Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

First performed 1607–8
First published 1613

*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was written for the private Blackfriars Theatre, built by Richard Burbage in 1596, and was performed by a company of boy actors. The play is significant for the information it offers in the Induction and elsewhere about contemporary acting companies and the public taste in theatre, as well as other popular cultural forms, such as the chivalric romance. This, together with its representation of social class, and its very specific sense of the geography of London and its environs, gives *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* a particular authority for students of early seventeenth-century theatre. Beaumont’s play is a network of overlapping dramatic narratives. The Induction and the Interludes supply a commentary on (and intervene in) the two ‘inner’ narratives, that of Venturewell and his family (the story of ‘The London Merchant’) and the enactment of ‘The Knight of the Burning Pestle’ itself. That the one story parodies London’s aspiring merchant class, and the other satirises that class’s taste for chivalric romance, gives the play a special sense of topicality. The Citizen’s ‘Down with your title, boy, down with your title!’ (Induction, 29), in response to what he predicts will be yet another Blackfriars play poking fun at his class, is humorous but also emphatic; it is a cry from the heart of a class that was sensitive about its own emerging, but as yet ill-defined, position at the centre of London’s economic and social transformation.

The sensitivity to social rank and identity is confirmed as it is exposed in Venturewell’s attempts at manipulation in the business of his daughter Luce’s marriage: he is entirely willing to enhance his social position at the expense of his daughter’s genuine desire for the ‘unsuitable’ Jasper. In turn, Jasper, similarly dismissed by his own mother, can rely on neither professional bonds (his indentures as an apprentice) or family loyalty. As for his love for Luce, and her love for him, these become tellingly confused by the play’s continual recourse to the enactment of chivalric codes, such as in the scene in Waltham Forest in Act III where Jasper ‘tests’ Luce. Humorous and bizarre as they are, such episodes suggest that in this dramatic world, as much as in any tragedy, the ‘experience of the social is dictated by ‘codes’ of representation that are shaped by value judgements which confine rather than liberate.

The enactment of ‘The Knight of the Burning Pestle’ superficially suggests an innocent preoccupation by the citizens with the old stories of chivalric adventure and nobility. They celebrate, and Beaumont parodies, the tales of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton, meshing these with narratives derived from popular Spanish prose romances. However, such evocations of the past also had a clear place in the official and semi-official discourse of the Tudor and early Stuart state. Edmund Spenser (1552–99) had written his chivalric romance, *The Faerie Queene* (1590–6), with a seriousness that borders on the melancholic, framing a mythologised national history that underpinned Elizabethan Protestant identity. *The Faerie Queene* is referred to in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (II.80), but the contrast between Spenser’s stately epic and Beaumont’s parody is complete, undermining a project that, in more widely accessible forms than Spenser’s, was represented in ballads, pageants and other popular forms of entertainments.

Some of these entertainments were presented at Mile End and it is not surprising that, towards the end of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the action shifts to this location. Here, beyond the city walls of London, was where the serious business of training soldiers had traditionally taken place, an activity that the play parodies in a subversive way. Yet it was also the scene of the kind of ‘miserule’ and carnival espoused by Rafe and Merrythought, but severely condemned by the Puritans who were emerging as the more powerful and politically motivated representatives of the social class from which Beaumont drew his characters.

*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is a compelling and often hilarious account of the workings of early seventeenth-century theatre, a parody of contemporary concerns over an evolving system of social class, and a critique of an earlier genre of plays that celebrated an ideal of ‘Merry England’, such as Thomas Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (1599). Yet many critics agree that the framing device of the Induction and Interludes tempts us to share the considerable and, finally, unattractive, prejudices of the Citizen and his Wife. Indeed, the play may put us in the position of endorsing easy solutions to the problematic social distinctions that shape the world of the play, favouring a sense of order above the chaos that is achieved through the intersection.
of social class with chivalric romance and festive release. Merrythought, with his constant recourse to song in the face of adversity, makes us laugh until, perhaps, we consider the terms, and price, of his good humour. As Arthur Kinney has remarked, ‘Merrythought, after all, is forever genial, yet that very geniality depends on the willingness of others to support him – he survives on the legacy of others. He can also carry his one-dimensional philosophy to an excess we would consider inhuman: “If both my sons were on the gallows, I would sing”’ (Kinney 1999: 389). As with much of the comedy of the period, The Knight of the Burning Pestle suggests that, beyond the laughter, there was a very real uncertainty in the shift from a late-medieval world into a recognisably modern one.

Textual note

The Knight of the Burning Pestle was once thought to have been written jointly by Francis Beaumont and his long-term collaborator, John Fletcher (1579–1625), but we follow recent editors, and the evidence of careful analysis of the play’s stylistic cohesion, in attributing it to Beaumont alone. This edition is based on the quarto of 1613 (referred to in the footnotes as Q1) and the two further quartos dated 1635 (Q2 and Q3). The play was reprinted from Q2 (which may, in fact, have been later than 1635) for the second Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1679. Copies of these early editions are held in the British Library in London. This edition reproduces the seventeenth-century division of the play into Acts and Interludes; further subdivision (into scenes), although favoured by some modern editors, suggests an undermining of the unusual sense of pace and cohesion achieved by the continued presence on the stage of the Citizen and the Citizen’s Wife.

Further reading

Editions


Critical and contextual commentaries


Lindsay, E. S. (1924) ‘The Music of the Songs in Fletcher’s Plays’, Studies in Philology, XXI.


Works of related interest

Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy (1585)

Anon., Mucedorus (1585)

George Peele, The Old Wives’ Tale (1591)

George Peele, Edward I (1591)

Thomas Heywood, The Four Prentices of London (1594)

Thomas Dekker, The Shoemaker’s Holiday (1599)

Thomas Dekker, Old Fortunatus (1599)

George Chapman, Ben Jonson and John Marston, Eastward Ho! (1605)

Thomas Heywood, If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody (1605)

John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, The Travels of the Three English Brothers (1607)
The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607)

To His Many Ways Enderead
Friend Master Robert Keysar

Sir, this unfortunate child who in eight days (as lately I have learned) was begot and born, soon after was by his parents (perhaps because he was so unlike his brethren) exposed to the wide world, who for want of judgement, or not understanding the privy mark of irony about it (which showed it was no offspring of any vulgar brain) utterly rejected it; so that for want of acceptance it was even ready to give up the ghost, and was in danger to have been smothered in perpetual oblivion, if you (out of your direct antipathy to ingratitude) had not been moved both to relieve and cherish it. Wherein I must needs commend both your judgement, understanding, and singular love to good wits. You afterwards sent it to me, yet being an infant and somewhat ragged, I have fostered it privately in my bosom these two years, and now to show my love return it to you, clad in good lasting clothes, which scarce memory will wear out, and able to speak for itself; and, withal, as it telleth me, desirous to try his fortune in the world, where if yet it be welcome, father, foster-father, nurse, and child, all have their desired end. If it be slighted or traduced, it hopes his father will beget him a younger brother who shall revenge his quarrel, and challenge the world either of fond and merely literal interpretation, or illiterate misprision. Perhaps it will be thought to be of the race of Don Quixote; we both may confidently swear it is his elder above a year; and therefore may (by virtue of his birthright) challenge the wall of him. I doubt not but they will meet in their adventures, and I hope the breaking of one staff will make them friends; and perhaps they will combine themselves, and travel through the world to seek their adventures. So I commit him to his good fortune, and myself to your love.

Your assured friend

W.B.

To the Readers of this Comedy

Gentlemen, the world is so nice in these our times, that for apparel, there is no fashion; for music, which is a rare art (though now slighted), no instrument; for diet, none but the French kickshaws that are delicate; and for plays, no invention but that which now runneth an invective way, touching some particular person, or else it is contemned before it is thoroughly understood. This is all that I have to say, that the author had no intent to wrong anyone in this comedy, but as a merry passage, here and there interlaced it with delight, which he hopes will please all, and be hurtful to none.

Robert Keysar: London goldsmith who, from about 1606, had financed The Children of the Revels at the Blackfriars Theatre

1 eight days: the period of composition (taken literally by many scholars)
2-3 his parents: one piece of evidence for the idea of joint authorship, i.e. with John Fletcher
3 brethren: other plays
4 no offspring . . . vulgar brain: not an ordinary citizen comedy
5 utterly rejected: either it was not performed or it was not appreciated
6 ragged: the author's foul papers (manuscript)
7 father, foster-father, nurse, and child: i.e. author, dedicatee, publisher, and play

Don Quixote: the first part of Cervantes' novel was printed in Spain in 1605 and an English translation (by Shelton) appeared in 1612, but both the original and the translation are known to have circulated in some form before this

W.B.: Walter Burre, the publisher

1 nice: fastidious
4 kickshaws: from quelque chose (French), dainties
7 thoroughly: thoroughly
The Prologue

Where the bee can suck no honey, she leaves her sting behind; and where the bear cannot find origanum to heal his grief, he blasteth all other leaves with his breath. We fear it is like to fare so with us, that seeing you cannot draw from our labours sweet content, you leave behind you a sour mislike and with open reproach blame our good meaning because you cannot reap the wonted mirth. Our intent was at this time to move inward delight, not outward lightness; and to breed (if it might be) soft smiling, not loud laughing, knowing it to the wise to be as great pleasure to hear counsel mixed with wit, as to the foolish to have sport mingled with rudeness. They were banished the theatre of Athens, and from Rome hissed, that brought parasites on the stage with apish actions, or fools with uncivil habits, or courtezans with immodest words. We have endeavoured to be as far from unseemly speeches to make your ears glow, as we hope you will be free from unkind reports, or, mistaking the author's intention (who never aimed at any one particular in this play), to make our cheeks blush. And thus I leave it and thee to thine own censure, to like, or dislike. Vale.

The Speakers’ Names

THE PROLOGUE

Then a citizen, George

The citizen’s wife, Nell, and

Rafe, her man, sitting below amidst the spectators

Venturewell, a rich merchant

Jasper, his apprentice

Master Humphrey, a friend to the merchant

Luce, the merchant’s daughter

Mistress Merrythought, Jasper’s mother

Michael, a second son of Mistress Merrythought

Old Master Merrythought

Tim, a squire

George, a dwarf

A tapster

A boy that danceth and singeth

An host

A barber

Three knights supposed captives

A woman, supposed captive

A sergeant

Soldiers

William Hamerton, a pewterer

George Greengoose, a poulterer

Pompiona, a daughter to the King of Moldavia

Boys, Gentlemen, Attendants, Servants

Induction

Gentlemen seated upon the stage. The citizen, his wife, and Rafe below among the audience

Enter prologue

PROLOGUE From all that’s near the court, from all that’s great

Within the compass of the city-walls,

We now have brought our scene—

Enter citizen on to the stage from the audience below

CITIZEN Hold your peace, goodman boy.

PROLOGUE What do you mean, sir?

CITIZEN That you have no good meaning. This seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play The London Merchant. Down with your title, boy, down with your title! 10

PROLOGUE Are you a member of the noble city?

CITIZEN I am.

Three knights: eds (Two knights Q2)

SD Gentlemen: tobacco-smoking gallants who paid for seats on the stage

1 court: at Westminster

2 city-walls: the walls that enclosed London north of the Thames

4 Hold your peace, goodman boy: parody of John Day’s Isle of Gulls (1606) in which the Prologue is interrupted by playgoers telling him what they want to see

6–7 This seven . . . this house: The Children of the Revels played at Blackfriars from 1600 to 1608

8 still: always

9 The London Merchant: probably the play about Venturewell and his family

10 title: a placard bearing the title of the play

11 member: citizen


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husband, husband.
wife

29-30 all plays that glorified London. Dick Whittington was
citizen

31 freeman: one enjoying the privileges of the City
32 following a successful apprenticeship
33 grocer: one of London's twelve great livery companies
34 (which also included the Mercers, Drapers, Fishmongers,
35 Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Taylors, Haberdashers,
36 Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners and Clothworkers)
37 favour: play on 'face'
38 play the jacks: play tricks (i.e. 'play the knave')
39 betters: adult companies

20-4 all plays that glorified London. Dick Whittington was
30 the legendary Lord Mayor who rose to his position from
31 low estate; a play about him was entered in the
32 Stationers' Register in 1605. Thomas Gresham appears in
33 If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, (1605) by
34 Thomas Heywood; he built the Royal Exchange, a place
35 of resort opened by Elizabeth I. Queen Eleanor appears in
36 Edward I (1591) by George Peele; 'The Building of
37 London Bridge upon Wool-sacks' was a contemporary
dance inspired by the raising of taxes on wool to finance
38 the bridge
39 understanding: a joke referring to the fact that the
40 spectators were below the stage
41 commons: the body of freemen
42 The Life . . . Fleet-privies: probably an invention (Fleet
43 Ditch was used as a sewer)
44 admirable: wonderful

rafe Peace, mistress.

wife

40 hold thy peace, Rafe; I know what I do, I
41 warrant'e.—husband, husband.
citizen

42 what say'st thou, cony?

43 wife let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband; let him
44 kill a lion with a pestle.
citizen

45 so he shall.—I'll have him kill a lion with a
pestle.

wife

46 husband, shall I come up, husband?
citizen

47 ay, cony.—Rafe, help your mistress this
48 way.—pray, gentlemen, make her a little room.—I
49 pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife;
50 I thank you, sir.—so.

wife comes up on to the stage

wife

51 by your leave, gentlemen all, I'm something
52 troublesome; I'm a stranger here; I was ne'er at one of
53 these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen
54 Jane Shore once, and my husband hath promised me
55 any time this twelvemonth to carry me to The Bold
56 Beauchamps; but in truth he did not. I pray you bear
57 with me.
citizen

58 boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools,
59 and then begin, and let the grocer do rare things.

prologue

60 but sir, we have never a boy to play him;
61 everyone hath a part already.

wife

62 husband, husband, for God's sake let Rafe play
63 him; beshrew me if I do not think he will go beyond
64 them all.
citizen

65 well remembered, wife.—come up, Rafe.—
66 I'll tell you, gentlemen, let them but lend him a suit
67 of reparel and necessaries, and, by gad, if any of them
68 all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged.

rafe comes up on to the stage

wife

69 I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of
70 reparel.—I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells
71 you true: he will act you sometimes at our house, that
72 all the neighbours cry out on him. He will fetch you
73 up a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as
74 feared, I warrant you, that we quake again. We'll fear

43 cony: rabbit (and term of endearment)
44 kill a . . . a pestle: the kind of romance satirised in The
45 Knight of the Burning Pestle often included battles with
46 wild animals. An apprentice in Thomas Heywood's The
47 Four Prentices of London (c. 1594) claims he killed a lion
48 shall I come up?: women rarely sat on the stage
49 Jane Shore: mistress of Edward IV who appears in
50 Heywood's Edward IV (1599)
51 The Bold Beauchamps: a lost play attributed to Heywood
52 beshrew me: 'the devil take me'
53 The Life and Death of Sir Thomas
54 Gresham, with the Building of the Royal Exchange, or
55 The Story of Queen Eleanor, with the Rearing of London
56 Bridge upon Woolsacks'?
our children with him: if they be never so unruly, do but cry, 'Rafe comes, Rafe comes,' to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs.—Hold up thy head, Rafe; show the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part; I warrant you the gentlemen will accept of it.

citizen Do, Rafe, do.

rafe By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the sea
Where never fathom-line touched any ground
And pluck up drowned honour from the lake of hell.

citizen How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you?

wife Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, Mucedorus before the wardens of our company.

citizen Ay, and he should have played Jeronimo with a shoemaker for a wager.

prologue He shall have a suit of apparel if he will go in.

citizen In, Rafe; in, Rafe; and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lov'st me.

exit rafe

wife I warrant our Rafe will look finely when he's dressed.

prologue But what will you have it called?

citizen The Grocers' Honour.

prologue Methinks The Knight of the Burning Pistle were better.

wife I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

citizen Let it be so. Begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

prologue I pray you, do.

citizen What stately music have you? You have shawms?

prologue Shawms? No.

citizen No? I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so. Rafe plays a stately part, and he must needs have shawms; I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

prologue So you are like to be.

citizen Why, and so I will be. There's two shillings; let's have the waites of Southwark. They are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

prologue You shall have them. Will you sit down then?

citizen Ay. Come, wife.

wife Sit you merry all, gentlemen. I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease.

prologue From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city-walls,
We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence
All private taxes, immodest phrases,
Whate'er may but show like vicious:
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things.
—Thus much for that we do; but for Rafe's part you must answer for yourself.

exit

citizen Take you no care for Rafe; he'll discharge himself, I warrant you.

wife I' faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Rafe.

Act I

Enter MERCHANT VENTUREWELL and JASPER, his prentice

merchant Sirrah, I'll make you know you are my prentice, And whom my charitable love redeemed Even from the fall of fortune; gave thee heat And growth to be what now thou art, new cast thee; Adding the trust of all I have at home, In foreign staples, or upon the sea, To thy direction; tied the good opinions Both of myself and friends to thy endeavours: So fair were thy beginnings. But with these,
As I remember, you had never charge
To love your master’s daughter, and even then
When I had found a wealthy husband for her.
I take it, sir, you had not; but, however,
I’ll break the neck of that commission
And make you know you are but a merchant’s factor.

Jasper  Sir, I do liberally confess I am yours,
Bound both by love and duty to your service,
In which my labour hath been all my profit.
I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted
To wear your honest gains upon my back,
Nor have I given a pension to my blood,
Or lavishly in play consumed your stock.
These, and the miseries that do attend them,
I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers
To all my temperate actions. For your daughter,
If there be any love to my deservings
Borne by her virtuous self, I cannot stop it;
Nor am I able to refrain her wishes.
She’s private to herself and best of knowledge
Whom she’ll make so happy as to sigh for.
Besides, I cannot think you mean to match her
Unto a fellow of so lame a presence,
One that hath little left of nature in him.

Merchant  ’Tis very well, sir. I can tell your wisdom
How all this shall be cured.

Jasper  Your care becomes you.

Merchant  And thus it must be, sir: I here discharge you
My house and service. Take your liberty,
And when I want a son I’ll send for you.

Jasper  These be the fair rewards of them that love.
Oh you that live in freedom, never prove
The travail of a mind led by desire!

Enter Lucæ

Lucæ  Why, how now, friend? Struck with my father’s
thunder?

Jasper  Struck, and struck dead, unless the remedy
Be full of speed and virtue. I am now

What I expected long, no more your father’s.

Lucæ  But mine.

Jasper  But yours, and only yours, I am;
That’s all I have to keep me from the statute.
You dare be constant still?

Lucæ  Oh, fear me not.

Jasper  In this I dare be better than a woman:
Nor shall his anger nor his offers move me,
Were they both equal to a prince’s power.

Lucæ  You know my rival?

Jasper  Yes, and love him dearly,
Even as I love an ague or foul weather;
I prithee, Jasper, fear him not.

Lucæ  Oh, no,
I do not mean to do him so much kindness.
But to our own desires: you know the plot
We both agreed on?

Lucæ  Yes, and will perform
My part exactly.

Jasper  I desire no more.

Lucæ  Farewell, and keep my heart; ’tis yours.

Jasper  I take it;

Lucæ  He must do miracles makes me forsake it. 

Exeunt

Merchant and Master Humphrey

Enter boy

I pray, my pretty youth, is Rafe ready?

Boy  He will be presently.

Wife  Now, I pray you, make my commendations unto
him, and withal carry him this stick of liquorice. Tell
him his mistress sent it him, and bid him bite a piece;
’twill open his pipes the better, say.

Exit boy

Enter Merchant and Master Humphrey

"The statute: a) that against rogues, vagabonds and
masterless men; b) that of 1562 which meant that
apprentices could not leave their masters’ parishes. Both
statutes were enforced by provision for imprisonment
better than a woman: women were thought to be
irredeemably ‘inconstant’
ague: fever (often the result of damp weather)
I prithee: ‘I pray you’
infidel: ‘George’s natural and class loyalty is to the
merchant’ (Kinney)
and: if
pretty: clever
stick of ... better, say: liquorice was used to loosen
phlegm and clear the throat; the Wife has a supply of
such remedies which are mocked throughout the play
FRANCIS BEAUMONT

MERCHANT Come, sir, she's yours; upon my faith, she's yours;
You have my hand. For other idle lets
Between your hopes and her, thus with a wind
They are scattered and no more. My wanton prentice,
That like a bladder blew himself with love,
I have let out, and sent him to discover
New masters yet unknown.

HUMPHREY I thank you, sir,
Indeed, I thank you, sir; and ere I stir
It shall be known, however you do deem,
I am of gentle blood and gentle seem.

MERCHANT Oh, sir, I know it certain.

HUMPHREY Sir, my friend,
Although, as writers say, all things have end,
And that we call a pudding hath his two,
Oh, let it not seem strange, I pray, to you,
If in this bloody simile I put
My love, more endless than frail things or gut.

WIFE Husband, I prithee, sweet lamb, tell me one thing, but tell me truly:—Stay youths, I beseech you,
till I question my husband.

CITIZEN What is it, mouse?

WIFE Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? How it behaves itself, I warrant ye, and speaks, and looks,
and perts up the head?—I pray you, with your favour, were you never none of Master Monkester's scholars?

CITIZEN Chicken, I prithee heartily, contain thyself; the childer are pretty childer; but when Rafe comes, lamb—

WIFE Ay, when Rafe comes, cony.—Well, my youth, you may proceed.

MERCHANT Well, sir, you know my love, and rest, I hope,
Assured of my consent. Get but my daughter's, And wed her when you please. You must be bold,
And clap in close unto her. Come, I know
You have language good enough to win a wench.

WIFE A whoreson tyrant! 'Tas been an old stringer in's days, I warrant him.

HUMPHREY Take your gentle offer, and withal
Yield love again for love reciprocal.

MERCHANT What, Luce! Within there!

Enter LUCE

LUCE Called you, sir?

MERCHANT I did.

Give entertainment to this gentleman
And see you be not froward.—To her, sir;
My presence will but be an eye-sore to you.

HUMPHREY Fair Mistress Luce, how do you do? Are you well?
Give me your hand, and then I pray you tell
How doth your little sister and your brother, And whether you love me or any other.

LUCE Sir, these are quickly answered.

HUMPHREY So they are,
Where women are not cruel. But how far
Is it now distant from this place we are in,
Unto that blessed place, your father's warren?

LUCE What makes you think of that, sir?

HUMPHREY Even that face;
For, stealing rabbits whilom in that place,
G O D Cupid, or the keeper, I know not whether,
Unto my cost and charges brought you thither,
And there began—

LUCE Your game, sir.

HUMPHREY Let no game
Or any thing that tendeth to the same,
Be evermore remembered, thou fair killer,
For whom I sat me down and brake my tiller.

WIFE There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you. When will you do as much for me, George?

LUCE Beshrew me, sir, I am sorry for your losses;
But as the proverb says, I cannot cry.
I would you had not seen me.

HUMPHREY So would I,
Unless you had more maw to do me good.

LUCE Why, cannot this strange passion be withstood?
Send for a constable and raise the town.

HUMPHREY Oh no, my valiant love will batter down
Millions of constables, and put to flight

76 lets: obstacles
78 wanton: promiscuous
79 bladder: inflatable animal's bladder (with obscene connotation)
84 gentle blood: some status
87 pudding: blood sausage
92 youths: the boy actors
94 mouse: term of endearment (as is 'chicken' and others)
95 prettier: more clever
97 perts: perks
98-9 Master Monkester: Richard Mulcaster was Master of St Paul's School from 1566 to 1608 and its boys' troupe played at the Whitefriar's Theatre
101 childer: children (dialect)
108 clap in close unto her: embrace
109 wench: a) young girl; b) prostitute
111 WIFE A whoreson tyrant! 'Tas been an old stringer in's days, I warrant him.
113 HUMPHREY I take your gentle offer, and withal
Yield love again for love reciprocal.
117 MERCHANT What, Luce! Within there!
119 Enter LUCE
120 LUCE Called you, sir?
123 MERCHANT I did.
126 Give entertainment to this gentleman
And see you be not froward.—To her, sir;
My presence will but be an eye-sore to you. Exit
130 HUMPHREY Fair Mistress Luce, how do you do? Are you well?
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For whom I sat me down and brake my tiller.

WIFE There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you. When will you do as much for me, George?

LUCE Beshrew me, sir, I am sorry for your losses;
But as the proverb says, I cannot cry.
I would you had not seen me.

HUMPHREY So would I,
Unless you had more maw to do me good.

LUCE Why, cannot this strange passion be withstood?
Send for a constable and raise the town.

HUMPHREY Oh no, my valiant love will batter down
Millions of constables, and put to flight
Even that great watch of Midsummer day at night.

LUCE Beshrow me, sir, 'twere good I yielded then;

Weak women cannot hope, where valiant men

Have no resistance.

HUMPHREY Yield then, I am full

Of pity, though I say it, and can pull

Out of my pocket, thus, a pair of gloves.

Look, Lucy, look: the dog's tooth nor the dove's

Are not so white as these, and sweet they be,

And whipped about with silk, as you may see.

If you desire the price, shoot from your eye

A beam to this place, and you shall espy

F. S., which is to say, my sweetest honey,

They cost me three and two pence, or no money.

LUCE Well, sir, I take them kindly, and I thank you.

What would you more?

HUMPHREY Nothing.

LUCE Why then, farewell.

HUMPHREY Not so, nor so; for, lady, I must tell,

Before we part, for what we met together;

God grant me time, and patience, and fair weather.

LUCE Speak, and declare your mind in terms so brief.

HUMPHREY I shall. Then, first and foremost, for relief

I call to you, if that you can afford it;

I care not at what price for, on my word, it

Shall be repaid again, although it cost me

More than I'll speak of now. For love hath tossed me

In furious blanket like a tennis-ball,

And now I rise aloft, and now I fall.

LUCE Alas, good gentleman, alas the day.

HUMPHREY I thank you heartily, and, as I say,

Thus do I still continue without rest,

I' th' morning like a man, at night a beast,

Roaring and bellowing mine own disquiet,

That much I fear, for asking of my diet

Will bring me presently to that quandary,

I shall bid all adieu.

LUCE Now, by Saint Mary,

HUMPHREY That were great pity.

LUCE That so it were, beshrow me.

Then ease me, lusty Luce, and pity show me.

LUCE Why, sir, you know my will is nothing worth

Without my father's grant; get his consent,

And then you may with assurance try me.

HUMPHREY The worshipful your sire will not deny me;

For I have asked him, and he hath replied,

'Sweet Master Humphrey, Luce shall be thy bride'.

LUCE Sweet Master Humphrey, then I am content.

HUMPHREY And so am I, in truth.

LUCE Yet take me with you;

There is another clause must be annexed,

And this it is: I swore and will perform it,

No man shall ever joy me as his wife

But he that stole me hence. If you dare venture,

I am yours—you need not fear, my father loves you—

If not, farewell for ever.

HUMPHREY Stay, nymph, stay;

I have a double gelding, coloured bay,

Sprung by his father from Barbarian kind;

Another for myself, though somewhat blind,

Yet true as trusty tree.

LUCE I am satisfied;

And so I give my hand. Our course must lie

Through Waltham Forest, where I have a friend

Will entertain us. So, farewell, Sir Humphrey,

And think upon your business. Exit Luce.

HUMPHREY Though I die,

I am resolved to venture life and limb

For one so young, so fair, so kind, so trim.

Exit Humphrey.

WIFE By my faith and troth, George, and, as I am

virtuous, it is e'en the kindest young man that ever

trod on shoe leather. Well, go thy ways; if thou hast

her not, 'tis not thy fault.

CITIZEN I prithee, mouse, be patient; 'a shall have her,

or I'll make some of 'em smoke for't.

WIFE That's my good lamb, George. Fie, this stinking

tobacco kills me, would there were none in

England.—Now I pray, gentlemen, what good does

this stinking tobacco do you? Nothing, I warrant you;

make chimneys o'your faces.—Oh, husband,

husband, now, now, there's Rafe, there's Rafe.
Enter Rafe like a grocer in’s shop, with two prentices Tim and George reading Palmerin of England

CITIZEN Peace, fool, let Rafe alone. Hark you Rafe; do not strain yourself too much at the first.—Peace!—

Begin, Rafe. 218

RAFE (reads) Then Palmerin and Trineus, snatching their lances from their dwarfs, and clapping their helmets, galloped amain after the giant; and Palmerin, having gotten a sight of him, came posting amain, saying: “Stay, traitorous thief, for thou mayst not so carry away her that is worth the greatest lord in the world”, and with these words gave him a blow on the shoulder, that he struck him besides his elephant; and Trineus, coming to the knight that had Agricola behind him, set him soon besides his horse, with his neck broken in the fall, so that the princess, getting out of the throng, between joy and grief said: “All happy knight, the mirror of all such as follow arms, now may I be well assured of the love thou bearest me”. I wonder why the kings do not raise an army of fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand men, as big as the army that the Prince of Portigo brought against Rosicleer, and destroy these giants; they do much hurt to wandering damsels that go in quest of their knights.

WIFE Faith, husband, and Rafe says true; for they say the King of Portugal cannot sit at his meat, but the giants and the ettins will come and snatch it from him.

CITIZEN Hold thy tongue.—On, Rafe.

RAFE And certainly those knights are much to be commended, who neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf through the deserts to relieve poor ladies.

WIFE Ay, by my faith, are they, Rafe; let ’em say what they will, they are indeed. Our knights neglect their possessions well enough, but they do not the rest. 250

RAFE There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age: they will call one ‘the son of a whore’, that Palmerin of England would have called ‘fair sir’, and one that Rosicleer would have called ‘right beauteous damsel’, they will call ‘damned bitch’.

WIFE I’ll be sworn will they, Rafe; they have called me so an hundred times about a scurvy pipe of tobacco.

RAFE But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop with a flappet of wood and a blue apron before him, selling mithridatum and dragon’s water to visited houses, that might pursue feats of arms, and through his noble achievements procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

CITIZEN Well said, Rafe, some more of those words, Rafe.

WIFE They go finely, by my troth.

RAFE Why should not I then pursue this course, both for the credit of myself and our company? For amongst all the worthy books of achievements I do not call to mind that I yet read of a grocer errant. I will be the said knight. Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice Tim shall be my trusty squire, and little George my dwarf. Hence my blue apron! Yet in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall be portrayed a burning pestle, and I will be called the Knight o’th’ Burning Pestle.

WIFE Nay, I dare swear thou wilt not forget thy old trade; thou wert ever meek.

RAFE Tim.

TIM Anon.

RAFE My beloved squire, and George my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name but the ‘Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle’, and that you never call any female by the name of a woman or wench, but ‘Fair Lady’, if she have her desires, if not, ‘Distressed Damsel’, that you call all forests and heaths ‘deserts’, and all horses ‘palfreys’.

WIFE This is very fine, faith. Do the gentlemen like

237–8 wandering damsels . . . their knights: a reversal of romantic convention

241 ettins: giants (from German)
Rafe, think you, husband?
citizen Ay, I warrant thee, the players would give all the shoes in their shop for him.
rafe My beloved squire Tim, stand out. Admit this were a desert, and over it a knight errant pricking, and I should bid you inquire of his intents, what would you say?
tim Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding?
rafe No, thus: ‘Fair sir, the Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle commanded me to inquire upon what adventure you are bound, whether to relieve some distressed damsels, or otherwise’.
citizen Whoreson blockhead cannot remember!
wife I’faith, and Rafe told him on’t before—all the gentlemen heard him.—Did he not, gentlemen? Did not Rafe tell him on’t?
george Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle here is a distressed damsel, to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper.
wife That’s a good boy. See, the little boy can hit it; by my troth, it’s a fine child.
rafe Relieve her with all courteous language. Now shut up shop; no more my prentice, but my trusty squire and dwarf. I must bespeak my shield and arming pestle.  

Exeunt tim and george
citizen Go thy ways, Rafe. As I’m a true man, thou art the best on’em all.  
wife Rafe, Rafe.  
rafe What say you, mistress?  
wife I prithee come again quickly, sweet Rafe.  
rafe By and by.  

Enter jasper and his mother, mistress merrythought
mistress merrythought Give thee my blessing? No, I’ll ne’er give thee my blessing, I’ll see thee hanged first; it shall ne’er be said I gave thee my blessing. Th’art thy father’s own son, of the right blood of the Merrythoughts. I may curse the time that e’er I knew thy father; he hath spent all his own, and mine too, and when I tell him of it, he laughs and dances, and sings, and cries, ‘A merry heart lives long-a’. And thou art a wastethrift, and art run away from thy master that loved thee well, and art come to me; and I have laid up a little for my younger son Michael, and thou think’st to bezzle that, but thou shalt never be able to do it.

Enter michael
—Come hither Michael, come, Michael, down on thy knees; thou shalt have my blessing.
michael I pray you, mother, pray to God to bless me.
mistress merrythought God bless thee; but Jasper shall never have my blessing. He shall be hanged first, shall he not, Michael? How say’st thou?  
michael Yes, forsooth, mother, and grace of God.
mistress merrythought That’s a good boy.
wife I’faith, it’s a fine spoken child.
jasper Mother, though you forget a parent’s love, I must preserve the duty of a child.
I ran not from my master, nor return To have your stock maintain my idleness.  
wife Ungracious child, I warrant him; hark how he chops logic with his mother!—Thou hadst best tell her she lies; do, tell her she lies.  
citizen If he were my son, I would hang him up by the heels, and flay him, and salt him, whoreson halter-sack!
jasper My coming only is to beg your love, Which I must ever, though I never gain it. And howsoever you esteem of me There is no drop of blood hid in these veins But I remember well belongs to you That brought me forth, and would be glad for you To rip them all again, and let it out.
mistress merrythought I’faith, I had sorrow enough for thee, God knows; but I’ll hamper thee well enough. Get thee in, thou vagabond, get thee in, and learn of thy brother Michael.  

Exeunt jasper and michael

...[Continues with scene and dialogue, not transcribed here].

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294 shoes in their shop: boys’ costumes were elaborate and costly
296 pricking: spurring on his horse
308 gentlemen: the other playgoers on the stage
318 arming: armorial
328 right: legitimate
333 ‘A merry heart lives long-a’: adapted from the song sung by Autolycus in Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale (1609), IV.iii.117–16; a similar line is sung by Silence in his 2 Henry IV (1597), V.iii.47
333 wastethrift: spendthrift

336 bezzle: squander (from embezzle)
344 forsooth: truly
350 stock: a) provisions; b) money
352 chops logic: formulates specious but cleverly conceived arguments
356 halter-sack: gallows bird
364–5 sorrow enough: in childbirth
366 hamper: a) basket for infants; b) prison fetters (as Jasper is a ‘masterless man’)
368–9 Nose, nose . . . red nose: refrain from Deuteronomia (1609) by Thomas Ravenscroft
371 hoiting: revelling, roistering
371 cark: carp, fret
and all little enough.—Husband, Charles, Charles Merrythought.

Enter old merrymirth

Old merrymirth

(Sings) Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves, And they gave me this jolly red nose.

Mistress merrymirth If you would consider your state, you would have little list to sing, ivis.

Old merrymirth It should never be considered while it were an estate, if I thought it would spoil my singing.

Mistress merrymirth But how wilt thou do, Charles? Thou art an old man, and thou canst not work, and thou hast not forty shillings left, and thou eatest good meat, and drinkest good drink, and laughest?

Old merrymirth And will do.

Mistress merrymirth But how wilt thou come by it, Charles?

Old merrymirth How? Why, how have I done hitherto this forty years? I never came into my dining room, but at eleven and six o'clock I found excellent meat and drink o' th' table; my clothes were never worn out, but next morning a tailor brought me a new suit; and without question it will be so ever. Use makes perfectness. If all should fail, it is but a little straining myself extraordinary, and laugh myself to death.

Wife It's a foolish old man this: is not he, George?

Citizen Yes, cony.

Wife Give me a penny 'tis your while I live, George.

Citizen Ay, by lady, cony, hold thee there.

Mistress merrymirth Well, Charles, you promised to provide for Jasper, and I have laid up for Michael. I pray you, pay Jasper his portion; he's come home, and he shall not consume Michael's stock. He says his master turned him away, but I promise you truly, I think he ran away.

Wife No indeed, Mistress Merrythought, though he be a notable gallows, yet I'll assure you his master did turn him away, even in this place; 'twas, if thou, within this half hour, about his daughter; my husband was by.

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Citizen Ay, by lady, cony, hold thee there.
THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

no longer with him, I warrant thee. (Exit Michael)
Truly, Charles, I'll begone too.
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT What! You will not?
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Yes, indeed will I.
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (Sings) Hey-ho, farewell, Nan,
I'll never trust wench more again, if I can.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT You shall not think, when
all your own is gone, to spend that I have been
scraping up for Michael.
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Farewell, good wife, I expect it
not; all I have to do in this world is to be merry,
which I shall, if the ground be not taken from me;
and if it be,
(Sings) When earth and seas from me are left,
The skies aloft for me are left.

FINIS ACTUS PRIMI

Interlude I

BOY danceth. Music

WIFE I'll be sworn he's a merry old gentleman for all
that. Hark, hark, husband, hark! Fiddles, fiddles! Now
surely they go finely. They say 'tis present death for
these fiddlers to tune their rebecks before the great
Turk's grace, 'tis not, George? But look, look, here's a
youth dances.—Now, good youth, do a turn o' th' toe.—Sweetheart, I faith, I'll have Rafe come and do
some of his gambols.—I thank you, kind youth; pray, bid Rafe come. I'll move the father for't.

CITIZEN Peace, cony.—Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the
players send Rafe, or by God's [ . . .] and they do not,
I'll tear some of their periwigs beside their heads: this
is all riff-raff.

Exit BOY

Act II

Enter MERCHANT and HUMPHREY

MERCHANT And how, faith, how goes it now, son
Humphrey?
HUMPHREY Right worshipful, and my beloved friend
And father dear, this matter's at an end.
MERCHANT 'Tis well—it should be so, I'm glad the girl
Is found so tractable.

HUMPHREY Nay, she must whirl
From hence (and you must wink; for so, I say,
The story tells) tomorrow before day.

WIFE George, dost thou think in thy conscience now
'twill be a match? Tell me but what thou think'st,
sweet rogue. Thou seest the poor gentleman, dear
heart, how it labours and throbs, I warrant you, to be
at rest. I'll go move the father for't.

MERCHANT How was it, son? You told me that

Before day break you must convey her hence?

HUMPHREY I must, I must, and thus it is agreed:
Your daughter rides upon a brown-bay steed,
I on a sorrel, which I bought of Brian,
The honest host of the Red Roaring Lion,
In Waltham situate. Then, if you may,
 Consent in seemly sort, lest by delay
The fatal sisters come and do the office,
And then you'll sing another song.

MERCHANT Alas,
Why should you be thus full of grief to me,
That do willing as yourself agree
To anything, so it be good and fair?
Then steal her when you will, if such a pleasure
Content you both; I'll sleep and never see it,
To make your joys more full. But tell me why
You may not here perform your marriage?

WIFE God's blessing o' thy soul, old man! I faith, thou

* * * * *

460 think: i.e. stop to think, but
467 reft: taken away
3 present: instant
4 rebecks: early fiddles
5 Turk's grace: some seventeenth-century travellers
reported that Sultans were feared for their impatience
8 gambols: leaping
8-9 wild mare: she means see-saw (proverbial for sexual
intercourse)
12 God's [ . . .]: the omitted word is probably 'body' (Christ's
body on the cross). Some eds note the Act to Restrain
the Abuses of the Players (1606) as an explanation for
this omission; compare Act II, l. 243
13 periwigs: wigs were frequently worn by actors in
performance

6 wink: turn a blind eye
15 shutting of an evening: dusk
16 knock't up: put an end to this
17 buss: kiss
18 wag: mischievous youth
24 sorrel: chestnut-coloured horse
25 host: publican
26 situate: located
28 fatal sisters: the Three Furies who control a man's life
30 full of grief to me: 'complain about me'
citizen If I could but see Rafe again, I were as merry
as mine host, i'faith.

HUMPHREY The cause you seem to ask, I thus declare
(Help me, oh Muses nine): your daughter swore
A foolish oath, the more it was the pity;
Yet none but myself within this city
Shall dare to say so, but a bold defiance
Shall meet him, were he of the noble science.
And yet she swear, and yet why did she swear?
Truly, I cannot tell, unless it were
For her own ease, for sure sometimes an oath,
Being sworn, thereafter is like cordial broth.
And this it was she swore: never to marry
But such a one whose mighty arm could carry
(As meaning me, for I am such a one)
Her bodily away through stick and stone,
Till both of us arrive, at her request,
Some ten miles off, in the wild Waltham Forest.

MERCHANT If this be all, you shall not need to fear
Any denial in your love. Proceed;
I'll neither follow nor repent the deed.

HUMPHREY Good night, twenty good nights, and
twenty more.
And twenty more good nights—that makes
threesome.

Exeunt

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT with jewel casket and
purse of money, and her son MICHAEL.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Come Michael, art thou
not weary, boy?
MICHAEL No, forsooth, mother, not I.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Where be we now, child?
MICHAEL Indeed, forsooth, mother, I cannot tell,
unless we be at Mile End. Is not all the world Mile
End, mother?
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT No, Michael, not all the
world, boy; but I can assure thee, Michael, Mile End
is a goodly matter; there has been a pitch-field, my
child, between the naughty Spaniels and the English
men; and the Spaniels ran away, Michael, and the
English men followed. My neighbour Coxstone was
there, boy, and killed them all with a birding piece.

MICHAEL Mother, forsooth—

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT What says my white boy?

MICHAEL Shall not my father go with us too?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT No, Michael, let thy father
go snick up; he shall never come between a pair of
sheets with me again while he lives. Let him stay at
home and sing for his supper, boy. Come, child, sit
down, and I'll show my boy fine knacks indeed. Look
here, Michael, here's a ring, and here's a brooch, and
here's a bracelet, and here's two rings more, and
here's money and gold by th'eye, my boy.

MICHAEL Shall I have all this, mother?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Ay, Michael, thou shalt
have all, Michael.

citizen How lik'st thou this, wench?

WIFE I cannot tell; I would have Rafe, George; I'll see
no more else, indeed la, and I pray you let the youths
understand so much by word of mouth; for I tell you
truly, I'm afraid o' my boy. Come, come, George,
let's be merry and wise. The child's a fatherless child;
and say they should put him into a strait pair of
gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass: he would never
grow after it.

Enter RAFE, TIM AS SQUIRE, and GEORGE AS DWARF

Citizen Here's Rafe, here's Rafe.

Wife How do you, Rafe? You are welcome Rafe, as I
may say; it's a good boy, hold up thy head, and be not
afraid; we are thy friends, Rafe; the gentlemen will
Praise thee, Rafe, if thou play'st thy part with
audacity. Begin, Rafe, o'God's name.

Rafe My trusty squire, unlace my helm; give me my
hat. Where are we, or what desert may this be?
GEORGE Mirror of knighthood, this is, as I take it, the perilous Waltham Down, in whose bottom stands the enchanted valley.

MISTRESS MERRITHOUGHT Oh Michael, we are betrayed, we are betrayed! Here be giants! Fly, boy; fly, boy; fly!

Exeunt MOTHER and MICHAEL, dropping purse and casket

RAFE Lace on my helm again. What noise is this? A gentle lady flying the embrace Of some uncourteous knight, I will relieve her. Go, squire, and say, the knight that wears this pestle In honour of all ladies, swears revenge Upon that recreant coward that pursues her. Go comfort her, and that same gentle squire That bears her company.

TIM I go brave knight. Exit

RAFE My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield, And hold it while I swear. First by my knighthood; Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul, My famous ancestor; then by my sword The beautiful Brionella girt about me; By this bright burning pestle, of mine honour The living trophy; and by all respect Due to distressed damsels: here I vow Never to end the quest of this fair lady And that forsaken squire, till by my valour I gain their liberty.

GEORGE Heaven bless the knight That thus relieves poor errant gentlewomen. Exeunt

WIFE Ay, marry, Rafe, this has some savour in't.— I would see the proudest of them all offer to carry his books after him. But, George, I will not have him go away so soon—I shall be sick if he go away, that I shall. Call Rafe again, George, call Rafe again; I prithee, sweetheart, let him come fight before me, and let's ha' some drums and some trumpets, and let him kill all that comes near him, and thou lov'st me, George.

CITIZEN Peace a little, bird; he shall kill them all, and they were twenty more on 'em than there are.

Enter JASPER

JASPER Now, Fortune, if thou be'st not only ill,

Show me thy better face, and bring about Thy desperate wheel, that I may climb at length And stand. This is our place of meeting If love have any constancy. Oh age, Where only wealthy men are counted happy! How shall I please thee, how deserve thy smiles, When I am only rich in misery? My father's blessing, and this little coin Is my inheritance, a strong revenue From earth thou art, and to earth I give thee.

 Casts the money away

There grow and multiply, whilst fresher air Breeds me a fresher fortune.—How, illusion? Spies the casket

What, hath the devil coined himself before me? Tis metal good, it rings well; I am walking, And taking too, I hope. Now God's dear blessing Upon his heart that left it here. Tis mine; These pearls, I take it, were not left for swine. Exit

WIFE I do not like that this unthrifty youth should embezzle away the money; the poor gentlewoman his mother will have a heavy heart for it, God knows.

CITIZEN And reason good, sweetheart.

RAFE But let him go. I'll tell Rafe a tale in's ear shall fetch him again with a wanion, I warrant him, if he be above ground; and besides, George, here are a number of sufficient gentlemen can witness, and myself, and yourself, and the musicians, if we be called in question. But here comes Rafe, George; thou shalt hear him speak, an he were an emperial.

Enter RAFE and GEORGE as DWARF

RAFE Comes not Sir Squire again?

GEORGE Right courteous knight, Your squire doth come and with him comes the lady,

Enter MISTRESS MERRITHOUGHT and MICHAEL and TIM as SQUIRE

For and the Squire of Damsels, as I take it.

112 George: from this point Q7 substitutes the speech prefix Dwarfe for George
113 recreant: a) dishonourable; b) traitorous
118 Amadis de Gaul: a Spanish knight, hero of a romance named after him (translated by Anthony Munday in parts from 1590 to 1618)
130 Brionella: mistress of Palmerin's friend, Ptolome girt: fastened
139-40 carry his books: 'follow like a lowly pedant' (Hattaway)
149-52 Fortune, if . . . And stand: Jasper wants the wheel of Fortune (governing his fate) to raise rather than lower him (thus showing its happier face)

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RAFE Madam, if any service or devoir
Of a poor errant knight may right your wrongs,
Command it; I am prest to give you succour,
For to the holy end I bear my armour.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Alas sir, I am a poor gentlewoman, and I have lost my money in this forest.

RAFE Desert, you would say, lady, and not lost
Whilst I have sword and lance. Dry up your tears
Which ill befit the beauty of that face,
And tell the story, if I may request it,
Of your disastrous fortune.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Out, alas! I left a thousand pound, a thousand pound, e’en all the money I had laid up for this youth, upon the sight of your mastership; you looked so grim, and, as I may say it, saving your presence, more like a giant than a mortal man.

RAFE I am as you are, lady; so are they
All mortal. But why weeps this gentle squire?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Has he not cause to weep, do you think, when he hath lost his inheritance?

RAFE Young hope of valour, weep not; I am here
That will confound thy foe and pay it dear
Upon his coward head, that dares deny
Distressed squires and ladies equity.
I have but one horse, on which shall ride
This lady fair behind me, and before
This courteous squire; fortune will give us more
Upon our next adventure. Fairly speed
Beside us, squire and dwarf, to do us need.  

CITIZEN Did not I tell you, Nell, what your man would do? By the faith of my body, wench, for clean action and good delivery they may all cast their caps at him.

WIFE And so they may, I’faith, for I dare speak it boldly, the twelve companies of London cannot match him, timber for timber. Well, George, and he be not inveigled by some of these paltry players, I ha’ much marvel; but, George, we ha’ done our parts if the boy have any grace to be thankful.

CITIZEN Yes, I warrant thee, duckling.

Enter Humphrey and Luce

HUMPHREY Good Mistress Luce, however I in fault am
For your lame horse, you’re welcome unto Waltham.
But which way now to go or what to say
I know not truly till it be broad day.

Luce Oh fear not, Master Humphrey, I am guide
For this place good enough.

HUMPHREY Then up and ride,
Or, if it please you, walk for your repose,
Or sit, or if you will, go pluck a rose;
Either of which shall be indifferent
To your good friend and Humphrey, whose consent
Is so entangled ever to your will,
As the poor harmless horse is to the mill.

Luce Faith, and you say the word, we’ll e’en sit down
And take a nap.

HUMPHREY ’Tis better in the town,
Where we may nap together; for, believe me,
To sleep without a snatch would mickle grieve me.

Luce You’re merry, Master Humphrey.

HUMPHREY So I am,
And have been ever merry from my dam.

Luce Your nurse had the less labour.

HUMPHREY Faith, it may be,
Unless it were by chance I did beray me.

Enter Jasper

JASPER Luce, dear friend Luce!
Luce Here, Jasper.
JASPER You are mine.

HUMPHREY If it be so, my friend, you use me fine;
What do you think I am?

JASPER An arrant noddy.

HUMPHREY A word of obloquy! Now, by God’s body,
I’ll tell thy master, for I know thee well.

JASPER Nay, and you be so forward for to tell,
Take that, and that, and tell him, sir, I gave it,
Beats him

And say I paid you well.

HUMPHREY Oh, sir, I have it,
And do confess the payment. Pray be quiet.

JASPER Go, get to your night-cap and the diet

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181  devoir: duty (in chivalric terms)
183  prest: prepared, from préparé (French)
185–7 I am . . . this forest: see Palmerin d’Olivia: ‘Palmerin and Ptoleme met with a Damsel, who made great moan for a casket which two knights had forcibly taken from her’ (1.2)
200  All: wholly
206  equity: justice
213  clean: adroit
214  cast their caps at: give up trying to imitate
216  twelve companies: see Induction, I. 141
217  timber for timber: like for like
218  inveigled: boys were sometime kidnapped as possible actors

229  pluck a rose: a) urinate (most eds); b) euphemism for defecate (Wine)
235  nap: a) sleep; b) drink
237  snatch: snack
238  mickle: much (northern English and still used in Scotland)
239  dam: mother
241  beray: befoul myself
244  arrant noddy: itinerant fool (or simpleton)
245  God’s body: see Interlude I, l. 12n
246  health
248  quiet: at peace
250  confess: acknowledge

THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

To cure your beaten bones.

LUCE

Alas, poor Humphrey,
Get thee some wholesome broth with sage and comfrey;
A little oil of roses and a feather
To 'noint thy back withal.

HUMPHREY

When I came hither,
Would I had gone to Paris with John Dory.

LUCE

Farewell, my pretty Nump; I am very sorry
I cannot bear thee company.

HUMPHREY

Farewell;
The devil's dam was ne'er so banged in hell.

Exit LUCE and JASPER. Manet HUMPHREY

WIFE

This young Jasper will prove me another thing,
O'my conscience, and he may be suffered. George,
dost not see, George, how 'a swaggers, and flies at the
to keep/The passage: guard the entrance to the castle

320

Enter a BOY

CITIZEN No, no, you talk like a foolish woman. I'll ha'
Rafe fight with him, and swinge him up well-

RAFE

What knight is that, squire? Ask him if he keep
The passage, bound by love of lady fair,
Or else but prickant.

HUMPHREY

Sir, I am no knight,
But a poor gentleman, that this same night
Had stolen from me on yonder green
My lovely wife, and suffered (to be seen
Yet extant on my shoulders) such a greeting
That whilst I live I shall think of that meeting.

WIFE

Ay, Rafe, he beat him unmercifully, Rafe; and
thou sparst him, Rafe, I would thou wert hanged.

CITIZEN

No more, wife, no more.

RAFE

Where is the caitiff wretch hath done this deed?
Lady, your pardon, that I may proceed
Upon the quest of this injurious knight.
And thou, fair squire, repute me not the worse,
In leaving the great venture of the purse
And the rich casket till some better leisure.

Enter JASPER and LUCE

Here comes the broker hath purloined my treasure.

RAFE

Go, squire, and tell him I am here,
An errant knight at arms, to crave delivery
Of that fair lady to her own knight's arms.
If he deny, bid him take choice of ground,
And so defy him.

TIM

From the knight that bears
The golden pestle, I defy thee, knight,
Unless thou make fair restitution
Of that bright lady.

JASPER

Tell the knight that sent thee
He is an ass, and I will keep the wenche
And knock his head-piece.

RAFE

Knight, thou art but dead,
FRANCIS BEAUMONT

If thou recall not thy uncourteous terms, wife
Break’s pate, Rafe; break’s pate, Rafe, soundly. 320
jasper Come, knight, I am ready for you. Now your
pestle
Shall try what temper, sir, your mortar’s of. (Recites) ‘With that he stood upright in his stirrups, and
gave the Knight of the Calf-skin such a knock (Knocks Rafe down) that he forsook his horse and
down he fell; and then he leaped upon him, and
plucking off his helmet—’
humphrey Nay, and my noble knight be done so
soon,
Though I can scarcely go, I needs must run. 

Execute HUMPHREY and RAFE
wife Run, Rafe; run, Rafe; run thy life, boy; Jasper
comes, Jasper comes. 331
jasper Come, Luce, we must have other arms for you;
Humphrey and Golden Pestle, both adieu. Execute
wife Sure the devil, God bless us, is in this springald.
Why, George, didst ever see such a fire-drake? I am
afraid my boy’s miscarried; if he be, though he were
Master Merrymouth’s son a thousand times, if there
be any law in England, I’ll make some of them smart
for’t.
citizen No, no, I have found out the matter,
sweetheart: Jasper is enchanted; as sure as we are here,
he is enchanted. He could no more have stood in
Rafe’s hands than I can stand in my Lord Mayor’s. I’ll
have a ring to discover all enchantments, and Rafe
shall beat him yet. Be no more vexed, for it shall be so.
Enter RAFE, TIM AS SQUIRE, GEORGE AS DWARF,
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL
wife Oh, husband, here’s Rafe again. — Stay, Rafe, let
me speak with thee. How dost thou, Rafe? Art thou
not shroadly hurt? The foul great lungies laid
unmercifully on thee; there’s some sugar-candy for
thee. Proceed, thou shalt have another bout with him.
citizen If Rafe had him at the fencing-school, he should ne’er come in my shop more.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Truly, Master Knight of
the Burning Pestle, I am weary. 355

MICHAEL Indeed la, mother, and I am very hungry.
RAFE Take comfort, gentle dame, and you, fair squire,
For in this desert there must needs be placed
Many strong castles held by courteous knights;
And till I bring you safe to one of those,
I swear by this my order ne’er to leave you.
wife Well said, Rafe. — George, Rafe was ever
comfortable, was he not?
citizen Yes, duck.
wife I shall ne’er forget him, when we had lost our
child (you know it was strayed almost, alone, to
Puddle Wharf, and the criers were abroad for it, and
there it had drowned itself but for a sculler), Rafe was
the most comfortest to me: ‘Peace, mistress’, says
he, ‘let it go; I’ll get you another as good’. Did he not,
George, did he not say so?
citizen Yes indeed did he, mouse.
GEORGE I would we had a mess of pottage and a pot of
drink, squire, and were going to bed.
tim Why, we are at Waltham town’s end, and that’s
the Bell Inn.
GEORGE Take courage, valiant knight, damsel, and
squire;
I have discovered, not a stone’s cast off,
An ancient castle held by the old knight
Of the most holy order of the Bell,
Who gives to all knights errant entertain.
There plenty is of food, and all prepared
By the white hands of his own lady dear.
He hath three squires that welcome all his guests:
The first hight Chamberlino, who will see
Our beds prepared, and bring us snowy sheets,
Where never footman stretched his buttered hams;
The second hight Tapstero, who will see
Our pots full filled and no froth therein;
The third, a gentle squire, Otero hight
Who will our palfreys slick with wisps of straw,
And in the manger put them oats enough,

361 my order: i.e. of knighthood
362 comfortable: helpful
367 Puddle Wharf: Thames landing place at the foot of
St Andrew’s Hill (now Puddle Dock, near Blackfriars
Bridge)
criers were abroad for it: one responsibility of town criers
was to help find lost children
368 sculler: either an oarsman or a light river boat
370 get: play on ‘beget’
373 mess of pottage: stew of boiled vegetables (and
sometimes meat)
378 I have discovered: the episode that begins here, where an
inn is mistaken for a castle, is taken from Book I of Don
Quixote
385 hight: called (archaic)
387 Where never . . . buttered hams: footmen ran with their
masters’ carriages and greased their calves to prevent cramp
391 slick: make sleek
And never grease their teeth with candle-snuff.

WIFE That same dwarf's a pretty boy, but the squire's a groutnoll.

RAFE Knock at the gates, my squire, with stately lance.

Enter Tapster

TAPSTER Who's there?—You're welcome, gentlemen; will you see a room?

GEORGE Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, this is the Squire Tapstero.

RAFE Fair Squire Tapstero, I, a wandering knight of the Burning Pestle, in the quest Of this fair lady's casket and wroth purse Losing myself in this vast wilderness, Am to this castle well by fortune brought; Where, hearing of the goodly entertain Your knight of holy order of the Bell Gives to all damsels and all errant knights, I thought to knock, and now am bold to enter.

TAPSTER Ain't please you see a chamber, you are very welcome.

WIFE George, I would have something done, and I cannot tell what it is.

CITIZEN What is it, Nell?

WIFE Why, George, shall Rafe beat nobody again? Prithhee, sweetheart, let him.

CITIZEN So he shall, Nell; and if I join with him, we'll knock them all.

Enter Humphrey and Merchant

WIFE Oh, George, here's Master Humphrey again now, that lost Mistress Luce, and Mistress Luce's father. Master Humphrey will do somebody's errand, I warrant him.

HUMPHREY Father, it's true in arms I ne'er shall clasp her, for she is stol'n away by your man Jasper.

WIFE I thought he would tell him.

MERCHANT Unhappy that I am to lose my child! Now I begin to think on Jasper's words, Who oft hath urged to me thy foolishness. Why didst thou let her go? Thou lov'st her not, That wouldst bring home thy life, and not bring her.

HUMPHREY Father, forgive me. Shall I tell you true? Look on my shoulders, they are black and blue. Whilst to and fro fair Luce and I were winding, He came and basted me with a hedge-binding.

MERCHANT Get men and horses straight; we will be there Within this hour. You know the place again? HUMPHREY I know the place where he my loins did swaddle. I'll get six horses, and to each a saddle.

MERCHANT Meantime I'll go talk with Jasper's father.

Exit

WIFE George, what wilt thou lay with me now, that Master Humphrey has not Mistress Luce yet? Speak, George, what wilt thou lay with me?

CITIZEN No; Nell, I warrant thee Jasper is at Puckeridge with her by this.

WIFE Nay, George, you must consider Mistress Luce's feet are tender, and, besides, 'tis dark; and I promise you truly, I do not see how he should get out of Waltham Forest with her yet.

CITIZEN Nay, cony, what wilt thou lay with me that Rafe has her not yet?

WIFE I will not lay against Rafe, honey, because I have not spoken with him. But look, George, peace; here comes the merry old gentleman again.

Enter Old Merrythought

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) When it was grown to dark midnight,
And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet.

I have money and meat and drink beforehand till tomorrow at noon; why should I be sad? Methinks I have half a dozen jovial spirits within me (sings) I am threes merry men, and threes merry men. To what end should any man be sad in this world? Give me a man that when he goes to hanging cries (sings) Troll the black bowl to me! and a woman that will sing a catch in her travail. I have seen a man come by my door with a...
serious face, in a black cloak, without a hat-band, carrying his head as if he looked for pins in the street; I have looked out of my window half a year after, and have spied that man’s head upon London Bridge. Tis vile. Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work: his mind is of nothing but filching.

wife Mark this, George, ’tis worth noting; Godfrey my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown; and I’ll be sworn Mistress Pennistone the draper’s wife had one made with twelve.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT
(Sings) ’Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,
More than wine, or sleep, or food;
Let each man keep his heart at ease,
No man dies of that disease.

He that would his body keep
From diseases, must not weep;
But whoever laughs and sings,
Never he his body brings
Into fevers, gouts or rheums,
Or lingeringly his lungs consumes,
Or meets with aches in the bone,
Or catarrhs, or griping stone,
But contented lives for aye;
The more he laughs, the more he may.

wife Look, George, how say’st thou by this, George? Is’t not a fine old man?—Now God’s blessing o’thi sweet lips.—When wilt thou be so merry, Geoge? Faith, thou art the frowning’st little thing, when thou art angry, in a country.

Enter MERCHANT

CITIZEN Peace, cony, thou shalt see him taken down too, I warrant thee. Here’s Luce’s father come now.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT
(Sings) As you came from Walsingham
From that holy land,
There met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?

MERCHANT Oh, Master Merrythought, my daughter’s gone!

This mirth becomes you not, my daughter’s gone.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT
(Sings) Why, an if she be, what care I?
Or let her come, or go, or tarry.

MERCHANT Mock not my misery; it is your son
Whom I have made my own, when all forsook him,
Has stol’n my only joy, my child, away.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT
(Sings) He set her on a milk-white steed,
And himself upon a grey,
He never turned his face again,
But he bore her quite away.

MERCHANT Unworthy of the kindness I have shown
To thee and thine! Too late I well perceive
Thou art consenting to my daughter’s loss.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Your daughter! What a stir’s here wi’ yer daughter? Let her go, think no more on her, but sing loud. If both my sons were on the gallows, I would sing,

(Sings) Down, down, down they fall,
Down, and arise they never shall.

MERCHANT Oh, might I behold her once again,
And she once more embrace her aged sire.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Fie, how scurvily this goes. ‘And she once more embrace her aged sire? You’ll make a dog on her will ye? She cares much for her aged sire, I warrant you.

(Sings) She cares not for her daddy, nor
She cares not for her mammy;
For she is, she is, she is, she is
My Lord of Lawgave’s lassy.

MERCHANT For this thy scorn, I will pursue that son
Of thine to death.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Do, and when you ha’ killed him,

(Sings) Give him flowers enow, palmer, give him flowers enow,
Give him red, and white, and blue, green, and yellow.

MERCHANT I’ll fetch my daughter.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT I’ll hear no more o’ your daughter; it spoils my mirth.

MERCHANT I say, I’ll fetch my daughter.

466–7 without a hat-band: sign of a Puritan
469–70 head upon London Bridge: after execution the heads of traitors were displayed on London Bridge as a warning to others; see Edward II, 1.1.18
471 filching: stealing
473 my tailor: tailors were believed to be dishonest fourteen yards: see The Roaring Girl, II.ii.90
487 aches: pronounced ‘aitches’
488 catarrhs: inflammation of the nose and throat griping stone: painful gallstone
498–501 As you . . . you came?: a popular ballad about a village in Norfolk that was, until 1538, a major Roman Catholic shrine to the Virgin Mary

504–5 Why, an . . . or tarry: from ‘Farewell, Dear Love’, a popular song that appears in Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night (1601–2), II.iii.91
509–12 He set . . . white steed: corresponds to a verse in ‘The Ballad of the Knight and the Shepherd’s Daughter’ Down, down . . . never shall: from ‘Sorrow’s Story’ in John Dowland’s Second Book of Songs and Airs (1600)
525–6 make a dog on her: Venturewell has called himself Luce’s sire

536 enow: enough
palmer: pilgrim
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT
(Sings)  Was never man for lady's sake,
Down, down,
Tormented as I, poor Sir Guy,
De derry down,
For Lucy's sake, that lady bright,
Down, down,
As ever men beheld with eye,
De derry down.

MERCHAND I'll be revenged, by heaven.  

FINIS ACTUS SECUNDI

Interlude II

Music

WIFE How dost thou like this, George?
CITIZEN Why, this is well, cony; but if Rafe were hot once, thou shouldst see more.
WIFE The fiddlers go again, husband.
CITIZEN Ay, Nell, but this is scurvy music. I gave the whoreson gallows money, and I think he has not got me the waists of Southwark. If I hear 'em not anon, I'll twinge him by the ears.—You musicians, play 'Baloo'.
WIFE No, good George, let's ha' 'Lachrimae'.
CITIZEN Why, this is it, cony.
WIFE It's all the better, George. Now, sweet lamb, what story is that painted upon the cloth? The Confutation of Saint Paul?
CITIZEN No, lamb, that's Rafe and Lucrece.
WIFE Rafe and Lucrece? Which Rafe? Our Rafe?
CITIZEN No, mouse, that was a Tartarian.
WIFE A Tartarian! Well, I would the fiddlers had done, that we might see our Rafe again.

Act III

Enter JASPER and LUCE

JASPER Come, my dear deer, though we have lost our way, We have not lost ourselves. Are you not weary With this night's wandering, broken from your rest, And frightened with the terror that attends The darkness of this wild unpeopled place?
LUCE No, my best friend, I cannot either fear Or entertain a weary thought, whilst you (The end of all my full desires) stand by me. Let them that lose their hopes, and live to languish Amongst the number of forsaken lovers, Tell the long weary steps, and number time, Start at a shadow, and shrink up their blood, Whilst I (possessed with all content and quiet) Thus take my pretty love, and thus embrace him.
JASPER You have caught me, Luce, so fast, that whilst I live I shall become your faithful prisoner, And wear these chains for ever. Come, sit down And rest your body, too, too delicate For these disturbances. So, will you sleep? I know you are not skilful in these watches, I cannot sleep, Indeed I cannot, friend.
JASPER Why, then we'll sing, And try how that will work upon our senses.
LUCE I'll sing, or say, or anything but sleep.
JASPER Come, little mermaid, rob me of my heart With that enchanting voice.
LUCE You mock me, Jasper.

SONG

JASPER Tell me, dearest, what is love?
LUCE 'Tis a lightning from above, 'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire, 'Tis a boy they call Desire, 'Tis a smile Dath beguile
Jasper
The poor hearts of men that prove.
Tell me more, are women true?
Luce
Some love change, and so do you.
Jasper
Are they fair, and never kind?
Luce
Yes, when men turn with the wind.
Jasper
Are they forward?
Luce
Ezer toward; those that love to love anew.

Jasper Dissemble it no more; I see the god
Of heavy sleep lay on his heavy mace
Upon your eyelids.
Luce
I am very heavy. She falls asleep
Jasper
Sleep, sleep, and quiet rest crown thy sweet
thoughts.
Keep from her fair blood distempers; startings,
Horrors, and fearful shapes; let all her dreams
Be joys, and chaste delights, embraces, wishes,
And such new pleasures as the ravished soul
Gives to the senses. So, my charms have took.
Keep her, you powers divine, whilst I contemplate
Upon the wealth and beauty of her mind.
She is only fair and constant, only kind,
And only to thee, Jasper. Oh my joys,
Whither will you transport me? Let not fullness
Of my poor buried hopes come up together
And overcharge my spirits. I am weak.
Some say (however ill) the sea and women
Are governed by the moon: both ebb and flow,
Both full of changes. Yet to them that know
And truly judge, these but opinions are,
And heresies to bring on pleasing war
Between our tempers, that without these were
Both void of after-love, and present fear,
Which are the best of Cupid. Oh thou child
Bred from despair, I dare not entertain thee,
Having a love without the faults of women,
And greater in her perfect goods than men;
Which to make good, and please myself the stronger,
Though certainly I am certain of her love,
I'll try her, that the world and memory
May sing to aftertimes her constancy.
He draws his sword
Luce, Luce, awake.
Luce
Why do you fright me, friend,
With those distempered looks? What makes your
sword
Drawn in your hand? Who hath offended you?
I prithee, Jasper, sleep; thou art wild with watching.
Jasper Come, make your way to heaven, and bid the
world
(With all the villainies that stick upon it)
Farewell; you're for another life.
Luce
Oh Jasper,
How have my tender years committed evil
(Especially against the man I love)
Thus to be cropped untimely?
Jasper
Foolish girl,
Canst thou imagine I could love his daughter,
That flung me from my fortune into nothing,
Discharged me his service, shut the doors
Upon my poverty, and scorned my prayers,
Sending me, like a boat without a mast,
To sink or swim? Come, by this hand you die;
I must have life and blood to satisfy
Your father's wrongs.

Wife Away, George, away; raise the watch at Ludgate,
And bring a mittimus from the justice for this
desperate villain.—Now I charge you, gentlemen, see
the king's peace kept.—Oh, my heart, what a varlet's
this to offer manslaughter upon the harmless
gentlewoman!

Citizen I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him
hampered.

Luce
Oh, Jasper, be not cruel;
If thou wilt kill me, smile and do it quickly,
And let not many deaths appear before me.
I am a woman made of fear and love,
A weak, weak woman; kill not with thy eyes,
They shoot me through and through. Strike, I am ready;
And, dying, still I love thee.

Enter Merchant, Humphrey, and his men

Merchant Whereabouts?

Jasper (Aside) No more of this, now to myself again.

Humphrey There, there he stands with sword, like
martial knight,
Drawn in his hand; therefore beware the fight,
THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

You that be wise; for, were I good Sir Bevis,
I would not stay his coming, by your leaves.

MERCHANT Sirrah, restore my daughter.

JASPER Sirrah, no.

MERCHANT Upon him, then.

WIFE So, down with him, down with him! Cut him i’th’ leg, boys, cut him i’th’ leg!

MERCHANT Come your ways, minion. I'll provide a cage
For you, you're grown so tame.—Horse her away.

HUMPHREY Truly I'm glad your forces have the day.

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, RAFE, MICHAEL, TIM as SQUIRE, GEORGE as DWARF, HOST and a TAPSTER

WIFE Oh, Rafe, how dost thou, Rafe? How hast thou slept tonight? Has the knight used thee well?

CITIZEN Peace, Nell; let Rafe alone.

TAPSTER Master, the reckoning is not paid.

RAFE Right courteous knight, who, for the order’s sake
Which thou hast ta’en, hang’st out the holy bell,
As I this flaming pestle bear about,
We render thanks to your puissant self,
Your beauteous lady, and your gentle squires,

For thus refreshing of our wearied limbs,
Stiffened with hard achievements in wild desert.

TAPSTER Sir, there is twelve shillings to pay.

RAFE Thou merry squire Tapstero, thanks to thee
For comforting our souls with double jug;
And if adventrous fortune prick thee forth,
Thou jovial squire, to follow feats of arms,
Take heed thou tender every lady’s cause,
Every true knight, and every damsel fair;
But spill the blood of treacherous Saracens
And false enchanters that with magic spells
Have done to death full many a noble knight.

HOST Thou valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, give ear to me: there is twelve shillings to pay, and as I am a true knight, I will not bate a penny.

WIFE George, I pray thee tell me, must Rafe pay twelve shillings now?

CITIZEN No, Nell, no; nothing but the old knight is merry with Rafe.

WIFE Oh, is't nothing else? Rafe will be as merry as he.

RAFE Sir knight, this mirth of yours becomes you well;
But to requite this liberal courtesy,
If any of your squires will follow arms,
He shall receive from my heroic hand
A knighthood, by the virtue of this pestle.

HOST Fair knight, I thank you for your noble offer;
Therefore, gentle knight,
Twelve shillings you must pay, or I must cap you.

WIFE Look, George, did not I tell thee as much; the Knight of the Bell is in earnest. Rafe shall not be beholding to him—give him his money, George, and let him go snick up.

CITIZEN Cap Rafe? No.—Hold your hand, Sir Knight of the Bell; there's your money. Have you anything to say to Rafe now? Cap Rafe!

WIFE I would you should know it, Rafe has friends that will not suffer him to be capped for ten times so much, and ten times to the end of that.—Now take thy course, Rafe.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Come, Michael, thou and I will go home to thy father; he hath enough left to

110 Sir Bevis: the hero of the famous medieval romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton
111 stay: wait for
116 minion: 'hussy'
125 deign: condescend
128 tonight: i.e. last night
143 the reckoning: the bill for food, drink and accommodation at an inn
147 puissant: powerful, noble
150 twelve shillings: a modest amount for the services received
153 double jug: strong ale
154 advent'rous: hazardous
160 pricking thee forth: spur you on
164 tender: care for
158 Saracens: a loosely applied term; the 'enemies of the Crusaders, Moors who are the enemy of Don Quixote and, by extension, villains in the romances' (Kinney)
159 false enchanters: those whom Don Quixote believed could turn inns into castles
163 bate: deduct
176 cap: seize, arrest
179 beholding: indebted
Faith, and those chilblains are a foul trouble.

Mistress Merrythought, when your youth comes home, let him rub all the soles of his feet and the heels and his ankles with a mouse skin—or, if none of your people can catch a mouse, when he goes to bed let him roll his feet in the warm embers, and I warrant you he shall be well; and you may make him put his fingers between his toes and smell to them; it’s very sovereign for his head if he be costive.

Mistress Merrythought Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, my son Michael and I bid you farewell; I thank your worship heartily for your kindness.

Rafe Farewell, fair lady, and your tender squire.

If, pricking through these deserts, I do hear Of any traitorous knight who through his guile Hath light upon your casket and your purse, 210 I will despoil him of them and restore them.

Mistress Merrythought I thank your worship.

Exit with Michael

Rafe Dwarf, bear my shield; squire, elevate my lance; And now farewell, you Knight of holy Bell.

Citizen Ay, ay, Rafe, all is paid.

Rafe But yet before I go, speak, worthy knight, If aught you do of sad adventures know, Where errant knight may through his prowess win Eternal fame, and free some gentle souls From endless bonds of steel and lingering pain.

Host (to Tapster) Sirrah, go to Nick the barber, and bid him prepare himself as I told you before, quickly.

Tapster I am gone, sir.

Host Sir knight, this wilderness affordeth none But the great venture where full many a knight Hath tried his prowess and come off with shame, And where I would not have you lose your life Against no man, but furious fiend of hell.

Rafe Speak on, sir knight, tell what he is and where;

For here I vow upon my blazing badge, 230 Never to blaze a day in quietness; But bread and water will I only eat, And the green herb and rock shall be my couch, Till I have quelled that man or beast or fiend That works such damage to all errant knights.

Host Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff,

At the north end of this distressed town,

There doth stand a lowly house

Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave

In which an ugly giant now doth won,

Ycleped Barbaroso. In his hand

He shakes a naked lance of purest steel,

With sleeves turned up, and him before he wears

A motley garment to preserve his clothes

From blood of those knights which he massacres, And ladies gent. Without his door doth hang A copper basin on a prickant spear, At which no sooner gentle knights can knock But the shrill sound fierce Barbaroso hears, And rushing forth, brings in the errant knight, And sets him down in an enchanted chair. Then with an engine which he hath prepared, With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown; Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin He plants a brazen pece of mighty bord, And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks, Whilst with his fingers, and an instrument With which he snaps his hair off, he doth fill The wretch’s ears with a most hideous noise. Thus every knight adventurer he doth trim, And now no creature dares encounter him.

Rafe In God’s name, I will fight with him. Kind sir, Go but before me to this dismal cave There this huge giant Barbaroso dwells, And, by that virtue that brave Rosicleer That damned brood of ugly giants slew,
THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

Enter a boy

CITIZEN Boy, come hither; send away Rafe and this whoreson giant quickly.

BOY In good faith, sir, we cannot. You'll utterly spoil our play, and make it to be hissed, and it cost money; you will not suffer us to go on with our plot.—I pray, gentlemen, rule him.

CITIZEN Let him come now and dispatch this, and I'll trouble you no more.

BOY Will you give me your hand of that?

WIFE Give him thy hand, George, and I'll kiss him.

I warrant thee the youth means plainly.

BOY I'll send him to you presently.

Exit boy

WIFE I thank you, little youth.—Faith, the child hath a sweet breath, George, but I think it be troubled with the worms. Carduus benedictus and mare's milk were the only thing in the world for't. Oh, Rafe's here, George.—God send thee good luck, Rafe.

Enter Rafe, Host, Tim as Squire, and George as Dwarf

HOST Puissant knight, yonder his mansion is; Lo, where the spear and copper basin are; Behold that string on which hangs many a tooth Drawn from the gentle jaw of wandering knights. I dare not stay to sound; he will appear. Exit host

RAFE Oh, faint not, heart. Susan, my lady dear,
The cobbler's maid in Milk Street, for whose sake I take these arms, oh let the thought of thee Carry thy knight through all adventurous deeds, And in the honour of thy beauteous self May I destroy this monster Barbaroso.— Knock, squire, upon the basin till it break With the shrill strokes, or till the giant speak.

Enter Barber

WIFE Oh, George, the giant, the giant!—Now, Rafe, for thy life.

BARBER What fond unknowing wight is this that dares So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell, Where no man comes but leaves his fleece behind? RAFE I, traitorous caitiff, who am sent by fate To punish all the sad enormities

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267 Frannarco: the giant slain by Palmerin in Palmerin d'Olivia, Iii
274 main: full
275 Saint George, set on before!: battle cry invoking the patron saint of England
278 hold: pledge
279 the great Dutchman: possibly a reference to a famous German fencer who lived in early seventeenth-century London; 'Dutchman' was a term for speakers of both Dutch and German
288 hermaphrodite: the citizens' taste for 'freaks' is referred to in Epicoene and was satirised in a number of plays, for example, Jonson's The Alchemist (1610), V.i.11ff
289 Ninivie: a contemporary puppet play about Jonah and the whale
291 Nell, I saw him wrestle with the great Dutchman and hurl him.
296 Rafe Saint George, set on before! March, squire and page.
300 Mam: full
301 hold: pledge
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330 Carduus benedictus: the blessed thistle (used as a medicinal cure-all)
335 Carduus benedictus: the blessed thistle (used as a medicinal cure-all)
336 mare's milk: considered a good purgative
338 sound: blow a horn
339 Milk Street: between Cheapside and Gresham Street, originally London's milk market
340 fond: foolish
341 wight: man (archaic)
341 fleece: a) beard; b) money (as in to 'fleece' someone)
Thou hast committed against ladies gent
And errant knights. Traitor to God and men,
Prepare thyself; this is the dismal hour
Appointed for thee to give strict account
Of all thy beastly treacherous villainies.

barber Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby
He takes down his pole
This fond reproach: thy body will I bang,
And, lo, upon that string thy teeth shall hang.
Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be.

rafe Saint George for me!

barber Gargantua for me!

wife To him, Rafe, to him! Hold up the giant; set out
thy leg before, Rafe.

citizen Falsify a blow, Rafe; falsify a blow; the giant
lives open on the left side.

wife Bear it off; bear it still. There, boy.—Oh,
Rafe’s almost down, Rafe’s almost down.

rafe Susan, inspire me.—Now have up again.

wife Up, up, up, up, up! So, Rafe, down with him,
down with him, Rafe.

citizen Fetch him o’er the hip, boy.

wife There, boy; kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Rafe.

citizen No, Rafe, get all out of him first.

rafe Presumptuous man, see to what desperate end
Thy treachery hath brought thee. The just gods,
Who never prosper those that do despise them,
For all the villainies which thou hast done
To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home
By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous.

But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul
To sad Avernus, w hither it must go,
Prepare thyself; this is the dismal hour
To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home
B y m y stiff arm , a knight adventurous. 370

The giant trained me to his loathsom e den
Under pretence of killing of the itch;

And all my body with a powder strewed,
That smarts and stings, and cut away my beard
And my curled locks wherein were ribbons tied,
And with a water washed my tender eyes
(Whilst up and down about me still he skipped),
Whose virtue is, that till mine eyes be wiped
With a dry cloth, for this my foul disgrace
I shall not dare to look a dog i’th’ face.

wife Alas, poor knight.—Relieve him, Rafe; relieve
poor knights whilst you live.

rafe My trusty squire, convey him to the town,
Where he may find relief.—Adieu, fair knight.

Exit knight with Tim, who presently re-enters

rafe's alm ost down, R afe's alm ost down.

Enter George as dwarf leading one with a patch o'er his

nose

George Puissant Knight of the Burning Pestle hight,
See here another wretch, whom this foul beast
Hath scorched and scored in this inhuman wise.

rafe Speak me thy name and eke thy place of birth,
And what hath been thy usage in this cave.

2 knight I am a knight, Sir Pockhole is my name,
And by my birth I am a Londoner,
Free by my copy; but my ancestors
Were Frenchmen all; and riding hard this way
Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache;
And I, faint knight, to ease my weary limbs,

Enter Tim as squire leading one winking, with a basin

under his chin

Tim Behold, brave knight, here is one prisoner
Whom this wild man hath used as you see.

wife This is the first wise word I heard the squire

speak.

rafe Speak what thou art, and how thou hast been
used,
That I may give him condign punishment.

1 knight I am a knight that took my journey post
Northward from London, and in courteous wise
This giant trained me to his loathsom e den
Under pretence of killing of the itch;

And all my body with a powder strewed,
That smarts and stings, and cut away my beard
And my curled locks wherein were ribbons tied,
And with a water washed my tender eyes
(Whilst up and down about me still he skipped),
Whose virtue is, that till mine eyes be wiped
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And what hath been thy usage in this cave.

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And by my birth I am a Londoner,
Free by my copy; but my ancestors
Were Frenchmen all; and riding hard this way
Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache;
And I, faint knight, to ease my weary limbs,
Light at this cave, when straight this furious fiend,
With sharpest instrument of purest steel
Did cut the gristle of my nose away,
And in the place this velvet plaster stands.
Relieve me, gentle knight, out of his hands.

wife Good Rafe, relieve Sir Pockhole and send him away, for, in truth, his breath stinks.

rafe Convey him straight after the other knight.—
Sir Pockhole fare you well.

2 knight Kind sir, goodnight.

Exeunt knight with george, who then re-enters.

Cries within.

3 knight (within) Deliver us.
woman (within) Deliver us.
wife Hark, George, what a woeful cry there is. I think some woman lies in there.

3 knight (within) Deliver us.
woman (within) Deliver us.
rafe What ghastly noise is this? Speak, Barbaroso,
Or by this blazing steel thy head goes off.

barber Prisoners of mine, whom I in diet keep.
Send lower down into the cave,
And in a tub that’s heated smoking hot,
There may they find them and deliver them.

rafe Run, squire and dwarf, deliver them with speed.

Exeunt tim as squire and george as dwarf.

wife But will not Rafe kill this giant? Surely I am afeared if he let him go he will do as much hurt as ever he did.

citizen Not so, mouse, neither, if he could convert him.

wife Ay, George, if he could convert him; but a giant is not so soon converted as one of us ordinary people. There’s a pretty tale of a witch that had the devil’s mark about her, God bless us, that had a giant to her son, that was called Lob-lie-by-the-fire; didst never hear it, George?

Enter tim as squire leading a man with a glass of lotion in his hand, and george as the dwarf leading a woman with diet-bread and drink.

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427 velvet plaster: covering for both the scars of war and those produced by the incisions made as a treatment for syphilis
428 breath stinks: as a result of taking mercury, used in the treatment of syphilis
429 Deliver us: parody of the Litany for General Supplication in The Book of Common Prayer (1549, revised 1552 and 1559)
430 tub: sweating tubs were believed to cure venereal disease
431 convert: converting heathens was a common element in chivalric romance
432 devil’s mark: the marks (spots or tooth marks) believed to identify witches
433 diet-bread: special bread used in the treatment of syphilis

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443-4 devil’s mark: the marks (spots or tooth marks) believed to identify witches

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447-8 pinéd: wasted, starved
450 Deliver: state
452 Turnbull Street: originally Turnmill Street, running south from Clerkenwell Green and known for its prostitutes
453 rib cut from a neck: extremely poor quality meat
454 mutton: prostitute (slang)
455 hearty: nourishing

Exeunt.
citizen  Now Rafe is in this humour, I know he would ha’ beaten all the boys in the house if they had been set on him.

wife  Ay, George, but it is as well as it is; I warrant you the gentlemen do consider what it is to overthrow a giant. But look, George, here comes Mistress Merrythought and her son Michael.—Now you are welcome, Mistress Merrythought, now Rafe has done, you may go on.

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT  Mick, my boy.

MICHAEL  Ay, forsooth, mother.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT  Be merry, Mick; we are at home now, where, I warrant you, you shall find the house flung out at the windows. (Music within) Hark, hey dogs, hey; this is the old world, ‘fath, with my husband. If I get in among ‘em, I’ll play ‘em such a lesson that they shall have little list to come scraping hither again.—Why, Master Merrythought, husband, Charles Merrythought.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT  (within)

(Sings)  If you will sing and dance and laugh,
And hollo and laugh again,
And then cry, ‘There, boys, there’, why then
One, two, three, and four,
We shall be merry within this hour.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT  Why, Charles, do you not know your own natural wife? I say, open the door, and turn me out those many companions; ‘tis more than time that they were fellow and fellow-like with you. You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself (though I say it) by my mother’s side niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor; he has been three times in his majesty’s service at Chester, and is now the fourth time, God bless him and his charge, upon his journey.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT  (within)

(Sings)  Go from my window, love, go;
Go from my window, my dear;
The wind and the rain
Will drive you back again;
You cannot be lodged here.

Hark you, Mistress Merrythought, you that walk upon adventures and forsake your husband because he sings with never a penny in his purse; what, shall I think myself the worse? Faith, no, I’ll be merry. You come out here—here’s none but lads of mettle, lives of a hundred years and upwards; care never drunk their bloods, nor want made ‘em warble, (Sings) Heigh-bo, my heart is heavy.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT  Why, Master Merrythought, what am I that you should laugh me to scorn thus abruptly? Am I not your fellow-feeler, as we may say, in all our miseries, your comforter in health and sickness? Have I not brought you children? Are they not like you, Charles? Look upon thine own image, hard-hearted man. And yet for all this—

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT  (within)

(Sings)  Begone, begone, my Juggy, my puggy,
Begone, my love, my dear.
The weather is warm
’Twill do thee no harm
Thou canst not be lodged here.

—Be merry, boys; some light music, and more wine.

WIFE  He’s not in earnest, I hope, George, is he?

CITIZEN  What if he be, sweetheart?

WIFE  Marry, if he be, George, I’ll make bold to tell him he’s an ingrant old man to use his bed-fellow so scurvily.

CITIZEN  What, how does he use her, honey?

WIFE  Marry come up, Sir Saucebox, I think you’ll take his part, will you not? Lord, how hot you are grown. You are a fine man, an’ you had a fine dog; it becomes you sweetly.

CITIZEN  Nay, prithee, Nell, chide not. For as I am an honest man and a true Christian grocer, I do not like his doings.

WIFE  I cry you mercy then, George. You know we are all frail and full of infirmities.—D’ee hear, Master Merrythought, may I crave a word with you?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT  (within)

Strike up lively, lads.

WIFE  I had not thought, in truth, Master
Merrythought, that a man of your age and discretion, as I may say, being a gentleman, and therefore known by your gentle conditions, could have used so little respect to the weakness of his wife. For your wife is your own flesh, the staff of your age, your yoke-fellow, with whose help you draw through the mire of this transitory world. Nay, she's your own rib. And again—

(old merrythought) (within)  

(Sings) I come not hither for thee to teach,  
I have no pulpit for thee to preach,  
I would thou hadst kissed me under the breech,  
As thou art a lady gay.

wife Marry, with a vengeance! I am heartily sorry for the poor gentlewoman.—But if I were thy wife, i'faith, grey-beard, i'faith—

citizen Give me such words that am a gentlewoman born! Hang him, hoary rascal! Get me some drink, George, I am almost molten with fretting: now beshrew his knave's heart for it. Exit Citizen

(old merrythought) (within) Play me a light lavolta.

Come, be frolic. Fill the good fellows' wine.

mistress merrythought Why, Master Merrythought, are you disposed to make me wait here? You'll open, I hope; I'll fetch them that shall open else.

(old merrythought) (at window) Good woman, if you will sing I'll give you something; if not—

SONG  
You are no love for me, Margaret,  
I am no love for you.

Leaves window  
(within) Come aloft, boys, aloft.

mistress merrythought Now a churl's fart in your teeth, sir.—Come, Mick, we'll not trouble him; 'a shall not ding us i'th teeth with his bread and his broth, that he shall not. Come, boy; I'll provide for thee, I warrant thee. We'll go to Master Venturewell's, the merchant; I'll get his letter to me host of the Bell in Waltham; there I'll place thee with the tapster. Will not that do well for thee, Mick? And let me alone for that old cuckoldly knave your father; I'll use him in his kind, I warrant ye.

Exeunt

FINIS ACTUS TERTII

Interlude III

Music. Enter boy and citizen

wife Come, George, where's the beer?  
citizen Here, love.

wife This old fornicating fellow will not out of my mind yet.—Gentlemen, I'll begin to you all, and I desire more of your acquaintance, with all my heart. (Drinks) Fill the gentlemen some beer, George. (boy dance) Look, George, the little boy's come again; methinks he looks something like the Prince of Orange in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck. George, I will have him dance 'Fading'.—'Fading' is a fine jig, I'll assure you, gentlemen.—Begin, brother.—Now 'a capers, sweetheart.—Now a turn o' th' toe, and then tumble. Cannot you tumble, youth?

boy No, indeed, forsooth.

wife Nor eat fire?

boy Neither.

wife Why then, I thank you heartily. There's twopence to buy you points withal.

Exit boy

Act IV

Enter Jasper and boy

jasper (gives a letter) There, boy, deliver this, but do it well. Hast thou provided me four lusty fellows Able to carry me? And art thou perfect In all thy business?

boy Sir, you need not fear: I have my lesson here and cannot miss it. The men are ready for you, and what else Pertains to this employment.

jasper (gives him money) There, my boy;
Take it, but buy no land.

Boy Faith, sir, ’twere rare
To see so young a purchaser. I fly,
And on my wings carry your destiny. Exit

Jasper Go, and be happy.—Now, my latest hope, 11
Forsake me not, but fling thy anchor out
And let it hold. Stand fixed, thou rolling stone,
Till I enjoy my dearest. Hear me, all
You powers that rule in men celestial. Exit

Wife Go thy ways; thou art as crooked a sprig as ever
boy wife

Boy, my good George, do.

Wife Do, my good George, do.

Enter Boy

Citizen Let me alone, sweetheart—I have a trick in
my head shall lodge him in the Arches for one year,
and make him sing pecavi ere I leave him, and yet he
shall never know who hurt him neither.

Wife Do, my good George, do.

Enter Rafe and the Lady Pomponia, Tim as Squire and George as Dwarf

Citizen Ay, Nell, it is the fashion of that country, I
warrant’ee.

Lady Welcome, sir knight, unto my father’s court,
King of Moldavia; unto me, Pomponia,
His daughter dear. But sure you do not like
Your entertainment, that will stay with us
No longer but a night.

Rafe Damsel right fair,
I am on many sad adventures bound,
That call me forth into the wilderness;
Besides, my horse’s back is something galled,

Boy It shall be done.—It is not our fault, gentlemen.

Wife Now we shall see fine doings, I warrant’ee,
George. Oh, here they come; how prettily the King
of Cracovia’s daughter is dressed.

Exit
THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE


Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.
But many thanks, fair lady, be to you,
For using errant knight with courtesy.

Lady But say, brave knight, what is your name and birth?

Rafe My name is Rafe; I am an Englishman,
As true as steel, a hearty Englishman,
And prentice to a grocer in the Strand
By deed indent, of which I have one part.
But Fortune calling me to follow arms,
On me this holy order I did take
Of Burning Pestle, which in all men’s eyes
I bear, confounding ladies’ enemies.

Lady Oft have I heard of your brave counrymeans,
And fertile soil and store of wholesome food;
My father oft will tell me of a drink
In England found, and ‘nipitato’ called,
Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.

Rafe Lady, ’tis true, you need not lay your lips
To better nipitato than there is.

Lady And of a wild fowl he will often speak
Which powdered beef and mustard called is.
For there have been great wars ’twixt us and you;
But truly, Rafe, it was not long of me.
Tell me then, Rafe, could you contented be
To wear a lady’s favour in your shield?

Rafe I am a knight of religious order,
And will not wear a favour of a lady’s
That trusts in Antichrist and false traditions.

Citizen Well said, Rafe, convert her if thou canst.

Rafe Besides, I have a lady of my own
In merry England, for whose virtuous sake
I took these arms, and Susan is her name,
A cobbler’s maid in Milk Street, whom I vow
Ne’er to forsake whilst life and pestle last.

Lady Happy that cobbling dame, whoe’er she be,
That for her own, dear Rafe, hath gotten thee;
Unhappy I, that ne’er shall see the day
To see thee more, that bear’st my heart away.

Rafe Lady, farewell; I needs must take my leave.

Lady Hard-hearted Rafe, that ladies dost deceive.

Citizen Hark thee, Rafe, there’s money for thee; give
something in the King of Cracovia’s house; be not
beholding to him.

Rafe Lady, before I go, I must remember

Your father’s officers, who, truth to tell,
Have been about me very diligent.
Hold up thy snowy hand, thou princely maid:
There’s twelve pence for your father’s chamberlain;
And another shilling for his cook,
For, by my troth, the goose was roasted well; 120
And twelve pence for your father’s horse-keeper,
For nointing my horse back—and for his butter,
There is another shilling—to the maid
That washed my boot-hose, there’s an English groat:
And twopence to the boy that wiped my boots;
And last, fair lady, there is for yourself
Threepence, to buy you pins at Bumbo Fair.

Lady Full many thanks; and I will keep them safe
Till all the heads be off, for thy sake, Rafe.

Rafe Advance, my squire and dwarf; I cannot stay. 130

Lady Thou kilt my heart in parting thus away.

Exeunt

Wife I commend Rafe yet that he will not stoop to a
Cracovian. There’s properer women in London than
any are there, iwis. But here comes Master
Humphrey and his love again now, George.

Citizen Ay, cony, peace.

Enter Merchant, Humphrey, Luce, and Boy. Luce kneels

Merchant Go, get you up; I will not be entreated.
And, gossip mine, I’ll keep you sure hereafter
From gadding out again with boys and unthrifts.
Come, they are women’s tears; I know your
fashion.— 140
Go, sirrah, lock her in, and keep the key
Safe as you love your life.

Now, my son Humphrey,

You may both rest assured of my love
In this, and reap your own desire.

Humphrey I see this love you speak of, through your
daughter,
Although the hole be little; and hereafter
Will yield the like in all I may, or can,
Fitting a Christian, and a gentleman.

Merchant I do believe you, my good son, and thank
you:

\[\begin{align*}
77 & \text{Strand Q2 (strond Q2)} \\
78 & \text{deed indent: duplicate agreement of indenture between} \\
79 & \text{apprentice and master; the deed was torn irregularly} \\
80 & \text{('indented') so that it could be proved genuine if the two} \\
81 & \text{parts matched} \\
82 & \text{confounding: a) confusing, bewildering; b) defeating} \\
83 & \text{‘nipitato’: prime ale} \\
84 & \text{powdered: salted} \\
85 & \text{long: on account} \\
86 & \text{cobbler: could also mean ‘bungling’} \\
124 & \text{boot-hose: elaborately embroidered footless stockings} \\
125 & \text{which covered the calf} \\
127 & \text{pins: elaborate pins were a fashionable gift} \\
130 & \text{Bumbo Fair: probably from a drink sold at fairs (made} \\
131 & \text{from rum, water, sugar and nutmeg) } \\
132 & \text{stoop: submit} \\
133 & \text{properer: handsomer} \\
137 & \text{up: either from kneeling or to her chamber} \\
138 & \text{gossip: female friend} \\
139 & \text{unthrifts: prodigals} \\
140 & \text{women’s tears: i.e. not to be taken seriously}
\end{align*}\]
FRANCIS BEAUMONT

For 'twere an impudence to think you flattered.  150
humphrey It were indeed; but shall I tell you why?
I have been beaten twice about the lie.
merchant Well, son, no more of compliment. My
daughter
Is yours again; appoint the time, and take her;
We'll have no stealing for it. I myself
And some few of our friends will see you married.
humphrey I would you would, 'faith, for, be it
known,
I ever was afraid to lie alone.
merchant Some three days hence, then.
humphrey Three days? Let me see:
'Tis somewhat of the most; yet I agree  160
Because I mean against the appointed day
To visit all my friends in new array.

Enter servant

servant Sir, there's a gentlewoman without would
speak with your worship.
merchant What is she?
servant Sir, I asked her not.
merchant Bid her come in.
Exit servant

Enter mistress merrythought and michael

mistress merrythought Peace be to your worship. I
come as a poor suitor to you, sir, in the behalf of this
child.
merchant Are you not wife to merrythought?
mistress merrythought Yes, truly; would I had
ne'er seen his eyes! He has undone me and himself
and his children, and there he lives at home, and
sings and hoists and revels among his drunken
companions; but, I warrant you, where to get a penny
to put bread in his mouth he knows not; and
therefore, if it like your worship, I would entreat your
letter to the honest host of the Bell in Waltham, that
I may place my child under the protection of his
tapster, in some settled course of life.  181
merchant I'm glad the heavens have heard my
prayers. Thy husband,
When I was ripe in sorrows, laughed at me;
Thy son, like an unthankful wretch, I having
Redeemed him from his fall and made him mine,
To show his love again, first stole my daughter,
Then wronged this gentleman, and, last of all,
Gave me that grief had almost brought me down
Unto my grave, had not a stronger hand
Relieved my sorrows. Go, and weep as I did,
And be unpitied; for I here profess  190

mistress merrythought Will you so, sir? How say
you by that?—Come, Mick, let him keep his wind to
cool his porridge. We'll go to thy nurse's, Mick; she
knits silk stockings, boy, and we'll knit too, boy, and
be beholding to none of them all.

Exeunt michael and his mother

Enter a boy with a letter

boy Sir, I take it you are the master of this house.
merchant How then, boy?
boy Then to yourself, sir, comes this letter.  200
merchant From whom, my pretty boy?
boy From him that was your servant; but no more
Shall that name ever be, for he is dead:
Grief of your purchased anger broke his heart.
I saw him die, and from his hand received
This paper, with a charge to bring it hither;
Read it, and satisfy yourself in all.
merchant (reads letter) 'Sir, that I have wronged your
love, I must confess; in which I have purchased to
myself, besides mine own undoing, the ill opinion of
my friends. Let not your anger, good sir, outlive me,
but suffer me to rest in peace with your forgiveness;
let my body (if a dying man may so much prevail
with you) be brought to your daughter, that she may
truly know my hot flames are now buried, and,
withal, receive a testimony of the zeal I bore her
virtue. Farewell for ever, and be ever happy. Jasper.'
God's hand is great in this. I do forgive him;
Yet I am glad he's quiet, where I hope
He will not bite again.—Boy, bring the body,  220
And let him have his will, if that be all.
boy 'Tis here without, sir.
merchant So, sir, if you please,
You may conduct it in; I do not fear it.
humphrey I'll be your usher, boy, for though I say it,
He owed me something once, and well did pay it.

Exeunt

Enter luce alone

luce If there be any punishment inflicted
Upon the miserable, more than yet I feel,
Let it together seize me, and at once
Press down my soul. I cannot bear the pain
Of these delaying tortures. Thou that art  230
The end of all, and the sweet rest of all,
Come, come, oh Death, bring me to thy peace,
And blot out all the memory I nourish
Both of my father and my cruel friend.
Oh wretched maid, still living to be wretched,

155 We'll have . . . for it: 'we'll not have another elopement'
160 of the most: overlong
161 against: in expectation of
175 hoists: laughs
185 purchased: incurred by his conduct
204 great: evident
224 usher: either a doorkeeper or an assistant
The knight of the burning pestle

To be a say to Fortune in her changes,
And grow to number times and woes together!
How happy had I been, if, being born,
My grave had been my cradle.

Enter servant

servant

By your leave,
Young mistress, here's a boy hath brought a coffin. 240
What 'a would say, I know not, but your father
Charged me to give you notice. Here they come.

Exit

Enter two (carrier and boy) bearing a coffin,
Jasper in it

Luce For me I hope 'tis come, and 'tis most welcome.
Boy Fair mistress, let me not add greater grief
To that great store you have already. Jasper,
That whilst he lived was yours, now dead
And here enclosed, command'd me to bring
His body hither, and to crave a tear
From those fair eyes, though he deserved not pity
To deck his funeral; for so he bid me
tell her for whom he died.
Luce He shall have many.—

Good friends, depart a little, whilst I take
My leave of this dead man that once I lov'd:

Exit coffin carrier and boy

Hold yet a little, life, and then I give thee
To thy first heavenly being. Oh, my friend!
Hast thou deceived me thus, and got before me?
I shall not long be after. But, believe me,
Thou wast too cruel, Jasper, 'gainst thyself
In punishing the fault I could have pardoned,
With so untimely death. Thou didest not wrong me,
But ever wast most kind, most true, most loving;
And I the most unkind, most false, most cruel.
Didst thou but ask a tear? I'll give thee all,
Even all my eyes can pour down, all my sighs,
And all myself, before thou goest from me.
These are but sparing rites; but if thy soul
Be yet about this place, and can behold
And see what I prepare to deck thee with,
It shall go up, borne on the wings of peace,
And satisfied. First will I sing thy dirge,
Then kiss thy pale lips, and then die myself,
And fill one coffin and one grave together.

Song

Come you whose loves are dead,
And whilst I sing
Weep and wring
Every hand, and every head

Bind with cypress and sad yew;
Riibands black and candles blue
For him that was of men most true.

Come with heavy moaning,
And on his grave
Let him have
Sacrifice of sighs and groaning;
Let him have fair flowers enow,
White and purple, green and yellow,
For him that was of men most true.

Thou sable cloth, sad cover of my joys,
I lift thee up, and thus I meet with death.

Jasper (rising out of the coffin) And thus you meet the living.

Luce Save me, heaven!

Jasper Nay, do not fly me, fair; I am no spirit;
Look better on me; do you know me yet?

Luce Oh, thou dear shadow of my friend.

Jasper Dear substance; I swear I am no shadow; feel my hand,
It is the same it was. I am your Jasper.
Your Jasper that's yet living, and yet loving.
Pardon my rash attempt, my foolish proof
I put in practice of your constancy;
For sooner should my sword have drunk my blood
And set my soul at liberty, than drawn
The least drop from that body; for which boldness
Doom me to anything: if death, I take it,
And willingly.

Luce This death I'll give you for it. Kisses him

So, now I am satisfied; you are no spirit,
But my own truest, truest, truest friend.

Why do you come thus to me?

Jasper First to see you,

Then to convey you hence.

Luce It cannot be,
For I am locked up here and watched at all hours,
That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

Jasper Nothing more possible. Within this coffin
Do you convey yourself; let me alone,
I have the wits of twenty men about me.
Only I crave the shelter of your closet
A little, and then fear me not. Creep in,
That they may presently convey you hence.
Fear nothing, dearest love, I'll be your second.

236 say: test, touchstone (from 'assay')
266 sparing: meagre
270 dirge: hymn for a funeral

277 cypress and sad yew: traditional emblems of mourning; see Twelfth Night, II.iv.50–65
278 blue: the colour of constancy
285 White and . . . and yellow: symbols of purity, sorrow, the soul, and divinity respectively
292 shadow: shade, departed spirit
312 closet: private room
313 fear me not: ‘do not have fear for me’
315 second: support
Lucie lies down in the coffin, and Jasper covers her with the cloth.

Lie close, so; all goes well yet.—Boy.

Enter boy and coffin carrier

Boy At hand, sir.

Jasper Convey away the coffin, and be wary.

Boy 'Tis done already.

Jasper Now must I go conjure. Exit

Enter merchant

Merchant Boy, boy!

Boy Your servant, sir.

Merchant Do me this kindness, boy (hold, here's a crown): before thou bury the body of this fellow, carry it to his old merry father, and salute him from me, and bid him sing; he hath cause.

Boy I will, sir.

Merchant And then bring me word what tune he is in, and have another crown; but do it truly. I have fitted him a bargain now will vex him.

Boy God bless your worship's health, sir.

Merchant Farewell, boy. Exeunt

Enter master merrythought

Wife Ah, old Merrythought, art thou there again?

Let's hear some of thy songs.

Old merrythought

(Sings) Who can sing a merrier note
Than he that cannot change a groat?
Not a denier left, and yet my heart leaps. I do wonder yet, as old as I am, that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing and laugh, and walk the streets. My wife and both my sons are I know not where; I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper, yet am I merry still, for I know I shall find it upon the table at six o'clock. Therefore, hang thought.

(Sings) I would not be a serving man
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer
The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master too,
But I would eat and drink of the best,
And no work would I do.

This is it that keeps life and soul together: mirth.
This is the philosopher's stone that they write so much on, that keeps a man ever young.

Enter a boy

Boy Sir, they say they know all your money is gone, and they will trust you for no more drink.

Old merrythought Will they not? Let 'em choose. The best is, I have mirth at home, and need not send abroad for that; let them keep their drink to themselves.

(Sings) For Jillian of Bury she dwells on a hill, 360
And she hath good beer and ale to sell,
And of good fellows she thinks no ill,
And thither will we go now, now, now, now,
And thither will we go now.
And when you have made a little stay,
You need not ask what is to pay,
But kiss your hostess and go your way;
And thither, etc.

Enter another boy

2 Boy Sir, I can get no bread for supper. 369

Old merrythought Hang bread and supper! Let's preserve our mirth, and we shall never feel hunger, I'll warrant you. Let's have a catch; boy, follow me; come, sing this catch:

(They sing) Ho, ho, nobody at home!
Meat, nor drink, nor money ha' we none.
Fill the pot, Eedy,
Never more need I.
So, boys, enough; follow me; let's change our place and we shall laugh afresh.

Exeunt

FINIS ACT IV

Interlude IV

Wife Let him go, George; 'a shall not have any countenance from us, nor a good word from any i'th' company, if I may strike stroke in't.

Citizen No more 'a sha'not, love; but, Nell, I will have Rafe do a very notable matter now, to the eternal honour and glory of all grocers.—Sirrah, you there, boy! Can none of you hear?

316 close: hidden
318 conjure: perform the trick
320 tune: mood
326 fitted: furnished
329 Who can . . . a groat?: a catch from Ravenscroft's Pammelia (1660)
335 denier: French coin of very small value
338 hang: dismiss all
344 cloak-bag: portmanteau
352 philosopher's stone: the stone which, in alchemy, heals wounds, turns base metals into gold, and prolongs life
372 catch: song sung as a round
373 sing this catch: these words are slightly separated from the preceding 'come' in Q1-2 and some eds present them as a stage direction
375-7 Ho, bo . . . need I: a catch from Pammelia
3 countenance: favour
3 strike stroke: have my say
Enter boy

Boy Sir, your pleasure?

Citizen Let Rafe come out on May Day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers and his rings and his knacks.

Boy Why, sir, you do not think of our plot. What will become of that, then?

Citizen Why sir, I care not what become on't. I'll have him come out, or I'll fetch him out myself. I'll have something done in honour of the city. Besides, he hath been long enough upon adventures. Bring him out quickly, or, if I come amongst you—

Boy Well, sir, he shall come out. But if our play miscarry, sir, you are like to pay for't. Exit boy

Citizen Bring him away, then.

Wife This will be brave, i'faith; George, shall not he dance the Morris too for the credit of the Strand?

Citizen No, sweetheart, it will be too much for the boy.

Enter Rafe

Oh, there he is, Nell; he's reasonable well in reparel, but he has not rings enough.

Rafe London, to thee I do present the merry month of May;

Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say:

For from the top of conduit head, as plainly may appear,

I will both tell my name to you and wherefore I came here.

My name is Rafe, by due descent though not ignoble I,

Yet far inferior to the flock of gracious grocery;

And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,

With gilded staff and crossed scarf, the May Lord here I stand.

Rejoice, oh English hearts, rejoice; rejoice, oh lovers dear;

Rejoice, oh city, town, and country; rejoice eke every shire.

For now the fragrant flowers do spring and sprout in seemly sort,

The little birds do sit and sing, the lambs do make fine sport.

And now the birchen tree doth bud, that makes the schoolboy cry;

The morris rings while hobby-horse doth foot it feateously.

The lords and ladies now abroad for their disport and play,

Do kiss sometimes upon the grass, and sometimes in the hay.

Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to purge the blood;

Fly Venus and phlebotomy, for they are neither good.

Now little fish on tender stone begin to cast their bellies,

And sluggish snails, that erst were mute, do creep out of their shellies.

The rumbling rivers now do warm for little boys to paddle,

The sturdy steed now goes to grass, and up they hang his saddle.

The heavy hart, the bellowing buck, the rascal, and the pricket,

Are now among the yeoman's peas, and leave the fearful thicket.

And be like them, oh you, I say, of this same noble town,

And lift aloft your velvet heads, and, slipping off your gown,

With bells on legs and napkins clean unto your shoulders tied,

9 May Day: the festival of spring with festivities, speeches, dancing and song. A good account can be found in Philip Stubbes's The Anatomy of Abuses (1583), Ch. xiii
10 conduit: fountain, cistern
10–12 scarfs about . . . his knacks: the accoutrements of Morris dancing
28–63 London, to . . . I cease: written in lines of fourteen syllables as a parody of May Day speeches and, possibly, hymn books
32 My name . . . ignoble I: parodies the speech by the Ghost of Don Andrea in The Spanish Tragedy, I.1.5–7, by Thomas Kyd
35 gilded staff and crossed scarf: symbols of the May Lord's authority

Created from villanova-ebooks on 2020-03-17 13:42:37.
With scarfs and garters as you please, and 'Hey for our town' cried,
March out, and show your willing minds, by twenty
and by twenty,
To Hogsdon or to Newington, where ale and cakes
are plenty.
And let it ne'er be said for shame, that we the youths
of London
Lay thrumming of our caps at home, and left our
custom undone.
Up then, I say, both young and old, both man and
maid a-maying,
With drums and guns that bounce aloud, and merry
tabor playing!
Which to prolong, God save our king, and send his
country peace,
And root out treason from the Land! And so, my
friends, I cease.

Exit

Act V

Enter merchant, solus

MERCHANT I will have no great store of company at the
wedding: a couple of neighbours and their wives; and
we will have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow,
and a good piece of beef, stuck with rosemary.

Enter jasper, his face mealed

JASPER Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.
MERCHANT Heaven bless me! Jasper?
JASPER Ay, I am his ghost,
Whom thou hast injured for his constant love,
Fond worldly wretch, who dost not understand
In death that true hearts cannot parted be.
First, know thy daughter is quite borne away
On wings of angels, through the liquid air,
To far out of thy reach, and never more
Shalt thou behold her face. But she and I
Will in another world enjoy our loves,
Where neither father's anger, poverty,
Nor any cross that troubles earthly men
Shall make us sever our united hearts.

And never shalt thou sit, or be alone
In any place, but I will visit thee
With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
The great offences which thou didst to me.
When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear
Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as Death itself.

MERCHANT Forgive me, Jasper. Oh, what might I do,
Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost?
JASPER There is no means; too late thou think'st of
this.
MERCHANT But tell me what were best for me to do?
JASPER Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,
And beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.

Exit jasper

Enter humphrey

WIFE Look, George, his very ghost would have folks
beaten.

HUMPHREY Father, my bride is gone, fair Mistress Luce;
My soul's the fount of vengeance, mischief's sluice.

MERCHANT Hence, fool, out of my sight with thy fond
passion!
Thou hast undone me.

HUMPHREY Hold, my father dear,
For Luce thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

MERCHANT Thy father, fool? There's some blows
more, begone!
Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased
To see thy will performed. Now will I go
To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs.

HUMPHREY What shall I do? I have been beaten twice
And Mistress Luce is gone. Help me, device!
Since my true love is gone, I never more
Whilst I do live, upon the sky will pore,
But in the dark will wear out my shoe soles
In passion in Saint Faith's Church under Paul's.

Exit

WIFE George, call Rafe hither; if you love me, call Rafe
hither. I have the bravest thing for him to do,
George; prithee call him quickly.

CITIZEN Rafe, why Rafe, boy!

Enter rafe

19–28 a parody of Shakespeare's Macbeth (1606), III.iv.48–143
32 fount: source
33 passion: grief
47 device: contrivance
51 Saint Faith's... under Paul's: St Faith's was a parish church
located in the crypt of St Paul's underneath the choir;
gallants would parade in the aisle of the cathedral above
53 bravest: most splendid
RAFE Here, sir.

CITIZEN Come hither, Rafe; come to thy mistress, boy.

WIFE Rafe, I would have thee call all the youths together in battle-ray, with drums, and guns, and flags, and march to Mile End in pompous fashion, and there exhort your soldiers to be merry and wise, and to keep their beards to burning, Rafe; and then skirmish, and let your flags fly, and cry, 'Kill, kill, kill.' My husband shall lend you his jerkin, Rafe, and there's a scarf, for the rest, the house shall furnish you, and we'll pay for't. Do it bravely, Rafe, and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent.

RAFE I warrant you, mistress, if I do it not for the honour of the city and the credit of my master, let me never hope for freedom.

WIFE 'Tis well spoken, i'faith. Go thy ways; thou art a spark indeed.

CITIZEN Rafe, Rafe, double your files bravely, Rafe.

RAFE I warrant you, sir. Exit Rafe

CITIZEN Let him look narrowly to his service, I shall take him else. I was there myself a pikeman once in the hottest of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet I thank God I am here. Drum within

WIFE Hark, George, the drums.

CITIZEN Ran, tan, tan, tan; ran, tan. Oh, wench, an thou hast but seen little Ned of Aldgate, Drum-Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant, and then struck softly till the ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go, 'Sa, sa, sa, bounce,' quoth the guns; 'Courage, my hearts,' quoth the captains, 'Saint George,' quoth the pikemen; and withal here they lay, and there they lay. And yet for all this I am here, wench.

WIFE Be thankful for it, George, for indeed 'tis wonderful.

Enter Rafe and his company, with drums and colours

RAFE March fair, my hearts! Lieutenant, beat the rear up.—Ancient, let your colours fly; but have a great care of the butchers' hooks at Whitechapel; they have been the death of many a fair ancient.—Open your files that I may take a view both of your persons and munition.—Sergeant, call a muster.

SERGEANT A stand!—William Hamerton, pewterer!

HAMERTON Here, captain.

RAFE A corset and a Spanish pike; 'tis well. Can you shake it with a terror?

HAMERTON I hope so, captain.

RAFE Charge upon me. (HAMERTON CHARGES UPON RAFE)

'Tis with the weakest. Put more strength, William Hamerton, more strength. As you were again.—Proceed, Sergeant.

SERGEANT George Greengoose, poulterer!

GReengoose Here.

RAFE Let me see your piece, neighbour Greengoose; when was she shot in?

GReengoose An't like you, master captain, I made a shot even now, partly to scour her, and partly for audacity.

RAFE It should seem so certainly, for her breath is yet inflamed; besides, there is a main fault in the touch-hole, it runs and stinketh; and I tell you moreover, and believe it, ten such touch-holes would breed the pox in the army. Get you a feather, neighbour, get you a feather, sweet oil, and paper, and your piece may do well enough yet. Where's your powder?

GReengoose Here.

RAFE What, in a paper? As I am a soldier and a gentleman, it craves a martial court. You ought to die for't. Where's your horn? Answer me to that.

GReengoose An't like you, sir, I was oblivious.

RAFE It likes me not you should be so; 'tis a shame for you, and a scandal to all our neighbours, being a man of worth and estimation, to leave your horn behind you: I am afraid 'twill breed example. But let me tell you no more on't.—Stand, till I view you all.—What's become o' th nose of your flask?

I SOLDIER Indeed la, captain, 'twas blown away with powder.

RAFE Put on a new one at the city's charge.—Where's

96 Whitechapel: a parish to the east of Aldgate known for its butchers' shops
99 mister: roll
101 corset: armour covering the body
102 Spanish pike: 'probably superior to the English' (Kinney)
103 shake it: with sexual connotation
104 piece: gun (but with sexual connotation)
111 touch-hole: the ignition hole in the breech of a gun
117-18 touch-hole: the ignition hole in the breech of a gun
120 pox: syphilis
121 feather, sweet oil, and paper: materials for cleaning a gun
126 horn: a) powder horn; b) cuckold's horn
127 oblivious: forgetful
the stone of this piece?

w ife 'T w as w ell done, Rafe. I'll send thee a cold capon

rafe To make a crescent now; advance your pikes; stand, and give ear! Gentlemen, countrymen, friends; and my fellow-soldiers, I have brought you this day from the shops of security and the counters of content, to measure out in these furious fields honour by the ell, and prowess by the pound. Let it not, oh, let it not, I say, be told hereafter the noble issue of this city fainted, but bear yourselves in this fair action like men, valiant men, and freemen. Fear not the face of the enemy, nor the noise of the guns, for believe me, brethren, the rude rumbling of a brewer's car is far more terrible, of which you have a daily experience, neither let the stink of powder offend you, since a more valiant stink is nightly with you. To a resolved mind his home is everywhere. I speak not this to take away the hope of your return; for you shall see, I do not doubt it, and that very shortly, your loving wives again, and your sweet children, whose care doth bear you company in baskets. Remember, then, whose cause you have in hand, and like a sort of true-born scavengers, scour me this famous realm of enemies. I have no more to say but this: stand to your tacklings, lads, and show to the world you can as well brandish a sword as shake an apron. Saint George, and on, my hearts!

omnes Saint George! Saint George!

wife 'Twas well done, Rafe. I'll send thee a cold capon a-field, and a bottle of March beer; and it may be, come myself to see thee.

citizen Nell, the boy has deceived me much; I did not think it had been in him. He has performed such a matter, wenches, that if I live, next year I'll have him captain of the galley-foist, or I'll want my will.

Enter old merrythought

old merrythought Yet, I thank God, I break not a wrinkle more than I had. Not a stoup, boys? Care live with cats, I defy thee! My heart is as sound as an oak, and though I want drink to wet my whistle, I can sing:

(Sings) Come no more there, boys, come no more there;
For we shall never whilst we live, come any more there.

Enter a boy and coffin carriers with a coffin

boy God save you, sir.

old merrythought It's a brave boy. Canst thou sing?

boy Yes, sir, I can sing, but 'tis not so necessary at this time.

old merrythought

(Sings) Sing we, and chant it,
Whilst love doth grant it.

boy Sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you, you would have little list to sing.

old merrythought

(Sings) Oh, the minion round,
Full long I have thee sought,
And now I have thee found,
And what hast thou here brought?

boy A coffin, sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

old merrythought Dead?

(Sings) Why, farewell he.
Thou wast a bonny boy,
And I did love thee.

Enter Jasper

jasper Then, I pray you, sir, do so still.

old merrythought Jasper's ghost?

(Sings) Thou art welcome from Stygian lake so soon;
Declare to me what wondrous things in Pluto's court are done.

jasper By my troth, sir, I ne'er came there; 'tis too hot for me, sir.

137 stone: a) flint; b) testicle

139 want: lack (also implying the effects of syphilis)

144 sodden face: a) drunken; b) suffering the effects of the sweating-tub treatment for syphilis

145 match: fuse for igniting musket

146–70 stand, and . . . my hearts!: Rafe's exhortation to his soldiers parodies that of Richard to his troops in Shakespeare's Richard III (1593), V.vi.44–81, echoes a number of other pre-battle speeches in the history plays, and contains some of the rhetorical features of Antony's speech in Julius Caesar (1599–1600) III.ii.70–104

150 ell: a measure of forty-five inches

159 valiant stink: another reference with sexual connotations

164 baskets: i.e. of provisions

165 sort: company

167 tacklings: a) weapons; b) genitals

170 March beer: strong beer (brewed early in the season)
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT A merry ghost, a very merry ghost!
(Sings) And where is your true love. Oh, where is yours?
JASPER Marry, look you, sir.
(Heaves up the Coffin, and LUCE climbs out)
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Ah, ha! Art thou good at that, i' faith?
(Sings) With hey, trixy, terlery-whiskin, The world it runs on wheels, When the young man's —, Up goes the maiden's heels.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL within
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (within) What, Master Merrythought, will you not let's in? What do you think shall become of us?
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT What voice is that that calleth at our door?
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (within) You know me well enough; I am sure I have not been such a stranger to you.
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (Sings) And some they whistled, and some they sung, Hey, down, down! And some did loudly say, Ever as the Lord Barnet's horn blew, Away, Musgrave, away.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (within) You will not have us starve here, will you, Master Merrythought?
JASPER Nay, good sir, be persuaded, she is my mother. If her offences have been great against you, let your own love remember she is yours, and so forgive her.
LUCE Good Master Merrythought, let me entreat you; I will not be denied.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (within) Why, Master Merrythought, will you be a vexed thing still?
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Woman, I take you to my love again; but you shall sing before you enter; therefore dispatch your song and so come in.
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (within) Well, you must have your will when all's done.—Mick, what song canst thou sing, boy?
MICHAEL (within) I can sing none, forsooth, but 'A Lady's Daughter of Paris' properly.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT with MICHAEL (within)
SONG
It was a lady's daughter, etc.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT admits MERCHANT MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Come, you're welcome home again.
(Sings) If such danger be in playing, And jest must to earnest turn, You shall go no more a-maying.
MERCHANT (within) Are you within, sir? Master Merrythought?
JASPER It is my master's voice. Good sir, go hold him in talk, whilst we convey ourselves into some inward room. Exit with LUCE
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT What are you? Are you merry? You must be very merry if you enter.
MERCHANT (within) I am, sir.
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Sing then.
MERCHANT (within) Nay, good sir, open to me.
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Sing, I say, or, by the merry heart, you come not in.
MERCHANT (within) Well, sir, I'll sing:
(Sings) Fortune my foe, etc.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT admits MERCHANT

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT You are welcome, sir, you are welcome. You see your entertainment; pray you, be merry.
MERCHANT Oh, Master Merrythought, I am come to ask you Forgiveness for the wrongs I offered you And your most virtuous son; they're infinite; Yet my contrition shall be more than they. I do confess my hardness broke his heart, For which just heaven hath given me punishment More than my age can carry. His wandering spirit,

251 It was a lady's daughter, etc.: from a broadside ballad that begins:
It was a lady's daughter, Of Paris properly,
Her mother her commanded To mass that she should hie: O pardon me, dear mother,
Her daughter dear did say, Unto that filthy idol I never can obey
254-6 If such . . . more a-maying: from 'My Love Hath Vowed' in Philip Rosseter's Book of Airs (1601)
playing: flirting
270 Fortune my foe, etc.: from a very popular song that begins:
Fortune my foe, why dost thou frown on me?
And will thy favours never better be?
Wilt thou, I say, for ever breed my pain?
And wilt thou not restore my joys again?

211 The world it runs on wheels: proverbial
216 When the young man's . . . the omitted word is possibly 'frisking'. Some editors note the Act to Restrain the Abuses of the Players (1606) as an explanation for this omission (as in Interlude I.iii)
228-32 And some . . . Musgrave, away: from the ballad of Little Margaret and Lady Barnard
237 own love: self-love
242 vexed: cantankerous

269
Not yet at rest, pursues me everywhere,  
Crying, 'I'll haunt thee for thy cruelty'.
My daughter, she is gone, I know not how,  
Taken invisible, and whether living  
Or in grave, 'tis yet uncertain to me.  
Oh Master Merrythought, these are the weights  
Will sink me to my grave. Forgive me, sir.

OLD MERRYthought Why, sir, I do forgive you, and  
be merry;  
And if the wag in's lifetime played the knave,  
Can you forgive him too?

MERCHANT With all my heart, sir.

OLD MERRYthought Speak it again, and heartily.

MERCHANT Now, by my soul, I do.

OLD MERRYthought (Sings) With that came out his paramour;  
She was as white as the lily flower,  
Hey, trolly, trolly, lolly.

Enter Luce and Jasper

With that came out her own dear knight,  
He was as true as ever did fight. etc.
Sir, if you will forgive 'em, clap their hands together; 
there's no more to be said i'th' matter.

MERCHANT I do, I do.

CITIZEN I do not like this.—Peace, boys, hear me one of you. Everybody's part is come to an end but Rafe's, and he's left out.

BOY 'Tis long of yourself, sir; we have nothing to do with his part.

CITIZEN Rafe, come away.—Make an end on him as you have done of the rest, boys; come.

WIFE Now, good husband, let him come out and die.

CITIZEN He shall Nell.—Rafe, come away quickly and die, boy.

BOY 'Twill be very unfit he should die, sir, upon no occasion, and in a comedy too.

CITIZEN Take you no care of that, sir boy, is not his part at an end, think you, when he's dead?—Come away, Rafe.

Enter Rafe, with a forked arrow through his head

RAFE When I was mortal, this my costive corpse  
Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand,
Where sitting, I espied a lovely dame,  
Whose master wrought with lingel and with awl,  
And under ground he vamped many a boot.  
Straight did her love prick forth me, tender sprig,  
To follow feats of arms in warlike wise  
Through Waltham Desert, where I did perform  
Many achievements, and did lay on ground  
Huge Barbaroso, that insulting giant,  
And all his captives soon set at liberty,  
Then honour pricked me from my native soil  
Into Moldavia, where I gained the love  
Of Pompiona, his beloved daughter,  
But yet proved constant to the black-thumbed maid  
Susan, and scorned Pompiona's love.  
Yet liberal I was, and gave her pins,  
And money for her father's officers.  
I then returned home, and thrust myself  
In action, and by all men chosen was  
Lord of the May, where I did flourish it,  
With scarfs and rings, and posy in my hand.  
After this action, I preferred was,  
And chosen city captain at Mile End,  
With hat and feather and with leading-staff,  
And trained my men and brought them all off clear  
(Save one man that berayed him with the noise).  
But all these things I Rafe did undertake  
Only for my beloved Susan's sake.  
Then coming home, and sitting in my shop  
With apron blue, Death came unto my stall  
To cheapen aqua vitae—but ere I  
Could take the bottle down, and fill a taste,  
Death caught a pound of pepper in his hand,  
And sprinkled all my face and body o'er,  
And in an instant vanished away.

CITIZEN 'Tis a pretty fiction i'faith.

RAFE Then took I up my bow and shaft in hand,  
And walked into Moorfields to cool myself;  
But there grim cruel Death met me again,  
And shot this forked arrow through my head,  
And now I faint. Therefore be warned by me,  
My fellows every one, of forked heads.  
Farewell, all you good boys in merry London;  
Ne'er shall we more upon Shrove Tuesday meet.
And pluck down houses of iniquity.
My pain increaseth.—I shall never more
Hold open, whilst another pumps both legs,
Nor daub a satin gown with rotten eggs;
Set up a stake, oh, never more I shall.
I die; fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers' Hall.
Oh, oh, oh, etc.
wife Well said, Rafe. Do your obeisance to the
gentlemen and go your ways. Well said, Rafe. 369
Exit RAFE
old merrythought Methinks all we, thus kindly and
unexpectedly reconciled, should not depart without a
song.
Merchant A good motion.
old merrythought Strike up, then.

SONG
Better music ne'er was known
Than a choir of hearts in one.
Let each other that hath been
Troubled with the gall or spleen,
Learn of us to keep his brow
Smooth and plain as ours are now. 380
Sing, though before the hour of dying;
He shall rise, and then be crying,
'Hey, ho, 'tis nought but mirth,
That keeps the body from the earth'.

Exeunt omnes

Epilogus

Citizen Come Nell, shall we go? The play's done.
wife Nay, by my faith, George, I have more manners
than so; I'll speak to these gentlemen first.—I thank
you all, gentlemen, for your patience and
countenance to Rafe, a poor fatherless child; and if I
might see you at my house, it should go hard but I
would have a pottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco for
you; for, truly, I hope you do like the youth, but I
would be glad to know the truth. I refer it to your
own discretions, whether you will applaud him or no;
for I will wink, and whilst you shall do what you will.
I thank you with all my heart. God give you good
night.—Come, George.

Exeunt

Finis

360–1 Shrove Tuesday...of iniquity: the last day before Lent
was a time of revelry and riot for apprentices who
sometimes attacked theatres and brothels
364 satin gown: the dress of gallants as dandies
365 Set up a stake: reference to the use of staked cockerels as
targets
371 depart: i.e. take leave of one another

7 pottle: measure of two quarts
tobacco: Nell's sense of hospitality (and social climbing)
outweighs her antipathy to tobacco at 1.210–14
11 will wink: close my eyes
whilst: meanwhile