

# Tarltons Iests.

Drawne into three parts.

- { 1 *His Court-wittie Iests*  
2 *His sound Cittie Iests.*  
3 *His Country prettie Iests.* }

Full of Delight, Wit, and honest Myrth.



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## Tarltons Court wittie Iests

*Tarlton* plaid the Drunkard before the  
Queene.



**T**he Quene being discontented :  
which *Tarlton* perceiuing, tooke vp  
on him to delight her with some  
quaint Jest, whereupon he counter-  
tasted a Drunkard, and calling for  
Beere, which was brought imme-  
diately : Her Maestie noting his  
humor, commanded that he should  
haue no more, for quoth she, he will  
play the beast, and so shame himselfe. Feare not you quoth  
*Tarlton*, for your Beere is small enough. Whereat her  
Maestie laughed heartily, and commanded that hee should  
haue enough.

How *Tarlton* deceiued the Watch in Fleetstreet.

**T**arlton hauing beene late at the Court, and comming  
homewards through Fleetstreet, hee espyed the watch,  
not knowing how to passe them, went very fast, thinking  
by that meanes to goe vnexamined : but the Watch-men  
perceiuing that he shunned them, crept to him, and com-  
manded him (in the Quens name) to stand. Stand, quoth  
*Tarlton*, let them stand that can, for I cannot : so falling  
downe as though he had bene drunke, they helpt him vp,  
and so let him passe.

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How *Tarlton* flouted a Lady in the Court.

**V**pon a time, *Tarlton* being among certaine Ladies at a banquet which was at *Greenwich*, the *Quene* then lying there, one of the Ladies had her face full of pimples with beate at her stomacke, for which cause she refused to drinke wine amongst the rest of the Ladies, which *Tarlton* perceiving (for he was there of purpose to test amongst the) quoth hee, a murren of that face which makes all the body fare the worse for it. At which the rest of the Ladies laught, and she blushing for shame left the banquet.

*Tarltons* opinion of Oysters.

**C**ertaine Noblemen and Ladies of the Court, being eating of Oysters, one of them seeing *Tarlton*, called him, and asked if he loved Oysters: so quoth *Tarlton*, for they be vngodly meat, vncharitable meat, & vnprofitable meate: why? quoth the Courtiers: they are vngodly, because they are eaten without Grace: vncharitable, because they leaue nought but Shells: and vnprofitable, because they must swim in wine.

*Tarltons* resolution of a question.

**O**ne of the company taking the Gentlemans part, asked *Tarlton* at what time he thought the Devil to be most busied: When the Pope dyes quoth he: why? saies the Courtier: Marry (answered he) then all the Diuels are troubled and busied to plague him, for he hath sent many a soules befoze him thither, that exclaime against him.

How a Parsonage fell into *Tarltons* hands.

**H**er Maestie dining in the Strand at the Lord Treasurers, the Lords were very desirous that she would

bouch,

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bouchsafe to stay all night, but nothing could pzeualle with her: *Tarlton* was in his Clownes apparell, being all dinner while in the pzeence with her, to make her merry, and hearing the sorrow that the Noblemen made that they could not worke her stay, he asked the Nobles what they would giue him to worke her stay: the Lords promised him any thing, to perfozme it: quoth hee, procure me the Parsonage of *Shard*. They caused the Patent to be drawne presently, he got on a Parsons gowne, and a cozner cap, and standing vpon the staires where the *Quene* should descend, he repeated these wordes: a Parson or no Parson? a Parson or no Parson: but after she knew his meaning, she not onely stayed all night, but the next day willed he should haue possession of the benefice: a madder Parson was neuer, for hee threatened to turne the *Bel-mettel* into lynyng for his purse, which hee did, the Parsonage and all, into ready money.

How *Tarlton* proued two Gentlewomen dishonest by their owne words.

**T***arlton* seeing in *Greenwich* two Gentlewomen in the Garden together, to mone mytch, comes to them, and enquires thus: Gentlewomen, which of you two is the honestest? I, saies the one, I hope without exceptions: and I quoth the other, since we must speake for our selues: so then saies *Tarlton*, one of you by your owne wordes is dishonest, one being honestest then the other, else you would answere otherwise: but as I sound you, so I leaue you.

How *Tarlton* answered a wanton Gentlewoman.

**A** Gentlewoman merily disposed, being cross by *Tarlton*, & halfe angry, said. Sirra. a little thing would make me requite you with a cuffe: with a cuffe Lady, sayes *Tarlton*, so would you spel my sorrow forward, but spell my sorrow backward, then cuffe me and spare not: when the Gentlemen

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men by, considered of the Word, their laughing made the simple-meaning Gentlewoman to blush for shame.

How *Tarlton* dared a Lady.

**A**T the dinner in the great Chamber where *Tarlton* Iested, the Ladies were daring one another: quoth one I euer durst any thing that is honest and honourable: a French crowne of that, sayes *Tarlton*: ten pound of that sayes the Lady: done sayes one, done sayes another. *Tarlton* put a two-pence betwixt his lips, and dared her to take it away with her lips. Fye saies she, that is immodestie. What, to kisse saies *Tarlton*: then immodestly beares a great hand ouer all: but once in your life say, you haue bene beaten at your owne weapon. Well sir, saies she, you may say any thing. Then sayes *Tarlton*, remember I say you dare not, and so my wager is good.

How *Tarlton* landed at Cuckolds hauen.

**T**arlton being one Sunday at Court all day, caused a payre of Dares to tend him, who at night called on him to be gone: *Tarlton* being a carousing, drunke so long to the Watermen, that one of them was bumsie, and so indeed were all thre for the most part: at last they left Greenwiche, the Tide being at a great low fall, the Watermen yet afraid of the crosse Cables by the Lime-house: very darke and late as it was, landed *Tarlton* at Cuckolds-hauen, and said the next day they would giue him a reason for it: But *Tarlton* was faine to goe by land to Reddiffe on the dirty banke, every step kné deepe: so that comming home, hee called one of his boyes to helpe him off with his boots, meaning his stockings, which were dyed of another colour. Whereupon one gaue him this Theame next day.

*Tarlton* tell me, for faine would I know,  
If thou wert landed at Culckolds-hauen or no?

*Tarlton*

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*Tarlton* answered thus:

Yes Sir, and I tak't in no scorne,  
For many land there, yet misse of the horne.

How *Tarlton* fought with Blacke *Dauie*.

**N**ot long since liued a little swaggerer, called blacke *Dauie*, who would at Sword and Buckler fight with any gentleman or other, for 12. pence: he being hired to draw vpon *Tarlton*, for breaking a test vpon huffin Kate, a puncke as men termed her: one evening *Tarlton* comming forth at the Court-gate, being at Whitehal, and walking toward the Tilt-yard, this *Dauie* immediatly drew vpon *Tarlton*: who on the sudden, though amazed, drew likewise, and inquired the cause, which *Dauie* denied, till they had fought about or two: *Tarlton* couragiously got within him, and taking him in his armes, threw him into the Tilt-yard, who falling vpon his nose, broke it extreame, that ever after he snuffled in the head; where *Dauie* lying all that night in the Tilt-yard, expecting the doores to be opened, came forth, and at the Barber, surgeons told of this bloody combat, and the occasion of it was (quoth hee) because *Tarlton* being in a Lanterne in the companie of this damnable Cockatrice huffing Kate, called for wine: but she told him that without he would burne it, she would not drinke. So quoth *Tarlton*, it shal be burnt, for thou canst burn it without fire: as how sir? (quoth she) marry thus, take the Cup in thine hand & I will tell thee: So he filling the cup in her hand, said it was burnt sufficiently in so fiery a place: she perceiuing her selfe so flouted, byed me to be her Champion to reuenge her quarrell.

How *Tarlton* answered the Watchmen comming from the Court.

**T**arlton hauing played before the Queen, till one a clock at midnight, comming homewards, one of them espyed him,

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him, calling him, Sirra, what art thou? a woman, sayes Tarlton: nay that is lie, saith the Watchmen, women haue no such beards: Tarlton replied, if I should haue said a man, that you know to be true, and would haue bidden mee tell you that you know not, therefore I sayd a Woman, and so I am all woman, hauing pleased the Quene, being a Woman: Well Sirra sayes another, I present the Quene: then am I a woman indeed saies Tarlton as well as you, for you haue a beard as well as I, and truly Mistress Annis, my but he is not done yet, when will yours? leaue thy gybing fellow, saith the Watch, the Quens will is that whosoener is taken without doores after ten a clocke, shall be committed, and now it is past one: commit all such sayes Tarlton, for if it be past one a clocke, it will not be ten this eight houres: with that one lifts by his Lanthorne, and looks him in the face, and knew him: indeed M. Tarlton you haue moze wit then all we, for it is true that ten was before one, but now one is before ten, it is true quoth Tarlton, Watchmen had wont to haue moze wit, but for want of slepe they are turned soles: so Tarlton stole from them, and they to seme wise went home to bed.

*Tarltons answer to a Courtier.*

Tarlton being at the Court all night, in the morning he met a great Courtier coming from his Chamber, who espying Tarlton, said: Good morrow Master Didimus and Tridimus: Tarlton being somewhat abashed, not knowing the meaning thereof, sayd: Sir, I vnderstand you not, expound I pray you: quoth the Courtier Didimus and Tridimus, is a foole and a knave: you over-load me replied Tarlton, for my backe cannot beare both, therefore take you the one, and I will take the other: take you the knave, and I will carry the foole with me.

*Tarlton*

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*Tarltons quipe for a yong Courtier.*

There was a yong Gentleman in the Court, that had first lpen with the Mother, and after with the Daughter, and hauing so done, asked Tarlton what it resembled: quoth he, as if you should first haue eaten the Hen, and after the Chicken.

*Tarltons answer to a Nobleman's question.*

There was a Nobleman that asked Tarlton what he thought of Souldiers in time of peace? Harry quoth he, they are like Chimneyes in Summer.

*Tarltons Iest to an vnthrifte Courtier.*

There was an vnthrifte Gallant belonging to the Court that had borrowed five pounds of Tarlton, but hauing lost it at Dice, hee sent his man to Tarlton to borrow five pounds moze, by the same token he owed him already five pounds: pray tell your Master, quoth Tarlton, that if he will send me the token, I will send him the money: for who deceiues me once, God forgive him: If twice, God forgive him: but if thrice, God forgive him, but not me, because I could not be ware.

*How Tarlton flouted two Gallants.*

Tarlton being in a mery baine, as he walked in the great Hall in Greenwich, he met my old Lord Chamberlain, going betwene two fantastike gallants, & cryed aloud vnto him, my Lord, my Lord, you goe in great danger: whereat amazed, hee askt whereof: of borrowing (quoth Tarlton) were it not for those two bladders vnder eche of your armes.

B

*Tarltons*



## Tarltons *found Cittie Iests.*

### *Tarltons Iest of a red face.*

**I**n an Ordinary in the White Friars, where Gentlemen bled, by reason of extraordinarie dyet, to this Tarlton often frequented, as well to continue acquaintance, as to please his appetite: it chanced so upon a time (especially) being set amongst the Gentlemen and Gallants, they enquired of him why melancholy had got the upper-hand of his mirth, to which he said little, but with a squint eye, as custom had made him hare-eyed, he lookt for a Iest to make them merry; at last he espyed one that sat on his left side, which had a very red face, hee being a very great Gentleman (which was all one to Tarlton) he presently in great hast called his Host: who do I serue my Host? quoth Tarlton, the Quenes Maestie, replied the good man of the house: how happens it then quoth Tarlton, that to her Maesties disgrace, you dare make me a companion with Servingmen, clapping my Lord Shandoyes Collisance vpon my sleeve, looking at the Gentleman with the red face, me thinks quoth he, it sits like the Sarazens head without Petogate: the Gentlemans Salamanders face burnt like Aena for anger, the rest laughed heartily: in the end all enraged, the Gentleman swoze to fight with him at the next meeting.

A sodaine and dangerous fray, twixt a Gentleman and  
*Tarlton*, which he put off with a Iest.

**A**s Tarlton & others passed along Fleetstreet, hee espyed a spruce yong gallant, blacke of complexion, with long haire hanging downe ouer his eares, and his beard of the  
Italian

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Italian cut, in white Satten, very quaintly cut, and his body so stiffe starcht, that he could not bend himselfe any way for no gold: Tarlton, seeing such a wonder comming, trips before him, and meeting this gallant tooke the wall of him, knowing that one so proud, at least looked for the prerogative. The gallant scorning that a Player should take the wall, or so much indigne him, turnes himselfe, and presently drew his Rapier, Tarlton drew likewise: The Gentleman fell to it roundly, but Tarlton in his owne defence, compassing and trauesing his ground, gaped with a wide mouth, whereat the people laughed: the Gentleman pausing, enquired why he gaped so? A Sir saies he, in hope to swallow you, for by my troth, you seme to me like a pume in a Pelle of white Broth: at this the people parted them, the Gentleman noting his mad humour, went his way well contented, for he knew not how to amend it.

### *Tarltons Iest of a Pippin.*

**A**t the Bull in Bishopsgatestreet, where the Quenes Players oftentimes played: Tarlton comming on the Stage, one from the Gallerie threw a Pippin at him, Tarlton tooke vp the Pip, & looking on it made this sodaine Iest.

Pip in or nose in, chuse you whether,  
Put yours in, ere I put in the other:  
Pippin you haue put in, then for my grace,  
Would I might put your nose in another place.

### *A Iest of an Apple hitting Tarlton on the face.*

**T**arlton hauing flouted the fellow for his Pippin which he threw, he thought to be met with Tarlton at length, so in the Play Tarltons part was to trauell, who kneeling downe to aske his Father blessing: the fellow threw an Apple at him, which hit him on the cheek: Tarlton taking  
vp the Apple made this Iest.

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Gentlemen



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Gentlemen, this fellow with his face of Mapple.  
In stead of a Pippin hath throwne me an Apple:  
But as for an Apple he hath cast a Crab,  
So in stead of an honest woman God hath sent him a Drab.  
The people laughed heartily, for he had a Queane to his  
Wife.

How *Tarlton* and one in the Gallerie fell out.

**I**t chanced that in the midst of a Play, after long expecta-  
tion for *Tarlton*, (being much desired of the people) at  
length he came forth: where at his entrance, one in the gal-  
lerie pointed his finger at him, saying to a friend that had  
never seene him, that is he: *Tarlton* to make sport at the least  
occasion giuen him, and seeing the man point with one fin-  
ger, he in lone againe held up two fingers: the captious fel-  
low iealous of his wife (for he was married) and because a  
Player did it, took the matter more hainously, and as kt him  
why hee made Hornes at him: So quoth *Tarlton*, they be  
fingers:

For there is no man which in loue to mee

Lends me one finger, but he shall haue three.

So, no, saies the fellow, you gaue me the hornes: true saies  
*Tarlton*, for my fingers are tipt with nailles which are like  
hornes, and I must make a shew of that which you are sure  
of: this matter grew so, that the more he medled, the more  
it was for his disgrace: wherefore the standers by coun-  
selled him to depart, both he and his hornes, lest his cause  
grew desperate: so the poore fellow plucking his Hat ouer  
his eyes, went his wayes.

How Fiddlers fiddled away *Tarltons* apparell.

**I**t chanced that one Fancie and Nancie, a Musitian in  
London, vsed often with their Boyes to visite *Tarlton*,  
when he dwelt in Gracious-Street, at the signe of the Saba,  
a

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a *Canern*, he being one of their best friends or benefactors,  
by reason of old acquaintance: to requite which, they came  
one summers morning to play him the *Hantl'* by with such  
Musicke as they had: *Tarlton*, to requite them would open  
his Chamber dooze, and for their paines would giue them  
Muscadine: which a Cony-catcher noting, and seeing *Tari-*  
*ton* come forth in his shirt and night-gowne to drinke  
with these Musitions, the while this nimble fellow kept in,  
and took *Tarltons* apparell which euery day he wore, thin-  
king that if he were espied to turne it to a iest, but it past for  
currant and he goes his wayes: Not long after *Tarlton* re-  
turned to his Chamber, and looked for his clothes, but they  
were safe enough from him. The next day this was noy-  
sed abroad, and one in the mockage threw him this *Stream*,  
he playing then at the Curtaine.

*Tarlton* I will tell thee a iest,  
Which after turned to earnest:  
One there was as I heard say,  
Who in his shirt heard Musicke play,  
While all his clothes were stolne away.

*Tarlton* smiling at this, answered on the sudden thus:

That's certaine, Sir, it is no lye,  
That same one in truth was I:  
When that the theefe shall pine and lacke,  
Then shall I haue cloathes to my backe:  
And I together with my fellowes,  
May see him ride to *Tiburne* Gallowes.

Of *Tarlton* and a Begger.

**T**here was a poore Begger (but a conceited fellow) who  
seeing *Tarlton* at his dooze, as kt something of him for gods  
cause. *Tarlton* putting his hand in his pocket, gaue him two  
pence in stead of a peny, at which *Tarlton* made this Riue:  
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Of all other Beggers most happy thou art,  
For to thee my hand is better then my heart.

Quoth the Begger.

True it is Master, as it chanceth now,  
The better for me, and the worse for you.

How *Tarlton* deceiued a Doctor of Phisicke.

**T**arlton to satisfie the humors of certaine Gentlemen, his familiar acquaintance, went about for to try the skill of a simple Doctor of Phisicke, that dwelt not farre from Allington, and thus it was: hee tooke a faire Urinall, and filled it halfe full of good wine, and boze it to this doctor, saying, it was a sicke mans water: who biewed it and tasting it vp and downe, as though he had great knowledge: quoth he, the patient whose water it is, is full of grosse humors, and hath need of purging, and to be let some ten ounces of blood. So you Dunce replied Tarlton, it is good piss, and with that drunke it off, and threw the Urinall at his head.

How *Tarlton* frighted a Country fellow.

**T**arlton passing through London, by chance hee heard a simple Country fellow in an Ale-house, calling for a Kingstone pot of Ale, kept into him and threatned to accuse him of treason, saying: Sirra, I haue sene and tasted of a penny pot of Ale, and haue found good of the price, but of a Kingstone coine I neuer heard, therefore it is some counterfait, and I must know how thou camest by it: hereupon the Country fellow was drinen into such a maze, that out of doores he got, and toke him to his heels, as though wilt-Are had followed him.

How

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How *Tarlton* was deceiued by his wife in London.

**T**arlton being merrily disposed, as his wife and he sate together, he said vnto her, Kate answere me to one question without a lye, and take this crowne of gold: which she tooke on condition, that if she lost, to restore it backe againe. Quoth Tarlton, am I a Cuckold or no Kate? Whereat she answered not a word, but stood silent: notwithstanding he urged her many waies: Tarlton seeing she would not speak, askt his gold againe: why quoth she, haue I made any lye: no sayes Tarlton: why then Goodman foole I haue won the wager: Tarlton mad with anger, made this Rime:

As women in speech can reuile a man,  
So can they in silence beguile a man.

One askt *Tarlton* what Countrey man the Diuell was.

**I**n Carter-lane dwelt a mery Cobler, who being in company with Tarlton, askt him, what Countrey man the diuell was: quoth Tarlton, a Spaniard; for Spaniards like the Diuell, trouble the whole world.

A Cheese-mongers question to *Tarlton*.

**I**n the time of Scarfitie, a simple Cheese-monger hearing Tarlton commended for his quick wit, came vnto him, and asked him why he thought Cheese and Butter to be so deere: Tarlton answered, because Wood and Coles are so deere, for Butter and Cheese a man may eate without a fire.

*Tarltons* answere to a rich Londiner.

**T**arlton meeting a rich Londiner, fell into talke about the Bishop of Peterborough, highly praising his bounty to



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to his seruants, his liberalitie to strangers, his great Hofpitalitie and Charitie to the poore. He doth well sayes the rich man, for what he hath is his but during his life. Why quoth Tarlton, for how many lines haue you your goods?

How *Tarlton* gaue away his dinner.

**A**s *Tarlton* and his wife sate at dinner, his wife being displeased with him, and thinking to crosse him, shee gaue away halfe of his meat vnto a poore Beggar, saying, take this for my other husbands sake. Whereupon *Tarlton* tooke all that was left, and likewise bad the poore fellow to pray for his other wifes soule.

*Tarltons* answere to a Boy in Rime.

**T**here was a crackrope Boy, meeting *Tarlton* in London Street, sung this rime vnto *Tarlton*.

Woe worth thee *Tarlton*,  
That euer thou wast borne:  
Thy wife hath made thee Cuckold,  
And thou must weare the horne.

*Tarlton* presently answered him in Extemporie.

What and if I be (Boy)  
I am nere the worse:  
Shee keepes me like a Gentleman,  
With money in my purse.

How *Tarlton* bid him selfe to dinner to my Lord Mayors.

**A** Jest came in *Tarltons* head where to dine, and thought he, in all that a man does, let him aske at the fairest,  
for

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for sure if I bid my selfe any where this day, it shall be to my Lord Mayors: and vpon this, goes to the Counter and entred his action against my Lord Mayor, who was presently told of it, and sends for him. *Tarlton* waits dinner time, and then comes, who was admitted presently. Master *Tarlton*, sayes my Lord Mayor, haue you entred an action against me in the Poultry Counter? My Lord, sayes *Tarlton*, haue you entred an action against me in Woodstreet Counter? Not I in troth, sayes my Lord. No sayes *Tarlton*, he was a villaine that told me so then: but if it be not so, forgiue me this fault my Lord, and I will neuer offend in the next: but in the end he begins to sweare, how he will be reuenged on him that mockt him, and sings out in a rage, But my Lord sayd, stay M. *Tarlton*, dine with me, and no doubt but after dinner you will be better minded. I will try that my Lord, sayes *Tarlton*, and if it alter mine anger, both mine enemy & I will thanke you together for this curtesie.

*Tarltons* Iest of a box on the eare.

**O**ne that fell out with his friend, meets him in the Street, and calling him into a corner, gaue him a boxe on the eare, and seld him, getting him gone, and neuer told wherefore he did so: which *Tarlton* beholding, raised vp the fellow, and askt him the reason of their suddaine falling out: can you tell Sir said the fellow, for by my troth as yet I cannot: Well said *Tarlton*, the more soole you, for had I such feeling of the cause, my wit would remember the iniurie, but many men are goolings, the more they seele the lesse they conueine.

*Tarltons* Iest to two Taylors.

**T***arlton* meeting two Taylors (friends of his) in the evening, in mirth cries, who goes there? A man answered a Taylor: How many is there? one: Hea said *Tarlton*, thou said the other Taylor: then you say true, said *Tarlton*: for  
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two Taylors goes to a man. But before they parted, they fort Tarlton, at the Castle in Paternoster Row, that Tarlton confest them two Taylors to be honest men: so what they spent in the purse they got in the person: comming but one by Tarltons account, they returned two: but Tarlton comming one, returned lesse by his wit, for that was drunk in the whetting.

How Tarlton ielled at his wife.

Tarlton and his wife keeping an Ordinarie in Paternoster Row, was bidden out to Supper, and because he was a man noted, she would not goe with him in the Street, but intreats him to keepe one side and the another, which he consented to: but as he went he would cry out to her and say, Turne that way wife, and anon on this side wife: so the people flockt the more to laugh at them, but his wife more then mad angry, goes backe againe, and almost sozwoze his company.

How Tarlton committed a Rakers horse to Ward.

When Tarlton dwelt in Gracious Street, at a Tauerne at the signe of the Saba, he was chosen Scavenger: and often the Ward complained of his slacknes in keeping the Streets cleane: so on a time when the Cart came, he asked the Raker, why he did his businesse so slackly, Sir said he, my foze-horse was in the fault, who being let blood and drencht yesterday, I durst not labour him: Sir said Tarlton, your horse shall smart for it, and so leads him to the Counter, which the Raker laughd at, and without his horse did his worke with the rest, thinking Tarltons humor was to test, and would returne him his horse againe anon: but when that anon came, he was faine to pay all his fees of the prison, as directly as if he himselfe had bene there: for if Tarlton had committed the matter, the busines had not gone forward, therefore the horse was in prison for the Master.

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How Tarlton made Armin his adopted sonne to succeed him.

Tarlton keeping a Tauerne in Gracious Street, hee let it to another, who was indebted to Armins Master, a Goldsmith in Lombard Street: yet he himselfe had a Chamber in the same house. And this Armin being then a wag came often thither to demaund his Masters money, which hee sometimes had, and sometimes had not: in the end the man growing poore, told the boy he had no money for his Master, and he must beare with him. The mans name being Charles, Armin made this verse, writing it with chalke on a waine-scot:

O world how wilt thou lie, is this Charles the great:  
that I denie:

Indeed Charles the great before,  
But now Charles the lesse, being poore.

Tarlton comming into the roome reading it, and partly acquainted with the boyes humor, comming often thither for his M. money, took a piece of chalke, & writ this rime by it.

A wag thou art, none can preuent thee,  
And thy desert shall content thee:

Let me diuine, as I am, so in time thou'lt be the same.

My adopted sonne therefore be,

To enjoy my Clownes suite after me.

And so how it fell out: the Boy reading this, so loved Tarlton after, that regarding him with more respect, vsed to his playes, and fell in a league with his humour, and private practise brought him to present playing, and at this house performed the same, where at the Globe on the Bancke-side men may see him.

Tarltons greeting with Bankes his horse.

There was one Bankes (in the time of Tarlton) who served the Earle of Essex, & had a horse of strange qualities:

and

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and being at the Crosse-kepes in Graciousstrate, getting money with him (as he was mightily resorted to:) Tarlton then (with his fellowes) playing at the Bell by, came into the Crosse-kepes amongst many people) to see fashions: which Bankes perceiuing (to make the people laugh) sayes Signior (to his Horse) goe fetch mee the veriest foole in the company, the Jade comes immediatly, and with his mouth drawes Tarlton forth: Tarlton with merry words said nothing, but God a mercy Horse: in the end, Tarlton seeing the people laugh so, was angry inwardly, and said, Sir, had I power of your horse, as you haue, I would doe more then that. Where ere it be said Bankes (to please him) I will charge him to do it: then saies Tarlton, charge him to bring me the veriest whoze-master in this company. He shall saies Bankes: Signior saies he, bring M. Tarlton heere the veriest whoze-master in the company: the Horse leades his master to him: then God a mercy Horse indeed, sayes Tarlton: the people had much adoe to keepe peace, but Bankes & Tarlton had like to squarce, and the horse by to giue ayde: but euer after it was a by-word through London, God a mercy horse, and is to this day.

An excellent Iest of *Tarlton* suddenly spoken.

**A**t the Bull at Bishopsgate was a play of Henry the 8<sup>th</sup>, wherein the Judge was to take a bore on the eare, and because he was absent that should take the blow: Tarlton himselfe (euer forward to please) took upon him to play the same Judge, besides his owne part of the Clowne: and Knell then playing Henry the 8<sup>th</sup>, bit Tarlton a sound here indeed, which made the people laugh the more, because it was he: but anone the Judge goes in, & immediatly Tarlton (in his Clownes clothes) comes out, and askes the Actors what newes: I saith one, hadst thou bene here, thou shouldst haue seene Prince Henry bit the Judge a terribly bore on the eare: What man, said Tarlton, is that Judge?

It

## Tarltons Iests.

It is true ysaith, said the other: no other like, said Tarlton, and it could not be but terrible to the Judge, when the report so terrifies me, that me thinks the blow remaines still on my cheek, that it burnes againe. The people laught at this mightily, and to this day I haue heard it commended so rare: but no maruaile, for he had many of these. But I would see our Clownes in these dayes doe the like, no I warrant ye, and yet they thinke well of themselves too.

*Tarltons* Iest with a Boy in the Street.

**A** Wag-batter Boy met Tarlton in the Street, and said: Master Tarlton who liues longest? Harry Boy, sayes Tarlton, he that dies latest: and why die men so fast, said the Boy: because they want breath, said Tarlton: no rather said the Boy, because their time is come: then thy time is come, said Tarlton, see who comes yonder: Who? said the Boy: Harry said Tarlton, Bull the hangman: or one that would willingly be thy hangman: Nay, hang me then, if I employ him at this time, said the Boy. Well said Tarlton, then thou wilt be hanged by thy owne confession, and so they parted.

A Iest of *Tarlton*, prouing Mustard to haue wit.

**T**arlton keeping an Ordinarie in Water-hoffer row, and sitting with Gentlemen to make them merry, would approue Mustard, (standing befoze them) to haue wit: how so sayes one: It is like a witty skold, meeting another skold, knowing that skold will skold, begins to skold first. so saies he, the Mustard being lickt by, and knowing that you will bite it, begins to bite you first: He trie that saies a Bull by, and the Mustard so tickled him, that his eyes watered: how now sayes Tarlton, does my Iest saunour? I, saies the Bull, and bite too: if you had had better wit, sayes Tarlton, you would haue bit first: so then conclude with me, that dumbe unfeeling

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## Tarltons Iests.

vnfeeling Mustard, hath moze wit then a talking vnfeeling  
foole as you are. Some were pleased and some were not,  
but all Tarltons care was taken (for his resolution was such  
euer) befoze he talkt any Iest.

How Tarlton tooke Tobacco at the first comming  
vp of it.

**T**arlton (as other Gentlemen vsed) at the first comming  
vp of Tobacco, did take it moze for fashions sake then  
otherwise, and being in a roome, set betwene two men o-  
uercome with wine, and they neuer seeing the like, wondred  
at it, and seeing the vapour come out of Tarltons nose, cried  
out, fire, fire, and threw a cup of wine in Tarltons face:  
Make no moze stirre quoth Tarlton, the fire is quenched, if  
the Sheriffes come it will turne to a fine; as the custome  
is. And drinking that againe, he sayes the other, what a  
sincke it makes, I am almost poisoned: Itt offend, sayes  
Tarlton, lets every one take a little of the smell, and  
so the saour will quickly goe: but To-  
bacco whiffes made them leaue  
him to pay all.

## Tarltons



## Tarltons prettie Countrie Iests.

Tarltons wit betweene a Bird and a Woodcocke.



**I**n the Citie of Gloucester, Master Bird of the  
Chappell met with Tarlton, who toysall to re-  
grat other, went to visit his friends: amongst  
the rest, M. Bird of the Queens Chappell visited  
Master Woodcock of the Colledge, where mee-  
ting, many frindly speeches past, amongst which, M. Wood-  
cocke challenged M. Bird of kin: who mused that he was  
of his affinitie and hee neuer knew it: yes sayes M. Wood-  
cocke, euery Woodcocke is a Bird, therefore it must needs  
be so. Lord, Sir, sayes Tarlton, you are wide, for though  
euery Woodcocke be a Bird, yet euery Bird is not a Wood-  
cocke. So M. Woodcocke like a Woodcocke bit his lip, and  
mum budged was silent.

Tarltons Iest of a Gridiron.

**W**hile the Queens Players lay in Worcester Citie  
to get money, it was his custome oft to sing ex-  
tempory of Theams giuen him: amongst which they were  
appoynted to play the next day: now one fellow of the City  
amongst the rest, that seemed quaint of conceit, to lead other  
pouthe with his fine wit, gaue out that the next day hee  
would giue him a Theam, to put him to a non plus: diuers  
of his friends acquainted with the same, expected some rare  
conceit: Well, the next day came, and my gallant gaue him  
his inuention in two lines, which was this this:

Me thinkes it is a thing vnfit.  
To see a Gridiron turne the spit.

The

## Tarltons Iests.

The people laughed at this, thinking his wit knew no answers therunto, which angered Tarlton exceedingly, and presently with a smile looking about, when they expected wonders, he put it off thus :

Me thinkes it is a thing vnfit,  
To see an Ass haue any wit.

The people booted for ioy, to see the Cheame-giner dash, who like a dog with his taile betwene his legs, left the place: But such commendations Tarlton got, that hee slept with the Bailiffe that night, where my Cheamer durst not come, although he were sent for, so much he vexed at that vnlookt-for answer.

*Tarltons* answer in defence of his flat nose.

I remember I was once at a Play in the Country, where as *Tarltons* use was, the Play being done, every one so pleased to shew by his Cheame: amongst all the rest, one was read to this same effect, word by word.

*Tarlton*, I am one of thy friends, and none of thy foes,  
Then I prethee tell how thou cam'st by thy flat nose:  
Had I beene present at that time on those bankes,  
I would haue layd my short sword over his long shankes.

*Tarlton* mad at this question, as it was his propertie sooner to take such a matter ill, then well, very suddenly returned him this answer:

Friend or foe, if thou wilt needs know, marke me well,  
With parting dogs & beares, then by the cars, this chance fell:  
But what of that? though my nose be flat, my credit to saue,  
Yet very well, I can by the smell,  
Scent an honest man from a knave.

*Tarlton*

## Tarltons Iests.

*Tarltons* Iest of a Bristow man.

**V**hen the Quenes Players were restrained in Summer, they traualled downe to S. James his Faire, at Bristowe, where they were worthily entertained both of Londoners, and those Citizens: it happened that a wealthy Citizen, called M. Sunbanke, one morning secretly married his Maid; but not so secret, but it was blowne abroad: that morning, *Tarlton* and others, walking in the Faire to visit his familiar friends of London, and being in company of Bristow men, they did see M. Sunbancke coming, who had this propertie with his necke, not to stirre it any way, but to turne body & all: it chanced at the Faire end, he stood to pisse against a wall: to whom *Tarlton* came, and clapping him on the shoulder, God giue you ioy of your marriage, saies he: M. Sunbancke being taken pissing against the wall, would haue lookt backe to thanke him, and suddenly turnes about body and all, in the view of many, and shewed all: which so abashed him, that ashamed he took it to a Taurne, protesting that he had rather haue spent ten pound: sure sayd the Wintner, the fault is in your necke, who will not turne without the bodiees assistance, and not in M. *Tarlton*: Call you him M. *Tarlton*, saies M. Sunbancke? I Sir, saies the Wintner, he is the Quens Jester: he may be whose Jester he will be, but this Jest agrees not with me at this time.

A Iest broken of *Tarlton* by a Country Gentleman.

**I**n the Country where the Quenes Players were accepted into a Gentlemans house: the Waggon unloading of the apparell, the Waggoner comes to *Tarlton*, & doth desire him to speake to the Steward for his horses: I will sayes he, and comming to the Steward, Sir, saies *Tarlton*, where shall our Horses spend the time: The Gentleman looking at



## Tarltons Iests.

at Tarlton at that question, suddenly answered, if it please you, or them, let them walke a turne or two : or there is a faire Garden, let them play a game or two at bowles in the Alley, and departs thence about his other businesse. Tarlton commending the suddaine wit of the Steward, said little: but my Steward not quiet, tels to the Gentlewomen aboue, how he had dyuen Tarlton to a nonplus with a iest: whereat they all did laugh heartily: which a Seruingman louing Tarlton well, came and told him as much. Tarlton to adde fuell to the fire, and loath to rest thus put off with a iest, goes and gets two of the horses into the Garden, and turns them into the Bowling Alley, who with their heles made hanocke, being the Gentlemans only pastime: The Ladies aboue from a window, seeing horses in the Garden Alley, call the Knight, who cries out to Tarlton, Fellow, what meanest thou: nothing Sir, saies he, but two of my horses are at seven by, for a pecke of Pouender, a foolish match that I made: now they being in play at bowles, run, run: your Steward may come after and crie rub, rub: at which, though they smiled, yet the Steward had no thanks for his labour, to set the horses to such an exercise: and they could not blame Tarlton, who did but as he was bidden: but by this Iest Mats and Hay, Stable-roome, and all, was plenty.

How Tarlton made one of his company vltterly forswear drunkenness.

**A**T Salisbury Tarlton & his fellows were to play before the Maior & his brethren: but one of his company, a yong man was so drunke that he could not: whereat Tarlton as mad angry, as he was mad drunke, claps me on his legs a huge payre of bouls: the fellow dead as a stone felt nothing: when all was done, they conuayed him to the Tayle on a mans backe, and intreated the Tayler to doe God good service, and let him lie there till he waked. While they were about their sport the fellow waked, and finding himselfe in durance, and the Tayle hung round with bolts and shackels, he

## Tarltons Iests.

he began to blesse himselfe, and thought sure in his drunkenness he had done some mischief: with that he called to know, but none came to him, then he thought verely his fault was capitall, and that hee was close prisoner: by and by comes the Keeper, and moaned him, that one so yong should come to so shamefull a death as hanging: anone, another comes, and another with the like, which further put him in a puzzle: but at last comes Tarlton and others, intreating the Keeper, yet if it might be, that they might see their fellow ere they went, but hee very hardly was intreated, but at length the poore drunken Signior cal'd out for them: in they come. Oh Tom, sayes Tarlton, hard was thy hap in drunkenness to murder this honest man, and our hard hap too, to haue it reported any of our company is hangd for it. O God, O God saies the fellow, is my fault so great: then commend me to all my friends. Well, short tale to make, the fellow forswore drunkenness if he could escape, and by as cunning a wile to his thinking, they got him out of prison by an escape, and sent him to London before, who was not a little glad he was gone: but see how this Iest wrought, by little and little the fellow left his excessive drinking, and in time altered his desire of drunkenness.

How Tarlton saved his head from cutting off.

**T**arlton vpon a time being in the Countrie, & lodging in an homely Inne, during which time there was a gentleman dwelling in the same towne, somewhat frantick and distraught of his wits: which mad man on a suddaine rush into Tarltons bed-chamber with his sword drawn, and finding him there in bed, would haue slain him: saying, villain, were it not valiantly done to strike off thy knaves head at one blowe? Tarlton answered, tut sir, thats nothing with your worship to do, you can as easily strike off two heads at one blow as one: wherefore, if you please Ile go downe and call by another, and so you may strike off both our heads at once: the mad-man beliened him, and so let him slip away.

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### How *Tarlton* escaped imprisonment.

**T**arlton hauing bene dominéring very late one Night, with two of his friends, and comming homewards along Cheapside, the watch being then set: Master Constable asked, who goes there: thre merry men, quoth *Tarlton*: that is not sufficient, what are you, quoth M. Constable: why saies *Tarlton*, one of vs is an eye-maker, and the other a light maker: what sayst thou knaue, doest mocke me: the one is an eye-maker, the other a light maker, which two properties belong vnto God onely: commit these blasphemers quoth the Constable: Nay, I pray you good M. Constable be good in your Office, I will approue what I haue sayd to be true. If thou canst, sayes the Constable, you shall passe, otherwise you shall be all thre punished. Why quoth *Tarlton*, this fellow is an eye-maker, because a Spectacle maker, and this other a maker of light, because a Chandle, that makes your darkest night as light as your Lanthorne. The Constable séing them so pleasant, was we'l contented, the rest of the Watchmen laughed, and *Tarlton* with his two companions went home quietly.

### How *Tarlton* deceived a Countrey wench.

**T**he Quéenes Plaiers trauellling into the West countrey to play, and lodging in a little village, some ten miles from *Wistow*, in which village dwelt a pretty nut-browne Lass. to whom *Tarlton* made proffer of marriage, protesting that he came from London, purposely to marry her: the simple Maide being proude, to be beloued by such a one, whom she knew to be the Quéenes man, without moze intreaty yélded, & being both at the Church together, and M. *Tarlton* ready to performe his dutie, and comming to the words of I Richard take the *Joane*: nay, stay good Master *Tarlton*, I will goe and call my fellows, and come to you againe:

## Tarltons Iests.

again: so going out of the Church in haste, returned at leisure; for hauing his horse ready saddled, hee rode toward *Wistow*, and by the way told his fellows, of his successe with his wench.

### How *Tarlton* went to kill Crowes.

**I**t chanced vpon a time, as *Tarlton* went forth with a birding péce into the fields to kill Crowes, hee espied a Daw sitting in a Tree, at which he meant to shoot; but at the same instant, there came one by, to whom he spake in this manner: Sir, quoth he, ponder I see a Daw, which I will shoot at if she sit: if she sit, said the other, then she is a Daw indeed: but quoth *Tarlton*, if she sit not, what is she then: Harry quoth the other, a Daw also: at which words she immediately flew away: whereupon *Tarlton* spake merrily in a Rime, as followeth:

Whether a Daw sit, or whether a Daw flie,  
Whether a Daw stand, or whether a Daw lie,  
Whether a daw creeke, or whether a Daw crie,  
In what case soeuer a Daw perseuer,  
A Daw is a Daw, and a Daw shall be euer.

### How a poore Beggerman ouer-reached *Tarlton* by his wit.

**A**s *Tarlton* vpon a day late at his owne doze, to whom came a poore old man, & begged a penny for the Lords sake, wherupon *Tarlton* hauing no single money about him, asked the begger what money he had, no moze money master but one single penny. *Tarlton* being merrily disposed, called for this penny, and hauing receiued it, gaue it to his boy to fetch a pot of Ale, whereat the Begger grew blanke, and began to gather vp his wits how to get it againe: the pot of Ale for the Beggers penny being brought, he proffered to drinke

## Tarltons Iests.

Drinke to the begger: nay stay awhile Master, quoth the begger, the use is where I was borne, that he that pates for the drinke, must drinke first: thou saist well quoth Tarlton, goe to, Drinke to me then: Whereupon the Begger tooke the Pot, saying, here Master I drinke to you, (and there-withall dranke off euery droppe) now Master, if you will pledge me, send for it as I haue done: Tarlton seeing him selfe so over-reacht, greatly commended the Beggers wit, and withall in recompence thereof, gaue him a Teasell: with that the Begger said, that he would most truly pray to God for him: no answered Tarlton, I pray thee pray for thy selfe, for I take no vsury for Almes-deeds.

*Of Tarltons pleasant answer to a Gallant, by the high-way side.*

**I**t was Tarltons occasion another time to ride into Suffolke, being furnished with a very leane large horse: and by the way a lustie gallant met him, and in mockage, asked him, what a yerd of his horse was worth: marry sir, quoth Tarlton, I pray you alight and lift vp my horses taile, and they in that shop will tell you the price of a yerd.

*How Tarlton would haue drowned his wife.*

**V**pon a time, Tarlton and his wife (as passengers) came sailing from Southampton towards London, a mighty storme arose, and endangered the ship, whereupon the Captaine thereof, charged every man to throw into the sea the heaviest thing he could best spare, to the end to lighten somewhat the ship: Tarlton, that had his wife there, offered to throw her over-board, but the company rescued her, and being asked wherefore he meant so to do: he answered she was the heaviest thing I haue, and I can best spare her.

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*How Tarlton made his Will and Testament.*

**O**f late there was a Gentleman living in England, that wheresoener he dined, would of euery dish conuey a modicum thereof into his Gownesleeue: which Gentleman being vpon a time at dinner at a Gentlemans house in the Country, there he used his aforesaid quality, in the company of M. Tarlton, who perceiving it, said thus vnto the company: My masters, I am now determined before you all, to make my last Will and Testament: and first, I bequeath my soule to God my creator, and my body to be buried in the sleeue of yonder Gentlemans Gowne: and with that stepping to him, he turned vp the Gowne sleeue, whereout here dropt a bird, and there a bird, with chesse of much other good chere, he still shaking it, saying, I meant this sleeue Gentleman, this sleeue I meant.

*How Tarlton called a Gentleman Knaue by craft.*

**V**Vthin a while after, as the same Gentleman and Tarlton passed through a feld together, a Crow in a Tree cryed, kaw, kaw: so yonder Tarlton, quoth the Gentleman, yonder Crow calleth thee knaue: no sir (he answered) he beckens to your worship as the better man.

*Tarltons Iest of a Country wench.*

**T**arlton going towards Hogsdon, met a Country maid coming to market, her Mare stumbling down the fell ouer and ouer, shewing all that euer God sent her, and then rising vp againe, she turned her round about vnto Master Tarlton, and said, Gods body sir, did you euer see the like before: No in good sooth, quoth Tarlton, neuer but once in London.

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How *Tarlton* deceiued an Inne-holder at Sandwich.

**V**pon a time when the Plaiers were put to silence, *Tarlton* and his boy frolickt so long in the Country, that all their money was gone, and being a great way from London, they knew not what to doe; but as want is the wheatestone of wit, *Tarlton* gathereth his conceit together, and practised a tricke to beare him vp to London without money, & thus it was: Vnto an Inne in Sandwich they went, and there lay for two daies at great charge, although he had no money to pay for the same: the third morning he had his man go dolowne and male content himselfe before his Hoast and his Hoastesse, & mumbling say to himselfe, Lord. Lord, what a scalde master doe I serue, this it is to serue such Seminary Priests and Iesuits, now euen as I am an honest boy, Ile leaue him in the lurch, and shift for my selfe: here's a doe about penance and mortification, as though (forsooth) Christ hath not died enough for all: The boy mumbled out these his instructions so dissembling, that it strake a iea- lousie in the Inne-holders heart, that out of doubt his master was a Seminary Priest; whercupon he presently sent for the Constable, and told him all the foresaid matter, and so went by both together to attach *Tarlton* in his chamber, who purposely had shut himselfe close in, and betaken him to his knees, and to his crosses, to make the matter seeme more suspicious, which they espying through the key-hole, made no more adoe, but in they rushed, and arrested him for a Seminary Priest, discharged his score, boze his, and his boyes charges by to London, and there in hope to haue rich rewards, presented him to M. Fleetwood, the old Recorder of London: but now marke the Jest; when the Recorder saw *Tarlton*, and knew him passing well, entertained him very courteously, and all to be sold the Inne-holder and his mate, and sent them away with fleas in their eares: but when *Tarlton* saw himselfe discharged out of their hands,

hee