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A Prosopopeia of the  
Earl of Leicester's Ghost

An epistle to the judicial readers

Room for my Lord of Leicester, though it be but his shadow; yet by this ye may judge what manner of man he was, who, if he were alive again, would either win ye with fair words to love him, or induce ye with benefits to honour him, or terrify ye with frowns to fear him. Ye must imagine that his ghost, having wandered about the wide world's circumference, and passed through the waves of affliction, is now arrived near the center of Great Britain, where he sees the alteration of state, and commends it; discourses of his fortune, and laments it; hears objections opposed against him, and answers to it. His life (too bitterly published in prose) is here indifferently composed in verse, not to feed the fancy of a friend, that through affection would judge partially, nor to soothe the humour of a foe, that for some private grudge would censure maliciously. Briefly, I say, he was a rare politician (I will not say a Machiavellian), courteous in behaviour, affable in speech, magnificent in gesture, beneficial to his true friends, dreadful to his proud enemies, in friendship uncertain, in counsel secret, in revenge implacable, an imperious subject, in conceit a king, covetous of glory, greedy of others' wealth, in his life highly magnified, after his death of few lamented, ignobly buried, and too soon forgotten. Who, if his heroical virtues had not been overwhelmed with insatiable ambition, might have been worthily reputed one of the most excellent courtiers in the world.

The Earl of Leicester's Ghost

The ghost's speech dedicatory to King James' most excellent Majesty.

Great Britain's King, rare, puissant, opulent  
In wisdom, empire, and your subjects' love,  
May I presume my shadow to present  
To you, that are chief viceroy under Jove?  
My liege, I come from dead men's hollow caves,  
With due allegiance to salute your Grace;  
In spite of that foul jailer of men's graves,  
I walk abroad, and seek some resting place.  
To whom, but to your Highness, should I come?  
Under whose passport I may safely pass;  
Although my corpse be banished by heaven's doom,  
Behold my figure in this tragic glass.  
Dread Lord, then bid me welcome to your shore,  
That if I lived, would now your Grace adore.

In Zoilum Distichon.

*Si imbellis placeat bello Regi iste Libellus,  
Nil curo si in me (Zoile) bella geris.*

The Earl of Leicester's Ghost

I that sometime shined like the Orient sun,  
Though fortune's subject, yet a puissant lord,  
Am now an object to be gazed upon,  
An abject, rather, fit to be deplored,  
Dejected now, that whilom was adored,  
Affected once, suspected since of many,  
Rejected now, respected scarce of any.

My spirit, hovering in the foggy air,  
Since it did pass the frozen Stygian flood,  
Unto Great Britain's empire did repair,  
Where of Eliza's death I understood,  
And that the heav'ns, careful of England's good,  
Raised up a king who, crowned with love and peace,  
Brings in new joys, and makes old griefs to cease.

Thus from the concave vaults of starless night,  
Where never sun, nor moon, vouchsafed to shine,  
My wretched ghost is come at length to light,  
By charter granted from the Power divine,  
Snake-eating envy, O do not repine  
At honour's shadow, do not bite the dead;  
My pride is past, my pomp from th' earth is fled.

My princely birth, my high ennobled state,  
My sometime dreadful frown, now none regard,  
My great good turns to many done of late,  
With grateful hearts now few, or none, reward;  
My fame is blotted out, my honour scarred,  
My monuments defaced, my relics torn;  
Yea, vassals do my excellency scorn.

Ah! silly peasants, as each Grecian boy  
Would brave stout Hector, being dead and cold,  
That whilom was the pillar of old Troy,

Whose presence, living, they durst scarce behold,  
 So, since ye see me dead, ye grow so bold  
 As to control my acts, whose looks did daunt  
 The proudest peer that lived in Troynovant.

A time there was, when stately bears could climb,  
 And in that time I was a stately bear  
 Who climbed up so fast, in little time,  
 That other beasts did my high mounting fear;  
 My fortunes by their downfall I did rear;  
 I joy enjoyed, whilst I made others mourn,  
 And served the time, to make Time serve my turn.

**John, Duke of  
 Northumberland,  
 father to my Lord of  
 Leicester, beheaded  
 in Queen Mary's  
 time, and his son  
 advanced by Queen  
 Elizabeth.**

I was the offspring of a princely sire;  
 He, too well known by his climb-falling pride,  
 Like Daedalus, did teach me to aspire;  
 We both did fly; he fell, I did but slide;  
 Like in attempts, yet unlike chance we tried;  
 He by a Queen did die, but as it chanced,  
 I by a Queen did live, and was advanced.

For Lady Jane, by him a Queen proclaimed,  
 Was soon suppressed; Queen Mary got the crown,  
 Which, as her proper right, she boldly claimed;  
 My father strived in vain to keep her down,  
 And for that lost his life; I, my renown,  
 Till sacred Cynthia to the kingdom came,  
 That gave new life to my late dying fame.

That peerless Queen of happy memory,  
 Who late like Deborah this kingdom swayed,  
 Now triumphs in the jasper coloured sky,  
 In star-embroidered vesture richly rayed,  
 She, she restored my honour then decayed,  
 When treason did attaint my father's blood,  
 And drowned our princely race in Lethe's flood.

**The Earl of  
 Leicester's rising.**

Then Jupiter was in my horoscope,  
 And Cynthia blest me with her fair aspect;  
 What might not then my youth and courage hope,  
 When me, my sovereign's favour did protect;  
 O, what may not a prince's grace effect,  
 When majesty on hapless men doth smile,  
 Whose joys did seem to perish in exile.

Even when Queen Mary's tragic reign did end,

My comic fortune in the prime begun,  
 That time when Cynthia's brightness did extend  
 To lighten this dark land, whose splendent sun  
 Was in eclipse, and sorrow's streams did run,  
 I like the glorious day-star did appear,  
 With fair uprise to grace this hemisphere.

**Brute, the first  
 King of Albion.**

Since Brute first swayed this all-united land,  
 No subject firmer held his sovereign's grace;  
 My will imperial for a law did stand;  
 Such was my prince's pleasure, such my place,  
 As Momus durst not offer me disgrace;  
 What man did smile when Leicester's brow did frown,  
 Whose wit could guide, though never get, the crown.

**The ingratitude of  
 some towards the  
 Earl of Leicester.**

Whilst in this glorious ocean I did swim,  
 To high preferment divers men I brought,  
 Which since have sought my honour's lamp to dim;  
 Yea, such as I before advanced of nought  
 Against my person treacheries have wrought.  
 Thus honours do oft-times good manners change,  
 And men grown rich, to ancient friends grow strange.

I grieve to think I did such men advance,  
 And raise their base lines to a stately pitch;  
 Under the shadow of my countenance,  
 The substance of the earth did make them rich;  
 What fury did their senses thus bewitch?  
 Or was it some ill spirit that possessed them,  
 To seek my ruin, whose large bounty blest them?

Thus they in vain my downfall did conspire,  
 Like dogs that at the moon do fondly bark,  
 And did but burn themselves like Aetna's fire,  
 Or like grim owls did wander in the dark,  
 Contemned of me, who mounted like the lark,  
 Or that rare bird that builds his nest on high,  
 In cedar trees, whose tops affront the sky.

When I commanded, who durst countermand?  
 Were not mean subjects subject to my beck?  
 What man of worth my pleasure did withstand?  
 What simple swains could do, I did not reckon;  
 I gave the mate to those that gave me check;  
 By the Queen's help, my power, and threatening looks,  
 I ruled the pawns, the bishops, knights and rooks.

Thus did I play at chess, and won the game,  
 Having the Queen my puissance to support;  
 The bishops for ambition did me blame;  
 The pawns affirmed I won by much extort;  
 The rooks and knights found draughts to mar my sport;  
 Had not some stopped me with their timely checks,  
 I might have given them check without their necks.

**His excellent parts.** My brain had wit, my tongue was eloquent,  
 Fit to discourse, or tell a courtly tale;  
 My presence portly, brave, magnificent;  
 My words imperious, stout, substantial;  
 My gestures loving, kind, heroicall;  
 My thoughts ambitious, proud and full of ire;  
 My deeds were good or bad, as times require.

Some of my foes that bore me deadly hate,  
 That had to them chief offices assigned,  
 And were my fellow consuls in the state,  
 Emulous of my still aspiring mind,  
 Gave me this praise (though otherwise unkind),  
 That I was wondrous politic, and wise,  
 A statesman that knew how to temporize.

**Of his religion.** Some others took me for a zealous man,  
 Because good preachers I did patronize,  
 And many thought me a Precisian,  
 But God doth know, I never was precise;  
 I seemed devout in godly exercise,  
 And by religious show confirmed my might,  
 But who durst say I was an hypocrite?

**Numa, the second King of Rome, that brought the Romans into civil government by establishing a kind of religion.** As Numa, when he first did seek to draw  
 The Roman people underneath his yoke,  
 Touching religion he ordained a law,  
 And feigned he with the nymph Egeria spoke,  
 That him to this good motion did provoke,  
 Whereby (as if it were by heaven's consent)  
 He brought his men to civil government.

**Plutarch in Vita Numa Pompil.**

So when I came in high affairs to deal,  
 Of sound religion I did make a show,  
 And, by pretence of hot and fervent zeal,  
 In wealth and faction I more strong did grow,  
 For by this practice I did plainly know

That men are apt to yield to any motion  
Made by a man that is of pure devotion.

Yet could I strain my conscience for a need,  
For though I seemed an earnest Protestant,  
For gain I favoured Papists; so indeed,  
Some held me for a neuter, and, I grant,  
To serve my turn, I could turn Puritant;  
Thus, by religion, honour some do win,  
And this fair cloak oft covers filthy sin.

Like as the air-sucking chameleon  
Can him transform to any hue save white,  
So man can turn to any fashion,  
Save to that form which is sincere and right;  
For though he may delude the people's sight,  
It is in vain before God to dissemble,  
Whose power the devils know, and knowing, tremble.

Was I the only man that have offended,  
In making holiness a cloak for sin?  
The Frenchmen for religion's sake pretended  
Their civil wars of late time did begin,  
But yet ambition chiefly drew them in;  
Yea, mad ambition and desire of gain  
Makes endless broils betwixt the States and Spain.

**His large promises  
to the clergy.**

Of promises I was so prodigal,  
So kind, well-spoken, and so politic,  
That to some great divine (as it might fall),  
Perhaps I promised a bishopric,  
Yet in performance I was nothing quick;  
Thus with fair words men's humours oft I fed,  
Whilst hope this while a good opinion bred.

**His inclination to  
scholars in general.**

To learned scholars I was somewhat frank,  
Not for the love that I to learning bore,  
But either to get praise, or pick a thank,  
Of such as could the Muses' aid implore,  
To consecrate my name for evermore;  
For he is blest that so befriended dies,  
Whose praise the Muses will immortalize.

Ye that desire to have your fame survive  
When ye within your graves inhumed shall lie,  
Cherish those sacred Sisters while ye live,

For they be daughters of Dame Memory,  
 And of the thundering monarch of the sky;  
 They have the gift to register with pen  
 Th' eternal fame, or infamy, of men.

**Chancellor of  
 Oxford.**

The students of the University,  
 Oxford, whereof I was the Chancellor,  
 That nurse of science and philosophy,  
 Knowing the greatness of my wit and power,  
 Did honour me as the fair springing flower,  
 That in the Prince's favour highly grew,  
 Whom she with showers of gold did oft bedew.

**Doctor Dee and  
 Allen of  
 Gloucester's Hall.**

At my command, both Dee and Allen tended,  
 By magic art my pleasure to fulfil;  
 These to my service their best studies bended,  
 And why? they durst not disobey my will;  
 Yea, whatsoever was of secret skill  
 In Oxford, or in Cambridge, to be sold,  
 I got for love, for fear, or else for gold.

**Cornelius Agrippa  
 De Occulta  
 Philosophia.**

Doubtless the most renowned philosophers,  
 As Plato, and Pythagoras, have sought  
 To learn the hieroglyphic characters  
 And secrets which by magic skill are wrought,  
 Such as th' Egyptians, Jews, and Chaldees taught;  
 Th' art is not ill, if men do not abuse it;  
 No fault so bad but some man will excuse it.

**Lopez and Julio.**

Lopez and Julio were my chief physicians,  
 Men that were cunning in the art to kill;  
 Good scholars, but of passing ill conditions,  
 Such as could rid men's lives, yet no blood spill;  
 Yea, with such great dexterity and skill,  
 Could give a dram of poison that should slay  
 At end of th' year, the month, the week or day.

I never did the wicked men employ  
 To wrong my prince, or my true loving friend,  
 But false deceitful wretches to destroy,  
 And bring them to an unexpected end;  
 Let them look to it that did most offend,  
 Whose names are registered in Pluto's scrolls,  
 For I will never answer for their souls.

**His attendants.**

Knights and esquires, the chief in every shire,

Did wait on me through England up and down,  
 And some among them did my livery wear,  
 My smiles did seem to promise them renown,  
 But dismal haps ensued when I did frown,  
 As when the star Arcturus doth appear,  
 Of raging tempests seamen stand in fear.

**Captains and  
 soldiers maintained  
 by the Earl of  
 Leicester.**

As for the soldiers and the men of war,  
 At home in service some I did retain,  
 Others I sent abroad, not very far,  
 At my commandment to return again;  
 These I with cost did secretly maintain,  
 That if aught chanced me otherwise than well,  
 I might have sent my foes to Heaven or Hell.

**His authority  
 amongst the  
 lawyers.**

Likewise I brought the lawyers in some awe;  
 The worthy students of the Inns of Court,  
 That then applied them to the common law,  
 Did yield to me in matters of import,  
 Although sometime I did the law extort,  
 And whether right, or wrong, my case once heard,  
 To plead against me made great lords afeard.

So the Lord Berkeley lost good land by might,  
 Whereof perhaps at first he did not dream;  
 Might many times doth overthrow the right,  
 It is in vain to strive against the stream;  
 When he that is chief subject in the realm,  
 Upon his prince's favour bears him bold,  
 He cannot, or he will not, be controlled.

**His power by the  
 Queen's favour.**

Thus by the Queen my puissance was upheld,  
 And for my foes I ever was too strong;  
 The grace I had from her, all fear expelled,  
 I might wrong others, but not suffer wrong,  
 So many men did unto me belong,  
 Which on my favour chiefly did depend,  
 And for my sake, both goods and blood would spend.

About the Queen such creatures I did place,  
 Whose service I approved firm and true,  
 Such ladies did attend upon her Grace,  
 As I presented to her Highness' view,  
 Whose hearts to me assured in love I knew;  
 Thus few things at the court by day were done,  
 But I did know ere Titan's race was run.



**His great alliance  
and faction.**

The best esteemed nobles of this land,  
On whose support the public state relied,  
Were linked to me in friendship's faithful band,  
Or else in kindred nearly were allied;  
Their perfect love and constant hearts I tried;  
Th' inferior sort at our devotion stood,  
Ready to execute what we thought good.

**His power in Wales.**

The Earl of Warwick, my own loving brother,  
My sister's husband, th' Earl of Huntingdon,  
The bounteous Earl of Bedford was another  
Of my best friends, beloved of everyone;  
Sir Henry Sidney's power in Wales well known,  
And there the Earl of Pembroke, chief of all,  
Of kin, my friends, whatever chance might fall.

**In Berwick.**

In Berwick, my wife's uncle had chief power;  
The Lord of Hunsdon, my assured friend;

**Ireland.**

In Ireland, the Lord Grey was governor;

**Guernsey.**

Guernsey and Jersey likewise did depend

**Sir Owen Hopton,**

Upon such men as did my will attend;

**my Lord of**

Hopton, my man, Lieutenant of the Tower

**Leicester's servant,**

Was prompt to do me service at an hour.

**Lieutenant of the****Tower.**

Sir Edward Horsey in the Isle of Wight,

**Sir Edward Horsey.**

And noble Sir George Carey next bore sway;

**Sir George Carey,**

Men of great courage, and no little might,

**late Lord of**

To take my part in any doubtful fray;

**Hunsdon.**

In London, the Recorder Fleetwood lay,

**The Recorder**

That often used good words which might incense

**Fleetwood.**

The citizens to stand in my defence.

**His power among  
the prentices.**

The prentices did likewise take my part,  
As I in private quarrels often tried,  
So that I had the very head and heart,  
The court and city leaning on my side;  
With flattery some, others with gifts I plied,  
And some with threats, stern looks, and angry words,  
I won to my defence with clubs and swords.

Thus I by wisdom, and fine policy,  
Maintained the reputation of my life,  
Drawing to me the flower of chivalry  
To succor me at need in civil strife;  
Men that loved change in every place were rife,

And all the realm was with my power possessed;  
Think what this might have wrought, but judge the best.

Like Claudius Marcellus drawn through Rome  
In his fair chariot with rich trophies decked,  
Crowned with garlands by the Senate's doom,  
Whom they five times their consul did elect,  
That from their foe he might their lives protect,  
When he with conquest did his country greet,  
Load with rich spoils, laid prostrate at his feet.

**His princely  
carriage.**

So did I ride in triumph through chief towns,  
As if I had been viceroy of this land;  
My face well graced with smiles, my purse with crowns,  
Holding the reins of honour in my hand,  
I managed the state, I did command;  
My looks with humble majesty replete,  
Made some men wish me a king's royal seat.

**His popularity.**

Thus waxed I popular to purchase fame;  
To me the common people's knees did bow,  
I could my humour still so fitly frame  
To entertain all men (to outward show)  
With inward love, for few my heart did know,  
And that I might not seem puffed up with pride,  
Bare-headed oft through cities I did ride.

While some cried out, 'God save you, gracious Lord!',  
Lord! how they did my fame hyperbolize;  
My words and gestures did so well accord,  
As with their hearts they seemed to sympathize;  
I charmed their ears, and did enchant their eyes;  
Thus was I reckoned their chief potentate,  
No poller, but a pillar of the state.

**He was called the  
heart and life of the  
court.**

Then was I called the heart, and life, of the court,  
And some (I wot) wished I had been the head;  
I had so great a train, and such a port,  
As did the pomp of Mortimer exceed,  
Who (as in th' English Chronicles we read)  
When Second Edward lost his kingly rights,  
Was waited on at once with nine score knights.

**A comparison  
betwixt the Earl of  
March and the Earl  
of Leicester.**

The Earl of March, Sir Roger Mortimer,  
Ruled the young king, Queen mother, and the peers;  
I, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester,  
Did sway in court and all the English shires;  
His rule was short, mine flourished many years;  
He did his life with ignominy lose;  
I lived, and triumphed over my proudest foes.

As th' image of great Alexander, dead,  
Made King Cassander tremble at the sight,  
Spying the figure of his royal head,  
Whose presence sometimes did the world affright,  
Or like as Caesar's monarchizing sprite  
Pursued false Brutus at Philippo's field,  
Till he that slew his liege himself had killed,

**His speech to such  
of the nobility and  
gentry which loved  
him not.**

So view (ye petty lords) my princely ghost.  
I speak to you whose hearts were full of gall.  
I, whilst I lived, was honoured of the most,  
And either feared for love of great and small,  
Or loved for fear of such as wished my fall.  
Behold my shadow, representing state,  
Whose person sometimes did your pride abate.

Weigh what I was, knights, gentlemen and peers,  
When my death-threatening frowns did make ye quake.  
As yet there hath not passed many years  
Since I your plumes plucked, lofty crests did shake.  
Then tell me, sirs, for old acquaintance' sake,  
Wax ye not pale to hear of Leicester's name,  
Or, to backbite him, blush ye not for shame?

**The objection of his  
injustice.**

Ye say that I, in dealings, was unjust,  
As if true justice' balance ye could guide.  
Had I dealt justly, I had turned to dust  
Long before this your corps swollen up with pride,  
Which, now surviving, do my acts deride;  
My fame yet lives, though death abridged my days;  
Some of you died, that overlived your praise.

**The answer.**

Are there not some among you parasites?  
Time-servers, and observers of no measure?  
Prince-smoothers, people-pleasers, hypocrites?  
Damned Machiavellians, given to lust and pleasure?  
Church-robbers, beggars of prince's treasure?  
Truce-breakers, pirates, atheists, sycophants?

**Astraea, the goddess of justice, feigned by the poets to be turned into one of the twelve signs called Libra. Aristides, a just man, banished by the law of ostracism through envy. Plut. in vita. Aris. The objections of his ambition.**

Can equity dwell here, where conscience wants?

And yet you think none justly deals but you?  
Divine Astraea up to heaven is fled,  
And turned to Libra; there look up and view  
Her balance in the Zodiac figured;  
Just Aristides once was banished;  
Where lives his match, whom Envy did pursue  
Because men thought he was too just and true?

Ye say ambition harboured in my brain?  
I say ambition is no heinous sin;  
To men of state do stately thoughts pertain --  
By baser thoughts what honour can ye win?  
Whoever did a great exploit begin  
Before ambition moved him to the deed,  
And hope of honour urged him to proceed?

**The answer.**

Themistocles had never put to flight  
Xerxes' huge host, or tamed the Persians' pride,  
Nor had King Pyrrhus got by martial fight  
The Romans' spoils, with conquest on his side,  
If first ambition had not been their guide;  
Had not this humour their stout hearts allured  
To high attempts, their fame had been obscured.

The eagle doth disdain to catch small flies,  
The lion with the ape doth scorn to play,  
The dolphin doth the whirlpool's love despise;  
Thus, if birds, beasts, and fishes bear such sway,  
As if they would teach underlings to obey,  
Much more should men, whom reason doth adorn,  
Be noble-minded, and base fortune scorn.

**The objections of his dissimulation, and his answer.**

Admit I could dissemble wittily --  
This is no grievous sin in men of state;  
Dissembling is a point of policy,  
Plain dealing now grows stale and out of date,  
Wherefore I oft concealed my privy hate  
Till I might find fit time, though long I stayed,  
To wreak the wrath that in my heart I laid.

The proverb is, plain dealing is a jewel,  
But he that useth it, a beggar dies;  
The world is now-a-days become so cruel  
That courtiers do plain countrymen despise;

Quick wits and cunning heads do quickly rise,  
 And, to be plain, ye must not plainly deal,  
 That office seek in court or commonweal.

**Aristippus, a  
 philosopher whom  
 Diogenes called the  
 royal dog for his  
 adulation of great  
 princes. Diog.  
 Laert.**

Now Aristippus is in more request,  
 That knew the way to please a monarch's mind  
 Than that poor Cynic swad that used to jest  
 At every idle knave that he could find.  
 To unkind friends ye must not be too kind;  
 This is a maxim which to you I give;  
 Men must dissemble, or they cannot live.

**The objection of his  
 want of valour.**

Ye say I was a coward in the field?  
 I say, it fits not such a noble wight,  
 To whom his country doth the title yield  
 Of Lord Lieutenant, with full power and might,  
 To venture his own person in the fight;  
 Let others die, that as our vassals serve,  
 Whilst heaven to better haps our hopes reserve.

How soon did England's joy in France diminish,  
 When the Earl of Salisbury at Orleans,  
 By gunshot stroke his honoured life did finish,  
 When Talbot, that did oftentimes advance  
 The English ensigns in disgrace of France,  
 Was at the last environed and slain,  
 Whose name the Frenchmen's terror doth remain?

**Plutarch in vita  
 Crassus.**

And what a fatal wound did Rome receive  
 By Crassus' death, whom faithless Parthians slew!  
 How did the Senate for Flaminius grieve,  
 And for Aemylius' death, and his stout crew,  
 Which Hannibal at Cannes did subdue?  
 Cut off an arm, yet life the heart may cherish;  
 Cut off the head, and every part will perish.

**Idem in vita  
 Hannibal; idem in  
 vita Aemyl.**

Iphicrates the Athenian used to say  
 Vaunt-couriers are like hands, to battle pressed;  
 The men of arms, as feet whereon to stay;  
 The footmen, as the stomach and the breast;  
 The captain, as the head above the rest;  
 The head, once crazed, troubleth all the parts;  
 The general, slain, doth kill ten thousand hearts.

Therefore a Lord Lieutenant should take care  
 That he himself in safety do repose,

And should not hazard life at every dare,  
 But watch and ward; so Fabius tired his foes,  
 When rash Minutius did the conquest lose.  
 If such in open danger will intrude,  
 It is fond rashness, and not fortitude.

**The objections of  
 his lasciviousness  
 in love.**

Ye say I was lascivious in my love,  
 And that I tempted many a gallant dame;  
 Nor so content, but I did often prove  
 To win their handmaids if I liked the game.

**His answer.**

Why, sirs, you know love kindles such a flame,  
 As if we may believe what poets pen,  
 It doth incense the hearts of gods and men.

Jove loved the daughter of a jealous sire,  
 Danae, a maid immured within a tower,  
 Yet to accomplish th' end of his desire,  
 He, metamorphosed to a golden shower,  
 Fell in the lap of his dear paramour,  
 And being termed a god, did not disdain  
 To turn a man, a beast, a shower of rain.

Dear lords, when Cupid throws his fiery darts,  
 Doth none of them your tender bodies hit?  
 Doth Cytherea never charm your hearts,  
 Nor beauty try your quintessential wit?  
 Perhaps you will say no, fie, 'tis unfit!  
 Now by my Garter, and my George to boot,  
 The blind god surely hits if once he shoot.

**The objection of his  
 practices by art  
 magic.**

Whereas ye do object by magic charms  
 I sought to win fair dames to my desire,  
 'Tis better so than strive by force of arms,  
 For forced love will quickly back retire.  
 If fair means cannot win what we require,  
 Some tricks and secret sleights must be devised,  
 That love may even from Hell be exorcised.

**Plato makes  
 mention of this  
 Gyges.**

To your dull wits it seems impossible  
 By drinks and charms this work to pass to bring?

**King Candaules,  
that showed his  
wife naked to this  
Gyges, was  
afterwards slain by  
both their consents.  
His wisdom  
exceeded the  
Chaldeans and  
soothsayers. 2 book  
of the Kings.  
Josephus affirmeth  
that he wrote a  
book to bind and  
charm devils and ill  
spirits.  
The objection of his  
art to strengthen  
venery.**

Know then, that Gyges went invisible  
By turning of the sigil of his ring  
Towards his palm, and thereby slew the king,  
Lay with his wife, of any man unseen,  
Lastly did reign by marrying with the Queen.

King Solomon, for magic natural,  
Was held a cunning man by some divines;  
He wrote a book of science mystical,  
To bind ill spirits in their dark confines.  
He had great store of wives and concubines,  
Yet was a sacred king; thus I infer  
The wisest man that now doth live may err.

Also ye say that when I waxed old,  
When age and time misspent had made me dry --  
For ancient eld in carnal lust is cold --  
Nature's defect with art I did supply,  
And that to help this imbecility,  
I used strange drinks and ointments of good price,  
Whose taste or touch might make dead flesh to rise.

**His answer and  
defence.**

To this I answered that those fine extractions,  
Drams and electuaries rarely made,  
Served not so much to help venereal actions,  
As for to comfort nature that decayed;  
Which, being with indifferent judgment weighed,  
In noblemen may be allowed (I trust),  
As lending to their health, not to their lust.

What if I drank nothing but liquid gold,  
Lachryma Christi, pearl resolved in wine,  
Such as the full Egyptians' cups did hold  
When Cleopatra with her lord did dine?  
A trifle, care not, for the cost was mine.  
What if I gave hippomanes in drink  
To some fair dames? at small faults ye must wink.

**The objection of his  
discontent and  
inclination to  
rebellion in  
Monsieur's time.**

Ye say I was a traitor to the Queen?  
And that when Monsieur was in greatest grace,  
I, being out of favour, moved with spleen  
To see a Frenchman frolic in that place,  
Forth towards Berwick then did post apace,  
Minding to raise up a rebellious rout  
To take my part in what I went about?

**His answer and defence.**

That I was then a traitor I deny,  
 But I confess that I was Monsieur's foe,  
 And sought to break that league of amity  
 Which then between my prince and him did grow,  
 Doubting religion might be changed so,  
 Or that our laws and customs were in danger  
 To be corrupt or altered by a stranger.

**A faction betwixt the Earl of Sussex and Leicester about the marriage of the Queen with Monsieur.**

Therefore I did a faction strong maintain  
 Against the Earl of Sussex, a stout lord  
 On Monsieur's side, and then Lord Chamberlain,  
 Who sought to make that nuptial accord  
 Which none may break, witness the sacred word;  
 But thus it chanced that he strived in vain  
 To knit that knot which heaven did not ordain.

Thus ye did misinterpret my conceits,  
 That for disloyalty my deeds did blame;  
 Yet many men have laid their secret baits  
 To entrap me in such snares to work my shame,  
 Whom I in time sufficiently did tame,  
 And by my sovereign's favour bore them down,  
 Proving myself true liegeman to the crown.

**His true allegiance to the Queen.**

Think ye I could forget my sovereign lady,  
 That was to me so gracious and so kind?  
 How many triumphs for her glory made I;  
 O, I could never blot out of my mind  
 What characters of grace in her have shined;  
 But some of you that were by her preferred,  
 Have with her bones almost her name interred.

**He blameth some for their ingratitude and forgetfulness of so excellent a prince.**

When she was gone, which of you all did weep?  
 What mournful song did Philomela sing?  
 Alas, when she in death's cold bed did sleep,  
 Which of you all her doleful knell did ring?  
 How long will you love your new crowned king,  
 If you so soon forget your old Queen dead,  
 That four and forty years hath governed?

Ye say I sought by murder to aspire,  
 And by strong poisons many men to slay,  
 Which (as ye thought) might cross my high desire  
 And cloud my long expected golden day.  
 Perhaps I laid some blocks out of my way,  
 Which hindered me from coming to that bower



Where Cynthia shined like lamps in Pharos' tower.

Alas, I came not of a tiger's kind;  
 My hands with blood I hated to defile;  
 But when by good experience I did find  
 How some with feigned love did me beguile,  
 Perchance all pity then I did exile,  
 And -- as it were, against my will -- was pressed  
 To seek their deaths that did my life detest.

**A lamentable  
 discourse.**

Lo then, attend to hear a doleful tale  
 Of those whose death ye do suppose I wrought;  
 Yet wish I that the world believe not all  
 That hath of me by envious men been taught,  
 But when I for a kingly fortune sought,  
 O pardon me, myself I might forget,  
 And cast down some, my state aloft to set.

**The death of my  
 Lord of Leicester's  
 wife at Cumnor, a  
 place 4 or 5 miles  
 from Oxford, where  
 this Lady died.**

My first wife fell down from a pair of stairs,  
 And brake her neck, and so at Cumnor died,  
 Whilst her true servants, led with small affairs,  
 Unto a fair at Abingdon did ride;  
 This dismal hap did to my wife betide;  
 Whether ye call it chance or destiny,  
 Too true it is she did untimely die.

Oh, had I now a shower of tears to shed,  
 Locked in the empty circles of mine eyes,  
 All could I spend in mourning for the dead,  
 That lost a spouse so young, so fair, so wise!  
 So fair a corpse, so foul a corse now lies;  
 My hope to have married with a famous Queen  
 Drave pity back, and kept my tears unseen.

**Quid non mortalis  
 pectora cogit Regni  
 sacra fames.**

What man so fond that would not lose a pearl  
 To find a diamond, leave brass for gold?  
 Or who could not forget a gallant girl  
 To win a Queen, great men in awe to hold,  
 To rule the state, of none to be controlled?  
 O, but the steps that lead unto a throne  
 Are dangerous for men to tread upon!

**The death of  
 Cardinal Chatillon.**

The Cardinal Chatillon was my foe,  
 Whose death I peradventure did compact,  
 Because he let Queen Elizabeth to know  
 My false report given of a former act --

How I with her had made a precontract,  
 And the great princes' hopes I barred thereby  
 Which sued to marry with her Majesty.

The prelate had been better held his tongue,  
 And kissed his Holy Father's feet in Rome;  
 A Mass the sooner for his soul was sung,  
 But he may thank me; had he stayed at home,  
 Or late, or never, he to heaven had come;  
 Therefore I sent him nimbly from the coasts  
 Perhaps to supper with the Lord of Hosts.

**The contract ended.** When death by hap my first wife's neck had cracked,  
 And that my suit unto the Queen ill sped,  
 It chanced that I made a precontract,  
 And did in sort the Lady Sheffield wed,  
 Of whom I had two goodly children bred,  
 (For the Lord Sheffield died, as I was sure  
 Of a catarrh which physic could not cure).

Some think the rheum was artificial,  
 Which this good Lord before his end did take.  
 Tush! what I gave to *her* was natural!  
 My plighted troth yet some amends did make,  
 Though her at length, unkind, I did forsake;  
 She must not blame me, for a higher reach  
 Made my sure promise find a sudden breach.

**The death of the  
 renowned Earl of  
 Essex.**

The valiant Earl whom, absent, I did wrong  
 In breaking Hymenaeus' holy band,  
 In Ireland did protract the time too long,  
 Whilst some in England ingled underhand,  
 And at his coming homeward to this land,  
 He died with poison, as they say, infected,  
 Not without cause (for vengeance) I suspected.

**A contract.**

Because this fact notorious scandal bred,  
 And for I did his gallant wife abuse,  
 To salve the sore, when this brave Lord was dead,  
 I for my wife did his fair Lady choose;  
 All flesh is frail! Dear Lady, me excuse;  
 It was pure love that made me undertake  
 This hapless recontract with thee to make.

Now in Jove's palace that good lord doth sup  
 And drink full bowls of nectar in the sky;

Hunnis, his page, that tasted of the cup,  
 Did only lose his hair, but did not die.  
 True noble Earl, thy fame to heaven doth fly;  
 He doth repent his fault, and pardon crave,  
 That marred thy bed, and too soon made thy grave.

**The praise of  
 Robert Devereux,  
 late Earl of Essex.**

Thou didst behind thee leave a matchless son,  
 A peerless pattern for all princely peers,  
 Whose sparks of glory, in my time begun,  
 Kindled with hope, flamed highly in few years,  
 But death him strook, and drowned his land with tears;  
 His son doth live, true image of him dead,  
 To grace this soil where showers of tears were shed.

**The death of Sir  
 Nicholas  
 Throgmorton, a  
 very worthy knight.**

They were to blame that said the Queen should marry  
 With me, her horse-keeper -- for so they called me.  
 But thou, Throgmorton, which this tale didst carry  
 From France to England, hast more sharply galled me;  
 Sith my good Queen in office high installed me,  
 And I was Master of her Highness' horse,  
 I scorn thy words, which did my hate enforce.

**Suspected to be  
 poisoned with a  
 sallet.**

But tell me, sir, how didst thou like the fare  
 When I to supper last did thee invite?  
 If I did rid thee of a world of care  
 By giving thee a sallet, gentle knight,  
 With ghastly looks do not my soul affright;  
 Leicester I was, whom England once did dread,  
 But now I am, like thee, Throgmorton, dead.

**The death of the  
 most noble Earl of  
 Sussex.**

My Lord of Sussex was too choleric,  
 That called me traitor, and a traitor's son,  
 But I served him a fine Italian trick;  
 Had I not done so, I had been undone.  
 Now mark the end: what conquest hath he won?  
 A little scruple that to him I sent  
 Did purge his choler till his life was spent.

He was a gallant nobleman indeed.  
 O, but his life did still my life decrease.  
 Therefore I sent him with convenient speed  
 To rest amongst his ancestors in peace.  
 My rage was pacified at his decease,  
 And now I crave to embrace his love too late;  
 Him dead I love, whom, living, I did hate.

**The death of the  
Countess of  
Lennox.**

I came to visit, as I chanced to walk,  
My Lady of Lennox, whom I found not well;  
I took her by the hand, had private talk,  
And so departed; a short tale to tell.  
When I was gone, into a flux she fell,  
That never ceased her company to keep  
Till it had brought her to a senseless sleep.

I dreamt she had not many days to live,  
And this my dream did shortly fall out true,  
So as her ghostly father, I did give  
Some comfort to her soul, for well I knew  
That she would shortly bid the world adieu;  
Some say I gave such physic as did spill her,  
But I conceive that mere conceit did kill her.

**The death of the  
Earl of Ormond  
intended, but not  
effected.**

Some will perhaps object I did pretend  
To meet the Earl of Ormond on a day  
In single fight, our quarrel so to end,  
But did command my servant Killigray  
To lie in ambush, that stout Lord to slay;  
But heaven did not consent to work his spoil  
That was the glory of the Irish soil.

Perhaps I doubted that I was too weak,  
And loath I was he should the conquest win.  
If in this case I did my promise break,  
I hope men will not count it for a sin.  
Is it not good to sleep in a whole skin?  
Where Hannibal could not prevail by blows,  
He oft used stratagems to kill his foes.

**The death of  
Monsieur Simier,  
ambassador of the  
French King,  
plotted, but not  
executed.**

If I the death of Monsieur Simier sought,  
When he from France ambassador was sent,  
I had just cause to seek it, as I thought,  
For towards me he bore no good intent;  
Had he not fled betimes, perhaps I meant  
To have sent him in ambassage for my pleasure  
To the black king that keeps Avernus' treasure.

For when no man about the court durst speak  
That I had Lady Lettice married,  
This prattling Frenchman first the ice did break,  
And to the Queen the fact discovered,  
Which, not without just cause, my anger bred;  
Thus the ape did play his part, controlled of none,

When he espied the bear from home was gone.

**The death of an  
Italian called  
Salvatore.**

One Salvatore, an Italian born,  
Having once watched with me till midst of night,  
Was found slain in his bed the next day morn.  
Alas, poor man, I rue his woeful plight,  
That did in nothing but in sin delight;  
Had he to honest actions bent his wit,  
He might have longer lived, and scaped this fit.

**Fallere Fallentem  
non est fraus.**

But what reward should such a man expect,  
Whom gold to any lewdness could entice?  
Our turn once served, why should not we reject  
So vile an instrument of damned vice?  
What if he were dispatched in a trice:  
Was it not better this man's blood to spill  
Than let him live, the world with sin to fill?

I doubted lest that Doughty would bewray  
My counsel, and with others party take,  
Wherefore, the sooner him to rid away,  
I sent him forth to sea with Captain Drake,  
Who knew how to entertain him for my sake;  
Before he went, by me his lot was cast;  
His death was plotted and performed in haste.

He hoped well, but I did so dispose  
That he at Port Saint Gillian lost his head,  
Having no time permitted to disclose  
The inward griefs that in his mind were bred.  
We nothing fear the biting of the dead!  
Now let him go, transported by the seas,  
And tell my secrets to th' Antipodes.

**The death of Gates,  
servant to the Earl  
of Leicester.**

My servant Gates did speed as ill, or worse,  
To whom I did my close intents impart,  
And at his need, with money stuffed his purse,  
And willed him still take courage to his heart.  
Yet in the end he felt the deadly smart;  
He was inveigled by some subtle witted  
To rob, so he was taken and committed.

Of pardon I did put him still in hope  
When he of felony was guilty found,  
And so condemned, till his last friend, the rope,  
Did him uphold from falling to the ground.

What hope of grace, where vice doth so abound?  
 He was beguiled like birds that used to gape  
 At Zeuxis' table for a painted grape.

Yet I did to the man no injury;  
 I gave him time and leisure to repent,  
 And well he knew he had deserved to die;  
 Therefore, all future mischief to prevent,  
 I let him slip away with my consent;  
 For his reprieval, like a crafty fox,  
 I sent no pardon, but an empty box.

**The falsehood of  
 servants to be  
 doubted.**

Else as unfaithful Bannister betrayed  
 The Duke of Buckingham, his master dear,  
 When he, of Richard's tyranny affrayed,  
 Fled to his servant's house for succour there,  
 So might my man, for gain, or forced by fear,  
 Have brought my corps with shame unto the grave  
 By too much trusting of a paltry knave.

**The death of the  
 good Duke of  
 Norfolk.**

Meseems at me great Norfolk's Duke doth frown  
 Because he thinks I did his death contrive,  
 Persuading some he aimed at the crown,  
 And that by royal match he meant to strive  
 A kingdom to his lordship to derive;  
 Alas, good Duke, he was too meek and mild,  
 And I too faithless, that his trust beguiled.

**The subtlety of the  
 Earl of Leicester.**

For when I found his humour first was bent  
 To take the Scots' captived Queen to wife,  
 I egged him on to follow his intent,  
 That by this means I might abridge his life;  
 And she, a crownless Queen, to stint all strife,  
 First finding Scotland lost, to England fled,  
 Where she, in hope of succour, lost her head.

O blessed spirits, live ye evermore  
 In heavenly Sion, where your Maker reigns,  
 And give me leave my fortunes to deplore,  
 That am fast fettered with sin's iron chains.  
 Man's most sweet joys are mixed with some sour pains,  
 And none doth live, of high or low degree,  
 In life or death, that can from woe be free.

Ah, now my tongue grows weary to recite  
 Such massacres as have been here expressed,

Whose sad remembrance doth afflict my sprite.  
 Methinks I see legions of saints to rest  
 In Abraham's bosom, and myself oppressed;  
 The burden of my sins do weigh me down;  
 At me the fiends do laugh, and angels frown.

My crimes, I grant, were great and manifold,  
 Yet not so heinous as some make report;  
 But flattering parasites are grown so bold  
 That they of princes' matters make a sport  
 To please the humours of the vulgar sort,  
 And that poor peevish giddy-headed crew,  
 Are prone to credit any tale untrue.

Let those that live endeavour to live well,  
 Lest after death their guilt, like mine, remain,  
 Let no man think there is no heaven nor hell,  
 Or with the impious Sadducees maintain  
 That after death no flesh shall rise again.  
 Let no man trust in fickle fortune's wheel;  
 The guerdon due for sin, in part I feel.

**Meaning Leicester.** Know that the prince of heavenly Seraphins,  
 When he gainst his Creator did rebel,  
 Was tumbled down for his presumptuous sins;  
 Satan (that once was blest) like lightning fell  
 From the highest heaven even to the depth of hell,  
 And all those angels that his part did take  
 Have now their portion in the burning lake.

**The Earl of Leicester's means to get infinite riches.** Of mighty heaps of treasure I could vaunt,  
 For I reaped profit out of everything.  
 I could the prince and people's hearts enchant  
 With my fair words and smooth-faced flattering.

**Bonus odor Luchri ex re qualibet.** Even out of dross, pure gold I oft did wring,  
 For though the means to gain be oft unmeet,  
 The smell of lucre ever savours sweet.

**By suit to the Queen.** So sometimes I had singular good hap  
 Great suits of my dread sovereign to obtain.

Prodigal fortune poured down from her lap  
 Angels of gold as thick as drops of rain;  
 Such was my luck to find this golden vein;  
**By changing rents and lands with the Queen.** Likewise to me it seemed nothing strange  
 Both rents and lands oft with my prince to change.

- By licences.** I had another way to enrich myself  
By getting licences for me alone  
For wine, oil, velvet, cloth, and suchlike pelf,  
By licence, too, of alienation,  
By raising rents, and by oppression,  
By claiming forests, pastures, commons, woods,  
And forfeiture of lands, of lives, and goods.
- By falling out with the Queen.** By this strange course also I greatly thrived,  
In falling out with my dear sovereign,  
For I the plot so cunningly contrived  
That reconcilment soon was made again,  
And by this means great gifts I did obtain,  
For, that I might my bags the better fill,  
I begged great suits as pledge of new goodwill.
- By placing of heads of houses in Oxford.** Besides I sometimes did increase my store  
By benefit that I from Oxford took,  
Electing heads of houses heretofore;  
I loved their money, and they loved their book.  
Some poorer, though more learned, I forsook,  
For in those days your charity waxed cold --  
Little was done for love, but much for gold.
- The valour of the Earl of Warwick, afterward Duke of Northumberland at Musselburgh field, & against the rebels in Northfolk.** Doubtless my father was a valiant peer  
In Edward the Sixth's days, when he was sent  
Gainst rebels that did rise in Northfolkshire,  
And, after that, when he to Scotland went  
Under the Lord Protector's regiment;  
By notable exploits against the Scots  
Eternal glory to himself he got.
- His ambition.** Surely ambition was his greatest fault,  
Which commonly in noble hearts is bred;  
He thought he never could his state exalt  
Till the good Duke of Somerset was dead,  
Who by my father's means did lose his head,  
So ill the race of Dudleys could endure  
The Seymour's lives that did their fame obscure.
- The death of the Duke of Somerset.** When once King Edward at the butts had shot,  
My father said, 'Your Grace shoots near the white';  
The king replied, 'But not so near (I wot),  
As when you shot my uncle's head off quite';  
The Duke, my father, knew the King spake right,  
And that he meant this matter to debate,



If once he lived to come to man's estate.

It seems my father in times past had been  
A skillful archer, though no learned clerk;  
So strange a chance as this is seldom seen;  
I do suppose he shot not in the dark,  
That could so quickly hit so fair a mark;  
Nor have I missed my aim, nor worse have sped,  
When I shot off the Duke of Norfolk's head.

Tarquin the Proud herein we counted wise,  
That he strook off the highest poppies' top,  
To note unto his son, as I surmise,  
That he the heads of some great peers should crop,  
Lest they, in time, too high might chance to hop;  
Excuse us, then, in that we gave such blows  
As chopped off heads of our aspiring foes.

**The Duke of  
Northumberland  
sold Boulogne to  
the Frenchmen.**

Now when the Duke of Somerset was dead,  
My father to the French did Boulogne sell.  
As pleased him, the King he governed,  
And from the Privy Council did expel  
Th' Earls of Southampton, and of Arundel;  
Thus, whilst he ruled and controlled all,  
The wise young King extremely sick did fall.

**The death of King  
Edward the Sixth.**

Who, having languished long, of life deprived,  
Not without poison, as it was suspected,  
The Council, through my father's means, contrived  
That Suffolk's daughter should be Queen elected;  
The sisters of King Edward were rejected,  
My brother Guildford to Jane Grey was wedded,  
Too high preferred, to be so soon beheaded.

**The Lady Jane, a  
virtuous dame,  
proclaimed Queen,  
and shortly after  
beheaded.**

This Lady Jane, that once was termed a Queen,  
Greater in fame than fortune, was put down,  
Had not King Henry's daughters living been,  
Might for her virtues have deserved a crown;  
Fortune on her at once did smile and frown;  
Her wedding garment, for a princess meet,  
Was quickly changed for a winding-sheet.

**The Duke of  
Northumberland's  
intent to marry  
Queen Mary.**

Between the Duke of Suffolk and my father,  
The match was made which Death soon after brake,  
But by my father's subtle drifts I gather  
He meant Queen Mary his own wife to make

If it had been his fortune her to take,  
 And then, to make the former purpose void,  
 The race of Suffolk should have been destroyed.

My father was by his familiar told  
 He by a man should never be subdued,  
 Whereon he grew more peremptory bold,  
 The issue of King Henry to exclude  
 From kingdom's sway; the sprite did him delude,  
 For when King Edward, that good prince, was dead,  
 A woman reigned, that made him lose his head.

He, with a warrant from the Council's hands,  
 Her days set down and journeys limited,  
 Most bravely furnished with his martial bands,  
 Rode t' apprehend Dame Mary, who for dread,  
 And danger of her life, to Norfolk fled,  
 But whilst from London he abroad did range,  
 Men's minds did alter as the times did change.

**She is proclaimed  
 Queen. The Duke  
 of Northumberland  
 arrested of high  
 treason at  
 Cambridge.**

For Princess Mary was, by trumpets' sound,  
 Proclaimed Queen, and in the throne invested,  
 And he, at Cambridge being quickly found,  
 Was of high treason instantly arrested  
 By those at whom he lately scoffed and jested;  
 So to the Tower he being once conveyed,  
 His head not long upon his shoulders stayed.

**His death.**

Like th' apples which Gomorrha's trees do bear,  
 Whose town with fire and brimstone was combust,  
 Of colour like to gold, they yet appear,  
 Or like the fruit that tempted Eve to lust,  
 But, being touched, forthwith they turn to dust,  
 And though they seem so beautiful to sight,  
 They yield no sap that may the taste delight.

So seems a crown to an ambitious wight,  
 Most rutilant and splendent in aspect,  
 That doth with glittering shows beguile the sight,  
 And doth corrupt the inward intellect  
 With superficial beauty's fond respect,  
 And if by wrongful means it be obtained,  
 Nothing but care, distrust, and fear is gained.

I did but like weak Icarus assay  
 After my sire Northumberland to fly

With waxen wings, which soon will melt away;  
 My plumes were like the wings of Mercury,  
 When he comes in ambassage from the sky;  
 By wisdom, wealth, by wariness and wit,  
 I fled aloft, and there did safely sit.

My hapless grandfather did lose his head,  
 Who for his private gain abused the state;  
 My father after him as badly sped,  
 Having incurred the prince and people's hate;  
 My courage for their fall did not abate,  
 But grown more wary by their dismal haps,  
 I learned how to prevent such afterclaps.

As Richard, Duke of York, when through submission,  
 And just desert, into the lapse he fell,  
 And being likewise held in great suspicion,  
 As one that oft attempted to rebel,  
 To th' end thenceforth he might more safely dwell,  
 Did so provide, after the former breach,  
 To come no more within his prince's reach.

**The Lord of  
 Leicester's  
 circumspect  
 dealing.**

So I, knowing my fault, made myself strong  
 By force, by faction, and by flattery,  
 By gifts, by threats, by my enchanting tongue,  
 By fraud, by friendship, by humility,  
 By sleights and Machiavellian policy,  
 That if I once deserved my prince's anger,  
 I might no more be caught within her danger.

**He aimeth at the  
 crown.**

Sith at a diadem my thoughts did aim,  
 And that I saw how things across did go,  
 When for myself the crown I could not claim,  
 Because thereto no title I could show,  
 Then on my friend I would the same bestow,  
 About whose person I might bear most sway,  
 As one born to command, not to obey.

For I was jump of Julius Caesar's mind,  
 That could no one superior endure;  
 Nay, I to guide my sovereign was inclined,  
 And bring the common people to my lure,  
 Accounting that my fortune was obscure,  
 And that I lived in a woeful plight,  
 If anyone eclipsed my glory's light.

**The ambitious  
desire of  
principality, and  
what it worketh.**

The love to reign makes many men respect  
Neither their friends, their kindred, nor their vow;  
The love to reign makes many men neglect  
The duty which to God and man they owe;  
From out this fountain many mischiefs flow;  
Hereof examples many may be read  
In chronicles of th' English princes dead.

**Kings which broke  
their oaths to  
obtain the  
kingdom. Henry,  
surnamed  
Beauclerk for his  
learning.**

This humour made King Harold break his oath  
Made unto William, Duke of Normandy;  
This made King Rufus, and young Beauclerk both  
Their elder brother Robert to defy,  
And Stephen to forget his loyalty  
To Maud, the Empress, and to hold in scorn  
The faithful oath that he to her had sworn.

This made young Henry, crowned by his sire,  
Against his father warfare to maintain;  
This made King John the kingdom to aspire,  
Which to his nephew Arthur did pertain,  
And him in prison hardly to detain,  
And this made Bullingbroke t' usurp the crown,  
Putting his lawful sovereign, Richard, down.

**Edward the Fourth.**

This made Edward the Fourth at his return  
From Burgundy, when he to York was come,  
To break the oath which he had lately sworn,  
And rule the realm in good King Henry's room;  
This made the tyrant, Richard, eke to doom  
His nephews' death, and rid away his wife,  
And so in blood to end his wretched life.

A pretty plot in practice I did put,  
Either to take a queen without delay,  
Or when the cards were shuffled, and well cut,  
To choose a king and cast the knaves away;  
He should be cunning, that great game will play;  
Ill luck hath he that no good game can make,  
When princes play, and crowns lie at the stake.

First I assayed Queen Elisabeth to wed,  
Whom divers princes courted but in vain;  
When in this course unluckily I sped,  
I sought the Scots' Queen's marriage to obtain,  
But when I reaped no profit of my pain,  
I sought to match Denbigh, my tender child

To Dame Arbella, but I was beguiled.

Even as Octavius with Mark Anthony  
 And Lepidus the Roman Empire shared,  
 That of the world then held the sovereignty,  
 So I a new triumvirate prepared;  
 If death awhile young Denbigh's life had spared,  
 The grandam, uncle, and the father-in-law  
 Might thus have brought all England under awe.

But when I saw my wit had no more might  
 To get a royal match than if I strived,  
 By washing oft, to make an Ethiop white,  
 And when I saw my son of life deprived,  
 Arbella lost, and I my hopes survived,  
 I plotted to advance unto the crown  
 One of my kin, a Lord of good renown.

So I preferred Hastings before those other  
 Which from th' united royal blood descend,  
 Although he came but of a second brother  
 Of York's right heir; alone I did pretend  
 His claim was just, and this I would defend;  
 Yet I did know his title was too weak,  
 And might have done more harm than I will speak.

For if York's title were advanced again,  
 Lancaster also would his claim recall,  
 In whose defence were many thousands slain,  
 Now the remainder of his house doth fall  
 To th' heirs of Castile and of Portugal,  
 And so should right, of consequence, pertain  
 To her that is th' Infanta now of Spain.

**A weak title.**

**John of Gaunt and  
 his issue.**

Brave John of Gaunt, Edward the Third's fourth son,  
 Had two sons: Henry, that was after King,  
 Who brought the crown to Lancaster; and John,  
 From whom Henry the Seventh his claim did bring;  
 And daughters twain, by Blanche and Constance spring:  
 Philippe, John, King of Portugal, did wed,  
 And Katherine, the heir of Castile married.

Yet no one part can merely claim the crown,  
 But such as from both houses are derived;  
 The heavens upon this land did ever frown,  
 While York and Lancaster together strived;

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The case seemed doubtful till it was contrived  
That Richmond, matching with Fourth Edward's daughter,  
Both should possess the crown, and end all slaughter.

For neither Marius and proud Sulla's wars  
In Rome such bloody massacres did breed,  
Nor Caesar and great Pompey's civil jars,  
Nor Guelphs and Ghibellines, did cause to bleed  
So many hearts, though long they disagreed,  
As York and Lancaster, whose mortal hate  
Consumed themselves, and half undid the state.

It were too tedious for me to recite  
How many princes of the royal blood  
Were done to death by treason or in fight,  
In what uncertain state this kingdom stood,  
What brainsick lightness, and what furious mood  
Possessed the commons, that would have the crown,  
Even, like a football, tossed up and down.

King Edward the Third's son this strife did breed,  
But the first cause that did their hate inflame  
From Henry the Third's children did proceed,  
Edward, and Edmund Crookback, from whom came  
In fourth descent a daughter, Blanche by name,  
She married John of Gaunt, whose son and heir,  
Called Bullingbroke, possessed the regal chair.

Richard of Bordeaux was the eldest son  
To Edward, Prince of Wales, the Black Prince hight,  
Son to Third Edward; so the strife begun,  
When Henry, Duke of Lancaster, by might,  
Compelled King Richard to resign his right  
Unto himself, although the title fell  
To him that matched with th' heir of Lionel.

So when the crown had three descents remained  
Under the rule of th' House of Lancaster,  
Then Edward, Duke of York, the crown obtained  
By Philippe, wife of Edmund Mortimer,  
Lionel's heir, who did the right transfer  
To Anne, espoused to Duke Plantagenet,  
At Wakefield slain, whose son the crown did get.

Some say that Edmund Crookback (from whose line  
Old John of Gaunt derived his pedigree)

Was Longshanks' elder brother, and in fine,  
Put by the crown for his deformity;  
If this be true, I do no reason see  
But that in my conceit I should prefer  
Before York's race, the House of Lancaster.

If this be false, York is of greater fame,  
And worthy to possess the royal chair,  
Although this from Third Edward's fifth son came,  
For that it coupled in conjunction fair  
With Lionel, the Duke of Clarence', heir,  
Which Duke (if we unto the truth will grant)  
Was elder brother unto John of Gaunt.

Henry of Monmouth, with small pain and cost,  
Did conquer France, but he not long did reign;  
Henry of Windsor long time lived, but lost  
All that his sire, or grandsire, did obtain,  
And so died in the Tower; his son was slain  
At Tewkesbury, the battle being ended,  
And so the crown to York more firm descended.

Fourth Edward had two sons and daughters five,  
Both princely sons were murdered in the Tower;  
Richard, the last heir male of York alive,  
Was slain at Bosworth Field by Richmond's power,  
Who matched with Edward's heir, York's fairest flower,  
Three younger daughters meanly were bestowed,  
The last, a nun, religious life she vowed.

Perceiving that the danger was so great  
For one to give a kingdom to his friend,  
I would have rather kept the kingly seat  
Than given it anyone that, in the end,  
Might prove unthankful, and perhaps intend,  
If once the crown were settled on his head,  
To crack my crown, till I to death had bled.

When any man's true love I meant to try,  
His meaning by this watchword I did know,  
'What, are you settled?'; if he did reply  
In doubtful terms, or this poor answer, 'No',  
He was not for my turn; I let him go,  
But if he answered, 'Settled is my heart',  
O, him I held a man of high desert.

Sith I could do myself but little good  
Unless I kindled strife among the peers,  
Or set the princes of the royal blood  
Amongst themselves together by the ears,  
Or filled the commons' hearts with doubtful fears,  
Mark what a subtle plot I did devise  
To compass that which gave me means to rise.

First Huntingdon should Scotland's King defeat;  
Arbella, Huntingdon. The Queen in ward  
Should put them down, and challenge Cynthia's seat,  
Yet she reserved alive, for my strong guard;  
If fortune on my part had fallen out hard,  
I might have used th' authority of all  
To mount the throne, and triumph at their fall.

The bear was ready evermore to watch,  
That the red lion might be soon suppressed,  
That the black bull, or wolf, small vantage catch,  
That the sole bird that hath the flaming crest  
Should in Arabia build no stately nest,  
And that fair fowl, that doth Jove's lightning bear,  
His clipped wings but hardly should appear.

Lo, thus the bear still loved to control,  
Since Archas and Calisto were installed  
In the celestial globe, near th' Arctic Pole,  
Which now the Great, and Lesser, Bears are called,  
So I, that to ambition was enthralled,  
Desired to climb, and I ascended high,  
But often failed when I meant to fly.

I took such order that no man should blaze  
The name of him that should the Queen succeed;  
Thus did I put the commons in a maze,  
And made them fear more than was cause indeed,  
That Cynthia's death would make all England bleed;  
All men might guess, but none directly say,  
'This is the heir that shall this kingdom sway.'

When Richard Coeur de Lion did prepare  
To take his voyage for the Holy Land,  
Arthur of Britain was proclaimed heir,  
In solemn manner, by the King's command;  
When Second Richard with his martial band  
To Ireland sailed, he likewise did prefer,



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As his next heir, Sir Edmund Mortimer.

But I procured an Act of Parliament,  
Willing the heir apparent to conceal;  
A strange device, and fit for their intent  
That seek the crown by mere deceit to steal,  
But most pernicious to the public weal,  
Save that God's providence doth so dispose  
That right takes place, though it hath many foes.

Although this new-found statute bore pretence  
Of safeguard to the Queen, if thoroughly weighed,  
It might have bred great danger and offence,  
Which gave us leave our friends closely to aid,  
And made the simpler sort of men affrayed  
T' enquire thereof, for fear t' offend the law,  
Whilst on our side great numbers we might draw.

For under colour thereby to restrain  
Some that would seek t' eclipse fair Cynthia's light,  
We privily did harbour and maintain  
A rout of ruffians, quickly armed to fight  
In the defence of some unworthy wight,  
Whom we might have set up within an hour  
To daunt the Queen, or true successor's, power.

Yet in excuse, this parable I told:  
Men honour more the sun when it doth rise  
Than when it sets; so, when the Queen waxed old,  
And th' heir made known, grows popular and wise,  
His sight might draw the people's hearts and eyes  
To wait on him, whose thoughts were fixed before  
Upon th' old prince whom they did all adore.

Some hoped to lade their backs with others' spoils,  
Others did fear supposed co-rivals' strife,  
Foreign invasion, and intestine broils,  
Woe to the husband, mourning to the wife;  
Some wished the world would end with Cynthia's life,  
Others did fear lest that, in time to come,  
Young babes should live to weep on Cynthia's tomb.

But now King James, the monarch of this soil,  
Inaugurate by heaven and earth's consent,  
Like Solomon, anointed with the oil  
Of gladness and of grace, from Scone is sent

To be Great Britain's greatest ornament,  
 And to establish new the Golden Age,  
 In spite of spite, and maugre envy's rage.

Thus, having told a catalogue of crimes  
 Which to my charge have publicly been laid,  
 With some excuse, how I observed times  
 To raise my state, how mightily I swayed,  
 Whilst I within this kingdom's limits stayed,  
 Now will I show what fame I got or lost  
 Whilst I did frolic on the Belgic coast.

**The Earl of  
 Leicester's voyage  
 into the Low  
 Countries.**

In the Low Countries did my fame soar high  
 When I was sent Lieutenant-General;  
 The Queen's proud foes I stoutly did defy,  
 And made them to some composition fall;  
 There I maintained a port majestic;  
 In pomp and triumph many days I spent,  
 From noble, then my name grew Excellent.

**His Excellency.**

Then was my heart in height of his desire,  
 My mind puffed up with surquedry and pride;  
 The vulgar sort my glory did admire,  
 Even as the Romans, 'Ave Caesar' cried,  
 When th' Emperor to the Senate house did ride,  
 So did the Flemings with due reverence,  
 Like thunder speak, 'God save your Excellence!'

Few subjects before me obtained this style,  
 Unless they were the viceroys of the land,  
 The name of lordship seemed too base and vile,  
 To me that governed such a royal band,  
 And had a prince's absolute command;  
 Who did not of my puissance stand in awe,  
 That might put him to death by martial law?

Lo, what a title hath mine honour got,  
 An Excellency added to my name;  
 Can this injurious world so quickly blot  
 A name so great out of record of fame,  
 Cover my glory with a veil of shame,  
 Or will it now contemn me, being dead,  
 Whom, living, even with fear it honoured?

**The town of  
Deusborough taken  
by the Lord of  
Leicester upon  
composition.**

The town called Deusborough I did besiege,  
Which did on composition shortly yield,  
I did good service to my gracious liege,  
Till by ill counsellors I was beguiled,  
For such as were my captains in the field,  
To whom at length chief charge I did commit,  
Seduced me to do many things unfit.

**Deventer town and  
Zutphen sconce by  
Sir Rowland Yorke  
and Captain  
Stanley yielded up  
to the enemies.**

When Sir John Norris' council I refused,  
Whose perfect skill in feats of arms I knew,  
By Rowland Yorke's advice I was abused,  
Whereon some loss soon after did ensue,  
Deventer town and Zutphen sconce, I rue,  
By Yorke, and Stanley, without any blows,  
Were rendered to the mercy of the foes.

**The death of Sir  
Philip Sidney.**

And that which to my heart more grief might strike,  
Happened the death of that redoubted knight,  
My nephew Sidney, who near Colestone dike,  
Received his deadly wound through fortune's spite;  
I sent no fresh supply to him in fight;  
I was not far off with a mighty host,  
So with his loss of life, some fame I lost.

The court in him lost a brave courtier,  
The country lost a guide, their faults to mend,  
The camp did lose an expert soldier,  
The city lost an honourable friend,  
The schools a patron, their right to defend,  
The court, the country, the camp, schools and city,  
For Sidney's death still sing a doleful ditty.

**The Earl of  
Leicester's  
hospitality and  
feastings in the  
Low Countries.**

Now while my princely glory did abound,  
Like rich Lucullus I great feasts did make,  
And was for hospitality renowned,  
The use of arms I quickly did forsake,  
An easier task I meant to undertake,  
I took no joy in wounds, or broken pates,  
But to carouse and banquet with the States.

Not Heliogabulus, whose dainty fare  
Did all the Roman Emperors' feasts exceed  
In cost and rareness, might with mine compare,  
Though he on brains of ostriches did feed,

**Phoenicopterus, a bird of whom Pliny writeth, that hath crimson wings.**

And phoenicopteries, and that instead  
Of oil, he used with balm his lamps to fill,  
Such was the pleasure of this tyrant's will.

**The Countess of Egmont's daughters resorting to my Lord of Leicester.**

To me Count Egmont's daughters did resort,  
And such brave dames as Flanders then did yield,  
That it did seem I rather came to court  
A gallant lady, than to pitch a field,  
For I did lay aside the sword and shield,  
At cards and dice I spent the vacant days,  
And made great feasts instead of martial frays.

But while in games and love my time I spent,  
Seeming secure as if I cared for nought,  
My messengers abroad I daily sent,  
As instruments of my still working thought,  
Whereby my purpose oft to pass I brought,  
And compassed what I did before devise,  
At such a time as no man would surmise.

**His policy when he was at his pastimes.**

Thus great attempts I oft did enterprise,  
Like a magician that with some fine wile,  
Dazzles the sight of the spectators' eyes,  
And with illusions doth their sense beguile;  
Such policies my cunning did compile,  
That I before men's eyes did cast a mist,  
While I performed such matters as I list.

**His counsel to young courtiers.**

Ye that like apes do imitate my deeds,  
Hoping thereby like favour to obtain,  
Know that so high a spirit never breeds  
In a blunt peasant or unnurtured swain,  
But in my heart imperious thoughts did reign;  
No phlegmatic dull milksop can aspire,  
But one compact of th' element of fire.

**The complements of a right courtier.**

He daily must devise some stratagem,  
He must be rich, stout, liberal and wise,  
The humours of base men he must contemn,  
He must be gracious in the people's eyes,  
He should be furnished with rare qualities,  
With learning, judgment, policy and wit,  
And suchlike parts as for the courts are fit.

For every forward fellow is not born  
To be a Scipio or a Maximus,

**Marius, a poor man's son, was chosen 7 times consul in Rome.**

Unless that wisdom doth his state adorn,  
Or valure make his life more glorious;  
Though he be base of birth like Marius,  
Yet he by virtue's aid aloft may come,  
Like him that seven times consul was in Rome.

**Ventidius quid enim Quid Tullius anne aliud quam sidus et occulti miranda potentiali celi. Juvenal.**

Ventidius' name at first was mean and base,  
Till he the Parthians' host had overthrown,  
And Cicero came of ignoble race,  
Borne at Arpinum, a poor country town,  
Yet he made arms give place unto the gown,  
And Rome, by his great wisdom freed from spoil,  
Called him the father of his native soil.

Perhaps young courtiers sometime learn to sing,  
To skip or dance before their mistress' face,  
To touch, like Orpheus, some enchanting string,  
To run at tilt, to jet with stately pace,  
Or by some fine discourse to purchase grace,  
But cannot manage the affairs of state  
Which best belongs to each great potentate.

Listen to me, ye hasty cavaliers,  
That in high favour do attempt to grow,  
Experience bred in me these many years  
Hath taught me cunning which ye do not know;  
Some precepts here I do intend to show,  
And if my siren song please not great peers,  
Then may they, with Ulysses, stop their ears.

**Trust not a reconciled friend.**

Trust not a friend that is new reconciled --  
In love's fair show he may hide foul deceit;  
By him ye unawares may be beguiled.  
Reveal to none your matters of great weight;  
If any chance to know your lewd conceit,  
Suspected to bewray your bad intent,  
He ought to suffer death or banishment.

**The Emperor Caligula wished all the Romans had but one head, that he might strike them all off at one blow.**

Caligula, the scourge of famous Rome,  
Wished all the Romans had one only head,  
That when he list to give their fatal doom,  
He might with one great blow strike all them dead,  
So should he never need their hate to dread,  
Even such a mischief wished I to my foes --  
That many men might perish with few blows.

**Caesar the mirror  
of clemency.**

But unto those that do your favour seek,  
 And by your help, hope their low states to raise,  
 Ye must be courteous, bountiful and meek;  
 Caesar by clemency won greatest praise,  
 And was esteemed the mirror in his days,  
 For it belongs to men of great estate,  
 To spare the poor, and rich men's pride t' abate.

**Noli altum sapere.**

It's ill to be a rub upon the ground  
 Wherein the prince the alley minds to sweep;  
 Their own estates they fondly do confound  
 That into high attempts so boldly creep,  
 And with their shallow pates do wade so deep,  
 To hinder what their sovereign doth intend,  
 Or to control what they cannot amend.

**It's dangerous to  
rouse the lion when  
he is asleep.**

Callisthenes much torment did sustain  
 Because great Alexander's pride he checked,  
 Grave Seneca (choosing his death) was slain  
 By Nero's doom, whose faults he did correct;  
 Use not too sharp rebukes, but have respect  
 Unto the persons; when great men do evil,  
 The vengeance leave to God, or to the devil.

**A meek and modest  
carriage required.**

Be not too haughty; pride procureth hate,  
 And mean men's hate may turn to your disgrace;  
 Nor be ye too familiar in high state,  
 For that will breed contempt among the base;  
 Observe a mean which winneth no mean grace,  
 Speak fair to all, trust few, use well your foes,  
 For this may purchase love where hatred grows.

**A way to procure  
one's overthrow by  
praising him.**

If ye do fear lest that your friend should chance  
 To mount too highly in the prince's grace,  
 His praise to heaven then stick not to advance,  
 Say that the charge he beareth is too base,  
 And that his worth deserves far better place;  
 So may ye by this praise rid him away,  
 And so supply his place another day.

**If he be valiant,  
thus.**

Say he will prove a terror in the field,  
 This private life doth much obscure his fame,  
 More fit to bear great Ajax' sevenfold shield,  
 Than, like Sardanapal, to court a dame;  
 He idly lives at home, it is a shame,  
 Her [sic] very presence may his foes appal,

Let him be sent Lieutenant-General.

Now if he chance to perish in some fight,  
It was not your work but the chance of war,  
Or thus you may excuse yourselves by sleight,  
Blaming the influence of the angry stars,  
That thus, by death, his future fortune bars,  
And, sighing, 'We are sorry,' ye may say,  
'That this brave man would cast himself away.'

**If he be learned and eloquent.** But if in feats of arms he hath no skill,  
If he be learned, wise, or eloquent,  
By praising him thus may you work your will:  
Procure him in ambassage to be sent,  
Far off, lest he return incontinent,  
As to the mighty Cham, or Prester John,  
And triumph in his room when he is gone.

If ye would fain cause him to be envied,  
Say that he bears a very royal mind,  
The common people love him as their guide,  
He is so gracious, affable, and kind,  
In him some sparks of majesty they find;  
Thus may his praise turn to his grievous smart,  
And breed suspicion in the prince's heart.

It skills not much if ye can paint or no,  
To set fair colours on your wooden love;  
Although th' Italian *Courtier* taught ye so,  
This art let Zeuxes, or Apelles prove;  
Dead pictures did not my affections move;  
Let painters draw fair Venus' comely face,  
No shadow, but the substance we embrace.

It boots not to excel in music's art,  
In praise thereof I list not to dispute;  
It better pleased great Alexander's heart  
To see Achilles' spear than Paris' lute;  
Brave Alcibiades misliked the flute,  
And for my part, sith music joys the ear,  
I love to hear it, but no part to bear.

It needs not to excel in poets' rimes,  
To versify is but a pretty toy  
Wherewith to pass away some idle times,  
And make long time seem short with longing joy,

While men do praise their ladies fair, but coy;  
Let bards sit plodding on their learning [sic?] lays,  
Whilst ye sit plotting deeds to win high praise.

If ye do princely regiment affect,  
Ye must be much more humble than before;  
Bear a high mind, but countenance deject,  
Showing a kind of pity to the poor,  
Chiefly to such as do your help implore;  
Sometime conform ye to the people's will,  
And soothe their humours, be they good, or ill.

When Nero, fierce Domitian, and the rest  
Of wicked Emperors that in Rome did reign  
Permitted vice, the people loved them best,  
Which when good Pertinax would needs restrain,  
He in a mutiny was shortly slain;  
Wherefore who can this argument convince:  
He was a good man, but a silly prince.

Henry the Sixth was holy and devout,  
Who, when his subjects fought, still fell to prayer;  
Gentle in peace, in battle nothing stout,  
Which gave occasion to the Yorkish heir  
To seat himself in Henry's royal chair;  
Wherefore of him, in the like sort I sing,  
He was a good man, but a simple king.

But Richard the usurper, putting down  
His princely nephews, caused them to be slain,  
Yet when he did possess the regal crown,  
Good laws he made, and justice did maintain,  
And as a righteous prince awhile did reign;  
Wherefore deny this argument who can,  
He was a good king, though an evil man.

So Macbeth that in Scotland sometime reigned,  
When first he had King Duncan's death compact,  
Yet when he had the garland once obtained,  
Which he by force unjustly did detract,  
Divers good statutes then he did enact;  
And so of him the former song I sing,  
He was a bad man, but an honest king.

Let not my words allure great men to vice,  
But let them take example by the best;



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The sins of wicked men ought to suffice  
That other men may learn them to detest;  
And of all evils let them choose the least;  
Want of discretion is no little fault,  
In those whom God to honour doth exalt.

Many more subtle secrets I could tell,  
Save that some captious people will suspect  
I am too deeply seen in Machiavel,  
And the severe critical Stoic sect,  
That do presume men's manners to correct,  
Will censure ill of this, my harmless speech,  
Wherein true rules of policy I teach.

Whoso would fain be thought an upright man  
In state affairs, to meddle let him shun  
In times corrupt, as Cato Utican  
Did give this rule in precept to his son,  
For he must needs unto great hatred run,  
Unless with others he will serve the times,  
And be in sort copartner of their crimes.

Now to proceed in telling on the story  
Of such attempts as I did enterprise,  
Whereby I hoped to win eternal glory:  
I daily did contemplate and devise  
How I, by force, or policy, might rise  
To be a king, or such a kinglike peer,  
As wanting but the name, chief sway might bear.

So though I did in secret sort conspire  
For private gain against the public state,  
Or seek above my calling to aspire,  
Stir factions, tax the commons, set debate,  
Or on the living of poor men ingrate,  
What I intended many might surmise,  
But no man durst my name to scandalize.

For I had got an Act of Parliament  
That none gainst Privy Councillors should prate,  
But he should suffer condign punishment,  
That urged by envy, or malicious hate,  
Would with a foolish tongue and knavish pate  
Talk idly of our persons that did deal  
In weighty business for the public weal.

Thus did I bridle each man's lavish tongue,  
That, in full cups, yet with an empty wit,  
Vomiting forth his malice, did us wrong,  
Misconstruing such decrees as we thought fit,  
Who gravely did at Council table sit,  
Discussing matters of no little weight,  
Above the reach of common men's conceit.

Now I, that was impatient of delays,  
Doubting lest fitter time I should not find  
Than in the reign of Cynthia's happy days  
To compass what I had conceived in mind,  
Having the prince's power to me assigned,  
Unto my use their forces did employ,  
That what I would, by force I might enjoy.

For when the camp at Tilbury did lie,  
Some shrewdly did suspect that I was bent  
To aid the Spanish host, if happily  
They had arrived on th' English continent;  
I loved them not, though, as an instrument,  
I might have used them to bring forces in,  
That to myself great honour I might win.

This was the year from Christ's nativity,  
A thousand and five hundred eighty-eight,  
Of which some men did strange things prophesy,  
Even when the Spaniards on the sea did wait  
To conquer England, led with vain conceit,  
For some our thundering cannons did confound,  
Others were in the wet world's empire drowned.

Thrice did the Queen her high commandment send,  
I should break up the camp, and come away,  
But after that, ten days I there did spend,  
Making excuses still of my delay;  
At length I was contented to obey,  
Weighing that in a sovereign prince's breath  
Lies th' awful sentence both of life and death.

Now though there were great matters of suspicion  
Which might against me well have been maintained,  
Such was my fortune's ever blest condition,  
At my return, my wonted grace I gained;  
I was with pomp and honour entertained;  
My presence, gentle speech, and gestures kind

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Cleared all suspicion in my prince's mind.

Like huge Antaeus, for his strength renowned,  
As dreadful as a Cyclops was to sight,  
When Hercules did cast him to the ground,  
He, from his mother Earth, increased his might,  
Even so, when Fortune, through my foes' despite,  
Gave me the foil, when to the Queen I came,  
My power increased, and I revived my fame.

But Hatton, then Lord Chancellor, did dare,  
To call me traitor stoutly to my face,  
This man, whom I advanced, did not spare  
To speak great words which turned to my disgrace;  
This man, whom I about my prince did place,  
In bold attempts t' assist me at my need,  
Did prove at length my strongest foe indeed.

Thus was I counterchecked by this proud peer,  
And him that kept fair Cynthia's treasury,  
But still my favour with my sovereign dear  
Did arm me against all adversity;  
My genius or my daemon was too high  
To be suppressed by my insulting foes,  
Whose evil words did wound me, not their blows.

Even as the genius of Mark Anthony,  
That seemed to be invincible in fight,  
When to Octavius Caesar he drew nigh,  
Was ever quailed, and fearful of his sight,  
As one whose genius was of greater might,  
So my great foes, that like proud peacocks vaunted,  
Were at my presence oft dismayed and daunted.

Now whilst like valiant Theseus I did tread  
The labyrinth of mischief and mischance,  
My Queen, like Ariadne, did me lead,  
Directed by a line, out of this trance;  
So, by her aid and royal countenance,  
I did at last the victory obtain,  
And envy, like the Minotaur, was slain.

Through London with my troops of men I rode,  
Which from the camp at Tilbury I brought;  
The fame of my return spread all abroad,  
In city and the suburbs round about;

Men forthwith banished that same idle thought  
Of treason, for the which I was suspected  
When I, as General, the camp directed.

Thus, as the sun most broad doth show his face  
When he begins in Thetis' lap to hide,  
So I, affecting still the people's grace,  
To make my power more known before I died,  
In pompous manner through the streets did ride,  
Casting abroad this little lasting blaze,  
While all men's eyes did on my person gaze.

Ah, how I was besotted with ambition,  
That did my brain so much intoxicate!  
If I had wrought my gracious Queen's perdition,  
For whom both heaven and earth did militate,  
Which way could I have shunned the people's hate?  
If Parma's prince, or Spaniards, had prevailed,  
Yet of my purpose needs I must have failed.

For many more competitors there were  
Then left behind, that would have stepped before,  
And joined their forces to put down the Bear,  
That had begun this mutinous uproar;  
To the right heir heaven would the crown restore;  
Besides, it happeneth thus in every state,  
Some treason love, the most do traitors hate.

Like to asbestos, the Arabian stone,  
Which once made hot cannot be cold again,  
Such is the nature of ambition,  
That when it doth possess a proud man's brain,  
It always doth inflame his phrenetic vein,  
Which, once incensed, he still doth honour crave,  
Till Death, approaching, pops him in a grave.

The Earl of Warwick, in Sixth Henry's days,  
That raised up kings, and after put them down,  
To give a kingdom thought it greater praise  
Than to adorn his own head with a crown;  
But I deemed it a point of more renown  
To be a king, than others kings to make,  
And him unwise, that would a crown forsake.

But sith to royal state I could not come,  
I sought myself by office to advance,

Like him that was dictator made in Rome,  
Or as the Lord High Constable in France,  
But missed of my aim, as it did chance,  
For then some mighty peers my suit did cross,  
That knew my gain must needs have bred their loss.

I sought no office mean, or trivial,  
But without limitation of command,  
To be the Lord Lieutenant-General  
Of the Queen's forces, both by sea and land,  
Whereby I might all foreign power withstand;  
And if my home-born enemies resisted,  
I might have chopped their heads off when I listed.

By this commission, for the which I sued,  
The charge of York and Wales had been assigned,  
Suffolk, and Norfolk, too, it did include;  
My gracious sovereign was to me so kind  
That she consented that it should be signed,  
But some of her great lords did plainly vow  
Of this large patent never to allow.

Wise Cecil that first sifted mine intent,  
Sought underhand, by craft and cunning skill  
My high aspiring drift to circumvent,  
Yet him I laboured, much against his will,  
To rest content, my pleasure to fulfil;  
But what prevailed my power against such foes?  
Some being dashed, like Hydra's heads more rose.

Hatton and Buckhurst never would consent  
That to such high promotion I should rise,  
But both their wits and forces jointly bent  
To cross my suit, by all the subtleties  
That either art or nature could devise;  
And Hatton would surrender the Great Seal,  
Rather than yield, to hurt the public weal.

The wolf doth terrify the gentle lamb,  
The elephant and rhinoceros do fight,  
The stag doth fly when he doth see a ram,  
The horse cannot abide the camel's sight,  
The beast hyena dreads the panther's might,  
The silly cony fears the wily fox,  
And kingly lions hate the crowing cocks.

So great antipathy was then between  
Myself, the Bear, and that unthankful Hind  
That hindered my great suit made to the Queen,  
To which her privy seal had been assigned,  
For the full satisfaction of my mind,  
Yet men of our degree in time of yore,  
Such offices without controlment bore.

As when Richard the Second was installed,  
And crowned king, John, Duke of Lancaster,  
Did bear the royal sword, Curtana called,  
And as he was then Earl of Leicester,  
The office of High Steward he did bear;  
As Earl of Lincoln to his sovereign Lord,  
He challenged to be carver at the board.

Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester,  
The office of High Constable did gain,  
The Earl of Oxford, then called Robert Vere,  
Admitted was for Lord High Chamberlain,  
The Marshalship, Lord Percy did maintain,  
And Sir John Dymock, a true worthy knight,  
Was the King's Champion to defend his right.

Some of these offices until this hour,  
By birthright do continue in one race;  
But, commonly, the men of greatest power,  
As they are raised by their sovereign's grace,  
When others fail or die, supply their place  
Which on their good deserts may rest so still,  
Or else be altered at the prince's will.

Cromwell, that well which all the abbeys drowned,  
(Come well, or ill, I will not censure it),  
Was made vicegerent, as a man renowned  
Both for his wisdom and his pregnant wit,  
But when the King, in choler, thought it fit,  
He lost his place, and afterward his head,  
For some small rumours that of him were spread.

Cardinal Wolsey, one of greater hope,  
More rich, more pompous, more majestic,  
York's great archbishop, legate of the Pope,  
Did bear chief sway by power pontifical;  
His pride was but the presage of his fall,  
And when the King this prelate's death had meant,

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By dying first, he did the King prevent.

Now of the Duke of Somerset I sing,  
Who had this realm's imperial government,  
As uncle and Protector of the King;  
He did no hurt, nor any mischief meant,  
Yet his ambitious foes were not content  
To take his head without sufficient cause,  
But half his land, contrary to the laws.

Would I could so have tempted my high thought,  
Or with so mild a grace had been endued,  
But if my wish had to effect been brought,  
Perhaps the prince and commons might have rued,  
And such catastrophes might have ensued,  
That England should, not without storms of tears,  
Behold the purple gore of slaughtered peers.

Like Tantalus, I saw th' Hesperian fruit,  
Which, when I would have tasted, fled away;  
The heavens compelled me to surcease my suit,  
When I beyond my limits sought to sway;  
Unconstant fortune offered me foul play,  
But passion ruled me, and my sovereign's favour  
Made me presume on fortune, that did waver.

O, then let not the sovereign monarch trust  
To any one peculiar potentate  
That ruleth, not by reason, but by lust,  
So consequently brings himself in hate,  
And doth endanger his dread prince's state;  
This makes me wish no such, I being dead,  
May of the prince, like me, be favoured.

Edward the Second's love to Gaveston  
Stirred up through all the realm great murmuring,  
Richard the Second's mighty favour shown  
To Robert Vere did grievous trouble bring,  
Queen Margaret, by too much favouring  
Proud de la Pole, wrought good Duke Humphrey's fall,  
And lost at length her husband, crown, and all.

But let me ask, what hath my sovereign lost  
By favouring myself, or my great blood?  
It may be that through envy I was crossed,  
Not that I did oppugn my country's good;

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Perhaps my foes in policy withstood  
My high attempts, doubting if I aspired,  
Like Clymen's son, their houses might be fired.

The Duke of Venice, as th' Italians say,  
Is counted but an honourable slave;  
He bears the name, his senators bear sway,  
And hath a double voice, nor more can crave,  
But, as in Oxford, heads of houses have;  
Were I a Duke (as I was little less),  
Such demi-peers should not my power suppress.

Aye me, that ever honour should be checked  
By men to us inferior in degree;  
But why should we, that were great lords, expect,  
Enthralled to sin, from malice to be free?  
From th' eye of heaven, oh whither can we flee?  
Death as a catchpole comes, when we think least,  
And doth, for debt to nature, us arrest.

I little did regard what Solon said,  
Respect the end, consider what thou art,  
No man is blest till he in grave be laid,  
And after Death hath strook him with his dart,  
His soul doth to celestial bliss depart,  
'For this is certain, that the end doth show  
Whether a man be happy, yea, or no.'

When, from the court, a malcontent I went,  
Crossed in my suit, late hoping to be blest,  
Death shortly did my purposes prevent,  
Giving ambitious thoughts eternal rest,  
That erst so hotly boiled in my breast;  
Yet life was sweet, and I was loath to leave it,  
But death was sour, yet, forced, I did receive it.

A little while before death did approach,  
For certain truth, as divers men do say,  
Pigs followed me as I rode in my coach,  
Which by no means could then be driven away;  
It is most true, while I on earth did stay,  
Many unthankful pigs by me did thrive,  
Which now of praise my worthy deeds deprive.

If pigs did haunt me as familiar sprites,  
It is not strange they showed my death drew near;



To Brutus, and to Dion, some few nights  
Before their deaths, hobgoblins did appear;  
I speak not this my guilty life to clear,  
But that the simpler sort of men may know  
Such sights, like comets, prince's deaths foreshow.

I kept a spirit in a crystal box,  
Which of a bridge, or bath, bade me beware,  
But, oh, the fiend, more subtle than a fox,  
Doth give such oracles as doubtful are,  
Thereby to catch men sooner in his snare;  
Yet in some sort his word did fall out true,  
As you shall find by that which did ensue.

Deep learned Socrates, that hath been deemed  
By Phoebus' oracle the wisest wight,  
Who was of gods and men highly esteemed  
For wisdom's love, that age's only light,  
Had often with him a familiar spite  
That hindered him from serving sensual lust,  
To do things that are lawful, good and just.

Oh, had I had a spirit of that kind  
To move me to good deeds, I had been blest;  
Then had I borne a more submissive mind,  
But that ill sprite, ambition, so possessed  
The inward motions of my sinful breast  
That it provoked me still to do amiss,  
And err from the right way that leads to bliss.

When I from Rycote towards Bath did ride,  
Some that did make fair shows proved too unkind;  
I took a dram too much, whereof I died,  
Much sick in body, but more sick in mind,  
When I my trusted servants, false did find;  
But what could pomp, or worldly wealth, avail?  
Even they betrayed my life that cried, 'All hail!'

Henry the Fourth by wizards was foretold  
His lot was in Jerusalem to die,  
His voyage he determined to hold  
Towards the Holy Land, his chance to try,  
But whilst the King at Westminster did lie,  
He fell sore sick, and died here in this realm,  
In th' abbots' chamber called Jerusalem.

King Pyrrhus' end was thus prognosticate,  
That, when he saw a bull and wolf to fight,  
Death's stroke should cancel his life's utmost date;  
In Argos he beheld that fatal sight,  
Of these two beasts, in copper carved right,  
Seeming to fight, and there as he did ride,  
Was with a tilestone hurt, and shortly died.

Now I forgot what my familiar said,  
That of a bath did warn me to take heed,  
Or else by me it was not rightly weighed,  
The name of 'bath' was ominous indeed,  
For riding toward Bath, my bane did breed;  
Thus destinies are oftentimes foreshown,  
But not avoided, though they may be known.

I meant t' have left my wife at Killingworth,  
Where she perhaps might during life have stayed;  
Whilst under an ill planet I rode forth,  
Some secret to one man I open said,  
Which after, to my ruin, was betrayed,  
As some, by change of loves, may be defiled,  
So some, by change of cups, have been beguiled.

As Alexander in a golden cup  
Distained with poison drank his deadly draught,  
When he in stately Babylon did sup,  
His death (that won all battles which he fought)  
By Antipater's treachery was wrought,  
And now his body in small compass lies,  
Whom one world's conquest once could scarce suffice.

So I drank poison, and forgot straightway  
That I was Earl of Leicester anymore,  
But a small lump of earth, and clod of clay  
Whom the still wavering world admired of yore,  
And few or none, now being dead, deplore,  
But like a shadow from reflecting glass,  
As from their eyes, so out of mind I pass.

Thus I, that oftentimes did lie in wait  
T' entrap the lives of others in a snare,  
Was caught myself, entangled with the bait  
Which wretched I for others did prepare;  
Of inward foes, men hardly can beware:  
Great Agamemnon's death who doth not rue?

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Whom Trojans feared, him lewd Aegisthus slew.

Lo, here the period of life's last date;  
Even in the height of my prosperity,  
Cut off from life by some untimely fate,  
The Bear sprung from Northumberland did die,  
When he presumed to have climbed most high,  
Whom, being yet alive, no man could tame,  
Now, being dead, ten thousand men do blame.

I marvel why some people do suppose  
That I, for fear lest I should be accused,  
Poisoned myself, as urged by mighty foes  
That I my prince and country had abused;  
I knew my faults might either be excused,  
Or that the Queen my follies might forgive,  
For never did a prince more gracious live.

How could I put so little confidence  
In my dear sovereign's long approved grace?  
Had I not, many times, experience  
Of her firm favour in a doubtful case,  
When fortune turned from me her smiling face?  
What cause had I to fall into despair  
That might beg pardon at her mercy' chair?

Say that I should be judged by the law,  
Her will might law's severity restrain;  
The Bear but of the Lion stood in awe,  
Of her alone, mercy I might obtain;  
And Anacharsis' speech was true and plain,  
That laws, like spiders' webs, hold fast small flies,  
But drones escape, and break the net that ties.

Grave Cato did himself unwisely slay,  
Because he would not yield to Caesar's will,  
Scorning his country's tyrant to obey;  
I doubt not but the fact was very ill,  
In any heathen, that himself did kill,  
But in a Christian, I account it worse  
That to his sin will add so great a curse.

O, thou poor traveller that passest by  
The place of my past glory's monument,  
In Warwick town, where my dead corps doth lie,  
Poorly interred by friends too negligent,

Sith potentates vouchsafe not to lament,  
I pray thee, honest friend, if here thou come,  
Grave ruth upon thy breast, praise on my tomb.

Thou mightest have seen some of the noble peers  
With humble congees do me reverence;  
I tell thee, man, there have not many years  
Slided away by tract of time sithence  
Mean men have quaked at my magnificence;  
I was envied, beloved, or feared of all,  
And when I frowned, half the court looked pale.

Pompey the Great, that long did seignorize  
Among the conscript fathers of old Rome,  
And whilom many lands did monarchize,  
Yet when by Caesar he was overcome,  
He, being dead, did want a worthy tomb;  
Thus Pompey lived, thus did great Pompey died,  
Thus Leicester lived, thus doth great Leicester lie.

So on my grave a marble stone is laid,  
Bare stone, weak love, soon hot, and quickly cold;  
My corps that sometime was so richly rayed  
In Tyrian purple, pearl, and cloth of gold,  
Now shrouded under a base earthly mold,  
Shows unto them which have my person seen  
But the bare shadow of what I have been.

Thou mightest have seen, engraven on my brow,  
Characters of nobility and grace,  
And noted me, whose knee did never bow,  
But if great Jove or Cynthia were in place,  
My port, my pomp, my presence, and my pace  
Showed that I was a man to greatness born,  
Whose thoughts all base servility did scorn.

Thou mightest have seen a stately personage,  
And framed to that, a correspondent mind,  
The rarest politician of that age,  
Whose disposition it was hard to find,  
Prudent in peace, not much to war inclined,  
Nor ruled so much by reason as by passion,  
I was a man conformed to each man's fashion.

Courteous with Caesar, stern with Tamburlaine,  
Gracious with Scipio, grave with Pericles,

Severe with Cato, bold with Charlemagne,  
Factious with Sulla, mild with Socrates,  
Portly with Pompey, proud with Damocles,  
Observing minds, myself I wisely carried,  
And, fitting all men's minds, from all I varied.

Pilgrim, farewell, but ere thou part from hence,  
At every word let fall a brackish tear,  
Write this small epitaph in my defence,  
'Here Leicester lies, old England's peerless peer,'  
Whom those that did not love were forced to fear,  
Farewell, once more, and say that I am gone,  
But to discover regions yet unknown.

Now since I walked in the path of Death,  
My friends, my kin, my poets me forsook;  
No learned muse bestowed her gentle breath,  
In breathing forth my praise, nor undertook  
To register my honours in her book,  
And of my fame no monuments are left  
In gratitude, and Time hath all bereft.

Thrice happy were those valiant lords of Rome,  
Whose statues, brought into the Capitol,  
Were there erected by the Senate's doom,  
But chiefly when the Muses did enrol  
Their names in honour's everlasting scroll,  
Who, when their conquering corps to death did yield,  
Were solemnly interred in Mars's field.

But who erects an image to my fame?  
Who consecrates colosses to my praise?  
Who studies to immortalize my name?  
Who doth a stately pyramid upraise  
T' entomb my corps, that slept in Cynthia's days?  
Who sung the requiem, or in mournful verse,  
Fixed my due praise upon my sable hearse?

Ere I could come near to th' Elysian camps,  
Having a tedious pilgrimage to make,  
There, where celestial earth-lightening lamps  
Did never shine, I did my way mistake,  
And so fell down in Lethe's sleepy lake,  
Lo, thus my name, through Europe once renowned,  
Now in oblivion's muddy pit is drowned.

Bucephalus, great Alexander's horse,  
That did his king good service in the field,  
Was so esteemed that, over his dead corse,  
A goodly city this dread prince did build;  
No town, nor worthy tomb, doth my corps shield  
From fortune's malice; is it not great pity  
Lords want fair tombs, while beasts lie in the city?

My brother Ambrose and myself did climb  
As high as subjects' fortunes could permit;  
We once were great, and flourished in the prime,  
Mighty in power, and prompt enough of wit,  
But since that we were fallen into death's pit,  
Our flesh scarce withered, and our bones scarce rotten,  
Our fame is dead, and we are quite forgotten.

Thus, our well pampered flesh is turned to dust;  
We have been Trojans, Ilium sometime stood;  
The heavens in canceling our days were just;  
We fed on joys, but now for worms are food,  
Who while we lived, for our country's good,  
Bore up the ragged staff, which oft was seen  
Advanced in honour of our gracious Queen.

Now the short springtime of our pomp is past,  
The tedious autumn of our fall is come;  
What thing beneath the moon can ever last?  
The fox, the ass, the ape, possessed our room,  
And triumphed in our dreadful days of doom,  
Yet now the ragged staff, once borne so high,  
Is broken, and in dust the bears do lie.

And Cynthia, whom my spirit doth adore,  
Up to her sphere celestial having fled,  
Will with her presence grace this soil no more,  
Sith her best friends are now pressed down, or dead;  
O powers immortal, deck her royal head  
With an eternal crown, and let her rest  
Among the sacred queens, and virgins blest.

When Death, as true jack of the clock, doth strike,  
And fortune turns the wheel of chance about,  
Croesus and Irus then are both alike,  
The rich and poor, the feeble and the stout,  
Man's life, even like a taper, burneth out,  
And when the hour-glass of his time is run,

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Atropos cuts the thread which Clotho spun.

What resteth now for me, but to lament  
My sins, that are too many to be told;  
I do confess my trespass, and repent;  
In doing good, I was too slack and cold,  
In doing ill, I was too quick and bold;  
For mercy now I call, I plead, I cry,  
For want of grace I sigh, I faint, I die.

If any grace to me my grief could win,  
Would I had here an ocean fraught with tears  
To overflow the mountain of my sin;  
O, would cold sighs could pierce the flinty spheres,  
And move to pity the celestial ears;  
Would I had air to sigh, or seas to weep,  
Or would my soul were with my corps asleep.

Yet though my sins pass number as the sand,  
O mortal men, to Him the judgment leave  
That dwells in temples never built with hands;  
Your judgment may perhaps yourselves deceive;  
No torment shall my soul of hope bereave;  
Some think some devils have an hope of grace;  
Keep you your faith, and I will hope embrace.

O yearth and ashes, wherefore dost thou boast  
Of pomp, of honour, or of riches' store?  
All this I gained, this gain I quite have lost,  
I gained but loss when death knocked at my door;  
Poor Job himself was never half so poor,  
For I lay naked when to earth I fell in;  
Heaven covers him that hath no house to dwell in.

Farewell, ye Lords, that in fair Albion sway,  
Cut not the Gordian knot of love in twain,  
With loyal hearts your sovereign's will obey;  
Justice and right with all your strength maintain,  
That heaven on you may peace and plenty rain;  
What was amiss in me, do you amend;  
If aught were good, that follow to your end.

If of yourselves good government ye lack,  
Ye are unfit the public weal to guide;  
Your vassals, and your slaves, behind your back,  
Will laugh to scorn the folly of your pride;

A conscience clean, all slanders may deride;  
Use virtue as an antidote most strong  
Against the poison of a venom'd tongue.

Adieu, fair dames that grace this earthly globe,  
Where in her golden hemicycle sate  
The night's pale queen, yclad in royal robe,  
Exempt from earth, by him that ruleth fate,  
Preserve the reputation of your state;  
Honour the King, that doth like Phoebus shine,  
Whom ye may term humane, and half divine.

Farewell, ye learned judges of this land;  
Judge ye uprightly, lest ye judged be,  
When ye before great Rhadamanth shall stand,  
If once condemned, ye never can be free,  
It is enacted thus, by heaven's decree,  
The gods will call a Parliament on high,  
To which ye shall be summoned when ye die.

Farewell, my son; Robert, my son, farewell;  
Proceed in virtue as thou hast begun,  
So mayest thou thy progenitors excel;  
Likely thou art a better race to run;  
Make thy dead sire blest in his living son;  
Sith all my hope in thee doth only rest,  
Fix virtue and true honour in thy breast.

O heavens, rain showers of glory on the throne  
Of James, the King, that now in peace doth reign,  
Who doth possess the patriarch Jacob's stone,  
Which doth to him of ancient right pertain;  
Even all the days of heaven let him remain  
An happy King to rule this happy soil,  
To triumph still, and give his foes the foil.

So shall the warlike Britons' fame increase,  
And to the height of happiness aspire,  
Even till the spheres' swift movement shall cease,  
When heaven shall melt, and earth consume with fire;  
Adieu, vain world; my ghost must now retire  
To unfrequented deserts, there to stay,  
Till all flesh turn to dust and slimy clay.



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The Author's Conclusion

Let no man think I exorcised the ghost  
Of this great peer that sleepeth in the dust,  
Or conjured up his spirit to this coast,  
To press him with dispraise, or praise unjust;  
I am not partial, but give him his due,  
And to his soul I wish eternal health,  
Ne do I think all written tales are true  
That are inserted in his *Commonwealth*.  
What others wrote before, I do revive,  
But am not like to them, incensed with hate,  
And as I plainly write, so do I strive  
To write the truth, not wronging his estate,  
Of whom it may be said, and censured well,  
He both in vice, and virtue, did excel.