SOLDIER. 'First demand of him how many horse the Duke is

strong.' What say you to that?

PAROLLES. Five or six thousand; but very weak and unserviceable.

The troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor

rogues, upon my reputation and credit, and as I hope to live.

FIRST SOLDIER. Shall I set down your answer so?

PAROLLES. Do; I'll take the sacrament on 't, how and which way you

will.

BERTRAM. All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this!

SECOND LORD. Y'are deceiv'd, my lord; this is Monsieur Parolles,

the gallant militarist-that was his own phrase-that had the whole

theoric of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the

chape of his dagger.

FIRST LORD. I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword

clean; nor believe he can have everything in him by wearing his

apparel neatly.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, that's set down.

PAROLLES. 'Five or six thousand horse' I said-I will say true- 'or

thereabouts' set down, for I'll speak truth.

SECOND LORD. He's very near the truth in this.

BERTRAM. But I con him no thanks for't in the nature he delivers it.

PAROLLES. 'Poor rogues' I pray you say.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, that's set down.

PAROLLES. I humbly thank you, sir. A truth's a truth-the rogues are

marvellous poor.

FIRST SOLDIER. 'Demand of him of what strength they are a-foot.'

What say you to that?

PAROLLES. By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I

will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty;

Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian,

Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred fifty each; mine own

company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred fifty each; so

that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not

to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake the

snow from off their cassocks lest they shake themselves to

pieces.

BERTRAM. What shall be done to him?

SECOND LORD. Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my

condition, and what credit I have with the Duke.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, that's set down. 'You shall demand of him

whether one Captain Dumain be i' th' camp, a Frenchman; what his

reputation is with the Duke, what his valour, honesty, expertness

in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with

well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt.' What say

you to this? What do you know of it?

PAROLLES. I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the

inter'gatories. Demand them singly.

FIRST SOLDIER. Do you know this Captain Dumain?

PAROLLES. I know him: 'a was a botcher's prentice in Paris, from

whence he was whipt for getting the shrieve's fool with child-a

dumb innocent that could not say him nay.

BERTRAM. Nay, by your leave, hold your hands; though I know his

brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, is this captain in the Duke of Florence's

camp?

PAROLLES. Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy.

SECOND LORD. Nay, look not so upon me; we shall hear of your

lordship anon.

FIRST SOLDIER. What is his reputation with the Duke?

PAROLLES. The Duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of

mine; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' th' band.

I think I have his letter in my pocket.

FIRST SOLDIER. Marry, we'll search.

PAROLLES. In good sadness, I do not know; either it is there or it

is upon a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent.

FIRST SOLDIER. Here 'tis; here's a paper. Shall I read it to you?

PAROLLES. I do not know if it be it or no.

BERTRAM. Our interpreter does it well.

SECOND LORD. Excellently.

FIRST SOLDIER. [Reads] 'Dian, the Count's a fool, and full of

gold.'

PAROLLES. That is not the Duke's letter, sir; that is an

advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take

heed of the allurement of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle

boy, but for all that very ruttish. I pray you, sir, put it up

again.

FIRST SOLDIER. Nay, I'll read it first by your favour.

PAROLLES. My meaning in't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf

of the maid; for I knew the young Count to be a dangerous and

lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity, and devours up all

the fry it finds.

BERTRAM. Damnable both-sides rogue!

FIRST SOLDIER. [Reads]

'When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it;

After he scores, he never pays the score.

Half won is match well made; match, and well make it;

He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before.

And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this:

Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss;

For count of this, the Count's a fool, I know it,

Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.

Thine, as he vow'd to thee in thine ear,

PAROLLES.'

BERTRAM. He shall be whipt through the army with this rhyme in's

forehead.

FIRST LORD. This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold

linguist, and the amnipotent soldier.

BERTRAM. I could endure anything before but a cat, and now he's a

cat to me.

FIRST SOLDIER. I perceive, sir, by our General's looks we shall be

fain to hang you.

PAROLLES. My life, sir, in any case! Not that I am afraid to die,

but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the

remainder of nature. Let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i' th'

stocks, or anywhere, so I may live.

FIRST SOLDIER. We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely;

therefore, once more to this Captain Dumain: you have answer'd to

his reputation with the Duke, and to his valour; what is his

honesty?

PAROLLES. He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister; for rapes

and ravishments he parallels Nessus. He professes not keeping of

oaths; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie,

sir, with such volubility that you would think truth were a fool.

Drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and

in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bedclothes about

him; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have

but little more to say, sir, of his honesty. He has everything

that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should

have he has nothing.

SECOND LORD. I begin to love him for this.

BERTRAM. For this description of thine honesty? A pox upon him! For

me, he's more and more a cat.

FIRST SOLDIER. What say you to his expertness in war?

PAROLLES. Faith, sir, has led the drum before the English

tragedians-to belie him I will not-and more of his soldier-ship

I know not, except in that country he had the honour to be the

officer at a place there called Mile-end to instruct for the

doubling of files-I would do the man what honour I can-but of

this I am not certain.

SECOND LORD. He hath out-villain'd villainy so far that the rarity

redeems him.

BERTRAM. A pox on him! he's a cat still.

FIRST SOLDIER. His qualities being at this poor price, I need not

to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

PAROLLES. Sir, for a cardecue he will sell the fee-simple of his

salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut th' entail from all

remainders and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

FIRST SOLDIER. What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

FIRST LORD. Why does he ask him of me?

FIRST SOLDIER. What's he?

PAROLLES. E'en a crow o' th' same nest; not altogether so great as

the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil. He

excels his brother for a coward; yet his brother is reputed one

of the best that is. In a retreat he outruns any lackey: marry,

in coming on he has the cramp.

FIRST SOLDIER. If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray

the Florentine?

PAROLLES. Ay, and the Captain of his Horse, Count Rousillon.

FIRST SOLDIER. I'll whisper with the General, and know his

pleasure.

PAROLLES. [Aside] I'll no more drumming. A plague of all drums!

Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of

that lascivious young boy the Count, have I run into this danger.

Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken?

FIRST SOLDIER. There is no remedy, sir, but you must die.

The General says you that have so traitorously discover'd the

secrets of your army, and made such pestiferous reports of men

very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use; therefore

you must die. Come, headsman, of with his head.

PAROLLES. O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death!

FIRST SOLDIER. That shall you, and take your leave of all your

friends. [Unmuffling him] So look about you; know you any here?

BERTRAM. Good morrow, noble Captain.

FIRST LORD. God bless you, Captain Parolles.

SECOND LORD. God save you, noble Captain.

FIRST LORD. Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu? I am

for France.

SECOND LORD. Good Captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet

you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon? An I were not

a very coward I'd compel it of you; but fare you well.

Exeunt BERTRAM and LORDS

FIRST SOLDIER. You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that

has a knot on 't yet.

PAROLLES. Who cannot be crush'd with a plot?

FIRST SOLDIER. If you could find out a country where but women were

that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent

nation. Fare ye well, sir; I am for France too; we shall speak of

you there. Exit with SOLDIERS

PAROLLES. Yet am I thankful. If my heart were great,

'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more;

But I will eat, and drink, and sleep as soft

As captain shall. Simply the thing I am

Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,

Let him fear this; for it will come to pass

That every braggart shall be found an ass.

Rust, sword; cool, blushes; and, Parolles, live

Safest in shame. Being fool'd, by fool'ry thrive.

There's place and means for every man alive.

I'll after them. Exit

ACT IV SCENE 4.

The WIDOW'S house

Enter HELENA, WIDOW, and DIANA

HELENA. That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd you!

One of the greatest in the Christian world

Shall be my surety; fore whose throne 'tis needful,

Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel.

Time was I did him a desired office,

Dear almost as his life; which gratitude

Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,

And answer 'Thanks.' I duly am inform'd

His Grace is at Marseilles, to which place

We have convenient convoy. You must know

I am supposed dead. The army breaking,

My husband hies him home; where, heaven aiding,

And by the leave of my good lord the King,

We'll be before our welcome.

WIDOW. Gentle madam,

You never had a servant to whose trust

Your business was more welcome.

HELENA. Nor you, mistress,

Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour

To recompense your love. Doubt not but heaven

Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,

As it hath fated her to be my motive

And helper to a husband. But, O strange men!

That can such sweet use make of what they hate,

When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts

Defiles the pitchy night. So lust doth play

With what it loathes, for that which is away.

But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,

Under my poor instructions yet must suffer

Something in my behalf.

DIANA. Let death and honesty

Go with your impositions, I am yours

Upon your will to suffer.

HELENA. Yet, I pray you:

But with the word the time will bring on summer,

When briers shall have leaves as well as thorns

And be as sweet as sharp. We must away;

Our waggon is prepar'd, and time revives us.

All's Well that Ends Well. Still the fine's the crown.

Whate'er the course, the end is the renown. Exeunt

ACT IV SCENE 5.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter COUNTESS, LAFEU, and CLOWN

LAFEU. No, no, no, son was misled with a snipt-taffeta fellow

there, whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbak'd

and doughy youth of a nation in his colour. Your daughter-in-law

had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more

advanc'd by the King than by that red-tail'd humble-bee I speak

of.

COUNTESS. I would I had not known him. It was the death of the most

virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature had praise for creating. If

she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a

mother. I could not have owed her a more rooted love.

LAFEU. 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady. We may pick a thousand

sallets ere we light on such another herb.

CLOWN. Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-marjoram of the sallet, or,

rather, the herb of grace.

LAFEU. They are not sallet-herbs, you knave; they are nose-herbs.

CLOWN. I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in

grass.

LAFEU. Whether dost thou profess thyself-a knave or a fool?

CLOWN. A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

LAFEU. Your distinction?

CLOWN. I would cozen the man of his wife, and do his service.

LAFEU. So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

CLOWN. And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

LAFEU. I will subscribe for thee; thou art both knave and fool.

CLOWN. At your service.

LAFEU. No, no, no.

CLOWN. Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a

prince as you are.

LAFEU. Who's that? A Frenchman?

CLOWN. Faith, sir, 'a has an English name; but his fisnomy is more

hotter in France than there.

LAFEU. What prince is that?

CLOWN. The Black Prince, sir; alias, the Prince of Darkness; alias,

the devil.

LAFEU. Hold thee, there's my purse. I give thee not this to suggest

thee from thy master thou talk'st of; serve him still.

CLOWN. I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire;

and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. But, sure, he

is the prince of the world; let his nobility remain in's court. I

am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too

little for pomp to enter. Some that humble themselves may; but

the many will be too chill and tender: and they'll be for the

flow'ry way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

LAFEU. Go thy ways, I begin to be aweary of thee; and I tell thee

so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways;

let my horses be well look'd to, without any tricks.

CLOWN. If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades'

tricks, which are their own right by the law of nature.

Exit

LAFEU. A shrewd knave, and an unhappy.

COUNTESS. So 'a is. My lord that's gone made himself much sport

out of him. By his authority he remains here, which he thinks is

a patent for his sauciness; and indeed he has no pace, but runs

where he will.

LAFEU. I like him well; 'tis not amiss. And I was about to tell

you, since I heard of the good lady's death, and that my lord

your son was upon his return home, I moved the King my master to

speak in the behalf of my daughter; which, in the minority of

them both, his Majesty out of a self-gracious remembrance did

first propose. His Highness hath promis'd me to do it; and, to

stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there

is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it?

COUNTESS. With very much content, my lord; and I wish it happily

effected.

LAFEU. His Highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as

when he number'd thirty; 'a will be here to-morrow, or I am

deceiv'd by him that in such intelligence hath seldom fail'd.

COUNTESS. It rejoices me that I hope I shall see him ere I die.

I have letters that my son will be here to-night. I shall beseech

your lordship to remain with me tal they meet together.

LAFEU. Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be

admitted.

COUNTESS. You need but plead your honourable privilege.

LAFEU. Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but, I thank my

God, it holds yet.

Re-enter CLOWN

CLOWN. O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet

on's face; whether there be a scar under 't or no, the velvet

knows; but 'tis a goodly patch of velvet. His left cheek is a

cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

LAFEU. A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good liv'ry of

honour; so belike is that.

CLOWN. But it is your carbonado'd face.

LAFEU. Let us go see your son, I pray you;

I long to talk with the young noble soldier.

CLOWN. Faith, there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine hats, and

most courteous feathers, which bow the head and nod at every man.

Exeunt

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ACT V. SCENE 1.

Marseilles. A street

Enter HELENA, WIDOW, and DIANA, with two ATTENDANTS

HELENA. But this exceeding posting day and night

Must wear your spirits low; we cannot help it.

But since you have made the days and nights as one,

To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs,

Be bold you do so grow in my requital

As nothing can unroot you.

Enter a GENTLEMAN

In happy time!

This man may help me to his Majesty's ear,

If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

GENTLEMAN. And you.

HELENA. Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.

GENTLEMAN. I have been sometimes there.

HELENA. I do presume, sir, that you are not fall'n

From the report that goes upon your goodness;

And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,

Which lay nice manners by, I put you to

The use of your own virtues, for the which

I shall continue thankful.

GENTLEMAN. What's your will?

HELENA. That it will please you

To give this poor petition to the King;

And aid me with that store of power you have

To come into his presence.

GENTLEMAN. The King's not here.

HELENA. Not here, sir?

GENTLEMAN. Not indeed.

He hence remov'd last night, and with more haste

Than is his use.

WIDOW. Lord, how we lose our pains!

HELENA. All's Well That Ends Well yet,

Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.

I do beseech you, whither is he gone?

GENTLEMAN. Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon;

Whither I am going.

HELENA. I do beseech you, sir,

Since you are like to see the King before me,

Commend the paper to his gracious hand;

Which I presume shall render you no blame,

But rather make you thank your pains for it.

I will come after you with what good speed

Our means will make us means.

GENTLEMAN. This I'll do for you.

HELENA. And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd,

Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again;

Go, go, provide. Exeunt

ACT V SCENE 2.

Rousillon. The inner court of the COUNT'S palace

Enter CLOWN and PAROLLES

PAROLLES. Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this letter. I

have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held

familiarity with fresher clothes; but I am now, sir, muddied in

Fortune's mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong

displeasure.

CLOWN. Truly, Fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell

so strongly as thou speak'st of. I will henceforth eat no fish

of Fortune's butt'ring. Prithee, allow the wind.

PAROLLES. Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir; I spake but by

a metaphor.

CLOWN. Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my nose; or

against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get thee further.

PAROLLES. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

CLOWN. Foh! prithee stand away. A paper from Fortune's close-stool

to give to a nobleman! Look here he comes himself.

Enter LAFEU

Here is a pur of Fortune's, sir, or of Fortune's cat, but not

a musk-cat, that has fall'n into the unclean fishpond of her

displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied withal. Pray you, sir,

use the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed,

ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress

in my similes of comfort, and leave him to your lordship.

Exit

PAROLLES. My lord, I am a man whom Fortune hath cruelly scratch'd.

LAFEU. And what would you have me to do? 'Tis too late to pare her

nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with Fortune, that

she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady and would

not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a cardecue for

you. Let the justices make you and Fortune friends; I am for

other business.

PAROLLES. I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

LAFEU. You beg a single penny more; come, you shall ha't; save your

word.

PAROLLES. My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

LAFEU. You beg more than word then. Cox my passion! give me your

hand. How does your drum?

PAROLLES. O my good lord, you were the first that found me.

LAFEU. Was I, in sooth? And I was the first that lost thee.

PAROLLES. It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for

you did bring me out.

LAFEU. Out upon thee, knave! Dost thou put upon me at once both the

office of God and the devil? One brings the in grace, and the

other brings thee out. [Trumpets sound] The King's coming; I

know by his trumpets. Sirrah, inquire further after me; I had

talk of you last night. Though you are a fool and a knave, you

shall eat. Go to; follow.

PAROLLES. I praise God for you. Exeunt

ACT V SCENE 3.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Flourish. Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, the two FRENCH LORDS, with ATTENDANTS

KING. We lost a jewel of her, and our esteem

Was made much poorer by it; but your son,

As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know

Her estimation home.

COUNTESS. 'Tis past, my liege;

And I beseech your Majesty to make it

Natural rebellion, done i' th' blaze of youth,

When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,

O'erbears it and burns on.

KING. My honour'd lady,

I have forgiven and forgotten all;

Though my revenges were high bent upon him

And watch'd the time to shoot.

LAFEU. This I must say-

But first, I beg my pardon: the young lord

Did to his Majesty, his mother, and his lady,

Offence of mighty note; but to himself

The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife

Whose beauty did astonish the survey

Of richest eyes; whose words all ears took captive;

Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve

Humbly call'd mistress.

KING. Praising what is lost

Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither;

We are reconcil'd, and the first view shall kill

All repetition. Let him not ask our pardon;

The nature of his great offence is dead,

And deeper than oblivion do we bury

Th' incensing relics of it; let him approach,

A stranger, no offender; and inform him

So 'tis our will he should.

GENTLEMAN. I shall, my liege. Exit GENTLEMAN

KING. What says he to your daughter? Have you spoke?

LAFEU. All that he is hath reference to your Highness.

KING. Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me

That sets him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM

LAFEU. He looks well on 't.

KING. I am not a day of season,

For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail

In me at once. But to the brightest beams

Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth;

The time is fair again.

BERTRAM. My high-repented blames,

Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

KING. All is whole;

Not one word more of the consumed time.

Let's take the instant by the forward top;

For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees

Th' inaudible and noiseless foot of Time

Steals ere we can effect them. You remember

The daughter of this lord?

BERTRAM. Admiringly, my liege. At first

I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart

Durst make too bold herald of my tongue;

Where the impression of mine eye infixing,

Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,

Which warp'd the line of every other favour,

Scorn'd a fair colour or express'd it stol'n,

Extended or contracted all proportions

To a most hideous object. Thence it came

That she whom all men prais'd, and whom myself,

Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye

The dust that did offend it.

KING. Well excus'd.

That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away

From the great compt; but love that comes too late,

Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,

To the great sender turns a sour offence,

Crying 'That's good that's gone.' Our rash faults

Make trivial price of serious things we have,

Not knowing them until we know their grave.

Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,

Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust;

Our own love waking cries to see what's done,

While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.

Be this sweet Helen's knell. And now forget her.

Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin.

The main consents are had; and here we'll stay

To see our widower's second marriage-day.

COUNTESS. Which better than the first, O dear heaven, bless!

Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse!

LAFEU. Come on, my son, in whom my house's name

Must be digested; give a favour from you,

To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,

That she may quickly come.

[BERTRAM gives a ring]

By my old beard,

And ev'ry hair that's on 't, Helen, that's dead,

Was a sweet creature; such a ring as this,

The last that e'er I took her leave at court,

I saw upon her finger.

BERTRAM. Hers it was not.

KING. Now, pray you, let me see it; for mine eye,

While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.

This ring was mine; and when I gave it Helen

I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood

Necessitied to help, that by this token

I would relieve her. Had you that craft to reave her

Of what should stead her most?

BERTRAM. My gracious sovereign,

Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,

The ring was never hers.

COUNTESS. Son, on my life,

I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it

At her life's rate.

LAFEU. I am sure I saw her wear it.

BERTRAM. You are deceiv'd, my lord; she never saw it.

In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,

Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name

Of her that threw it. Noble she was, and thought

I stood engag'd; but when I had subscrib'd

To mine own fortune, and inform'd her fully

I could not answer in that course of honour

As she had made the overture, she ceas'd,

In heavy satisfaction, and would never

Receive the ring again.

KING. Plutus himself,

That knows the tinct and multiplying med'cine,

Hath not in nature's mystery more science

Than I have in this ring. 'Twas mine, 'twas Helen's,

Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know

That you are well acquainted with yourself,

Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement

You got it from her. She call'd the saints to surety

That she would never put it from her finger

Unless she gave it to yourself in bed-

Where you have never come- or sent it us

Upon her great disaster.

BERTRAM. She never saw it.

KING. Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;

And mak'st conjectural fears to come into me

Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove

That thou art so inhuman- 'twill not prove so.

And yet I know not- thou didst hate her deadly,

And she is dead; which nothing, but to close

Her eyes myself, could win me to believe

More than to see this ring. Take him away.

[GUARDS seize BERTRAM]

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,

Shall tax my fears of little vanity,

Having vainly fear'd too little. Away with him.

We'll sift this matter further.

BERTRAM. If you shall prove

This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy

Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,

Where she yet never was. Exit, guarded

KING. I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.

Enter a GENTLEMAN

GENTLEMAN. Gracious sovereign,

Whether I have been to blame or no, I know not:

Here's a petition from a Florentine,

Who hath, for four or five removes, come short

To tender it herself. I undertook it,

Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech

Of the poor suppliant, who by this, I know,

Is here attending; her business looks in her

With an importing visage; and she told me

In a sweet verbal brief it did concern

Your Highness with herself.

KING. [Reads the letter] 'Upon his many protestations to marry me

when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. Now is the

Count Rousillon a widower; his vows are forfeited to me, and my

honour's paid to him. He stole from Florence, taking no leave,

and I follow him to his country for justice. Grant it me, O King!

in you it best lies; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor

maid is undone.

DIANA CAPILET.'

LAFEU. I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll for this.

I'll none of him.

KING. The heavens have thought well on thee, Lafeu,

To bring forth this discov'ry. Seek these suitors.

Go speedily, and bring again the Count.

Exeunt ATTENDANTS

I am afeard the life of Helen, lady,

Was foully snatch'd.

COUNTESS. Now, justice on the doers!

Enter BERTRAM, guarded

KING. I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you.

And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,

Yet you desire to marry.

Enter WIDOW and DIANA

What woman's that?

DIANA. I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,

Derived from the ancient Capilet.

My suit, as I do understand, you know,

And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

WIDOW. I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour

Both suffer under this complaint we bring,

And both shall cease, without your remedy.

KING. Come hither, Count; do you know these women?

BERTRAM. My lord, I neither can nor will deny

But that I know them. Do they charge me further?

DIANA. Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

BERTRAM. She's none of mine, my lord.

DIANA. If you shall marry,

You give away this hand, and that is mine;

You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;

You give away myself, which is known mine;

For I by vow am so embodied yours

That she which marries you must marry me,

Either both or none.

LAFEU. [To BERTRAM] Your reputation comes too short for

my daughter; you are no husband for her.

BERTRAM. My lord, this is a fond and desp'rate creature

Whom sometime I have laugh'd with. Let your Highness

Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour

Than for to think that I would sink it here.

KING. Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend

Till your deeds gain them. Fairer prove your honour

Than in my thought it lies!

DIANA. Good my lord,

Ask him upon his oath if he does think

He had not my virginity.

KING. What say'st thou to her?

BERTRAM. She's impudent, my lord,

And was a common gamester to the camp.

DIANA. He does me wrong, my lord; if I were so

He might have bought me at a common price.

Do not believe him. o, behold this ring,

Whose high respect and rich validity

Did lack a parallel; yet, for all that,

He gave it to a commoner o' th' camp,

If I be one.

COUNTESS. He blushes, and 'tis it.

Of six preceding ancestors, that gem

Conferr'd by testament to th' sequent issue,

Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife:

That ring's a thousand proofs.

KING. Methought you said

You saw one here in court could witness it.

DIANA. I did, my lord, but loath am to produce

So bad an instrument; his name's Parolles.

LAFEU. I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

KING. Find him, and bring him hither. Exit an ATTENDANT

BERTRAM. What of him?

He's quoted for a most perfidious slave,

With all the spots o' th' world tax'd and debauch'd,

Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.

Am I or that or this for what he'll utter

That will speak anything?

KING. She hath that ring of yours.

BERTRAM. I think she has. Certain it is I lik'd her,

And boarded her i' th' wanton way of youth.

She knew her distance, and did angle for me,

Madding my eagerness with her restraint,

As all impediments in fancy's course

Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,

Her infinite cunning with her modern grace

Subdu'd me to her rate. She got the ring;

And I had that which any inferior might

At market-price have bought.

DIANA. I must be patient.

You that have turn'd off a first so noble wife

May justly diet me. I pray you yet-

Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband-

Send for your ring, I will return it home,

And give me mine again.

BERTRAM. I have it not.

KING. What ring was yours, I pray you?

DIANA. Sir, much like

The same upon your finger.

KING. Know you this ring? This ring was his of late.

DIANA. And this was it I gave him, being abed.

KING. The story, then, goes false you threw it him

Out of a casement.

DIANA. I have spoke the truth.

Enter PAROLLES

BERTRAM. My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

KING. You boggle shrewdly; every feather starts you.

Is this the man you speak of?

DIANA. Ay, my lord.

KING. Tell me, sirrah-but tell me true I charge you,

Not fearing the displeasure of your master,

Which, on your just proceeding, I'll keep off-

By him and by this woman here what know you?

PAROLLES. So please your Majesty, my master hath been an honourable

gentleman; tricks he hath had in him, which gentlemen have.

KING. Come, come, to th' purpose. Did he love this woman?

PAROLLES. Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

KING. How, I pray you?

PAROLLES. He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman.

KING. How is that?

PAROLLES. He lov'd her, sir, and lov'd her not.

KING. As thou art a knave and no knave.

What an equivocal companion is this!

PAROLLES. I am a poor man, and at your Majesty's command.

LAFEU. He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

DIANA. Do you know he promis'd me marriage?

PAROLLES. Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

KING. But wilt thou not speak all thou know'st?

PAROLLES. Yes, so please your Majesty. I did go between them, as I

said; but more than that, he loved her-for indeed he was mad for

her, and talk'd of Satan, and of Limbo, and of Furies, and I know

not what. Yet I was in that credit with them at that time that I

knew of their going to bed; and of other motions, as promising

her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak

of; therefore I will not speak what I know.

KING. Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are

married; but thou art too fine in thy evidence; therefore stand

aside.

This ring, you say, was yours?

DIANA. Ay, my good lord.

KING. Where did you buy it? Or who gave it you?

DIANA. It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

KING. Who lent it you?

DIANA. It was not lent me neither.

KING. Where did you find it then?

DIANA. I found it not.

KING. If it were yours by none of all these ways,

How could you give it him?

DIANA. I never gave it him.

LAFEU. This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes of and on at

pleasure.

KING. This ring was mine, I gave it his first wife.

DIANA. It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

KING. Take her away, I do not like her now;

To prison with her. And away with him.

Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring,

Thou diest within this hour.

DIANA. I'll never tell you.

KING. Take her away.

DIANA. I'll put in bail, my liege.

KING. I think thee now some common customer.

DIANA. By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

KING. Wherefore hast thou accus'd him all this while?

DIANA. Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty.

He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't:

I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.

Great King, I am no strumpet, by my life;

I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

[Pointing to LAFEU]

KING. She does abuse our ears; to prison with her.

DIANA. Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir;

Exit WIDOW

The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for,

And he shall surety me. But for this lord

Who hath abus'd me as he knows himself,

Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him.

He knows himself my bed he hath defil'd;

And at that time he got his wife with child.

Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick;

So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick-

And now behold the meaning.

Re-enter WIDOW with HELENA

KING. Is there no exorcist

Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes?

Is't real that I see?

HELENA. No, my good lord;

'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,

The name and not the thing.

BERTRAM. Both, both; o, pardon!

HELENA. O, my good lord, when I was like this maid,

I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring,

And, look you, here's your letter. This it says:

'When from my finger you can get this ring,

And are by me with child,' etc. This is done.

Will you be mine now you are doubly won?

BERTRAM. If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,

I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

HELENA. If it appear not plain, and prove untrue,

Deadly divorce step between me and you!

O my dear mother, do I see you living?

LAFEU. Mine eyes smell onions; I shall weep anon. [To PAROLLES]

Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher. So, I

thank thee. Wait on me home, I'll make sport with thee;

let thy curtsies alone, they are scurvy ones.

KING. Let us from point to point this story know,

To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

[To DIANA] If thou beest yet a fresh uncropped flower,

Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower;

For I can guess that by thy honest aid

Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.-

Of that and all the progress, more and less,

Resolvedly more leisure shall express.

All yet seems well; and if it end so meet,

The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet. [Flourish]

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE.

KING. The King's a beggar, now the play is done.

All is well ended if this suit be won,

That you express content; which we will pay

With strife to please you, day exceeding day.

Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;

Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

Exeunt omnes

THE END

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PHILO. Nay, but this dotage of our general's

O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes,

That o'er the files and musters of the war

Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,

The office and devotion of their view

Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart,

Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst

The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,

And is become the bellows and the fan

To cool a gipsy's lust.

Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her LADIES, the train,

with eunuchs fanning her

Look where they come!

Take but good note, and you shall see in him

The triple pillar of the world transform'd

Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.

CLEOPATRA. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

ANTONY. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

CLEOPATRA. I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.

ANTONY. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

MESSENGER. News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANTONY. Grates me the sum.

CLEOPATRA. Nay, hear them, Antony.

Fulvia perchance is angry; or who knows

If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent

His pow'rful mandate to you: 'Do this or this;

Take in that kingdom and enfranchise that;

Perform't, or else we damn thee.'

ANTONY. How, my love?

CLEOPATRA. Perchance? Nay, and most like,

You must not stay here longer; your dismission

Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.

Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? Both?

Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's Queen,

Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine

Is Caesar's homager. Else so thy cheek pays shame

When shrill-tongu'd Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

ANTONY. Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch

Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.

Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike

Feeds beast as man. The nobleness of life

Is to do thus [emhracing], when such a mutual pair

And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,

On pain of punishment, the world to weet

We stand up peerless.

CLEOPATRA. Excellent falsehood!

Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?

I'll seem the fool I am not. Antony

Will be himself.

ANTONY. But stirr'd by Cleopatra.

Now for the love of Love and her soft hours,

Let's not confound the time with conference harsh;

There's not a minute of our lives should stretch

Without some pleasure now. What sport to-night?

CLEOPATRA. Hear the ambassadors.

ANTONY. Fie, wrangling queen!

Whom everything becomes- to chide, to laugh,

To weep; whose every passion fully strives

To make itself in thee fair and admir'd.

No messenger but thine, and all alone

To-night we'll wander through the streets and note

The qualities of people. Come, my queen;

Last night you did desire it. Speak not to us.

Exeunt ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, with the train

DEMETRIUS. Is Caesar with Antonius priz'd so slight?

PHILO. Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony,

He comes too short of that great property

Which still should go with Antony.

DEMETRIUS. I am full sorry

That he approves the common liar, who

Thus speaks of him at Rome; but I will hope

Of better deeds to-morrow. Rest you happy! Exeunt

SCENE II.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, and a SOOTHSAYER

CHARMIAN. Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most anything Alexas, almost

most absolute Alexas, where's the soothsayer that you prais'd so

to th' Queen? O that I knew this husband, which you say must

charge his horns with garlands!

ALEXAS. Soothsayer!

SOOTHSAYER. Your will?

CHARMIAN. Is this the man? Is't you, sir, that know things?

SOOTHSAYER. In nature's infinite book of secrecy

A little I can read.

ALEXAS. Show him your hand.

Enter ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS. Bring in the banquet quickly; wine enough

Cleopatra's health to drink.

CHARMIAN. Good, sir, give me good fortune.

SOOTHSAYER. I make not, but foresee.

CHARMIAN. Pray, then, foresee me one.

SOOTHSAYER. You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

CHARMIAN. He means in flesh.

IRAS. No, you shall paint when you are old.

CHARMIAN. Wrinkles forbid!

ALEXAS. Vex not his prescience; be attentive.

CHARMIAN. Hush!

SOOTHSAYER. You shall be more beloving than beloved.

CHARMIAN. I had rather heat my liver with drinking.

ALEXAS. Nay, hear him.

CHARMIAN. Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to

three kings in a forenoon, and widow them all. Let me have a

child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage. Find me to

marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress.

SOOTHSAYER. You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

CHARMIAN. O, excellent! I love long life better than figs.

SOOTHSAYER. You have seen and prov'd a fairer former fortune

Than that which is to approach.

CHARMIAN. Then belike my children shall have no names.

Prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?

SOOTHSAYER. If every of your wishes had a womb,

And fertile every wish, a million.

CHARMIAN. Out, fool! I forgive thee for a witch.

ALEXAS. You think none but your sheets are privy to your wishes.

CHARMIAN. Nay, come, tell Iras hers.

ALEXAS. We'll know all our fortunes.

ENOBARBUS. Mine, and most of our fortunes, to-night, shall be-

drunk to bed.

IRAS. There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else.

CHARMIAN. E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine.

IRAS. Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.

CHARMIAN. Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful prognostication, I

cannot scratch mine ear. Prithee, tell her but worky-day fortune.

SOOTHSAYER. Your fortunes are alike.

IRAS. But how, but how? Give me particulars.

SOOTHSAYER. I have said.

IRAS. Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?

CHARMIAN. Well, if you were but an inch of fortune better than I,

where would you choose it?

IRAS. Not in my husband's nose.

CHARMIAN. Our worser thoughts heavens mend! Alexas- come, his

fortune, his fortune! O, let him marry a woman that cannot go,

sweet Isis, I beseech thee! And let her die too, and give him a

worse! And let worse follow worse, till the worst of all follow

him laughing to his grave, fiftyfold a cuckold! Good Isis, hear

me this prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight; good

Isis, I beseech thee!

IRAS. Amen. Dear goddess, hear that prayer of the people! For, as

it is a heartbreaking to see a handsome man loose-wiv'd, so it is

a deadly sorrow to behold a foul knave uncuckolded. Therefore,

dear Isis, keep decorum, and fortune him accordingly!

CHARMIAN. Amen.

ALEXAS. Lo now, if it lay in their hands to make me a cuckold, they

would make themselves whores but they'ld do't!

Enter CLEOPATRA

ENOBARBUS. Hush! Here comes Antony.

CHARMIAN. Not he; the Queen.

CLEOPATRA. Saw you my lord?

ENOBARBUS. No, lady.

CLEOPATRA. Was he not here?

CHARMIAN. No, madam.

CLEOPATRA. He was dispos'd to mirth; but on the sudden

A Roman thought hath struck him. Enobarbus!

ENOBARBUS. Madam?

CLEOPATRA. Seek him, and bring him hither. Where's Alexas?

ALEXAS. Here, at your service. My lord approaches.

Enter ANTONY, with a MESSENGER and attendants

CLEOPATRA. We will not look upon him. Go with us.

Exeunt CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, and the rest

MESSENGER. Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

ANTONY. Against my brother Lucius?

MESSENGER. Ay.

But soon that war had end, and the time's state

Made friends of them, jointing their force 'gainst Caesar,

Whose better issue in the war from Italy

Upon the first encounter drave them.

ANTONY. Well, what worst?

MESSENGER. The nature of bad news infects the teller.

ANTONY. When it concerns the fool or coward. On!

Things that are past are done with me. 'Tis thus:

Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death,

I hear him as he flatter'd.

MESSENGER. Labienus-

This is stiff news- hath with his Parthian force

Extended Asia from Euphrates,

His conquering banner shook from Syria

To Lydia and to Ionia,

Whilst-

ANTONY. Antony, thou wouldst say.

MESSENGER. O, my lord!

ANTONY. Speak to me home; mince not the general tongue;

Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome.

Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my faults

With such full licence as both truth and malice

Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds

When our quick minds lie still, and our ills told us

Is as our earing. Fare thee well awhile.

MESSENGER. At your noble pleasure. Exit

ANTONY. From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there!

FIRST ATTENDANT. The man from Sicyon- is there such an one?

SECOND ATTENDANT. He stays upon your will.

ANTONY. Let him appear.

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,

Or lose myself in dotage.

Enter another MESSENGER with a letter

What are you?

SECOND MESSENGER. Fulvia thy wife is dead.

ANTONY. Where died she?

SECOND MESSENGER. In Sicyon.

Her length of sickness, with what else more serious

Importeth thee to know, this bears. [Gives the letter]

ANTONY. Forbear me. Exit MESSENGER

There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it.

What our contempts doth often hurl from us

We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,

By revolution low'ring, does become

The opposite of itself. She's good, being gone;

The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on.

I must from this enchanting queen break off.

Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,

My idleness doth hatch. How now, Enobarbus!

Re-enter ENOBARBUS

ENOBARBUS. What's your pleasure, sir?

ANTONY. I must with haste from hence.

ENOBARBUS. Why, then we kill all our women. We see how mortal an

unkindness is to them; if they suffer our departure, death's the

word.

ANTONY. I must be gone.

ENOBARBUS. Under a compelling occasion, let women die. It were pity

to cast them away for nothing, though between them and a great

cause they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but

the least noise of this, dies instantly; I have seen her die

twenty times upon far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle

in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a

celerity in dying.

ANTONY. She is cunning past man's thought.

ENOBARBUS. Alack, sir, no! Her passions are made of nothing but the

finest part of pure love. We cannot call her winds and waters

sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than

almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she

makes a show'r of rain as well as Jove.

ANTONY. Would I had never seen her!

ENOBARBUS. O Sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of

work, which not to have been blest withal would have discredited

your travel.

ANTONY. Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS. Sir?

ANTONY. Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS. Fulvia?

ANTONY. Dead.

ENOBARBUS. Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it

pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it

shows to man the tailors of the earth; comforting therein that

when old robes are worn out there are members to make new. If

there were no more women but Fulvia, then had you indeed a cut,

and the case to be lamented. This grief is crown'd with

consolation: your old smock brings forth a new petticoat; and

indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

ANTONY. The business she hath broached in the state

Cannot endure my absence.

ENOBARBUS. And the business you have broach'd here cannot be

without you; especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends

on your abode.

ANTONY. No more light answers. Let our officers

Have notice what we purpose. I shall break

The cause of our expedience to the Queen,

And get her leave to part. For not alone

The death of Fulvia, with more urgent touches,

Do strongly speak to us; but the letters to

Of many our contriving friends in Rome

Petition us at home. Sextus Pompeius

Hath given the dare to Caesar, and commands

The empire of the sea; our slippery people,

Whose love is never link'd to the deserver

Till his deserts are past, begin to throw

Pompey the Great and all his dignities

Upon his son; who, high in name and power,

Higher than both in blood and life, stands up

For the main soldier; whose quality, going on,

The sides o' th' world may danger. Much is breeding

Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life

And not a serpent's poison. Say our pleasure,

To such whose place is under us, requires

Our quick remove from hence.

ENOBARBUS. I shall do't. Exeunt

SCENE III.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS

CLEOPATRA. Where is he?

CHARMIAN. I did not see him since.

CLEOPATRA. See where he is, who's with him, what he does.

I did not send you. If you find him sad,

Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report

That I am sudden sick. Quick, and return. Exit ALEXAS

CHARMIAN. Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,

You do not hold the method to enforce

The like from him.

CLEOPATRA. What should I do I do not?

CHARMIAN. In each thing give him way; cross him in nothing.

CLEOPATRA. Thou teachest like a fool- the way to lose him.

CHARMIAN. Tempt him not so too far; I wish, forbear;

In time we hate that which we often fear.

Enter ANTONY

But here comes Antony.

CLEOPATRA. I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY. I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose-

CLEOPATRA. Help me away, dear Charmian; I shall fall.

It cannot be thus long; the sides of nature

Will not sustain it.

ANTONY. Now, my dearest queen-

CLEOPATRA. Pray you, stand farther from me.

ANTONY. What's the matter?

CLEOPATRA. I know by that same eye there's some good news.

What says the married woman? You may go.

Would she had never given you leave to come!

Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here-

I have no power upon you; hers you are.

ANTONY. The gods best know-

CLEOPATRA. O, never was there queen

So mightily betray'd! Yet at the first

I saw the treasons planted.

ANTONY. Cleopatra-

CLEOPATRA. Why should I think you can be mine and true,

Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,

Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,

To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,

Which break themselves in swearing!

ANTONY. Most sweet queen-

CLEOPATRA. Nay, pray you seek no colour for your going,

But bid farewell, and go. When you sued staying,

Then was the time for words. No going then!

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,

Bliss in our brows' bent, none our parts so poor

But was a race of heaven. They are so still,

Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,

Art turn'd the greatest liar.

ANTONY. How now, lady!

CLEOPATRA. I would I had thy inches. Thou shouldst know

There were a heart in Egypt.

ANTONY. Hear me, queen:

The strong necessity of time commands

Our services awhile; but my full heart

Remains in use with you. Our Italy

Shines o'er with civil swords: Sextus Pompeius

Makes his approaches to the port of Rome;

Equality of two domestic powers

Breed scrupulous faction; the hated, grown to strength,

Are newly grown to love. The condemn'd Pompey,

Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace

Into the hearts of such as have not thrived

Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;

And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge

By any desperate change. My more particular,

And that which most with you should safe my going,

Is Fulvia's death.

CLEOPATRA. Though age from folly could not give me freedom,

It does from childishness. Can Fulvia die?

ANTONY. She's dead, my Queen.

Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read

The garboils she awak'd. At the last, best.

See when and where she died.

CLEOPATRA. O most false love!

Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill

With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,

In Fulvia's death how mine receiv'd shall be.

ANTONY. Quarrel no more, but be prepar'd to know

The purposes I bear; which are, or cease,

As you shall give th' advice. By the fire

That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence

Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war

As thou affects.

CLEOPATRA. Cut my lace, Charmian, come!

But let it be; I am quickly ill and well-

So Antony loves.

ANTONY. My precious queen, forbear,

And give true evidence to his love, which stands

An honourable trial.

CLEOPATRA. So Fulvia told me.

I prithee turn aside and weep for her;

Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears

Belong to Egypt. Good now, play one scene

Of excellent dissembling, and let it look

Like perfect honour.

ANTONY. You'll heat my blood; no more.

CLEOPATRA. You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

ANTONY. Now, by my sword-

CLEOPATRA. And target. Still he mends;

But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,

How this Herculean Roman does become

The carriage of his chafe.

ANTONY. I'll leave you, lady.

CLEOPATRA. Courteous lord, one word.

Sir, you and I must part- but that's not it.

Sir, you and I have lov'd- but there's not it.

That you know well. Something it is I would-

O, my oblivion is a very Antony,

And I am all forgotten!

ANTONY. But that your royalty

Holds idleness your subject, I should take you

For idleness itself.

CLEOPATRA. 'Tis sweating labour

To bear such idleness so near the heart

As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me;

Since my becomings kill me when they do not

Eye well to you. Your honour calls you hence;

Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,

And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword

Sit laurel victory, and smooth success

Be strew'd before your feet!

ANTONY. Let us go. Come.

Our separation so abides and flies

That thou, residing here, goes yet with me,

And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee.

Away! Exeunt

SCENE IV.

Rome. CAESAR'S house

Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, reading a letter; LEPIDUS, and their train

CAESAR. You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,

It is not Caesar's natural vice to hate

Our great competitor. From Alexandria

This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes

The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike

Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy

More womanly than he; hardly gave audience, or

Vouchsaf'd to think he had partners. You shall find there

A man who is the abstract of all faults

That all men follow.

LEPIDUS. I must not think there are

Evils enow to darken all his goodness.

His faults, in him, seem as the spots of heaven,

More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary

Rather than purchas'd; what he cannot change

Than what he chooses.

CAESAR. You are too indulgent. Let's grant it is not

Amiss to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,

To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit

And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,

To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet

With knaves that smell of sweat. Say this becomes him-

As his composure must be rare indeed

Whom these things cannot blemish- yet must Antony

No way excuse his foils when we do bear

So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd

His vacancy with his voluptuousness,

Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones

Call on him for't! But to confound such time

That drums him from his sport and speaks as loud

As his own state and ours- 'tis to be chid

As we rate boys who, being mature in knowledge,

Pawn their experience to their present pleasure,

And so rebel to judgment.

Enter a MESSENGER

LEPIDUS. Here's more news.

MESSENGER. Thy biddings have been done; and every hour,

Most noble Caesar, shalt thou have report

How 'tis abroad. Pompey is strong at sea,

And it appears he is belov'd of those

That only have fear'd Caesar. To the ports

The discontents repair, and men's reports

Give him much wrong'd.

CAESAR. I should have known no less.

It hath been taught us from the primal state

That he which is was wish'd until he were;

And the ebb'd man, ne'er lov'd till ne'er worth love,

Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,

Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,

Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,

To rot itself with motion.

MESSENGER. Caesar, I bring thee word

Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,

Make the sea serve them, which they ear and wound

With keels of every kind. Many hot inroads

They make in Italy; the borders maritime

Lack blood to think on't, and flush youth revolt.

No vessel can peep forth but 'tis as soon

Taken as seen; for Pompey's name strikes more

Than could his war resisted.

CAESAR. Antony,

Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once

Was beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st

Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel

Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,

Though daintily brought up, with patience more

Than savages could suffer. Thou didst drink

The stale of horses and the gilded puddle

Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate then did deign

The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;

Yea, like the stag when snow the pasture sheets,

The barks of trees thou brows'd. On the Alps

It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,

Which some did die to look on. And all this-

It wounds thine honour that I speak it now-

Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek

So much as lank'd not.

LEPIDUS. 'Tis pity of him.

CAESAR. Let his shames quickly

Drive him to Rome. 'Tis time we twain

Did show ourselves i' th' field; and to that end

Assemble we immediate council. Pompey

Thrives in our idleness.

LEPIDUS. To-morrow, Caesar,

I shall be furnish'd to inform you rightly

Both what by sea and land I can be able

To front this present time.

CAESAR. Till which encounter

It is my business too. Farewell.

LEPIDUS. Farewell, my lord. What you shall know meantime

Of stirs abroad, I shall beseech you, sir,

To let me be partaker.

CAESAR. Doubt not, sir;

I knew it for my bond. Exeunt

SCENE V.

Alexandria. CLEOPATRA'S palace

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN

CLEOPATRA. Charmian!

CHARMIAN. Madam?

CLEOPATRA. Ha, ha!

Give me to drink mandragora.

CHARMIAN. Why, madam?

CLEOPATRA. That I might sleep out this great gap of time

My Antony is away.

CHARMIAN. You think of him too much.

CLEOPATRA. O, 'tis treason!

CHARMIAN. Madam, I trust, not so.

CLEOPATRA. Thou, eunuch Mardian!

MARDIAN. What's your Highness' pleasure?

CLEOPATRA. Not now to hear thee sing; I take no pleasure

In aught an eunuch has. 'Tis well for thee

That, being unseminar'd, thy freer thoughts

May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou affections?

MARDIAN. Yes, gracious madam.

CLEOPATRA. Indeed?

MARDIAN. Not in deed, madam; for I can do nothing

But what indeed is honest to be done.

Yet have I fierce affections, and think

What Venus did with Mars.

CLEOPATRA. O Charmian,

Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he or sits he?

Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?

O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!

Do bravely, horse; for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?

The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm

And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,

Or murmuring 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'

For so he calls me. Now I feed myself

With most delicious poison. Think on me,

That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,

And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Caesar,

When thou wast here above the ground, I was

A morsel for a monarch; and great Pompey

Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;

There would he anchor his aspect and die

With looking on his life.

Enter ALEXAS

ALEXAS. Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

CLEOPATRA. How much unlike art thou Mark Antony!

Yet, coming from him, that great med'cine hath

With his tinct gilded thee.

How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

ALEXAS. Last thing he did, dear Queen,

He kiss'd- the last of many doubled kisses-

This orient pearl. His speech sticks in my heart.

CLEOPATRA. Mine ear must pluck it thence.

ALEXAS. 'Good friend,' quoth he

'Say the firm Roman to great Egypt sends

This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,

To mend the petty present, I will piece

Her opulent throne with kingdoms. All the East,

Say thou, shall call her mistress.' So he nodded,

And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,

Who neigh'd so high that what I would have spoke

Was beastly dumb'd by him.

CLEOPATRA. What, was he sad or merry?

ALEXAS. Like to the time o' th' year between the extremes

Of hot and cold; he was nor sad nor merry.

CLEOPATRA. O well-divided disposition! Note him,

Note him, good Charmian; 'tis the man; but note him!

He was not sad, for he would shine on those

That make their looks by his; he was not merry,

Which seem'd to tell them his remembrance lay

In Egypt with his joy; but between both.

O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,

The violence of either thee becomes,

So does it no man else. Met'st thou my posts?

ALEXAS. Ay, madam, twenty several messengers.

Why do you send so thick?

CLEOPATRA. Who's born that day

When I forget to send to Antony

Shall die a beggar. Ink and paper, Charmian.

Welcome, my good Alexas. Did I, Charmian,

Ever love Caesar so?

CHARMIAN. O that brave Caesar!

CLEOPATRA. Be chok'd with such another emphasis!

Say 'the brave Antony.'

CHARMIAN. The valiant Caesar!

CLEOPATRA. By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth

If thou with Caesar paragon again

My man of men.

CHARMIAN. By your most gracious pardon,

I sing but after you.

CLEOPATRA. My salad days,

When I was green in judgment, cold in blood,

To say as I said then. But come, away!

Get me ink and paper.

He shall have every day a several greeting,

Or I'll unpeople Egypt. Exeunt

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ACT II. SCENE I.

Messina. POMPEY'S house

Enter POMPEY, MENECRATES, and MENAS, in warlike manner

POMPEY. If the great gods be just, they shall assist

The deeds of justest men.

MENECRATES. Know, worthy Pompey,

That what they do delay they not deny.

POMPEY. Whiles we are suitors to their throne, decays

The thing we sue for.

MENECRATES. We, ignorant of ourselves,

Beg often our own harms, which the wise pow'rs

Deny us for our good; so find we profit

By losing of our prayers.

POMPEY. I shall do well.

The people love me, and the sea is mine;

My powers are crescent, and my auguring hope

Says it will come to th' full. Mark Antony

In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make

No wars without doors. Caesar gets money where

He loses hearts. Lepidus flatters both,

Of both is flatter'd; but he neither loves,

Nor either cares for him.

MENAS. Caesar and Lepidus

Are in the field. A mighty strength they carry.

POMPEY. Where have you this? 'Tis false.

MENAS. From Silvius, sir.

POMPEY. He dreams. I know they are in Rome together,

Looking for Antony. But all the charms of love,

Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wan'd lip!

Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both;

Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,

Keep his brain fuming. Epicurean cooks

Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,

That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour

Even till a Lethe'd dullness-

Enter VARRIUS

How now, Varrius!

VARRIUS. This is most certain that I shall deliver:

Mark Antony is every hour in Rome

Expected. Since he went from Egypt 'tis

A space for farther travel.

POMPEY. I could have given less matter

A better ear. Menas, I did not think

This amorous surfeiter would have donn'd his helm

For such a petty war; his soldiership

Is twice the other twain. But let us rear

The higher our opinion, that our stirring

Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck

The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.

MENAS. I cannot hope

Caesar and Antony shall well greet together.

His wife that's dead did trespasses to Caesar;

His brother warr'd upon him; although, I think,

Not mov'd by Antony.

POMPEY. I know not, Menas,

How lesser enmities may give way to greater.

Were't not that we stand up against them all,

'Twere pregnant they should square between themselves;

For they have entertained cause enough

To draw their swords. But how the fear of us

May cement their divisions, and bind up

The petty difference we yet not know.

Be't as our gods will have't! It only stands

Our lives upon to use our strongest hands.

Come, Menas. Exeunt

SCENE II.

Rome. The house of LEPIDUS

Enter ENOBARBUS and LEPIDUS

LEPIDUS. Good Enobarbus, 'tis a worthy deed,

And shall become you well, to entreat your captain

To soft and gentle speech.

ENOBARBUS. I shall entreat him

To answer like himself. If Caesar move him,

Let Antony look over Caesar's head

And speak as loud as Mars. By Jupiter,

Were I the wearer of Antonius' beard,

I would not shave't to-day.

LEPIDUS. 'Tis not a time

For private stomaching.

ENOBARBUS. Every time

Serves for the matter that is then born in't.

LEPIDUS. But small to greater matters must give way.

ENOBARBUS. Not if the small come first.

LEPIDUS. Your speech is passion;

But pray you stir no embers up. Here comes

The noble Antony.

Enter ANTONY and VENTIDIUS

ENOBARBUS. And yonder, Caesar.

Enter CAESAR, MAECENAS, and AGRIPPA

ANTONY. If we compose well here, to Parthia.

Hark, Ventidius.

CAESAR. I do not know, Maecenas. Ask Agrippa.

LEPIDUS. Noble friends,

That which combin'd us was most great, and let not

A leaner action rend us. What's amiss,

May it be gently heard. When we debate

Our trivial difference loud, we do commit

Murder in healing wounds. Then, noble partners,

The rather for I earnestly beseech,

Touch you the sourest points with sweetest terms,

Nor curstness grow to th' matter.

ANTONY. 'Tis spoken well.

Were we before our arinies, and to fight,

I should do thus. [Flourish]

CAESAR. Welcome to Rome.

ANTONY. Thank you.

CAESAR. Sit.

ANTONY. Sit, sir.

CAESAR. Nay, then. [They sit]

ANTONY. I learn you take things ill which are not so,

Or being, concern you not.

CAESAR. I must be laugh'd at

If, or for nothing or a little,

Should say myself offended, and with you

Chiefly i' the world; more laugh'd at that I should

Once name you derogately when to sound your name

It not concern'd me.

ANTONY. My being in Egypt, Caesar,

What was't to you?

CAESAR. No more than my residing here at Rome

Might be to you in Egypt. Yet, if you there

Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt

Might be my question.

ANTONY. How intend you- practis'd?

CAESAR. You may be pleas'd to catch at mine intent

By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother

Made wars upon me, and their contestation

Was theme for you; you were the word of war.

ANTONY. You do mistake your business; my brother never

Did urge me in his act. I did inquire it,

And have my learning from some true reports

That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather

Discredit my authority with yours,

And make the wars alike against my stomach,

Having alike your cause? Of this my letters

Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,

As matter whole you have not to make it with,

It must not be with this.

CAESAR. You praise yourself

By laying defects of judgment to me; but

You patch'd up your excuses.

ANTONY. Not so, not so;

I know you could not lack, I am certain on't,

Very necessity of this thought, that I,

Your partner in the cause 'gainst which he fought,

Could not with graceful eyes attend those wars

Which fronted mine own peace. As for my wife,

I would you had her spirit in such another!

The third o' th' world is yours, which with a snaffle

You may pace easy, but not such a wife.

ENOBARBUS. Would we had all such wives, that the men might go to

wars with the women!

ANTONY. So much uncurbable, her garboils, Caesar,

Made out of her impatience- which not wanted

Shrewdness of policy too- I grieving grant

Did you too much disquiet. For that you must

But say I could not help it.

CAESAR. I wrote to you

When rioting in Alexandria; you

Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts

Did gibe my missive out of audience.

ANTONY. Sir,

He fell upon me ere admitted. Then

Three kings I had newly feasted, and did want

Of what I was i' th' morning; but next day

I told him of myself, which was as much

As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow

Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,

Out of our question wipe him.

CAESAR. You have broken

The article of your oath, which you shall never

Have tongue to charge me with.

LEPIDUS. Soft, Caesar!

ANTONY. No;

Lepidus, let him speak.

The honour is sacred which he talks on now,

Supposing that I lack'd it. But on, Caesar:

The article of my oath-

CAESAR. To lend me arms and aid when I requir'd them,

The which you both denied.

ANTONY. Neglected, rather;

And then when poisoned hours had bound me up

From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,

I'll play the penitent to you; but mine honesty

Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power

Work without it. Truth is, that Fulvia,

To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;

For which myself, the ignorant motive, do

So far ask pardon as befits mine honour

To stoop in such a case.

LEPIDUS. 'Tis noble spoken.

MAECENAS. If it might please you to enforce no further

The griefs between ye- to forget them quite

Were to remember that the present need

Speaks to atone you.

LEPIDUS. Worthily spoken, Maecenas.

ENOBARBUS. Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant,

you may, when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again.

You shall have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to

do.

ANTONY. Thou art a soldier only. Speak no more.

ENOBARBUS. That truth should be silent I had almost forgot.

ANTONY. You wrong this presence; therefore speak no more.

ENOBARBUS. Go to, then- your considerate stone!

CAESAR. I do not much dislike the matter, but

The manner of his speech; for't cannot be

We shall remain in friendship, our conditions

So diff'ring in their acts. Yet if I knew

What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge

O' th' world, I would pursue it.

AGRIPPA. Give me leave, Caesar.

CAESAR. Speak, Agrippa.

AGRIPPA. Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,

Admir'd Octavia. Great Mark Antony

Is now a widower.

CAESAR. Say not so, Agrippa.

If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof

Were well deserv'd of rashness.

ANTONY. I am not married, Caesar. Let me hear

Agrippa further speak.

AGRIPPA. To hold you in perpetual amity,

To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts

With an unslipping knot, take Antony

Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims

No worse a husband than the best of men;

Whose virtue and whose general graces speak

That which none else can utter. By this marriage

All little jealousies, which now seem great,

And all great fears, which now import their dangers,

Would then be nothing. Truths would be tales,

Where now half tales be truths. Her love to both

Would each to other, and all loves to both,

Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke;

For 'tis a studied, not a present thought,

By duty ruminated.

ANTONY. Will Caesar speak?

CAESAR. Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd

With what is spoke already.

ANTONY. What power is in Agrippa,

If I would say 'Agrippa, be it so,'

To make this good?

CAESAR. The power of Caesar, and

His power unto Octavia.

ANTONY. May I never

To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,

Dream of impediment! Let me have thy hand.

Further this act of grace; and from this hour

The heart of brothers govern in our loves

And sway our great designs!

CAESAR. There is my hand.

A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother

Did ever love so dearly. Let her live

To join our kingdoms and our hearts; and never

Fly off our loves again!

LEPIDUS. Happily, amen!

ANTONY. I did not think to draw my sword 'gainst Pompey;

For he hath laid strange courtesies and great

Of late upon me. I must thank him only,

Lest my remembrance suffer ill report;

At heel of that, defy him.

LEPIDUS. Time calls upon's.

Of us must Pompey presently be sought,

Or else he seeks out us.

ANTONY. Where lies he?

CAESAR. About the Mount Misenum.

ANTONY. What is his strength by land?

CAESAR. Great and increasing; but by sea

He is an absolute master.

ANTONY. So is the fame.

Would we had spoke together! Haste we for it.

Yet, ere we put ourselves in arms, dispatch we

The business we have talk'd of.

CAESAR. With most gladness;

And do invite you to my sister's view,

Whither straight I'll lead you.

ANTONY. Let us, Lepidus,

Not lack your company.

LEPIDUS. Noble Antony,

Not sickness should detain me. [Flourish]

Exeunt all but ENOBARBUS, AGRIPPA, MAECENAS

MAECENAS. Welcome from Egypt, sir.

ENOBARBUS. Half the heart of Caesar, worthy Maecenas! My honourable

friend, Agrippa!

AGRIPPA. Good Enobarbus!

MAECENAS. We have cause to be glad that matters are so well

digested. You stay'd well by't in Egypt.

ENOBARBUS. Ay, sir; we did sleep day out of countenance and made

the night light with drinking.

MAECENAS. Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but

twelve persons there. Is this true?

ENOBARBUS. This was but as a fly by an eagle. We had much more

monstrous matter of feast, which worthily deserved noting.

MAECENAS. She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.

ENOBARBUS. When she first met Mark Antony she purs'd up his heart,

upon the river of Cydnus.

AGRIPPA. There she appear'd indeed! Or my reporter devis'd well for

her.

ENOBARBUS. I will tell you.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,

Burn'd on the water. The poop was beaten gold;

Purple the sails, and so perfumed that

The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,

Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made

The water which they beat to follow faster,

As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,

It beggar'd all description. She did lie

In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold, of tissue,

O'erpicturing that Venus where we see

The fancy out-work nature. On each side her

Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,

With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem

To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,

And what they undid did.

AGRIPPA. O, rare for Antony!

ENOBARBUS. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,

So many mermaids, tended her i' th' eyes,

And made their bends adornings. At the helm

A seeming mermaid steers. The silken tackle

Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands

That yarely frame the office. From the barge

A strange invisible perfume hits the sense

Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast

Her people out upon her; and Antony,

Enthron'd i' th' market-place, did sit alone,

Whistling to th' air; which, but for vacancy,

Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,

And made a gap in nature.

AGRIPPA. Rare Egyptian!

ENOBARBUS. Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,

Invited her to supper. She replied

It should be better he became her guest;

Which she entreated. Our courteous Antony,

Whom ne'er the word of 'No' woman heard speak,

Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,

And for his ordinary pays his heart

For what his eyes eat only.

AGRIPPA. Royal wench!

She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed.

He ploughed her, and she cropp'd.

ENOBARBUS. I saw her once

Hop forty paces through the public street;

And, having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,

That she did make defect perfection,

And, breathless, pow'r breathe forth.

MAECENAS. Now Antony must leave her utterly.

ENOBARBUS. Never! He will not.

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

Her infinite variety. Other women cloy

The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry

Where most she satisfies; for vilest things

Become themselves in her, that the holy priests

Bless her when she is riggish.

MAECENAS. If beauty, wisdom, modesty, can settle

The heart of Antony, Octavia is

A blessed lottery to him.

AGRIPPA. Let us go.

Good Enobarbus, make yourself my guest

Whilst you abide here.

ENOBARBUS. Humbly, sir, I thank you.