

SUMMARY: *Greene's News From Both Heaven and Hell* (STC 12259) was entered in the Stationers' Register to Thomas Adams and John Oxenbridge on 3 February 1593. The title-page bears neither the printer's name nor the shop at which the book was to be sold, and McKerrow says that 'neither Adams nor Oxenbridge seems ever to have engaged in printing' (see McKerrow, R.B., ed., *B.R. – R.B.; Greenes Newes both from Heaven and Hell 1593 and Greenes Funeralls 1594*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1911, p. vi). By this McKerrow presumably means that both Adams and Oxenbridge were booksellers, rather than printers. However, the entry in *The Dictionary of National Biography* for Thomas Adams states that he was a printer made free of the Stationers' Company on 15 October 1590, and although McKerrow's expertise is not to be questioned lightly, it would appear that Adams may have printed books as opposed to merely selling them as a Stationer. McKerrow also says that the device on the title-page ('a landscape surrounded by a circular band bearing the words MARCANTIA REALE') was otherwise unknown to him. Another unusual circumstance is that in place of an author's name on the title-page, there is the statement that the book was 'Commended to the press by 'B.R.'. Given that *Greene's Funerals* was printed in the following year with a reverse set of initials ('R.B., gentleman') on the title-page, it seems likely that both 'B.R.' and 'R.B., gentlemen' are fictitious. In accordance with the title-page statement that the work was 'Commended to the press by B.R.', the dedicatory epistle by B.R. claims that the manuscript was put into his hands by none other than the ghost of Robert Greene. The tract itself purports to be written by Robert Greene in the first person, and its style and vocabulary so closely resemble Greene's as to suggest that Robert Greene was, in fact, the author. Moreover the anti-Catholic sentiments in *Greene's News* accord with similar sentiments in Greene's *Oration or Funeral Sermon*, published in 1585 with no information on the title-page concerning the name of the printer, the place of publication, or the location at which the book was to be sold. All these circumstances, taken together, suggest that *Groatsworth, The Repentance of Robert Greene, Kind-Heart's Dream, Greene's Funerals*, and *Greene's News* are part of a hoax concerning the death of Robert Greene in which the printer John Danter and his compositor, Henry Chettle, played key roles. The modern spelling version of *Greene's News* below was prepared from the University of Michigan microfilm of the copy in the Huntington Library.

GREENE'S NEWS BOTH FROM HEAVEN AND HELL

Prohibited the first for writing of books, and banished out of the last for displaying of
cony-catchers

Commended to the press
by B.R.

At London
Printed Anno Domini
1593

To the renowned Gregory Cole, chief burgomaster of the castle of Clonard, marquess of merry conceits, and grand cavalier amongst boon companions and all good fellowship, at his chaste chamber at Dublin in Ireland, B.R. sendeth greeting

It was my fortune, sir, not long since to travel between Pancras Church & Pie Corner, being somewhat late in the evening about an hour after the setting of the sun, and casting up mine eyes towards the skies to behold the twinkling stars that had then but newly discovered themselves, I might see how the Man of the Moon was beating of his dog. This fearful aspect did wonderfully daunt me with doubt of some angry accident that might shortly betide me, and I had not paced many steps but directly in the path before me there appeared a most grisly ghost wrapped up in a sheet, his face only discovered, with a pen under his ear and holding a scroll of written paper in his hand. I crossed the way of purpose to shun him, but cross as I could, he was evermore before me, that pass I might not unless I should run over him. I remembered myself how old fathers were wont to say that spirits in such cases had no power to speak to any man until they were first spoken unto, and therefore taking unto me a constrained courage I asked him what he was & what was his meaning to trouble me in my passage, who answered thus. I am, said he, a spirit, yet fear thou nothing, for my coming is not to do thee any manner of harm, but to request a matter at thy hands which thou mayest not deny me. For thou must understand I am the spirit of Robert Greene, not unknown unto thee (I am sure) by my name when my writings, lately privileged on every post, hath given notice of my name unto infinite numbers of people that never knew me by the view of my person. The matter that I would request thee to perform is the committing of these papers to the press, wherein, because I have there manifested the very drift of mine own devise, I may therefore be the more sparing unto thee in relating the circumstances. This may suffice, nor fail not thou to do as I have willed thee.

Herewithal popping the papers into my hand, I cannot tell what account I should make of his departure, or whether I might say he flew into the air or sunk into the earth, he was so suddenly vanished out of my sight, but I was glad I was rid of his company, and homewards I went hastily to my lodging, where casting for a light I began by myself to peruse over these lines, wherein I found such a mess of altogether that I knew not what I should make of the medley.

Spiced it was here and there with mystlin, a kind of grain that is made of knave and rye mixed both together; pleasurable it was in many places to be read, and therefore fittest for melancholy humours. And bethinking me of my friends to whom I might commend it, in the end I resolved of your own good self, and the rather finding it to be delightful and pleasant, I thought it a fit restorative to recall you from that melancholy conceit that hath so long pestered your brains for the loss of a mill dismembered and shaken down by the rage of a pelting puff of wind, but such a paltry tempest should not dismay a man of your spirit when it is well known to every gamester that although the knave of trumps be the second card at maw, yet the five-finger may command both him and all the rest of the pack. I could tell you a tale, Master Gregory, of an ass who, leaving the place where he was first foaled, fortun'd to stray into a strange forest, and finding the beasts of that desert to be but simple, had never seen the majesty of the lion, neither had they felt the

cruelty of the tiger, nor had any manner of ways been wronged by the oppressions of the leopard, the bear, the panther, or any other devouring or ravening beasts.

This paltry ass, seeing their simple plainness, found means to wrap himself in a lion's skin, and then with proud looks and lofty countenance ranging among the herds he would stretch out his filthy throat, bellowing and braying (as nature had taught him) with so hideous and horrible a noise that the poor beasts that were within his hearing began already to tremble & shake for fear. Then he began to tyrannize, commanding what himself pleased amongst them, and not contenting himself with that obeisance which had been fit for an honourable beast, and more than was due to an ass, would many times take upon him some duties proper to the person of the lion himself, and in the end became a notable sheep-biter, worrying and devouring whole flocks of poor sheep that happened within his precinct or jurisdiction.

The wolf that had lain all this while close amongst the mountains, and having gotten understanding of the nature and disposition of this ass thought him a fit companion for his consortship, and combined with him in such a friendly league that between them, the one taking opportunity to filch and steal in the night, the other using his tyranny to raven and devour in the day, the poor harmless cattle that lived within their reach were still oppressed, & never free from peril. The ass grew to that greatness that he was surnamed Tarquinius Superbus, not that Tarquin that ravished Lucretia of her honour, but it was that Tarquin that ravished a church of her livings, and an ass I found him, and so I will leave him.

Peradventure, Master Gregory, you expected a wiser conclusion, but what would you look to come from a man that hath been lately so scared with sprites that he hath not yet recovered the right use of his senses? It may be true that devils are afraid to pass by a cross, but I am sure knaves are not afraid to shroud themselves behind a conduit. You may perceive, sir, my wits are set a-wandering, but knowing your discretion enough to conceive my meaning, I will trouble you no further, but with this abrupt conclusion will bid you heartily farewell.

Your assured friend,
B.R.

Greene's news both from heaven and hell

Be not dismayed, my good friends, that a dead man should acquaint you with news, for it is I, I per se I, Robert Greene *in Artibus Magister*, he that was wont to solicit your minds with many pleasant conceits, & to fit your fancies at the least every quarter of the year with strange & quaint devises best beseeming the season and most answerable to your pleasures. Having therefore so many times taken the true measure of your appetites, & finding the very height of your dispositions inclined to novelties, that you might the rather see how willing I am to satisfy your humours, I have sent you here the whole discourse of my adventures, what hath betide me since I left the terrestrial world, with a very true report of my infernal travels. Strange peradventure for you to understand of, but for the truth of the matter, if you shall anywhere stand in doubt, do but compare the place with that golden volume of *Legenda Aurea*, or with the works of that famed wise man Sir Thomas More in the book of *Quoth I to your friend* and *Quoth your friend to me*, in his discourse of *Utopia*, & the *Supplication of Souls* in purgatory. If your conscience be yet scrupled, and that these authentic authorities will not fully satisfy you, turn over then to the *Rhemish Testament*, and leaving the chapters and words of the evangelists, look into the notes inserted by that holy fraternity of Jesuits and that blessed brood of seminaries, and tell me then if you do not find matter seeming more incredible than any by me here alleged, and yet I dare boldly avouch it (and that without blushing), if you consider only of the circumstances you shall find no less cause to laugh at the one than to believe the other. Having thus prepared your minds to receive the certainty of my discourse, now likewise set open your ears and be attentive to the rest, for thus it followeth.

When pitiless death had summoned my soul to leave his transitory estate, infusing his frosty humour through all the parts of my body, leaving my breathless corps a fit prey for the sepulchre, my deceased ghost wandering now to and fro in many obscure & unknown ways desirous to find a place to rest, at the length lighted into a strait and narrow tract so overgrown with briars & brambles that there was almost no passage left, and as it should seem unto me, did lead unto some ruined place where all form of trade & traffic was decayed, the solitariness whereof (methought) was best befitting & answering to my humour, so that with great difficulty scratching through the bushes, it brought me at the length to the foot of a mighty steep hill whose height I was not able to discern, but by the unpleasantness of the path leading over monstrous rocks craggy & ill-favoured to pass, I perceived it to be the highway to heaven. But should I tell you here the toil that I had to climb this mountain, with what labour I attained it, how many breathings I took by the way before I could reach it, what folly I found in myself to undertake it, and should I describe unto you at large how many inconveniences they find that undertakes this passage to heaven, peradventure I might so discourage you that a great number would never desire to come there at all. But this I can assure you for your better comfort, he that hath a willing mind to undertake this travel, let him bring with him a pottle of that liquor which I was wont to drink with my hostess at the Red Lattice in Tormoyle [=Turnmill?] Street and he shall find it more available in the furthering of his journey than a whole pokeful of the Pope's pardons.

When I was gotten up to the top of the hill, after that I had a little panted for breath, looking forward over a fair green (as my highway did direct me), I might perceive (a little distant from me) where two were fast together by the ears. Weapons they had none more than their bare fists, but with them they laid on such load that I perceived the one was loath to remain in the other's debt, and I somewhat mending my pace, when I was come unto them presently knew them both to be of mine old acquaintance, the one Velvet Breeches, the other Cloth Breeches, between whom I had not long before been a stickler, and (as I supposed) had taken a quiet order between them for ending of all controversies, but they never the more upon my arrival forbore the one the other, but sometimes with downright blows enough to have felled a bullock, sometime with bobs at the lips able to have dashed out their teeth, otherwhiles lugging one another by the ears as if they had committed some offence in listening too lightly after foolish speeches, but Velvet Breeches, being in the French fashion, with a goodly lock hanging down his left cheek wherein Cloth Breeches had so snarled his fingers that when I thrust in between them to have parted them I could not pluck away his hand till he had plucked away hair and all that he had hold on, but having once put them asunder, I willed them as they were men to hold their hands. Why, quod I, do you know what you do, or do you remember the place where you are? I am sure we be not far from heaven-gates, and if St. Peter should understand of your abuse, I know he would commit you both to the porter's lodge.

Velvet Breeches, who was so far out of breath that he was not able to speak, in the end, when he had awhile well blustered and blown, delivered me these words:

This base fellow, whom I have ever disdained, and although in our late controversy by the inconsideration of a partial jury he prevailed against me, sentence being given on his side, the which I think doth encourage him the rather in his presumption toward me, but I ever scorning him, denying him (as he is) unworthy to converse with a gentleman of any quality or training up, and as I was erewhiles quietly travelling all alone in a solitary muse how I might behave myself when I came to heaven, what salutations I might render to the saints, with what grace I might give the *beso las manos* to the monarchs and great princes that had reigned in the world, and what countenance I might carry best beseeming a gentleman of my reputation & calling newly coming amongst so many strangers of all sorts amongst whom I was altogether unknown and had no manner of acquaintance, as I was painfully and with great difficulty travelling up the hill in these & other like cogitations, this barbarous fellow (whose rude training up hath better enabled him to endure labour & toil than those that have lived in pleasure & ease) was followed hard at my heels before I was aware of him, which in truth at the first made me half afraid, but looking back & seeing who it was, my fear was turned into disdain, and my stomach marvellously began to swell against him, but without any manner of word speaking unto him I kept my way, the which being so strait (as you know) that there can pass but one at once, I held him behind me till I was gotten up to the very height of the hill, where the passage growing more spacious, he makes no more ado at the matter, but without any word speaking steps afore, & began to hold on his way as though I had been but his man, and should have waited on him in his journey, the which my stomach not able to brook, I reproved his malapert sauciness. He by and by began to grow into comparisons, both of myself and my pedigree, when it is well known that Velvet Breeches was never less than

a gentleman, and Cloth Breeches never more than a peasant, and that I have ever kept company where such a vassal as he is might be ashamed to show his face, and therefore hold it in great scorn that he should take the way of me, now travelling to so glorious a presence.

Cloth Breeches, that stood all this while with his head hanging on the one side, and biting of his nether lip, answered him thus:

Velvet Breeches, touching thy parentage, from whence thou art descended, what thou mayest claim for thy gentility, and how thou maintainest thy bravery, thou knowest hath been already sufficiently disputed upon between us, and by the verdict of a jury (whom thou falsely accusest of inconsiderate partiality), they have pronounced against thee, and decreed on my side, the which sentence, until by a new trial thou dost seek to aver, thou art not till then able to avoid. I will not therefore reiterate any matter already handled and fully concluded, but briefly to answer thy past speeches, thou saidst thou wert half afraid when I first overtook thee, and I believe thee, for I perceived by thy blushing that either thou wast in doubt of a constable that had followed thee with hue and cry, or of a bailiff with a writ out of the King's Bench that had come to arrest thee. For the generosity thou braggest of, acknowledging thyself to be a gentleman & accounting me for a peasant, I will deal plainly with thee in that. There be some fools indeed like thyself that do call thee Master Velvet Breeches, & me they call Goodman Cloth Breeches, but look generally through all the parts of England and you shall see the goodman Cloth Breeches at home keeping good hospitality when Master Velvet Breeches sells away his house or keeps his doors shut and will not be spoken withal. For the company which thou sayest thou hast kept where I might be ashamed to show my face, I know not where it should be unless in some brothel-house, for those be the places where thou most frequentest, wherein thou hast truly spoken, for there indeed I would be much ashamed to be seen.

Velvet Breeches would fain have replied, but that I interrupted him in these words, saying:

My masters and very good friends both, I perceive you have not read all my books which I have purposely put forth for the benefit of my countrymen, for if you had but seen *Greene's Farewell to Folly*, methinks the bare title, without turning over leaf to look further into the matter, might have moved you to this consideration, that the very ground of your contention is mere folly and flat foolishness, the which you should have shaken hands withal, and so to have bid it adieu, taking a fair farewell of a foul oversight, and in one other of my books called *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, why, if there were but one pennyworth of wit equally distributed between you both, you would never use to quarrel & fall together by the ears as you travel by the way. Blame me not, my good countrymen, though I use bitter expulsives to expel your gross errors. You are travelling, I perceive, to a place of blessed peace & quiet rest. What, would you think to enter with malicious minds? No, the porter is circumspect, & can look narrowly into men's dispositions. You, Master Velvet Breeches, you are a gentleman, and you are bravely suited & gallantly apparelled, and you peradventure will look for pre-eminence, but do you think that either your great title or gay clothes will anything at all stand you in stead?

No, for St. Peter will first look into your scutcheon (for if you be a gentleman you must show your arms; otherwise you will be proved but a counterfeit, and those St. Peter cannot abide), and if there shall be found either in the coat or crest any bloody or cruel beast, any ravenous or devouring fowl, or any other mark or token whatsoever whereby it may appear that your gentry hath been advanced by rape, by ravin, by bribery, by deceit, by oppression, by extortion, by usury, by perjury, and to make short, by any manner of fraud and subtilty, you are utterly undone; he will lock the gates against you, he will not suffer you to enter. And you, Goodman Cloth Breeches, peradventure you, under your simple attire and homely habit, you think to find so much the more favour, but I can tell you it will not serve the turn, for St. Peter shuts out forty false knaves in a year that come creeping thither in friars' coats, and monks' cowls.

I am now to put you in mind of another of my books called *Greene's Never Too Late*. O that you had but read over that book in time, but now it is too late for me to spend such wishes, and more later for you to redress your former follies. It resteth then that we agree together like friends, and travel together like loving countrymen. Let us not exhibit complaints one against another, for you shall find we shall be charged with matters more than we shall well be able to answer.

Truly, said Velvet Breeches, your wise persuasions hath so lenified my choleric passion that I am content for this present journey to admit of Cloth Breeches as a companion; neither is it himself that I do so much despise, but his mean and simple attire.

And for my part, answered Cloth Breeches, I can be contented to pass in friendly manner with Velvet Breeches; neither is it his gay apparel that I find fault withal, but with his several and sundry abuses.

Well then, said I, I hope the greatest part of this quarrel is at an end for the present. Let us therefore spend no longer time with any further discourings, but let us go forwards till we have likewise ended our journey. Agreed, said they, and forwards we went, and within a very small distance we might perceive a far more clear and radiant light than ever before till that present we had beholden, and immediately we might behold the tops of the heavenly buildings, whose towers and turrets were of such exceeding brightness that, our eyes dazzled, we were not able directly to look upon them, which gave us so great comfort that we mended our pace till at the last we might hear the most sweet and delectable melody that ever (I think) happened to any ears, the harmony not possible to be described, and by this time we were come hard to heaven-gates, which we found shut and fast locked, and at the least a hundred persons walking up and down with sad and heavy countenances, conferring now and then by two or three together, making semblance by the show of their behaviour that their minds were perplexed with some distressed grief. This spectacle made me wonderfully to muse what I might think of the matter, but we three, holding still in company, passed to and fro by them, and they likewise by us, we knowing none of them, nor they knowing none of us. At the last meeting with one all alone by himself whose grave & sober aspects argued a stayed and discreet mind, and leaving my company for the time, I singled him out, first saluting him

with a courteous congee, the which he as kindly returning me again, I began in this sort to enter parle with him:

Courteous sir, if a stranger's boldness might not breed offence, I would request you to satisfy me but in this one demand. I am (as you may perceive) unacquainted in this place, having taken a tedious and painful travel, and being now arrived, would be glad to understand the success of my journey, and I have walked to & fro here this long hour, and in all this space I could never see anyone pass either in or out, nor the gate so much as opened, which seemeth strange unto me, considering the multitude which do frequent the place. It makes me jealous that all should not be well in heaven, and to grow in suspicion of I know not what.

Truly, my good friend, answered this grave sir, it should seem you have never been a suitor, that would look for so quick a dispatch. You have walked up and down (you say) here this hour, and there be here in this company that have travelled as far as you, and have walked up and down here this month, peradventure a year, perhaps more, and would be glad if they might be dispatched yet within a week, a fortnight, or a month; yea, if it were somewhat more they would be glad even then to come to an end of their suits. You must, sir, therefore be contented to stay your time & to take your fortune, and think you came hither in a very happy hour if you be dispatched in a quarter of a year. Your news, sir, said I, doth not a little make me wonder, but if without offence I might but deal thus much farther with you, what might be the cause, I beseech you, that there is no more regard to the dispatching of poor suitors that have laboured & tired themselves many ways in hope to have here a speedy release as well for the redress of their sustained wrongs as also to be rewarded as they shall be found worthy by desert, for as it is supposed, this is the very place where justice & right is most duly administered, & therefore is accounted the only place of comfort, but can there by any greater wrong than for a man to be so long deferred from his right, or may there be a more discomfort than when a man shall never hope to have end of his suits?

My good friend, answered the other again, although you have said no more than is truth, but yet something for your better satisfaction, your consideration must have some reference to the time, for one of the greatest matters that doth hinder the forwarding of suits at this instant over it hath been in times past is this, in brief to be spoken, the wonderful affairs of great importance and the continual business that St. Peter is daily troubled withal.

What, I pray, sir, said I, is St. Peter more troubled with business now than in times past he hath been?

O sir, said the other, you need not doubt of that, & there is great reason for it that it cannot otherwise be he hath so many affairs to run though that it is almost thought impossible how he should execute them all. For first, he is Knight Porter here of heaven-gates, a place, I warrant you, of no less charge than trouble. Then, he is constituted the Prince of the Apostles, & confirmed in that authority by all the Popes for this three or four hundred year, so that all the rest of the apostles can do nothing without his

allowance, and whatsoever he doth they cannot recall. Then, he is the Pope's factor, & hath the handling & determining of all causes for him, and hath lately been more troubled with his brabblings for the holding up of St. Peter's chair than with all the kings & princes again in Christendom. Fourthly, he is the Master of the Requests chosen by the papists to present their prayers to God, and they ply him every day with mo pelting petitions than his leisure will permit to look over in a month after. These & so many other matters he hath still to look into that if he had six able bodies, they were all too little to run though his other affairs.

Why, said I, this is a piteous case, that having such infinite business as I perceive by your speeches, that he hath not some assistants to help him, & that so many troubles should not lie all on one man's neck.

Well, said he, this is your opinion; you have given your verdict, but have you not learned *Quod supra nos, nihil ad nos*, it is not for you & me to say what is behoveful for saints? They know their times & what is necessary better than you or I can instruct them, & therefore not to be found fault withal in any of their dealings.

These speeches ended, giving him great thanks for his courtesy I returned again to my two companions, Velvet Breeches and Cloth Breeches, to whom I imparted all my news, which struck them both into a sudden dump, but especially Cloth Breeches, whose training up had not been accustomed much to give attendance, but it fell out the very same afternoon that Our Lady, with the eleven thousand virgins, had been walking in the garden to take the air, & in her coming back, fortuning to look out at a casement she saw us altogether as we were walking, and calling to her gentleman-usher she demanded what we were. He answered that we were suitors which there did give our attendance. Alas, poor souls, said she, I did perceive indeed by their piteous looks that their minds were troubled with sorrow and grief, and without any other words speaking, she departed, and causing all other business to be for the time set apart, she took order that all suitors should presently be dispatched.

The next morning something early St. Peter came forth to a place where he useth to sit for the hearing of causes, for that there is a custom that if any man do but once get his feet within heaven-gates he is never after thrust out, and therefore he taketh assured order that none may enter but such as shall be thought worthy for their deserts to continue the place. St. Peter having now seated himself, order was taken that every suitor should successively be heard, he that had remained longest to be first called, and so to proceed to the second in due course accordingly. I and my two companions were the latest that were there arrived, and therefore the last to be dispatched. The rest were examined by one and one, and that in such severe and strait manner that amongst every ten there were scarce one admitted to have entrance into heaven. The articles that were objected against them were too many in this place to be rehearsed, but one thing I noted well, which was, there were some that showed him the Pope's passport sealed with lead under his privy signet, but Jesus, how St. Peter did befool them to show him such a writing being not confirmed under the hands of the four evangelists; he commanded them presently to avoid and to come no more in his sight.

Our turns being now come to say for ourselves, I was the first of the three that was called for. St. Peter demanded of me what might be my name, and what trade I had used. I told him my name was Robert Greene, by profession a scholar, and commenced Master of Arts. O, quoth St. Peter, I have heard of you. You have been a busy fellow with your pen. It was you that writ the books of cony-catching, but sirrah, could you find out the base abuses of a company of petty varlets that lived by pilfering cozenages and could you not as well have descried the subtle and fraudulent practices of great cony-catchers such as rides upon foot-cloths, and sometime in coaches, and walks the streets in long gowns and velvet coats? I am sure you have been in Westminster Hall where you have seen poor clients animated to commence actions and to prosecute suits till they have brought themselves to beggary, & when all is spent they are turned off like fools, and sent home by Weeping Cross. And let me see now if any of your crossbiters, your lifters, your nippers, your foisters, or any other of the whole rabblement of your cony-catchers, call him by what name you list, be like unto these, or more mischievous in a commonwealth. Then have you covetous landlords, that doth daily so exact and cheat of their poor tenants that they were better light into the laps of a cutpurse than to dwell within the precincts of a cut-throat. Yet have you a proud kind of cony-catchers that having but a penner and ink-horn hanging at his girdle, yet creeping into some great man's favour to become his clerk or secretary, by plain cony-catching within very few years will purchase three or four hundred pound land a year.

Or should I put you in mind of great cony-catchers placed in offices who are continually building of houses and still purchasing of revenues to leave to their heirs, perhaps by deceiving the prince or cozening the subject, but how should they compass so great abundance but by some practice in cony-catching unless they be such which the prince doth favour, of whom she bestoweth many gracious and liberal gifts? I will not say there be cony-catchers amongst clergymen that will catch at a benefice sometime before it falls, and now and then by simony or other corruption having caught two or three, can be contented likewise to catch their tithes from their poor flock, but very seldom to feed them, or to catch any of their souls for the kingdom of heaven. But now, my friend, take this for your answer: you that could busy yourself to fable out so many follies without indifferency, and to become a writer with such partiality, I must tell you truth, heaven is no habitation for any man that can look with one eye and wink with the other, for there must none rest there that doth use to halt, but such as be plain and true-dealing people.

I would very fain have replied in mine own excuse, but St. Peter cut me off, telling me that I was answered, and that having mine answer, I should trouble him no further. And forthwith speaking to him that stood next me, asked him his name, who told him that he was called Velvet Breeches. St. Peter asked him further what countryman he was. He answered, an Englishman. I cannot think you to be a natural Englishman, said St. Peter, for that I never heard of any of your name in that country. Yes, sir (if it please you), said Velvet Breeches, my ancestors came in with the Conquest, and my predecessors have still continued gentlemen both of worship and credit.

As Velvet Breeches had ended these words, there happened to come by divers princes that had reigned kings of England, all of them mounted upon great horses, and had been abroad upon the green running at the ring, the which princes being espied by St. Peter, he called unto them, requesting them a little to stay, and then pointing to Velvet Breeches he demanded if any of them did know him or any of his name remaining in England in the time of their reigns and governments, but they denied altogether that ever they had seen him, or ever known any gentleman of English birth that was of his name.

Amongst this royal troop was King Henry the Third, and he confidently protested that in the time of his reign there was no such person to be found, for, said he, I sent one of my servants to buy me a pair of hose, and he returned again with a pair that was but six shillings and eight pence the price, wherewith I, being displeased, told him that I would have had him bestowed a mark of a pair, but he said there were none such to be got. But as for the other Cloth Breeches that standeth by him, I know him very well by his looks, he doth so much resemble his ancestors, and hath the very lively picture of his predecessors, the which were very honest plain-dealing men without any manner of falsehood or deceit.

St. Peter thanked them of their pains, and thus the princes departed, who being gone, St. Peter said: You have heard, Master Velvet Breeches, what hath passed, but yet because you have avouched yourself to be a gentleman, you shall have this favour: we will examine some other of later time who peradventure may better call you to remembrance. There stood a messenger by, whom St. Peter willed presently to go fetch him some Englishman that was but of some ten or twenty years' residence in the place, charging him to go with speed and to make a quick return. The messenger met with a company that were new come out of a tennis-court, amongst whom was a mercer that within these ten years had dwelt in Cheapside; him the messenger brought to St. Peter, who demanded of him if he did know a gentleman in England called by the name of Master Velvet Breeches. Yea, marry, said the mercer, I know him to my cost, for this is he that stands by me, and here I avouch it before his face that he is no gentleman, but a proud dissembler and a cozening counterfeit, which if it please you to give me leave, I will prove before this holy company. Saint Peter answered, we do not only give you leave, but also do straitly command you to speak a truth and withal to speak no more than is truth, what you are able to charge him withal, and how you are able to prove your words.

The mercer answered: It were too much impiety for a man in my case to raise any slander, or maliciously to accuse any man wrongfully, but to the end the truth of the matter might more evidently appear, I must crave pardon a little to use circumstances, and thus it followeth.

About fourteen or fifteen years since, when I kept a shop in Cheapside, following there my trade, this counterfeit gentleman, being consorted with another of his own pitch, a bird of the same feather, although in times past his only familiarity was but with dukes, earls, lords, and such other worthy personages, yet at this day an ordinary companion and conversant with every skipjack, and himself of base condition and a common cozener, his name called Silk Stockings. These two copesmates, Velvet Breeches and Silk Stockings,

changing their names, and because I will not be offensive to other gentlemen that peradventure be of the same name which they then took to themselves, I will call Velvet Breeches Master White, and Silk Stockings, he shall be Master Black. These two counterfeit gentlemen, Master White and Master Black, providing themselves of lodgings, Master White, as it might be in Gracious Street in a house where nobody knew him, and Master Black in Fenchurch Street fast by, where he found as little acquaintance. Their lodgings being thus provided, Master White walking into Paul's, and seeing many bills set up on the west door by such as wanted masters, perusing the bills, and finding one that he thought might be fit for his purpose (and in truth was as cozening a knave as he himself), gave notice under the bill that he should repair into Gracious Street, and at such a sign inquire for Master White.

The fellow finding his bill subscribed (and hoping now to light upon some cheat), made haste the same night & came to Master White's chamber. Sir, saith he, I perceive your Worship wants a servant, and I am the party whose bill it hath pleased you to subscribe, and would be glad to take any pains with a good master to please him. O, says Master White, art thou he? Marry, it is truth, I would give entertainment to a young fellow that would be diligent and trusty. If it please you, sir, answered the party that meant nothing but deceit, I will find you sureties for my truth and good behaviour. Thou sayest well, says Master White, but trust me, I like thy looks well; methinks thou hast a good honest face. But tell me if thou wilt be with me; I must have thee immediately.

Sir, answered the other, if it please you to give me leave till the morning that I might fetch some few things that I have to shift me withal, I will then attend your Worship. Very well, says Master White, thou mayest do so, and till then farewell.

Here was now a master and a man well met, for the master meant to use his man but to serve his turn for a point of cozenage, and the man meant to use his master till he might find opportunity to run away with his purse or some other of his apparel, as he had done before with many others. But according to appointment, in the morning Trusty Roger came, and was received of his master, who now with his man at his heels frequented his friend Master Black's chamber for a day or two, and the one of them could not be without the other's company, but Master Black must dine with Master White at his chamber, and Master White must sup with Master Black in his chamber, but the sequel was, Master White with his servant attending of him, walking into Cheapside and lighting into my shop, demanded of my servants where their master was. They told him that I was within, & that if it pleased him to have anything with me, they would call me. Yes, marry, would I, says he, I pray you call him, for I would speak with him. One of them telling me that there was a gentleman in the shop that would speak with me, I came down, and Master White, first courteously saluting me, began in this sort to discourse with me:

Sir, I am a gentleman belonging to such a nobleman in the north parts of England, and in truth the steward of his house, and having now some business for my Lord here in the city which I am come to dispatch, I must disburse some money upon velvets & other silks both for my Lord and Lady, and I tell you truth, they are such wares as I have little skill to make choice of. The matter why I was desirous to speak with you was but to commit

that trust to yourself which I durst not adventure with your man, and my request is that you would deal so honestly with me as I might not be deceived in the choice of my stuff. The benefit that you shall win by your good usage is you shall receive ready money for such wares as I mean at this present to buy, and you shall win a customer of whom hereafter you may take greater sums.

I, hearing his smooth speeches delivered under pretence of honesty, and seeming otherwise both in the show of his apparel and dutiful attendance of his man that he had been (indeed) some gentleman of reputation and good reckoning, desirous so much the rather to win such a customer, I told him that I would not only fit him with as good stuff as any man in London should show him, but also in the price I would use him with such reason as in any other place they were able to afford him, the which promise (in very deed) I meant faithfully to perform.

Herewithal he drew a paper forth of his pocket wherein he began to read. Item, for my Lord, two yards and a half of black velvet and two yards and a half of russet velvet for two pair of hose, with three yards and a half of black satin and as much of russet for doubleting. Item, for my Lady, fourteen yards of the best three-piled velvet for a loose gown, with six yards of peach-coloured satin for her petticoat. Item, for Mistress Jane & Mistress Frances, fourteen yards of double-tufted(?) taffeta for each of them a gown, and twelve yards of carnation satin for their petticoats. To conclude, he brought me out so many items that the prices of the wares amounted to 50 and odd pounds, the which when I had sorted him out, he began to find fault that they were too high rated, praying me to set my lowest price for that he meant to pay ready money, and therefore if I would not be reasonable he must be driven to seek some other shop. I, very loath to drive him away, pitched him a price so reasonable as in truth I was not able better cheap to afford them, but his mind being only set upon cozenage, told me he durst not adventure to give so much money, and thus away he went.

Within an hour after, having sent away his man, which of purpose he had done, he returned again, and finding me in my shop he asked me if I would abate no money in my stuff. I, thinking he had been some otherwhere to cheapen, told him I had rated them so reasonably as I was able to afford them, and that I was sure in any shop where he had since been he had not found the like wares for the like price.

Nay, truly, said he, I have not been in any other place to cheapen any such stuff, but yet since I left your house I have disbursed forty pounds in other things that I have sent to my lodging by my man, but I see you are hard, and yet sith I have dealt thus far with you, I will not forsake you; come therefore and cut me off the parcels. The which accordingly I did, and laying them together, he desired me to cast the total sum, the which as before I have said, amounted to fifty and odd pounds.

Sir, said he, I must crave to borrow one of you servants to help me home with this stuff, and he shall bring you your money. I have sent mine own man about business, and have nobody here now to help me. Very well, sir, said I, my man shall wait upon you, or do any other courtesy.

And thus willing one of my men to take up the stuff and follow him, I delivered him a note what money he was to receive. Together they go till they came to his chamber in Gracious [=Gracechurch] Street where they found his man remaining, who (indeed) was somewhat perplexed in his mind because there was nothing there of his master's that was worth the carrying away unless he should have taken the sheets from the bed, but that he deferred, hoping shortly to light of a better cheat. But Master White demanded of his man if Master Black had not been there since his coming into the chamber, who answered him, no, neither had he seen him all that day.

Master White with that seemed as though he began to be angry, and willed his man presently to haste to his chamber, and to will him with all speed to bring away the two hundred pounds that he was to receive, or at the least to bring one of them with him immediately, for that he was to pay the greatest part of it to one that stayed in his chamber for it. Away went his man, and in the meantime Master White entertained my man in this manner. He asked him if he had any acquaintance with some goldsmith in the Row that was his friend, and would use him well in the buying of a chain and a pair of bracelets, and not to exact too much of him for the fashion. My man told him that he was well acquainted with two or three that would deal very reasonably with him.

He seemed to give my man great thanks, and told him that so soon as his man was returned, and that he had paid him his money, he would himself go back with him and buy them. His own man in this mean space was come to Master Black's chamber, whom he found within, provided for the purpose, and was as busy with a standish, a great many of papers lying before him, and a whole set of counters in his hand, as though he had been casting up of as huge sums as the King of Spain receiveth from the Indies. He had likewise lying before him a great bag of money, the sight whereof gave the messenger so good an appetite that he wished the bag and himself ten miles out of the place. But doing his master's message, Master Black answered him that he was so full of present business that he could not stir forth from his chamber, but, saith he, the money thou seest where it lieth and if he will come himself, or send some other to tell it and receive it. Why, sir, said the other, if you please to deliver me the money, I can carry it. Yea, says Master Black, but your master, I perceive, is in such haste as he would be offended if you should stay the telling of it, but go your ways to him and tell him what I have said, and then let him choose whether he will come or send; the money is here ready for him. Away goes this companion, comforting himself with the assured hope that the carrying of this bag would have lighted to his lot, which if it had, he meant to have given them all the slip or his running should have failed him, but coming to his master, he told him that Master Black was so busy in his chamber casting up of accounts that he could not come, but sir, said he, the money I did see lying upon the table ready for you, and he would have delivered it unto me but that I feared my long staying in the telling of it might have offended you.

Why then, said Master White, go your ways back again, and I will entreat this good fellow to go with you (meaning by my man), to whom he further said: I pray thee, my good friend, do so much as go with my man, and first pay yourself according to your

note, and help him then to tell out the rest, for I think his skill will scarce serve him to tell so much money, and drawing out of his pocket a pair of gold weights which he delivered to my man, he said, and I beseech you, if any part of his payment be in gold, see that it be neither cracked nor crazed, and that it carries weight, and I pray you, in your coming back again with my man, do so much as call in here, and I in the meantime will dispatch a little business, and will by that time be ready to go with you unto the Goldsmiths' Row, where I must crave your help for the buying of this chain and bracelets. My man, suspecting no manner of deceit, went along with his man, but coming to Master Black's chamber there was nobody to be found, neither could any of the servants of the house say whither he was gone; they saw him go forth but a little before their coming in, but whither he went they could not tell, whereupon they both together returned back again to certify Master White, but coming to his chamber, he was likewise gone, and had carried away all the same stuff which my servant had left with him.

My man beginning but now to suspect when it was too late, immediately caused the officers to lay hold of Master White's man, and he was carried directly to the Counter, where he began to curse the time that ever he met with such a service, confessing that he had cozened many masters before, but now he had met with a master that had a little overreached him. But I upon my man's return came to the places where they had been lodged, and made what inquiry I could, but there was nobody that had any manner of knowledge of them, for they came thither not above four or five days before, making show that they were new come forth of the country, and that the carriers were not yet come with their trunks and apparel, and during the time of their abode had never spent penny in the house for meat, drink, nor lodging, which made them protest it should be a warning unto them what guests they received again so long as they kept house, and here was all the remedy that I could have. But in the end I had intelligence of many other like cozenages they had committed in the city, and the parties were well known to be Master Velvet Breeches & Master Silk Stockings, two counterfeit gentlemen that to maintain their bravery practised such deceits, and would not stick many times to rob by the highway. For the varlet committed to the Counter, whom I could no ways charge with any practice towards me, I released him freely, but for some other villainies which before he had committed to others, and by himself confessed, he was whipped at a cart's arse, and after burnt through the ear, and so commanded to avoid the city.

Thus much (as it hath pleased you to command me) I have truly signified what knowledge I have had of this gentleman, Master Velvet Breeches.

St. Peter, standing up, said: Velvet Breeches, thou hast heard what hath been avouched against thee, and I wonder how thou durst presume to present thyself in this place, knowing the guiltiness of thine own conscience, but I see thou art shameless, and for such persons as thou art there is another place prepared, to the which thou must depart, for here thou mayest not bide. Then speaking to Cloth Breeches he said, and for thee, Cloth Breeches, of whom I have heard so good report, thou mayest separate thyself from thy two companions & enter into that bliss where thou shalt find a happy reward for an honest life.

And thus as he was (by seeming) ready to depart, he espied where one was coming alone by himself within a little distance, whom St. Peter perceiving to be a stranger, stayed his coming, and then speaking unto him, he demanded of him what he was, who answered that he was a poor Yorkshireman, a bricklayer by his occupation, and one that had truly laboured for his living all the days of his life, and, said he, our Master Vicar hath many times told us that if we get our livings honestly with the sweat of our brows, we shall go to heaven, and there we should have such peace, such quiet, such joy, such comfort, such pleasure, and so many God morrows I cannot tell what, but of his words I have had but an ill-favoured journey hither, and what I shall find I cannot tell yet.

St. Peter, seeing his simplicity, said, Why then, my friend, come and follow me, and tell me hereafter how thou likest of the place.

The fellow hastily replied, saying, I pray, sir, let me first ask you a question, do use to let any women come into heaven amongst you?

Why not? said Saint Peter. What should make thee to doubt of that?

Why then, I pray, sir, said the other, did there not a woman come hither about a six weeks ago with a blear eye, a snotty nose, a blabber lip, a stinking breath, her voice was very shrill, and her speech thick and short?

But how dost thou call her name, said St. Peter, whom thou hast described with so many lovely tokens?

Her name, said the other, is called Margery Sweet, but yet more oftener called by the name of Mannerly Margery.

Why, she is in heaven, said St. Peter, and if thou hast anything to say to her, thou mayest there find her.

Marry, God bless me from thence, said the other. If she be there, I know her fashions too well to come any more where she is. She was my wife, and I was married to her sixteen or seventeen years, and i' faith all heaven would be too little for her and me and if we should once meet again, but I am now rid of her, and I hope I will keep me so. She shall not cast it in my teeth that I was so far in love with her to follow her, as she hath many times done, telling me that if I had not been, she might have had a minstrel that would have got more money in a week with his fiddle than I could get in a month with laying of brick.

St. Peter, with the rest of the company, hearing the mad disposition of the fellow, departed, leaving behind him myself, Velvet Breeches, and this bricklayer who forsook to go into heaven because his wife was there. You may easily guess Velvet Breeches and I were perplexed with sorrow enough, but it was too late now for us to bethink ourselves what we should have done, and rested only for us to determine what we must do, & the further we found ourselves bereaved of all possibility to recover again what we had lost,

the nearer approached the horror of our grief and torment, but we had received our final sentence, and there was no place longer for us to stay in. The comfort that was left us was to see if we could find means to get into purgatory, hoping there to find some release by the prayers and charitable devotions of good people, and with this resolution we set forward of our journey. The bricklayer, overtaking us, desired us to accept of his company, protesting that he would be a partaker of our fortunes, whatsoever did betide us.

Velvet Breeches demanded of him what was his name. The other told him that before he was married they called him Ruffling Richard, but after that he was married, they never used better addition than plain Dick. Truly, friend Richard, said Velvet Breeches, methinks you are too plain, and more simple, to forsake heaven because your wife is there. I pray you, sir, said Richard, were you ever married? Yes, marry, was I, said Velvet Breeches, but what of that? I do not understand you, said Richard, for I demand of you if ever you had a wife? And I tell thee I had a wife, said Velvet Breeches. Why dost thou ask me that? Good Lord, said Richard, I never heard a wise man make so foolish an answer, for I ask you if you were married, and you say, yes, and when I demand if ever you had a wife, you answer, aye, marry, had I, and what then? And dost thou call that a foolish answer? said Velvet Breeches. What wouldst thou have me say, yes forsooth? No sir, no, said Richard, but I will teach you some wit how to answer to such a question. When a man doth ask you if you have a wife, you must say, yes, I thank God, or, yes I cry God mercy, for so a man shall directly understand you. For if you say, yes, I thank God, by that we may understand you have a good wife, for the which you are bound to thank God highly because few men doth happen of the like, but if your answer be, yes, I cry God mercy, *subintelligitur* such a wife as mine was, and then you would never have accounted me simple to leave heaven to shun her company, because a man shall live more quietly amongst all the devils of hell than it is possible for him to do that lights on such a wife.

Hearing these pleasant speeches in this manner delivered by Richard, I could not choose but smile notwithstanding my cause of grief, and taking it to be a benefit of fortune that had vouchsafed to favour us with the company of this merry-conceited bricklayer whereby to beguile our pensive thoughts with his pleasant discourses in this our tedious travel, I questioned with him of his wife, what she was when he married her, whether a widow or a maid, by what means he came acquainted with her, and how she became so unruly. Richard in this sort began to discourse.

When I was young, said he, I was as handsome a fellow as any was in the parish where I was born, and for my valour, I durst have travelled into any gentleman's buttery when all the barrels had been full without either sword or dagger about me. For my resolution, if I had once gotten under a maiden's chamber-window, I would never have started till they had emptied a chamber-pot on my head. For my courage, I durst have gone into any bawdy-house, and would have come out again as honest a man as when I went first in. For my credit, I might have run on the score for six pots with any ale-wife that kept house within five miles where I dwelt. For my qualities every manner of way, I had the pre-eminence amongst all the youths that were in our quarters, for at May-tide, who was the

ringleader for the fetching home of a maypole, but I? At midsummer, I was chosen the summer-lord. At every bridal who must dance with the bride but Ruffling Richard? Thus for a pleasant life, the constable of the parish lived not more merrily than I, and for my reputation, I was almost as much revered as our churchwardens, but as the stoutest stand of ale at last is set a-tilt, and the fattest goose comes soonest to the spit, so my former fortunes were drawn to their latest date, and my prime of pleasures concluded with mishap. But oh love, O cruel love, that wast the first front to my felicities. But who can resist love if it be once crept into the bottom of a man's belly? O what a rumbling it makes in his guts, and how it bethrobs him about the heart, and see now the sequel of my mishap.

I fortun'd to be at a sheep-shearing where I met with Margery, she that was my wife, in a fine red petticoat with damask upper bodice, a white apron before her, & upon her head a broad felt hat, with a brave branch of rosemary sticking in her bosom, appointed amongst the rest with a pair of shears to help shear sheep, and I having brought forth a lusty young ram, would have laid him in her lap, but she refusing to take him, said unto me: Now good friend Richard, if you love me, bring me none but polled sheep, for of all things in the world I cannot away with these horned beasts. When I heard these mild words thus gently spoken, & how kindly she pronounced this sentence (Good friend Richard, if you love me), O heavens, thought I what a sweet charm is this? Then noting her modesty, that she could not abide the sight of a horned beast, I began to think with myself how happy might that man be accounted that could light of such a wife, & having but a little thus given scope to mine own affections, love, that had his tinder-box ready to strike fire, by this time had set my fancy of such a flame that not longer able to endure the heat without a cup of sack, I said unto her: Margery, your manner of phrase hath wonderfully troubled me, for in your first speeches you call me your good friend Richard, and then you come in with a doubtful demand in these words (if you love me), as though I could be your good friend and yet did not love you, but Margery, sith you have popped me such a doubtful question, if you and I were alone by ourselves, I would pop you such an answer that you should well find that I loved you, and that hereafter you might leave out your *if*, and say, Richard, *as* you love me.

With these words prettily casting her head at one side she gave me such a leering look that might as well have daunted me with despair as given me comfort & hope of grace, for the one of her eyes was bleared and seemed as though she wept, the other was a pretty narrow pinkeny, looking ever as though she smiled, so that in her very countenance at one instant you might behold pleasure and pain, pity and rigour, courtesy and cruelty, love and disdain, and then with a sweet voice, like one that were asking an alms, she said: Richard, if you love me as you say, your love shall not be lost, but men are so crafty now-a-days before they are married that they will make a maid believe they love her till they have got up her belly, and then they will not stick to deny their own children, and that makes women, when they be once married, to play their husbands such a cast that they shall not know their own children, but if your love be no such love, Richard, you shall not find me unkind.

When I heard the wisdom of the wench, it made my pulses so to beat that I had thought my cod-piece point would have fallen asunder, but for answer I said: Margery, your sober speeches so wisely delivered, together with your sweet countenance so lovely placed, hath so prevailed with your good friend Richard that for the better confirmation of my love, receive here this token as a pledge of my goodwill. And taking then a twopenny piece which I had in my purse, I bowed it and gave it to her, the which when she had received, she said: Well, Richard, now I do account you as mine own, and at night when my mother is gone to bed, if you will come home, we will there talk farther of this matter, & for your welcome, I will bestow of you a mess of cream. Margery, said I, look you keep your promise, for I will be there, and because you will be at so much cost with a mess of cream, I will bring with me a pennyworth of spice-cakes, and although we had thus referred over farther speeches till our next meeting, yet during the time that we remained there in place, O how many amorous glances and loving countenances there passed still to and fro between us.

But at night my appointed time being come, thither I went, and Margery was at the window watching for my coming, who having once espied me, she opened the door, where she received me with such a sweet kiss as if her breath had been lately perfumed for the purpose, whose dainty smell was as savoury as if it had been a red herring that had been newly roasted, her lovely lips pleasant and soft, like a lock of wool that was but then come out of the seam basket. But should I tell you of all the other love-tricks that passed between her and me that night, I might either oppress your stomach to think of it, or otherwise perhaps make you ashamed to hear it, but let this suffice, before I departed our marriage-day was appointed, and Margery in time made her mother acquainted with the matter, who nothing misliking of her daughter's choice, gave her her blessing, with many other good helps to furnish forth her bridal day, the which when time had drawn to be solemnized, and that the lusty youths of the parish were gathered together to go with us to church, & the young damosels were flocked on a heap to wait on the bride, attending her coming forth, the good old woman her mother, who had been ever chary of the lovely chicken her daughter, and even at the very instant when we were ready to go to church, she was schooling of her with this exhortation.

Margery, said she, the day is now come for the which you have so much longed after. It is twenty years ago since you first wished for a husband, and byrlady, daughter, you were then seventeen or eighteen years of age, so that at this present you want not above two or three of forty. Now if wit went by years, you are old enough to be wise, but I being your mother, besides my many years which might advance my skill, so I have buried four several husbands (the heavens be praised for it), which hath so much the more confirmed my experience in the dispositions of men, and can the better judge of their natural inclinations, and by all that I have gathered by mine own proof and practice, I have found it still by trial that the fantasies of men are evermore best fitted with the follies of women. But leaving generalities, and to come to so much as concerneth but thyself, that art now to be married to a husband who in respect of his age thou mightest be his mother, and couldst thou now but consider what a comfort it is for an old woman to be lovingly embraced by a young man, O daughter, daughter, thy mother's mouth begins to water but

with the very imagination to think of the pleasure, and therefore happy mayest thou deem thyself that art so likely to enjoy it.

But here is now a great piece of discretion to be used, for as age conceiveth such contentment with the society of fresh and pleasant youth, so youth will quickly fall a-loathing of cold and crooked age if the parties be not wise to enforce that by art that they are otherwise denied by nature, which is, to show a youthful-disposed mind, how far soever they be spent in years, for it is a tired jade that cannot cry wehee, and a sorry mare that cannot wag her tail. Thou art now to consider the inequality of the years between thyself and thy husband, and therefore a little to whet him on to make him to like of thee the better it shall not be amiss for thee to show some youthful conceit, especially being thy bridal day it is tolerable for thee a little play the wanton. I can tell thee, daughter, men are well pleased to see their wives youthfully given, and there is nothing that doth more delight them than to see them wantonly disposed, and this is the mean to win your husband's liking, and to draw him to that appetite which your many years might quench; remember therefore what I have told you, and fail not for your advantage to show some youthful tricks.

Margery, making a mannerly curtsy, said: Yes, forsooth, mother; I will remember all that you have told me.

By this time all things being prepared, to church we went, where the priest having once done his office, we returned again and were accompanied with our neighbours and friends that went home to dinner with us, for whom there was provided frumenty and minced-pies, besides other good meat both roast and sod, the which being all ready, Margery was placed at the upper end between two of the most substantial honest men, according to the custom of the parish, and myself likewise (as the manner was) did wait that day at the table with a napkin hanging on my shoulder.

But O what a comfort it was unto me to see how daintily Margery fed of every dish that came near her, and how lustily she laid about her for her victuals. And, thought I, if it be true as some will say, that a good-feeding horse will go through with his labour, then I warrant if I give Margery her meat, I need not fear to ride her where I list. But dinner being almost at an end, and the cake-bread and cheese ready to be set on the table, the good old woman her mother, who had likewise been very busy that day in taking pains to fill the pots and to carry away empty dishes, began to cheer up the company, bidding them welcome, and telling them she was sorry there was no better cheer for them.

Margery presently upon the sight of her mother bethought herself what she had to do, and calling now to mind what lesson she had given her, and how she had willed her that day to show some youthful trick thereby to purchase the favour of her husband, and picking out at that very instant a fit opportunity to perform it, she called to her mother in this youthful manner, Munna, up and cack. The old woman, hearing her daughter, said: Why how now, Margery? Fie, for shame, will you speak bug's-words? Could you not prettily have said: I pray you, mother, have me up to pick a rose; nay, now I see you play the wanton too much. Then speaking to the company that sat by, she said: I pray you, bear

with my daughter's childishness, for I know it is the frumenty that doth so much annoy her, for even from her very infancy if she had taken any spoon-meat she was still troubled in the bottom of her backside with a great ventosity. The neighbours, seeing the cleanliness of the wench, did ever after that call her by the name of Mannerly Margery. Thus much to answer your former demand concerning my wife, whether she were a widow or a maid, by the circumstances whereof you may perceive she was a maid, although a very old one, and yet not so far spent in years but she was able to play a youthful trick.

And now for the rest that concerneth but the tragedy of mine own misfortune, to signify the matter at large would be tedious for you to hear & fearful for me to declare, the very memory whereof were enough to make me tremble, but that I know I am far enough from her that was the minister of my woe. Let this suffice, within a very few months after I was married, Margery began to grow jealous, for if she had once been thirsty, and that I wanted money to send to the ale-house, she would tell me that I spent away my thrift amongst some other young queans. Here began our first falling out, and to set forward the matter, there dwelt at the very next house by me a tailor, who had a wife that was sure once a day to measure the breadth of her husband's shoulders with his own meteyard. Margery and this tailor's wife grew to be acquainted, and amongst other conclusions it was agreed between them that to prevent diseases, and to preserve them in health, they would every morning next their hearts take a physical diet, which was a full quart of the quintessence drawn from an ale-tub, warmed by the fire, with a grated nutmeg, half a yard of black-pudding roasted on a gridiron, a quantity of salt with a measure of fine wheat-flour first made into paste and after baked in a loaf of bread; these ingrediencies, after they had incorporated altogether, they would afterwards lightly fast till noon. And they found such a commodity in using this medicine that if the tailor and I had not every morning given them money to pay for the simples, it had not been good for us to have come that day after in their sights, for the tailor's wife, she could handle a meteyard or a cudgel passing nimbly, but Margery had gotten the practice of all manner of weapons. For besides that she had the use of her nails, which she employed many times about my face, she could likewise handle a pair of bellows about my pate, a pair of tongs athwart my shins, a fire-brand sometimes should fly at my head, a ladleful of scalding liquor otherwhiles in my bosom, a three-footed stool, a pot, a candlestick, or any other thing whatsoever came next her hand, all was one to her, and she had learned such a dexterity in the delivery that they should have come whirling about mine ears.

In the end, devising with myself a remedy for these mischiefs, I found the means to be made the constable, hoping that mine office would have been a protection to me for a year, and that she durst not have stricken her Majesty's officer. But within a day or two it was my fortune to hit on a pot of strong ale which she had set up in a corner for her own drinking, and I (being thirsty) gave it such a sup that I left very little behind. The which afterward when she came to seek for, and found her store so pitifully impaired, against my coming home at night she provided herself of a waster, and I was no sooner entered the doors but forth she comes with her cudgel in her hand, and with such a terrible countenance that were able to affright any man that should behold it.

Richard, said she, I had thought you would never have given me occasion to be jealous of you, but now I see you love a cup of strong ale better than you love me, and do you not think then that I have great reason to be displeased with your unkindness towards me, and to beat out that lack of love that doth make you so lightly to regard me?

Margery, said I, take heed what you do, for you know that I am her Majesty's officer, and here I charge you in the Queen's name that you hold your hands. What, master constable, said she, have you gotten an enchantment for me, or do you think that your charm shall serve to excuse you? No, sir, no, for now you have deserved double punishment. First, you being an officer, if you offer wrong, your punishment must be so much the more grievous, and is it not mere injustice to take that which was not provided for you? Next, you have deserved to be well punished for the little reverence you have used in the execution of your office, commanding me in the Queen's name to hold my hands with your cap on your head, nor using any other duty or reverence, but master constable, I will teach you how to use an office. And with that she let fly at my head, at my shoulders, at my arms, and still she would cry: Remember hereafter how you do your office, remember your duty to the Queen, remember when you command in her Majesty's name that you put off your cap, and do it with reverence, and such a number of other remembrances she gave me as I think there was never poor constable before nor since so instructed in an office as I was. To tell you of many other like remembrances which at other times she bestowed on me, I should but trouble you, but the conclusion is, I am now rid of her, and they say that the distance between heaven and hell is great, but if they were asunder five times further than they be, if I might understand where she were in the one, I would never rest till I were got to the other.

Richard having thus discoursed the whole course of his life, of his liking, of his love, of his pleasure, of his pain, although the subject of the matter were scarce worth the hearing, yet considering the place whither we were going, it kept a fit decorum with the journey we had in hand, and as the tale itself was tedious, so by this time we were overpassed a long and wearisome way. The best commodity, the tract was large and spacious, and still descended down a hill into the bottom of a valley, glooming and melancholy to behold, where we might espy one with a wax candle lighted in his hand who was walking by himself, prying and tooting in every corner, and many times stumbling and ready to fall where the way was plain and smooth, that we took him to be some blind man that had lost his way, whereat we began to wonder what he should do with candlelight, that could not see to guide his steps at high noondays. But we keeping on our way were drawn so near him that we might perceive he had the use of his eyes, yet he never perceived us till I saluted him and bade him God-speed, whereat he suddenly started as if he had been half in a fright, but when he had awhile taken the gaze on us he demanded of us how far we had come that way. I told him that we were come from heaven, and that we were going to seek out the place of purgatory, desiring him that if he were acquainted in those quarters, that he would direct us the ready way to go thither.

Alas, gentlemen, said he, that is the place that I have been seeking for this long month together, and I think there is no corner between this and hell that I have left unsearched, and were it not for this holy candle whose virtue is able to defend me from the

enchantment of any spirit or devil, I would think I were goblin led, I have wandered so far about, evermore hitting into dangerous highways that leadeth to hell, and could never find out the path that should bring me to purgatory.

Truly, my friend, said I, if I be not deceived, the light which you carry in your hand (wherein you repose your greatest confidence) is the very mean of your mistaking, & hath so much dimmed your sight and dazzled your eyes that you cannot see the right way, but makes you thus to run stumbling about and to wander to and fro, that you yourself knows not whither. I would wish you therefore to leave it, and you shall see so much the better how to direct your steps. What, said he, would you have me leave my holy candle? Marry, God and good St. Francis bless me out of that mind, but if you be of that religion, I would be sorry to tarry in your company, unless I might induce you by persuasion to think more reverently of holy things.

Truly, said I, a little inducement shall suffice to persuade me to any reasonable matter, and good counsel is evermore to be embraced, but especially at this instant, my case being now as it is.

Why then, said he, I will tell you a true tale wherein you shall perceive the wonderful effect that holy water hath in working against the devil, and this it is. There was not not [sic] long since a very proper young woman that was possessed of a fiend who did so torment & vex her that although she would not go to any sermons nor would ever receive the communion, yet she would sometimes go to church and say her paternoster in English, and now and then eat flesh on Fridays, and would commit many other heresies which this devil tempted and led her to do. But you shall see now, there was a good honest holy priest that was a seminary, who being in place where this woman was, and liking her very well, did begin to pity her case, and of mere devotion pricked forward by a sanctified love he devised with himself how he might fully reclaim her to the holy church, and having attempted many practices in vain, and finding that neither persuasion, charm, nor any manner of conjuration was able to remove the wicked sprite from her, his last help was, he gave her a clyster of holy water, the which he had no sooner put up into her body but the devil immediately forsook her, that she after became a most catholic vessel, and was able to reason so profoundly in that religion that but with a little blast of her backside she would have made the proudest protestant that stood next her to stop his nose.

Another like miracle I am able to protest of mine own knowledge, and this is it. There was a gentleman that is living at this present hour, whose name and dwelling-place if I list I could deliver. This gentleman had been married full out ten years, during which space he never had issue, although both himself and his wife were very desirous to have children. But it fell out that a holy father, a Jesuit, was privily harboured in this gentleman's house, who seeing the gentlewoman to be a lusty and well-liking wench to bear children, did minister unto her the holy sacrament of extreme unction, anointing her parts of generation with holy oil, and laying the sign of the cross over her as she lay on her bed, and this gentlewoman for three years together that this holy father lay in her house had every year a child, and therefore most happy may those people think

themselves that doth retain and foster such holy guests now in these dangerous times, if it were but to have their wives hallowed and to be made holy vessels.

But if I should here enlarge further what miracles hath been wrought by holy water, holy candles, holy ashes, holy oils, holy lambs and many other holy relics, I know I should minister so much contentment to your conceit as the pleasure would make you heartily to laugh.

Sir, said I, your miracles are strange, and they may be true, but yet I am of opinion that for the casting out of devils the name of God is of greater authority than a whole tubful of holy water, and for a woman to be made fruitful in children is likewise the blessing of God, and I do think that for the attainment of anything that is good, it is rather to be requested in the name of the Creator than otherwise to be sought for by the means of the creature.

The other answered again, but men that be of your religion are not able to look into their own errors, for if they were not wilfully blind, they should find it in common experience that he that will look to prevail in his suits shall sooner be dispatched by the mediation of the saints than if he presumed to prefer his cause to God himself, and should find more grace by the means of the creature than if he requested in the name of the Creator, and because I would be glad to confirm you the better, I will show you you [sic] an example.

Admit now that yourself were in a prince's court, and had some suit that might not only concern your own, but that it stretcheth so far as to the advancement of God's glory, the profit of the prince, and the general benefit of the whole country. You are now to prefer this suit. What, will you go to the prince himself (who in this place representeth God)? Why you shall attend a long while before you shall come to his presence, and then, although he be mild, affable, gracious, and full of clemency, and indeed with as many royal virtues as appertaineth to a godly prince, yet he will turn you off to some one grave councillor or some other great personage that is about him to look into your cause and to consider of it (who in this place doth represent the holy saints, which must be your mediator). Now this councillor is so troubled with so many other affairs and such business of great importance that he hath no leisure in the world to remember you. Then must you ply his secretary, or some other that is near about him, and you come to him (with your cap in your hand and low courtesy) and say: I beseech you, sir, remember my suit to your master; I have been long here, and I have spent all that I am able to make, and I pray you, sir, even for Christ's sake and for the tender mercy of God, get me an answer (here you come in the name of the Creator). Now, sir, I will for example[s] sake make myself an adverse against you, and I will come to the same party and say unto him: Sir, I understand that such a one (meaning you) hath presented such a suit, and I beseech you, sir, even as you love an hundred angels (I come here in the name of the creature), procure me your master's lets against him, and let me have your assistance for the stay of his suit. Tell me now your own conscience, will not these visible creatures, glistering in this man's eyes, work a quicker expedition than the bare name of your invisible Creator but sounding in his ears? I am sure you will never make question of the matter, for the very presence of an hundred angels but looking him in the face will make him to enter into any

attempt, yea, and sometimes to abuse his master, be he never so wise, be he never so grave, or be he never so honourable, and to make him by his information perhaps to commit some error.

Sir, said I, if the matter were worth the reasoning, I could easily answer your fond comparisons, but I am not disposed to argue of these matters, & will therefore let them rest with this conclusion: that God is God, and only good, & men are men, & no man without fault, nor free from offence. This is very true, answered Richard, for the vicar of our parish in a sermon that he made on mid-Lent Sunday did speak so much in Latin, and said *Nemo sine bribere viuit*. I remember his words well enough, and brought so much of his sermon away.

Richard had no sooner thus added his finitive conclusion but we might suddenly hear a loud and piteous shriek which by the shrillness of the noise seemed to be some woman's voice that was put into some fear or offered some violence, and bending both our eyes and our steps towards the place from whence the noise resounded to our ears, we might see a woman hastily coming towards us with a truss or fardel under her arm, to whom I said: Good woman, it seemeth you should be distressed, although I know not for what cause, but say, what is the matter of this your hasty flight? Alas, sir, said she, as I was travelling towards hell with certain wares that I have here in my fardel, which I am sent withal to show them to Proserpina, fast by here in the highway there encountered with me the most deformed and ill-favoured monster that ever I did set mine eyes on, whose ugly countenance did so affright me that it maketh me in this sort to retire, not daring to hold on my course.

I pray thee, goodwife, said I, what wares should they be that thou art carrying to hell, or dost thou carry them to sell, or be they sent as a present?

Sir, said she, I have here periwigs of the new curl, rolls and other attires for the head of the new fashion, ruffs of the new set, new cuffs, new stitches, new guards, new embroiders, new-devised French vardingales, new French bodices, new bombasting, new bolstering, new underlayings, and twenty new devises more than I have now spoken of, which I am carrying to hell amongst the ladies and gentlewomen that are there, who when they lived in the world would let slip no fashion, and I am sure now they be there, would be right glad of the fashions now in use, both to see them and to have them.

In good faith, said I, they be wares fit for such customers, for from hell they came, and thither they will. There they were first devised, and therefore fittest to serve that market.

You are much deceived, sir, said she, for I have fashions here that never a lady nor gentlewoman that is in hell ever saw the like, nor never a courtesan or any other strumpet that lived in the world did ever wear the like, such periwigs, curled and frizzled by art, such rolls of hair perfumed and platted by proportion, such ruffs as will ask one whole day to wash and starch, and another day's labour but to pin them in the fashion, that (alas, poor women), they are fain to take great pains to go to the devil, but I beseech you,

gentlemen, if your occasions be not the greater, do so much as conduct me a little part of the way till I be past this ill-favoured monster that hath so affright[ed] me.

We, yielding to her request, had not gone far but we might discern a most deformed creature with a monstrous pair of horns growing from the uppermost part of his forehead, the tips whereof turned round into his eyes, and growing there again into his head had made him stark blind that he had no manner of sight. Our companion, so confidently persuaded in the virtue of his holy candle that he thought no spirit was able to hurt him, stepping forward said: *In nomine Patris*, what art thou that walkest in this sort, thus disturbing the highways?

The other answered: What I am thou mayest see very well, but how I came to be thus perplexed, that thou must understand by a further circumstance. Know then that I was a miller sometimes dwelling in Kent where I kept a mill which, as it seldom-times wanted water so at no time it wanted grist for that it had the custom of the country at the least five or six miles about. It fortuned that a very wealthy and substantial farmer dwelling two or three miles from me sent a sack of corn to my mill by his daughter, which came on horseback to have her corn ground, intending to have gone back again with it before night, which might very well have been done, saving that we millers are tied to this custom, which is, when any young women doth fortune thus to come to the mill, we use as well to take tolls of themselves as of their sacks, and I, fixing mine eyes upon the wench, seeing her to be a very handsome young maiden not above nineteen or twenty years of age, was very loath to let her escape toll-free, and therefore set down a plot how I might acquaint her with our custom, the which I could not by any means perform but by making her to stay all night, wherefore I purposely put my mill out of temper, and spent all the afternoon in repairing and trimming of my mill, and brought her corn to the hopper when the day was so far passed that it was not possible it could be ground off till it were very late in the night. But the young maiden, seeing her corn upon the mill, and desirous to have it home with her, stayed with the better will, the which being once ground off, notwithstanding the evening was very far spent, yet she would have departed home, but I, pretending much goodwill to her father, told her that if a dog of her father's were in my house at this time of the night I would not shut him forth of the doors for his master's sake, much less your father's daughter, wherefore I will entreat you to stay this night in my house, and you shall have a homely bed and a clean pair of sheets, with such fare as I hope shall content you, and for your horse, he shall likewise be turned into a good pasture fast by my mill, and in the morning all things shall be ready for you to depart so soon as you please.

The maiden, being well persuaded by my fair speeches, seemed content, and I went to my wife & told her that forasmuch as my mill had been out of temper all the day, I must sit up all night to grind, willing her further to make ready a spare chamber for the young maiden, my neighbour's daughter, who had stayed so long for the grinding of her corn that it was too late for her to go home, & willed her to better our supper with a capon or a dish of chickens as she herself thought good. But my wife, who many times before had taken the true measure of my foot, and had picked out at her fingers'-ends the whole drift of my pretence, winking a little with one of her eyes, answered smoothly: Husband, all

shall be done as you have willed, & although I had been sufficiently instructed in this old axiom which saith, *Trust not an old quean if she once begins to wink*, yet by my wife's smooth demeanour I was free from all suspicion, and contemplating myself in hope of my night's happiness, I never had leisure to bethink me of any prec[e]pts of good counsel.

But my wife having made all things ready, and that we were called in to such cates as she had provided, we likewise having ended our supper, I told the young wench that when she were disposed to take her rest, my wife should bring her to her chamber, and willed my wife likewise at her own leisure to get her to bed for that I was to watch all night that I might be ready in the morning to serve my customers according to my promise. And thus leaving them twain together, I departed about my business, but my wife, that had conceived the very depth of my devise, lodged the maid in her own bed, and having but one other chamber, which I always reserved for a friend, and where I thought the maid should have been placed, there my wife slyly and cunningly lodged herself. But I, that was more doubtful of mine own fortune than suspicious of my wife's practice, perceiving everybody to be in bed, did think it now high time to make trial of my pretence, and conveying myself featly into the chamber, and then coming to the bedside, with a soft and low voice I began to persuade this young maiden (as I had thought) that she should not stand in doubt or fear of him who was come unto her only for goodwill, whom love and liking had made bold and hardy to request some courtesy and kindness at her hands, and herewithal throwing one of mine arms over her, I began to hunt after her lips, and to have bestowed of her a loving kiss.

But my wife, whose cunning had served her to train me into this mistaking, could tell how to behave herself in the rest to confirm me in mine error, for although she would render me no manner of speeches whereby I might discover her by her voice, yet in the rest of her demeanour she counterfeited so cunningly such a kind of maidenly nicety that a man would rather have taken her for some young ignorant puny that had never dealt the cards than for an old beaten gamester than knew well enough how to make the stakes, for although she knew what it was whereat I levelled, and was most desirous to have had me hit the mark, yet she delayed me off with a counterfeit kind of striving, and would never yield till seeming for want of breath she was not able to resist, and then panting (as it were to take the air) she seemed to be overcome (as it were) by force, and I that was not better able to discern of cats in the dark but that they were all grey, feasted myself with a fulsome repast instead of a dainty dish, for blind conceit had given me an appetite to feed on that diet which if I had seen would quickly have cloyed my stomach.

But having well satisfied myself, and that I was now at leisure to look into mine own fortune, and considering what peril might ensue for a little pleasure past if the wench should fortune to complain of that one night's lodging forty weeks after, the which would not only redound to my great shame and reproach, but like enough to fall out to my wrack and utter undoing, her father being an able and wealthy man that would not let to seek revenge, to prevent these and other mischiefs I did bethink me of this devise.

I had a lusty young fellow to my man called Rafe, about the age of four or five and twenty years, whom I had left to see to my mill now in mine absence. This companion I knew would be pat for my purpose, and one I was sure that would never flinch to spend his sixpence at his drink or his drab, and calling to mind an old precedent drawn from one of mine own coat, I mean from the miller that had taught his man to counterfeit so long till he was hanged up in his master's room, I determined with myself likewise to make mine own man the instrument that should stand between me and all future mischiefs. Whereupon feigning an occasion to go look to my mill, and taking my leave for the instant with a kiss, I came where my man was, and questioning with him of many idle matters, amongst the rest I demanded of him how he liked of the young maiden.

Marry, master, said he, I do like so well of her that I would think it a most happy turn for men of our occupation if all the devils of hell were such as she is, because there are very few millers that do use to go to heaven, and then if hell were no worse furnished than with such, I would not care if I did take my journey thitherwards tomorrow so soon as it were day.

Why, Rafe, said I, thou knowest where she lieth in the guest chamber, & what wilt thou give me if I turn thee in to her, and give thee instruction how thou shalt behave thyself that she shall not refuse to render courtesy for thy kindness? I could scarce make an end of my words but my man, as if he had stayed too long, hastily answered.

Master, I have nothing in the world but a sheep and a lamb, which (as you know) do go in the mill close. Perform your words, and I will give you them both, and that with all my heart.

I, rejoicing in mine own conceit to think how kindly I had cozened my man, would needs clap hands with him for the better confirmance of the bargain, the which being thus agreed on between us, I willed him to go into the chamber, and without any fear to get to the maid's bed, and there to use no manner of speeches, but to work all his enterprises but only by dumb persuasions.

But will you see how cunning was here caught in his own net? I had thought to have cozened my man, but he kissed me kindly for my acquaintance, and (according as I had directed him) into the chamber he went, where my wife in the dark could no better discern between me and my man than I was able before to judge between her and the maid. But he using no words because I had so instructed him, and she forbearing to speak for marring her own market, but thus in silence between them, I was cozened on both sides, for they agreed so well together that I think they were loath to part, for my man seemed to like so well of his entertainment that the day was ready to break before he would leave his game. My wife on the other side, in condition like unto those that when they have sped well cannot keep their own counsel, she gat herself up immediately after, and then calling the young maiden, who had slept quietly all night, knowing nothing how matters had passed amongst us, and the daylight being by this time a little cleared up, between my man and I we set her upon her horse with her sack of meal under her, and she giving me hearty thanks for my courtesy, departed thus towards her father's house.

Here began Rafe and I again to recreate ourselves with the remembrance of our night's pleasure. I smiled in my sleeve to think how I had cozened my man, my man laughed to remember how he had deceived the maid, and being thus together in the midst of our sports, in comes my wife, seeming by her countenance to be as merry as the best, and taking me by the hand she prayed me to go in with her. I thinking she had somewhat to say, coming into the house, she had provided for my breakfast a warm caudle daintily made, with a couple of chickens roasted, and stood hot upon the table. I that saw this extraordinary diet, marvelling what conceit was got into her head, asked her what might be the cause of this her sudden kindness. She, that looked me in the face as wantonly as if she had come lately where the frolic had run round about the house, answered me thus: Byrlady, husband, you have taken pains tonight, and I perceive you are not yet so far overspent but that you are worth the cherishing. You have deserved a better breakfast than this, for he that hath watched as you have done all night had need be well comforted in the morning.

These suspicious words thus delivered by my wife brought me well near into the fit of an ague, but being desirous to be better satisfied in her meaning, I said: And what pains have I taken this night more than I have done at other times? I have watched many a night before this, when I found no such kindness at your hand in the morning.

Husband, said she, howsoever you have watched in times past I know not, but this night's labour hath deserved no less than a comfortable restorative, and instead of potato roots, I have made you a warm caudle next your heart. Be not ashamed, man, of that you have done, for it was I that supplied the young wench's place tonight in the guest chamber, and it was you that came thither and played the proper man. But I think, husband, howsoever you have overreached me before, I have cried quittance with you tonight. And now comfort yourself whilst your meat is warm; pluck up your stomach and fall to your breakfast.

I that was not able with patience to endure her words, bursting out in choler said: The devil take thee and thy breakfast, for thou hast given me a breakfast and a dinner too that will stick in my stomach whilst I live. And going my way in this chafe into my mill where my man, perceiving my sudden passion, demanded of me the cause of my unquietness: Villain, said I, thyself art the cause why I am thus perplexed, for thou hast lien with my wife. I, master? said he. You are much deceived, and I protest I would not do you so much wrong for so much coin as would fill the hopper.

Thou hast done it, said I, for she hath confessed it unto me, and it was she that did lie tonight in the outer chamber in the young wench's room. That was more than I knew of, said my man, but sith it was so, I will have my sheep and my lamb again, for the bargain was between us that you should have sent me in to the maid, and I upon this condition promised you my sheep & my lamb, but sith you have broke your promise, by Saint Anne I will not stand to my bargain.

These speeches of this varlet did more vex and grieve me than before, and yet I wist not how I should be revenged, nor better remedy could I devise, but after I had fretted my fill, I commanded the knave to take his sheep and his lamb, and presently to get him out of my service, nor never after to come within my doors, nor into any other place in my wife's company.

This gall of grief continually fretting and gnawing in my conscience might have been thought a sufficient punishment though rigour himself had pronounced the sentence, but my terrestrial penance not enough to appease the angry gods, they have decreed this final conclusion, that as I was the author of mine own harms by mine own blindness, so mine own horns shall for evermore so grow in mine own light, that being not able to discern which way or how to direct my steps, I should wander in this solitary place bereft of all other society, and so to continue world without end.

The woman, that stood by all this while, and had given attentive ear to this discourse, stricken as it should seem into some remorse, upon what consideration I know not, but thus she said: Alas, poor miller, if thy punishment be so grievous for a small escape ignorantly committed, woe is me to bethink what shall betide to an infinite number that are daily infected with this common calamity, this horn-plague, I mean, the general sickness of our time, a malady that hath so much infected both city, town, and country that there are few places free which are not spiced here & there with this forked generation, amongst the which there be a number of honest gentlemen, some of them my very good friends and customers, whose horns doth hang so much in their own lights that they are well contented to suffer their wives to prank themselves up in every new fashion whereby to set themselves to sale & to make open show how lightly they are disposed, but the horn-plague shall never depart his house that hath his wife so garishly inclined. But alas for pity, what shall become of a number of kind-hearted wittols that will not only be contented to hoodwink themselves from their wives' adulteries, but also to become bawds and brokers, yea, and sometimes will not stick to keep the doors whilst their wives shall be within, playing the harlots with their customers? Blame not me that am touched with some remorse, for these be the people that I do live by. For what should I do with my newfangled trash if there were not as licentious women to buy them, and why should they deck themselves so courtesan-like to the show of the world but to manifest their unchaste appetites, that they might be the rather desired of men?

The woman had no sooner ended these speeches but she as suddenly burst out into such a vehement laughter that for the time she was not able to deliver a word, but in the end, with much ado recovering the use of her tongue, she said: Now truly, I cannot choose but laugh to think of my husband, how ill-favoured he will look with such a pair of spectacles hanging over his brows as this miller hath got.

We that stood by and were more mindful to see an end of our travels than disposed to prolong the time in idleness, I asked of the miller if he did know whereabouts the place of purgatory was, or if he could give us any direction which way we might get thither. He answered thus:

My good friends, whatsoever you be, you shall understand that thirty years and odd are already overpassed sith I first frequented these infernal paths, in which mean space, though I have not been able to discern mine own footsteps, yet by the reports of sundry travellers that hath passed these ways I have learned thus much concerning purgatory.

The persons that were the first founders of the place were not perfectly sighted, but like as the owl which cannot abide the light of the sun flieth evermore in the night, so those men, not able to endure that excellent brightness which is the only true light to every perfect understanding, framing all their platforms in obscurity and darkness, amongst other idle inventions would needs take upon them the building of purgatory. The place where they had seated it was so obscured with such fogs and filthy mists that no man that had the perfect use of his wits was ever able to find the situation. The foundation whereon it was laid was lies and foolish fantasies; the rest of the upper buildings was dreams and doting devises. All the whole edifice was of such light and rotten stuff that after they had been two or three hundred years patching & piecing it together, a poor silly swain, naked and threadbare, called truth, blowing against the building but with a little blast of breath, the gale was of such force against it that the whole matter & substance, together with the founders, patrons, proctors, protectors, & defenders, were all blown immediately into hell, so that whosoever he be that seeketh for purgatory, there he shall be sure to find it, and for these thirty years that I have wandered in these places, there never came any to inquire after it but madmen and fools.

Why then, said I to our companion that stood by with his candle, I perceive you had some reason to bring light with you when you came to seek purgatory sith the place is so dark and so dainty to be found. But now you know assuredly where you may find it, your candle will stand you in some stead to light you to hell.

He breaking out into sundry passions, sometimes raging against the miller, saying that he was but an ignorant and a lying heretic, then calling to his memory the long time he had spent in seeking of purgatory, he began as vehemently to rail against the Pope, and as bitterly to exclaim against his Jesuits and seminaries, that had promised to instruct him in the highway to heaven, and directly sent him the very next way to hell. In these angry fits he blew out his candle, and throwing it from him was contented to hold us company in the rest of our journey.

Whilst we were wandering thus together, we had not paced the distance of a furlong but we might hear the sound of a horn which was blown with such shrillness that the echo redoubled again in the air, and looking about us we might perceive afar off where one came riding post all in black as fast as his horse was able to fling, and with his quick speed immediately passing by us, we knew him by his bald pate and his cowl hanging at his back that he was a fat squaddy monk that had been well fed in some cloister, who with his great haste was suddenly out of our sights. And we had not travelled far but we might see hell-gates standing wide open, with abundance of people that were flocking out of all quarters, pressing in as thick as if in the term-time they were thronging to Westminster Hall, and presently we might behold a clear avoidance in the gates, and a

multitude coming forth with bells, with banners, with torches, with crosses, and with copes, in a very solemn manner of procession, singing *Salve festa dies*.

We standing still in a gaze as they passed by, I demanded of one of the train what might be the meaning, who answered me that there was a post newly come from Rome with news that the Pope's legate was hard at hand with some great embassy, and that solemnity was only to entertain him, to show what reverence they did bear to his master. The throng that followed was so exceeding that we were mightily shouldered to and fro amongst the company, but Velvet Breeches & I, determining to see what would follow, we took the one the other by the hand, following in the press till at length this holy legate was seen where he was coming, so that it was not long but they met. The legate, that was a chuff-headed cardinal with a pair of fulsome cheeks stretched out like one that were playing on a bagpipe, alighted from his palfrey, and presenting himself before Lucifer, who was there in place to receive him, he fell down upon his knees, praying the prince of darkness to bestow his fatherly benediction upon the Pope's Holiness, his chief vicar and vicegerent upon earth, the only man that he was especially beholding unto, who sent him from time to time whole millions of souls for the increasing of his kingdom, from whom I am sent with matters of much importance to be here considered of, and whose person in this place I do now represent.

Lucifer, lifting up one of his paws and wagging it over the legate's head, said: That blessing that God gave unto Cain for the killing of his brother Abel light upon thy master and his successors forever. Then taking him by the arm, he said: Stand up, for considering whose ambassador thou art, it were an embasing to thine estate if thou shouldst show any sign of humility or lowliness. Thou dost here represent the person of Antichrist, whose pride could never yet surrender itself to any manner of obedience. I will not therefore in this place that anything be embezzled that might derogate the least dignity from that chair of pestilence, I mean the Holy See of Rome.

Then was there brought forth a most stately chair which was prepared of purpose, in which chair Ambition and Pride having placed the cardinal, old Ignorance and young Obstinacy (the one blind, the other froward), taking it upon their shoulders as if the Pope himself were carried in his pontificalibus, and then a rich & sumptuous canopy being spread over him and borne by four supporters which were Idolatry, Hypocrisy, Heresy, and Blasphemy, thus in this pompous manner (being placed in the procession next Lucifer himself) they returned to hell, whose gates I noted to be so large and spacious that a prince's army, though it were marshalled in any proportion of battle, with fillets(?), troops, and wings, might well have marched in without any manner of disorder. And although the inner rooms did so exceed in greatness that it passeth human reason to conceive of them aright, yet he that should behold the abundance of people that resort thither daily, and the infinite number that are there to be seen flocking in every corner thereof, would more wonder to think what place could so contain them.

Being thus come into hell, they went to the chapel where Pope Hildebrand, the first founder of tra[n]substantiation, was ready to say Mass, the which being ended, Satan (who can in no wise endure the deferring of matters that doth concern his own estate),

went immediately into the Convocation-house, where calling about him a most abominable company of popes, cardinals, bishops, priors, abbots, and other clergymen that hath been for this four or five hundred years still of his privy council, the legate was willed to deliver the effect of his message, who making his entrance with a brief oration tending to the commendation of the Pope's carefulness, how many stratagems he had endeavoured against England, France, and Ireland for the better establishing of the kingdom of Antichrist in those places, and he was now to let them understand, first for England, where he had thought to have accomplished his purposes by the means of his Jesuits and seminaries whom he sent thither in flocks to withdraw the people from their obedience, to stir them to sedition, rebellion, and uproar, to practise treasons against their sovereign, yea and to undertake many horrible enterprises against the person of the prince, whom God hath still mightily defended, not only preserving her from their traitorous practices, but likewise hath so revealed the conspiracies of the practisers that from time to time they have been still apprehended, and so sent to Tyburn to say *In manus tuas*, being therefore exempted from all manner of hope to find any good success in these former platforms, his Holiness craveth your hellish instructions, what course he might now follow for the recovery of that country.

For France, it would ask a long time here to be discoursed what treacheries, what treasons, what mischiefs, what murders, and what massacres his Holiness hath there from time to time effected, and although he hath now stirred up his vassal the King of Spain, who hath from the dignity of a magnificent prince surrendered himself to become a slave to the Pope, to come and go as he appoints him, and to be the executor of all his damnable devises, and hath his forces now in that country in the assistance of traitors and rebels against their natural prince and lawful king, yet his Holiness can have no assured hope to suppress the light of the gospel retained amongst them, or utterly to subvert the professors of it without some devilish devise platted and contrived from this infernal pit of hell.

Now lastly for Ireland, if that country might still be continued in that state as it now standeth, there were many hopes to be expected, not necessary in this place to be openly revealed, for although the natural people of that country (yea, even in the most barbarous places) be of themselves very jealously inclined, & without all peradventure would easily be drawn to the true knowledge and worship of God if they had such a minister amongst them as might instruct them as well in wholesome doctrine as in good example of life, but the Pope hath so well provided for the place that the whole country doth swarm with Jesuits, seminaries, and massing-priests, yea, and friars, that have recourse into Dublin itself, and these do keep such a continual and daily buzzing in the poor people's ears that they are not only led from all duty and obedience of their prince but also drawn from God by superstitious idolatry, and so brought headlong by heaps into hell, for through the whole country the people are so confidently persuaded in the doctrine of Antichrist that they think Our Lord will do nothing without the mediation of Our Lady, or Mary, or of John. And to speak truly of the clergy of that realm, if there be one that seeketh to uphold the glory of God, there is ten for that one that seeketh to uphold the kingdom of Antichrist. Neither is it to be doubted but that there be some few which both in preaching and living showeth all sincerity and godliness of life, but there be a number of others

which neither say nor do, neither preach well, nor live well. Some other there be that now and then will get up into a pulpit, and there they will spend an hour chiding against the Pope in the course of their speaking, and they are no sooner come down but they will defy God himself half a year after in the manner of their living, and this example of their ungodly behaviour is no little corrosive to weak consciences that do behold their wickedness. For what is it for a clergyman, be he parson, be he vicar, be he deacon, be he archdeacon, be he bishop, be he archbishop, or let him be what he will, if he be one that will rather endeavour himself to fleece his flock than to feed it, that hath not so much care of the children of God committed to his charge, which he suffereth daily to perish, as he hath to provide marriages for his own children in their very infancy and when they are under-age, that doth build houses, and purchase rents by corruption, extortion, and bribery, that doth eat and drink the sins of the ignorant people daily at his table, that will not admit of a pardon from the Pope, yet dares not be without five or six several pardons from the prince for treason, for murder, for theft, for robbery, for conspiracy, for confederacy, for rasing(?), for forging, for extortion, for bribery, and for many other filthy matters shameful to be spoken of were it not before this haggish assembly, and what though from a base and beggarly parentage he could show himself lofty in mind, lofty in looks, and lofty in all the rest of his demeanours, would not such a prelate be fit for the devil's chapel? The legate had no sooner made an end of these latter words but in comes Dick Tarleton apparelled like a clown and singing this piece of an old song.

*If it be true, as true it is,
Lady, lady;
God send her life may mend the miss,
Most dear lady.*

This sudden jest brought the whole company into such a vehement laughter that not able again to make them keep silence for that present time they were fain to break up, and as Velvet Breeches and I were walking arm in arm through the press we fortun'd to meet with Commens, one that some few years ago had been a sergeant in London, who no sooner espied Velvet Breeches but he got up a fire-brand wherewith he gave him such a stroke over the shoulders that the coals flew all about the place. Velvet Breeches again up with his fist, and gave him such a blow under the ear that had like to have stricken him over. With this they closed, and began to pommel one another as fast as their fists could walk. The company that stood by began to cry, Clubs, clubs, clubs, and immediately they came rushing in about us with flesh-hooks, with coal-rakes, with fire-forks, and with such other furniture as a man would have thought were all come out of a kitchen, and with some little ado they parted the fray, and the parties were presently by the officers brought before Lucifer, and I being a stranger in the place was likewise carried with them for company, where Commens being charged to be the first author of the broil, in his own excuse rendered this reason.

I was, said he, sometimes an officer under the sheriffs of London, and being feed by a townsman to arrest Velvet Breeches, I was brought unto him where he was in a barber's shop sitting with a basin before him full of soapy water wherewith the barber was rubbing his cheeks and dashing of him about the lips, and I seeing him thus in trimming,

thought of courtesy to forbear the doing of mine office till the barber had ended his business, and setting myself down without any word speaking, Velvet Breeches by chance espying my mace under my gown, suspecting aright the cause of my coming, suddenly (before I was aware of him) threw all the water so directly in my face that the soap getting into mine eyes did so smart and grieve me that for my life I was not able to hold them open, but whilst I stood stark blind for the time, wiping and rubbing of mine eyes, Velvet Breeches packed himself out of the doors that I could never after come where he was till this present, and I vowed then to be revenged of him the next time that ever I saw him, and I am now to crave the privilege of the place, for it is directly against our ancient custom that there should be any quarrels or controversies taken up here, or that there should be found any peacemakers in hell.

With this the whole multitude began to grow into an uproar, and they fell immediately to taking of parts, and first there stood up in Commens' behalf a great number of cruel creditors, crafty lawyers, merchants, retailers, scriveners, brokers, and a most shameful and filthy company of usurers. Velvet Breeches, on the other side, he wanted no friends, for there were a great many that knew him, and those that took his part were swashers, swearers, whoremasters, thieves, robbers, ruffians, roisters, and cozeners.

As they were growing into this commotion amongst themselves, there were gathered together an infinite number of cony-catchers which came to take part with Velvet Breeches, who seeing me to stand by, they began to grow into confused exclamations against me. Some said: Let us tear the villain in pieces that hath written so many books against us. Other said: Let us flay off his skin and cut the the [sic] flesh from his bones in small gobbets that hath so manifested the secrets of our trade and profession to the world. Some other said: Let us cut the tongue out of his head and put out both his eyes that hath been an enemy to the art of cony-catching and hath so shamefully inveighed against the practices. Then came there forth an infinite number of women cony-catchers, and they swore they would geld me for marring their market and hindering them of their taking. Thus was I threatened on all sides; every man stood wondering at me, no man to take my part, but Lucifer, perceiving the cause of their griefs by the manner of their clamours, & willing to appease their passions with any punishment, commanded me presently to be thrust forth of hell-gates, and [sic?] charging me so to remain a restless spirit wandering through the world, and never after to make any return again to that place.

Thus for the writing of books I was first banished from heaven for my overmuch partiality, and now exiled from hell for my too much plainness, I remain now (as I have told you) a walking spirit, restless and remediless to wander through the world. I would therefore wish my friends to beware how they walk late a-nights, for I will be the maddest goblin that ever used to walk in the moonshine. For I will sometimes be a spirit of the buttery, and I will so intoxicate their heads that do frequent the places of my haunt that at night they shall not be able to find the way to their beds till they have taken their first sleep on the floor.

Sometimes I will be Robin Goodfellow, and will meet with a wanton wench in a dark corner, and let her bless and cross herself as well as she can, I will put her in such a

bodily fear that for forty weeks after she shall think that young bugs are crawling in her belly.

Sometimes I will show such dreams & visions to women whilst they be sleeping that they shall make their husbands cuckolds when they are waking.

Sometimes I will transform myself into divers shapes, and will walk through all trades, all sciences, and all occupations, and some I will infect with the spirit of avarice, some with misery, some with deceit and all manner of subtilty, that they shall leave no practice unsought for whereby to rake and gather pelf to leave to their heirs, that the old proverb might be verified: Happy are those children whose fathers go to the devil.

In the term-time I will be in Westminster Hall amongst the lawyers, whom I will make so capable in the quillities of the law that they shall cozen twenty clients of their coin before they will bring one to an end of his cause, and will not stick now and then to get me up to the bench amongst the judges themselves to let them taste a little of the sweetness of corruption.

You may easily think that I mean to frequent the court, where I will oppose myself a professed enemy against good desert, and let him come thither and plead his many years' service in the wars, let him show his wounds and maims gotten in his country's defence, let him signify his time and patrimony spent in his prince's quarrel to maintain himself and to relieve such as were about him, or let him pretend many other endeavours in the service of his sovereign that might worthily move a favourable consideration, if there shall be found one that will afford him a favourable look or a comfortable speech, there shall be two for that one to requite him with disdainful countenance and churlish checks.

I will not tell all, how grievous I will be to largess and liberality, nor how miserable I will show myself in shutting up of the prince's bounty. Let this suffice: he that shall become a suitor at the court without gold in his purse to fee a bribing groom, let him look for small grace in his suits, for I will strike such a deafness into the ears of the clerks and secretaries appertaining to great men that when a penniless suitor comes unto them with cap and curtsy they shall not understand what the fool meaneth nor be able to hear one word that he speaketh without a bribe. I might mar all if I should tell all how I meant to bestir myself amongst the courtiers of all sorts, but they say enough is as good as a feast.

The clergy must not think to escape me scot-free, for I must needs be acquainted with these double-beneficed men, and will many times converse with such as be non-residents, and sometimes I will get up into the pulpit and preach, but you may easily discern me, for my text shall be: Do as I say, but not as I do.

My conclusion is, good friends, take heed how you come in those places where I walk, for you may perceive I am bent upon mischief; I can but therefore wish you to look to yourselves, and so fare you well.

FINIS