

A New Letter of Notable Contents

With a Strange Sonnet, Entitled

Gorgon,

Or, The Wonderful Year.

London

Printed by John Wolfe

1593.

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To my loving friend John Wolfe, printer to the City.

Mr. Wolfe, good news was ever a welcome guest unto me, and you do well in the current of your business to remember the Italian proverb, Good tidings would be dispatched to ride post, as ill tidings may have good leave to be a footman. The nimblest bee is a slow-worm in expeditions of importance or congratulation, & the dullest snail the meetest ambassador to be employed in messages of damage or condolment. You have lately (as appeareth by your indices of the sickness, and so many other novels) very tidily played the bee's part, and so continue, as you love me or yourself, unto whom I wish a rich hive and many honeymoons. Since I received *Parthenophil*, *Shore's Wife*, and the *Articles* of accord or truce in France (for which I render you as many thanks as there be articles), I have now also this instant of September, perused your quaint and cunning discourse of *Remonstrances to the Duc de Mayenne*, with that other new new pamphlet of the late Turkish assiege of Sisak in Croatia, the old Liburnia, famous for serviceable ships. And take no less pleasure in the sound declaration of the plain German, a credible historiographer, than delight in the sly information of the fine French, a gleeking remembrancer. It is not the external, but the internal form (call it the pith, or the marrow, or the life-blood, or what you list) that edifieth, and undoubtedly the Christian world hath pregnant cause to prostrate the ferventest zeal of their devotions to His Almighty Majesty that hath brought France and Croatia to those terms of truce and triumph. A happy truce, if a happy truce, and an honourable triumph, if durable. I say *if* and *if* because I have known many a truce like scammony, that weakeneth the liver, or cassia, that enfeebleth the reins, or agaric, that overthroweth the stomach, the stomach that must work the feat. And who hath not either by experience or by hearsay, or by reading, known many a triumph like senna, that breedeth wind, or rhubarb, that drieth overmuch, or euforbium, that inflameth the whole body, the body that must strike the stroke? Take away that overthrowing or weakening property from truce, and truce may be a divine scammony, cassia or agaric to purge noisome and rebellious humours. Oh, that it might be such a purge in France. Correct that ventosity or inflammation that accompanieth triumph, and lo, the gallantest physic that nature hath afforded, wit devised, or magnanimity practised to abate the pride of the enemy and to redouble the courage of the friend. No tobacco or panacea so mightily virtuous as that physic. Oh, that it might be such a physic in Croatia, in Hungary, in Almany, in the whole Christian world. *Immensum calcar gloria*, the golden spur of the brave Grecian & the worthy Roman. Policy is politic, & will not easily be cozened with the musk of the perfumer, though musk be a sweet courtesan, or allured with the sugar & honey of the cook, though sugar & honey be dainty hypocrites, or inveigled with the gold leaves of the goldsmith, though gold leaves be eloquent & bewitching orators, or deluded, that is, betrayed, with any colourable counterfeisance, however smoothly enticing, or gloriously pretending. Private medicines are often adulterate, but public medicines will admit no sophistication, and policy must be well advised before it swallow down the gilded pills of flattering pretext. France hath been taught to be cautelous in truce, which hath eftsoons sucked the sweetness of a Judas kiss, and Croatia may learn to be provident in triumph, which hath often felt the joyfulness of a Samson's post. Neither France can be too jealous, nor Croatia too prest, nor Hungary too fierce, nor Almany too hardy, nor any nation too circumspect that is beleaguered with such puissant and obstinate foes. The house of Guise hath long hawked and practised for

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a great crown; the Duc de Mayenne hath chopped upon a main chance; opportunity is a marvelous warrior, the King of Spain a mighty enemy, the Pope an unreconcilable adversary to a Protestant prince, the Turk a horrible foe to Christian states, and not to be daunted or dismayed with two or three petty foils. Petty foils incense choler & enrage fury, not allay courage or disarm power. Were not a man a man in himself, and God above all, alas, what security in a fallible truce, or what repose in a momentary triumph? Yet every truce is respectively welcome, and every triumph a pageant of manful valour, & a jubilee of divine favour. For my poor part (a single interest in so great affairs), I am as affectionately glad to find victory on the better side as I have often been compassionately sorry (or shall I say, stomachously angry) to read how piteously the Christian host hath been beaten by the Turkish army, a brave army, but Turkish. Whose puissance hath long been, and still is, the dishonour of Christendom, and whose empire cannot wax, according to their aspiring design, but Christ's kingdom must wane, according to some lamentable examples. Surely the Only-wise (for whosoever is comparatively wise, he is absolutely wise) ordaineth all for the best, and they perish for, or through, their own folly that perish. Homer in humanity hath affirmed it, and the Bible in divinity hath confirmed it. Howbeit true wisdom is valiant in adversity, and right valiancy wise in prosperity, both ever like themselves, and unlike the puffs or bubbles of the world that know how to disguise or afflict, but not how to redress or solace themselves. Hope never despaireth, and no such resolution as the resolution of faith, a virtue of more wonderful improvement by thousands than the most miraculous grain of mustard seed, or whatsoever nature engendereth, art frameth, or exercise achieveth most powerable. Zeal hath been, & may be, a marvelous conqueror, even beyond the bravest confidence or fiercest fury, and faith was ever the wonder of wonders where it was. Christ favoureth a stout and invincible constancy in any good cause, and in his own cause (maugre the mainest forces or subtlest policies of Mahomet or the devil) he will finally make them victorious with triumphs and joy and trophies of honour that fight his battles with the heart of zeal and the hand of courage. Who honoureth not the glorious memory, and the very name, of the renowned Lepanto, the monument of Don John of Austria, the security of the Venetian state, the halleluiahs of Christendom, & the wellaway of Turkey? Christ bless his standard-bearers with many Lepantos and Sisaks, and make his militant church an host triumphant. It hath often been the mediation of one, that with a politic and divine analysis hath looked into the successive proceedings and fatal overthrows of tyrannies, if Mahomet and his Alcoran cannot stand but Christ & his evangely must fall when the Great Turk, continually encroaching (according to his grand intendiments and ambitious design) is busiest in his hottest harvest of engrossing and co-heaping kingdoms, and, with a most greedy appetite runneth headlong to devour the Christian world at a bit, Lord have mercy upon thee, O little little Turk. Pride may exalt his haughty presumptions, and prowess advance his terrible bravery, but there is a God in heaven, and they cannot laugh long that make the devil laugh and Christ weep. Meanwhile it were pity Sisak should want the glory of such an immortal memorial as some noble and royal wits have bestowed upon the ever-renowned Lepanto. Excellent virtue, for a due reward, deserveth excellent honour, and brave valour, for worthy imitation, would be bravely extolled, as Orpheus glorified Jason; Homer, Achilles; Virgil, Aeneas; Ariosto, Charlemagne; Tasso, Godfrey of Bouillon, and so forth. Especially in such an encountering and surprising time as must either flourish like the palm of the

mountain, or fade like the lily of the valley. You know I am not very prodigal of my discourse with everyone, but I know unto whom I write, & he that hath read and heard so many Florentine discourses as you have done may the better discern what is what, and he that publisheth so many books to the world as you do, may frame unto himself a private & public use of such conference. Few they are that are qualified to surpass or equal those singular precedents, but they few would be retained with a golden fee, or entertained with silver courtesy. Some I know in Cambridge, some in Oxford, some in London, some elsewhere, dyed in the purest grain of art & exercise, but a few in either, and not many in all that undoubtedly can do excellently well, exceedingly well. And were they thoroughly employed according to the possibility of their learning & industry, who can tell what comparison this tongue might wage with the most flourishing languages of Europe, or what an inestimable crop of most noble and sovereign fruit the hand of art, and the spirit of emulation, might reap in a rich and honourable field? Is not the prose of Sir Philip Sidney, in his sweet *Arcadia*, the embroidery of finest art and daintiest wit? Or is not the verse of M. Spenser in his brave *Faerie Queen* the virginal of the divinest Muses and gentlest Graces? Both delicate writers, always gallant, often brave, continually delectable, sometimes admirable. What sweeter taste of Suada than the prose of the one, or what pleasanter relish of the Muses than the verse of the other? Sir John Cheke's style was the honey-bee of Plato, and M. Ascham's period the siren of Isocrates. His, and his, breath the balm and spikenard of the delightfulest Tempe. You may guess whose metre I would entitle the harp of Orpheus, or the dulcimers of Sappho. And which of the golden rivers floweth more currently than the silver stream of the English Ariosto? Oh, that we had such an English Tasso, and oh, that the worthy Du Bartas were so endenized. The sky-coloured muse best commendeth her own heavenly harmony, and who hath sufficiently praised the hyacinthine & azure dye, but itself? What colours of astonishing rhetoric or ravishing poetry more deeply engrained than some of his amazing devises, the fine ditties of another Petrarch or the sweet charms of pure enchantment? What diamargariton or dia-amber so comfortative or cordial as her electuary of gems (for though the furious tragedy *Antonius* be a bloody chair of estate, yet the divine discourse of life and death is a restorative electuary of gems) whom I do not expressly name, not because I do not honour her with my heart, but because I would not dishonour her with my pen, whom I admire, and cannot blazon enough. Some other paragons of beautifullest eloquence, and mirrors of brightest wit, not so much for brevity's sake, as for like honour's sake, I overskip, whose only imperfection is that they are touched with no imperfection. Yet hope is a transcendent, & will not easily be imprisoned or impounded in any predicament of ancient or modern perfection, which it may honour with due reverence, but will not serve with base homage. Excellency hath in all ages affected singularity, & ambition how impetuously buckled for the mastery. And albeit wit have a quick scent that will not be cozened, and judgement a sharp eye that cannot be bleared (the morning star of discretion and the evening-star of experience have a deep insight in the merits of every cause), yet still hope hath reason to continue hope, and is a white angel sent from heaven, as well to enkindle vigorous zeal as to awaken lazy sloth. A wan or windy hope is a notable break-neck unto itself, but the grounded and winged hope which I someway perceive in a few other, no way conceive in myself, is the ascending scale and milk way to heavenly excellency. When I bethink me of any singular or important effect, I am presently drawn into a consideration of the cause, and

deem it a childish vanity to dream of the end without the means. The prompt and pliant nature is the dawning of the crimson morning, the right art as fine a workman as Daedalus, & as nimble a planet as Mercury; aspiring imitation may climb high; how oft hath emulation won the golden spurs, and run his victorious race like the shining sun in his resplendishing chariot? Pregnant and incessant exercise hatcheth miracles. Practise was ever a curious platformer of rare and quaint theoric, and is it not still possible for practise to devise as exquisite patterns as ever were invented, and even to contrive new ideas of singularity? The encounter of virtue is honourable, & what more commendable than the conflict of art? It is only that divine hope, embellished with those ornaments of skill, and inspired with those blessings of heaven, that must excel itself, & advance the worthiest valour that ever achieved heroical exploits, or levied Argonautical prizes by land or sea. Peerless wits may hoard up the precious treasure of their invention, and store up the gorgeous furniture of their eloquence, till prowess hath accomplished mightier wonders upon earth. At this present, what can admiration find either more resolute for courage, or more puissant for valour, or more honourable for success, or more wonderful for imitations, than the small bands of the brave Rupertus against the Turk, or the little troops of the braver French King against his domestical and foreign enemies?

I might say more, were the place fit, but what written token shall I return for so many printed tokens? One hand washeth another, and it appertaineth unto him that taketh something to give something. I am reasonably furnished with choice of other store at this instant, but I will not accloy you at once, and my least, but newest, trifle (for that is the meetest name) shall serve in supply of a small requital for your greater news. I term it a trifle for the manner, though the matter be, in my conceit, superexcellent; in the opinion of the world, most admirable; for private consideration, very notable; for public use, passing memorable; for a point or two, exceeding monstrous. And that is the very disgrace of the sonnet, that the style nothing countervaieth the subject, but debaseth a strange body with vulgar attire, and disguiseth a superlative text with a positive gloss. As it is, it is your own to dispose or cancel at pleasure, and albeit the writer promise nothing (for promise he accounteth an obligation), yet if he fortune to surprise you with a sorry amends, let it not be unwelcome that cometh in the name of goodwill, and such a goodwill as is less afraid of the plague than of unthankfulness. He that is desirous with the first to be continually made acquainted with your public intelligences, from or of whatsoever kingdoms or states, will have a mutual regard of friendly correspondence by some return of private novels or other recompense, as any his vacation yieldeth leisure, or any his opportunity presenteth occasion.

Touching his present exercises or other actions, you know enough that know why the ass sleepeth, & the fox winketh. Or recall to mind our sweet table philosophy of the fordead leopard, a very gentle and silent creature, and you need no other inkling. Peradventure somebody may find that the roughest & awkest things are not so cumbersome to other as they may prove irksome to themselves. There is a learned kind of fear that preventeth many mischiefs, and they are judiciously wise (howsoever valiant, rich or powerable) that dare not use other otherwise than themselves would be used. Men may stand upon braving terms, and puff up their own swelling veins, but when wilfulness is in the tide, discretion is in the ebb. Some have repented them no less than four and twenty hours in a

day and a night for one froward word. Surely a man were better shift his footing than stand stiffly in his own light, and who would not rather say to his tongue, Tongue thou art a liar, or to his pen, Pen, thou art a fool, than undo himself utterly, and shame himself everlastingly? You might hear of the new treaty or motive, and it is not the first time that I have discovered a brood of wits like the famous well in Idumea, whose water one quarter of the year was muddy as the muddiest kennel; another quarter, as bloody as the bloodiest slaughter-house; the third, as green as the greenest grass; the fourth, as clear as the clearest conduit.

Every exchange for the better doth well, and it is a good sign when puddle waters grow clear, if they grow clear, and disordered wits become tractable, if they become tractable. Have they not cause to doubt, that know the variable nature of that Syrian well, and have seen so many dogged things return to their vomit? A good bargain and a gentle offer would not be refused, but he that considereth the fits of April and the pangs of September hath reason for a demurrer, and he that hath seen as lunatic creatures as the moon must be pardoned though he suffer not himself to be cozened with the legerdmain of a juggling convert. Did I never tell you of a graver man that wore a privy coat of interchangeable colours, and for the art of revolting or recanting might read a lecture to any retrograde planet in heaven or earth? Is it not possible for a wild ass of a fugitive and renegade disposition in such a point to resemble the tamest fox? Or are not books, with unstaidd readers and running heads, like unto those wondrous waters that, being drunk of birds, as Theophrastus reporteth, or of sheep, as Seneca writeth, changed them from white to black, and from black to white?

After a stern and ruthless tragedy, solemnly acted, who deeplier plunged in sober and melancholy dumps than some good-fellows that from a pleasant and wanton comedy, lively played, return as merry as a cricket, and as light as a feather? When the sweet youth haunted Aretine and Rabelais, the two monstrous wits of their languages, who so shaken with the furious fevers of the one, or so attainted with the French pox of the other? Now he hath a little mused upon the *Funeral Tears* of Mary Magdalen, and is egged on to try the suppleness of his pathetical vein in weeping the compassionatest and divinest tears that ever heavenly eye rained upon earth; Jesu, what a new work of supererogation have they achieved! Riotous vanity was wont to root so deeply that it could hardly be unrooted, and where reckless impudency taketh possession, it useth not very hastily to be dispossessed. I was saying, What say you to a spring of rankest villainy in February, and a harvest of ripest divinity in May? May they not surcease to wonder, that wonder how Machiavel can teach a prince to be, and not to be, religious?

Another question or two of sharper edge were at my tongue's end. But what should we hereafter talk any more of paradoxes or impossibilities, when he that penned the most desperate and abominable pamphlet of *Strange News*, and disgorged his stomach of as poisonous rancour as ever was vomited in print, within few months is won, or charmed, or enchanted (or what metamorphosis should I term it) to astonish carnal minds with spiritual meditations upon one of the most sacred and Godful arguments that the holiest devotion could admire in the profoundest trance of rapt seraphical zeal? I will not stay to marvel at the miracles of predominant causes; the Holy Ghost is an omnipotent spirit that

can mollify the flintiest mind, and breathe a soul of heaven into a heart of hell. If unfeignedly he hath stripped off the snake's skin and put on the new man, as he devoutly pretendeth, let him be constant, and not blaspheme his most reverend Saviour with counterfeit tears; if he playeth at fast and loose (as is vehemently suspected, by strong presumptions), whom shall he cony-catch or crossbite but his castaway self, as holy as a hollyhock? But I thank God I have something else to dispute, and if young Apuleius be not still the son of old Apuleius, and Pierce still as divine as a wild vine, I have said nothing, but commend the sweet art of relenting humanity, and embrace the good nature of a good nature that sheddeth the pure tears of repentance. The more notorious the offence, and the more unsatisfiable the injury was, the more favourable and liberal he is that with honest terms and reasonable conditions may easily be entreated to pardon the same, that is, to bestow a great benefit instead of a great revenge, and to lose the exercise of many weeks to gain the recovery of one lost son. The best is, I am not yet a fly in the cobweb of the spider, and in a mating age none are free from the check but kings. Or if kings peradventure find themselves somewhat shrewdly mated, alas, we poor subjects must be content to be checked, & may daily learn of our betters to smother with patience that we cannot quench with order, and will not extinguish with disorder. Socrates professed nothing, and I profess less than Socrates, yet this I profess. He that neither cockereth himself, nor loveth to be lulled or smoothed up of friends, can lightly put up the heaviest load of an enemy, and he can hardly be daunted with nipping words that is not easily dismayed with pinching deeds. An unguilty mind knoweth not what the trembling of the heart meaneth, and a sound conscience is a brazen wall against the mainest battery of spite or feud. Were there no other philosophy but experience, and settled resolution to proceed according to reason in general, and occasion in special, every guiltless eye that seeth anything seeth his own confirmation in the confutation of his guilty adversary, whose vain railings are sib to other vanities that cannot endure, but either vanish like smoke in the air, or melt away like snow in the sun, or grow stale like disguised fashions, or dissolve themselves into their *materiam primam*, that is, into vanity & shame. Had I found any one material article or substantial point against me, I must have imputed some part of the blame to myself, but finding nothing in all those pestilent & virulent sheets of waste paper but mere mere forgeries, and the devil in the horologe, might I not justly say I have cause to use as I am used, or have I not reason to stand upon terms of consideration? Did I not intend to deal with a bountiful alms of courtesy, who in my case would give ear to the law of oblivion that hath the law of talion in his hands, or accept of a filthy recantation, as it were a sorry plaster to a broken shin, that could knock malice on the head, and cut the windpipe of the railing throat? *Pierce's Supererogation* (that was an arrow in my hand, or clog in your) is left beholding to the penknife; *Nashe's St. Fame* hath somewhat more of the lancelet; the *Reply of the Excellent Gentlewoman* is the fine razor that must shave away every rank hair of his great courage and little wit. I was long since awearry with beating the air, and take small pleasure in washing the ass's head, or what should I term that bootless and irksome business. But it is that heavenly creature (for so she will approve herself) that can conjure down the mouth of villainy into hell-mouth, & will do it as resolutely as she can do it peremptorily, unless a competent satisfaction be speedily tendered to my contentment. It were pity that divine handiwork should be employed but to a divine piece of service, either to gain a relenting soul, or to cast away an obstinate body. If she be prevented by a voluntary submission of the

offender, to do a thing done were a superfluous labour, and to undo a man undone, an unmerciful cruelty. A thing as contrary to the shining loveliness of her mild disposition as the bitterest bitter seemeth repugnant to the sweetest sweet. The bravest man is such a personage as I have elsewhere described, a lion in the field, a lamb in the town; a Jove's eagle in feud, an Apollo's swan in society; a serpent in wit, a dove in life; a fury in execution, an angel in conversation. What hath the bravest man that she hath not, excepting the lion in the field of Mars, which she hath in the field of Minerva, whose war she wagheth with a courageous mind, an invincible hand, and the cunning array of the worthy old man in Homer. His talk was sweet, his order fine, and his whole manage brave, and so is hers, but for a dainty wit and a divine humanity she is such a paragon as may compare with the excellentest of Homer's women, and pledge the honourablest of his goddesses. She is a right bird of Mercury's winged chariot, and teacheth the liveliest cocks of the game to bestir them early, to crow gallantly, to march comely, to fight valiantly, to comfort kindly, and to live in any estate honourably. No flower more flourishing than her wit, no fruit more mature than her judgement. All her conceits are illuminate with the light of reason, all her speeches beautified with the grace of affability, all her writings seasoned with the salt of discretion, all her sentences spiced with wittiness, perfumed with delight, tempered with profit; no leaven of experience more savoury than all her platforms & actions, nothing more mellow than the whole course of her life. In her mind there appeareth a certain heavenly logic; in her tongue & pen, a divine rhetoric; in her behaviour, a refined moral philosophy; in her government, a sovereign policy; in every part of her proceeding, a singular dexterity, & what pattern of skill or practice more admirable than the whole? Let it not seem incredible that shall enact & accomplish more than is signified. The manner of her wrath or disdain (yet I believe she was never froward with any, nor ever angry but with one, whom only she scorneth, & before whom she never contemned any) is somewhat like the counter-tenor of an offended siren, or not much unlike the progress of the resplendent sun in the scorpion. Her favour is liker treacle for the heart than hippocras for the mouth, her disfavour like the moon withdrawing the cheerly beams of her bounteous light in a cloud; her hatred (if she can hate, for I verily think she never hated but one) like the flashing weapon of the fiery air. She is not lightly moved, but what she resembleth or representeth when she is moved, could I visibly declare as she can vigorously utter, I would deem myself a piece of an orator. And I were more than Tully's perfect orator if I could display her excellent perfections, whose mind is as full of rich gifts and precious jewels as New-year's day. Yet her goodliest ornament and greatest wonder is the sweet humility of that brave courage. But in remembering her, I forget myself, & what a tedious letter is here for him that maintaineth a chargeable family by following his business. Had I not found you desirous of some particularities touching *Nashe's St. Fame*, & *The Gentlewoman's Reply*, when you delivered unto me *Pierce's Supererogation* in print, I had dispatched ere now. But now you must lend me patience until I have disbalass'd my mind concerning her inditing, whereof I have already given you a taste or smack in *Pierce's Supererogation*; as in the harmony of her mind, so in the melody of her verse, I seldom or never descry any note out of tune, and it is not the first time I have termed her prose the tinsel of finest art and sweetest nature. What notes I find above ela in the one, & what counterpoints of exquisite workmanship I admire in the other, it shall elsewhere appear in a dialogue intituled *Pandora*, or *The Mirror of*

*Singularity.* Might I see the finest art and sweetest nature in person, I would report me to the censure of their own sovereign mouths, the best judges in their own peerless faculty. There falleth not a sentence from her quill without sap and pith, and every period of her style carrieth marmalade and sucket in the mouth, and every argument of her invention savoureth of most savoury reason. No chain so linked as her conclusions, nor any crystal so conspicuous as her method. Her whole discourse is the cream of the milk, the comb of the honey, the juice of the grape, & the marrow of the bone. The bestowing of her perfections at occasion, a dainty choice, & fine marshalling of every excellency, curiously sorted in their proper places like the gorgeous wardrobe of Helena, or the precious jewel-house of Cleopatra, or the cunning still-house of Medea, or the comely distributing of the neatest and gallantest furniture in the richest economy. What needeth more? Her beginning, like the purest oil in the crown of the roundlet; her proceeding, like the sovereignest wine in the midst of the butt; her ending, like the sweetest honey in the bottom of the honey-pot. Her intention was defensive, not offensive, and had anything been tolerable in that scurrilous and villainous declamation, assuredly she would a thousand times rather have excused the matter than accused the maker. Humanity is ever willing to love than to hate, & so is she; courtesy, much forwarder to commend that to dispraise, and so is she; clemency, infinitely proner to absolve than to condemn, and so is she. For she is a personal humanity, a mere courtesy, and a clemency incorporate. But when she saw the foul mouth so shamefully run over, without all respect of manners, or regard of honesty, or pretence of truth, or colour of reason, Gentlemen, quoth she, though I lack that you have, the art of confuting, yet I have some suds of my mother wit to souse such a dish-clout in, and if sousing will not serve the turn, I may hap find a pair of pinsons as sharply conceited as St. Dunstan's tongs that led the devil by the nose *autum*, up and down the house till the roaring beast bellowed out like a bull-beggar. And as for his terrible cracks of gunpowder terms, never lend credit to the word of a gentlewoman if I make not old mother gunpowder of the newest of those rattling babies. And if steeping in aquafortis will infuse courage into this goose-quill, why man, I will douse thee over head and ears in such a doughty collyrium as will inspire the picture of snuff and fury into the image of St. Patience. I have not been squatting at my papers for nothing, and albeit I cannot paint with my pen like fine Sappho, yet I can daub with my ink like nine of the Muses, and am prettily provided to entertain St. Fame with a homely gallimaufry of little art, to requite her dainty flampoint of little wit. A poor kitchen may be as good an artist for the stomach as a poor dairy (alas, that ever St. Fame should be so whittled), and it shall go hard in my cookery but the syllabub of his stale invention shall be welcomed with a supping of a new fashion, & some strange syrup in commendam of his meritorious works. Though a railer hath more learning than a shrew, yet experience hath a fillip for a scholar, discretion a tuck for a fool, honesty a bob for a K, & my mortar, a pestle for asafœtida. Let him be the falanta-down-diddle of rime, the hey-ho holiday of prose, the welladay of new writers, the cutthroat of his adversaries, the gallows of his companions, the only broker of pamphlets, or what he can for his sweltering heart, my battering instrument is resolute, and hath vowed to bray the braying creature to powder. We must have at least three peccavies of Pierce Penilesse, and three misereres of the confuting tosspot, or Lord have mercy upon thee, three thousand times woeful wight. I am loath to struggle for the moonshine in the puddled water, but if we must needs buckle for nifles, and grapple for naughts, though I cannot

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tell whether I can bounce him like a barn-door or thump him like a drum of Flushing, yet I may chance rattle him like a baby of parchment, or knead him like a cake of dough, or churn him like a dish of butter, or jerk him like a hobbling gig, or tatter him like a thing forsoken, or someway have my pennyworth of his *Penillesse* wit. Nay, if the princox must be playing upon them that can play upon his warped sconce as upon a tabor or a fiddle, let himself thank himself if he be kindly thumbed. Sirrrah, I will stamp an unknown grape that shall put the mighty Bordeaux grape to bed, & may peradventure broach a new tun of such nippitate as with the very steam of the nappy liquor will lullaby thy five wits like the senses of the drunkenest sot when his brains are sweetliest perfumed. I fit thee with a similitude for thy capacity, or belch a new confutation against the long tongues of the Steelyard, and some twenty taverns in London. I could be content a drunken prose and a mad rime were thy deadliest sins. But they are sweet youths that tipple their wits with quaffing of knavery, and carousing of atheism. If there be no other jollities at home, or braveries abroad, it is happy for them that were born with those prizes in their throats. And welfare a frolic courage that will needs be the Tower of Babylonian conceit, and with a mighty bulwark of supererogation gloriously confound itself.

The rest of her speeches and writings are to be recorded, or suppressed as it pleaseth the horn of these pelting stirs, who may haply find the trumpet of peace as sure a soldier in case of necessary defence as the drum of war, or the swash of feud. Some that have perused eloquent books, and researched most curious writings, have not seen goodlier variety of varnished phrases and burnished sentences than in her style, which was not so gorgeously decked, and so fairly limned, for naught. Howbeit as in some public causes, better a mischief than an inconvenience, so in many private cases better an inconvenience than a mischief. Though an orient gem be precious, and worthy to be gazed upon with the eye of admiration, yet better an orient gem sleep than the penitent man perish, and better a delicate piece of art should be laid aside, or unwoven like Penelope's web, than an immortal piece of nature be cast away. She loveth not to confute that confuteth itself, & I hate to confound that confoundeth himself. She in the court of civility hath learned to embrace amendment with the arms of courtesy, and I in the school of divinity am taught to kiss repentance with the lips of charity. I affect not any colourable insinuation in glozing or smoothing terms of formal accord, but misery accompany my actions, and the mercy of heaven be my unmerciful enemy, if I desire not with a longing heart to wreak my teen upon wild indiscretion by requiting good for bad, & converting the wormwood of just offence into the angelica of pure atonement. The only reason of my demurrer is my assurance, which consisteth rather in diffidence than in credulity, and cannot warrantise itself what will be done until it is done. He were very simple that, having so heavy causes of diffidence, and so light causes of credulity, would run hastily into the trap, or suffer himself to be presently entangled in the snare. Parley is a subtle sophister, flattery a tickling solicitor, and persuasion an enchanting witch. I cannot but listen unto them with an itching ear, and conceive as it were a tang of pleasure in mine own displeasure, but without legem pone, words are wind, and without actual performance, all nothing. Had I not more premises of distrust than promises of trust, or were he not ever to be presumed a bad fellow that hath once played the bad fellow with a witness (nothing but contrary proof can reverse that judgement), yet lawyers love real cautions, and they

that would be loath to be enticed by white, and defeated by black, are curious of their security. Truce was ever a redoubtable friend, & suspicion hath cause to look upon reconciliation with a jealous eye. Reconciliation is a sweet word, but entire reconciliation a rare thing, & a strange restorative, whose sweetness lieth not in the tip of the tongue or in the neb of the pen, but in the bottom of the heart & in the bowels of the mind; the mind that daily improveth itself the only deep politician & inscrutable hypocrite. Whose inwardest secrets, notwithstanding, are not so profound or close, especially in the shallow breast of inconsiderate youth, but they may in sort be sounded & discovered by a cunning observation of circumstances.

Some essential points I reserve to myself, but M. Wolfe knoweth, & who knoweth not, great penmen and pamphlet-merchants play much upon the advantage of the time, and care not who be the enemy, so the term be their friend. Which of us can tell but there may lie the drift & great policy of the new motion? I have earnestly and instantly craved personal conference, but that should seem to make little for his purpose, or might have been granted with less suit. All must be done by the mediation of a third, and a fourth, and such an intercourse as I may probably have in some jealousy, though I conceive well of the interposed persons. There hath already been a large expense of time, & charges continually run, & matters of more importance lie dead in the nest, & the burned finger hath reason to startle from the fire, and he that hath been once abused would not willingly be abused twice, and security cannot be too precise or scrupulous, and I would there were no cony-catchers in London. Till a public injury be publicly confessed, and print confuted in print, I am one of St. Thomas' disciples, not over prest to believe but as cause causeth, and very ready to forgive as effect effecteth. They that know the danger of truces and the covin of treaties, ut supra, must beg leave to ground their repose upon more cautels than one, and to proceed in terms of suspense or pause till they may be resolved with infallible assurance. For mine own determination, I see no credible hope of peace but in war, and could I not command that I desire, I am persuaded I should hardly obtain that I wish. I love *osculum pacis*, but hate *osculum Judae*, and reverence the tears of Christ, but fear the tears of the crocodile.

Shall I be a little plain? Methinks the ranging eyes under that long hair (which some would call ruffianly hair) should scarcely yet be bathed in the heavenly tears of Christ, or washed in the divine tears of penitence. Irish hair, and weeping Irish, are no white crows in these countries, and although there were no wolves in England, yet there be foxes in the hole. I would be loath to aggravate the least or greatest particular against a penitential soul, but still to haunt infamous or suspected houses, taverns, lewd company and riotous fashions as before (for to this day his behaviour is no turncoat, though his style be a changeling) is a greater liberty in my small divinity than accordeth with that devout and most holy holy profession.

Lord, how curious was the wiser sort even of the heathen philosophers in the neat & exquisite choice of their pure diet, undefiled society, virgin manners, unstained discourses and unspotted actions. What so clarified as their wit, so purified as their mind, so sweetened as their conference, so virtuous as their instructions, so powerful as their experiments, so exemplary as their life, so unblemished as their fame? I know not who

weeped *The Funeral Tears of Mary Magdalen*; I would he that sheddeth the pathological tears of Christ, & trickleth the liquid tears of repentance, were no worse affected in pure devotion than those philosophers in moral conversation! Were I not content, in some little hope of his final recovery either in deed or in show, to do him a meritorious favour by concealing his utter discredit, I could easily, and would notoriously, make him ashamed of some his late sayings and doings, O Lord, how unbeseeming the tears of Christ, & alas, how likely to fore-run a miserable destiny? Let him reform his public, & redress his private, enormities, & with a sincere vow I swear him friendship, or let him rest quiet, & I am quiet. Otherwise I may possibly be induced to pay him home with an immortal revenge that hath plagued his own tongue with desperate blasphemies in jest, O Christ, of how horrible consequence, without tears in earnest? There is a great distance betwixt hell and heaven, the devil and God, rake-hells and saints, the *Supplication to the Devil* and the *Tears of Christ*, the *Strange News* of villainy and the miraculous news of repentance, the herald of war and the ambassador of peace, the public notary of lies and the register of truth, the devil's orator and Christ's chancellor. Though Greene were a Julian and Marlowe a Lucian, yet I would be loath he should be an Aretine, that paraphrased the inestimable books of Moses, and discoursed the capricious dialogues of rankest bawdry; that penned one apology of the divinity of Christ, and another of paederastice, a kind of harlotry not to be recited; that published the life of the Blessed Virgin, and the *Legend of the Errant Putana*; that recorded the history of St. Thomas of Aquin, and forged the most detestable black book *De tribus impostoribus mundi*. O monster of extremities, and O abomination of outrageous wit. It was his glory to be a hell-hound incarnate, and to spoil Origen of his egregious praise: *Ubi bene, nemo melius; ubi male, nemo peius*.

Some surmounting spirits love to arrear a huge opinion of their excessive validity, pro or contra. Hyperbolical virtues (it is Aristotle's epithet) are heavenly miracles, and hideous excellency an heroic wonder, like the labours of Hercules, and the bounties of errant knights, but superlative knavery is a rank villain, and UGLY BLASPHEMY a foul devil, tormented with his own damnable mouth. It is not puffing, or blustering in bombasted terms or Babylonian phrases, but the fine and sweet course of virtue, of industry, of beauty, of valour, of true bravery, that performeth worthy actions and purchaseth the honour of the world. If humanity will needs grow miraculous, it must fly with the wing of divinity, not flutter with the plume of atheism, or hoise the sail of presumption. Whosoever despiseth the majesty of heaven, or playeth the Democritus in God's cause, be his wit never so capon-crammed with vanity, or his heart never so toad-swollen in surquidry, is the abjectest vermin and vilest pad that creepeth on the earth. If there be no such matter in the world, all the better; if there be, woe be to the authors of their own confusion, and blessed they that take forth a good lesson from other men's miscarriage. Happy, and ten thousand times happy, that inspired Heraclitus that poureth out the most tender affectionate tears of Christ with the flowing eyes of zeal and the melting eloquence of his bowels. Other oratory would be feed as it persuadeth, or thanked as it edifieth, or honoured as it ravisheth hearts with a powerful impression, or admired as it stealeth souls with a divine sacrilege. He is the perfect orator that figureth and representeth everything in art as it is in nature, that dispatcheth light points roundly, handleth weightier matter more substantially, in the gravest subject proceedeth with due reverence, and of faith

discourseth faithfully, of heaven heavenly, of divinity divinely, of Christ like Christ. Dalliance in the sagest and highest causes is an absurdity, and like a ridiculous vice in a tragedy, or a poisonous serpent in paradise. *Non est bonum, ludere cum sanctis; cum Christo ludere, execrabile.* Aretine was a reprobate ruffian, but even Castilio and Machiavel, that were not greatly religious in conscience, yet were religious in policy, & there is no kingdom or commonwealth upon earth so profane or barbarous but either in conscience is, or in policy seemeth, religious, or cannot possibly maintain any durable state. I would every author that hath done no better had done no worse, and it were to be wished that some desperate wits were not so forward to disbowel the entrails of their own impious minds. Pliny's and Lucian's religion may ruffle and scoff awhile, but extreme vanity is the best beginning of that bravery, and extreme misery the best end of that felicity. Greene and Marlowe might admonish other to advise themselves, and I pray God the promised tears of repentance prove not the tears of the onion upon the Theatre. If I knew no more than I utter, I would hope no less than I wish, but hearing what I hear, & conceiving what I conceive, I would be unfeignedly glad he should exceed my expectation, and when he hath resolved my incredulity with a little actual performance, I will not fail to render him right with extensive favour. For my particular, let his proffered poenitet appear by any reasonable or tolerable satisfaction, without fraud or collusion, and I am no way rigorous in revenge, or obstinate in displeasure. Meanwhile it is haply not amiss to consider by the way that truth begetteth hatred; virtue, envy; familiarity, contempt; favour, pride; pardon, recklessness; and credulity, damage or danger. A strange case, that so good mothers should bring forth so bad daughters, but improbity, or iniquity (or what should I term that naughty humour?), is the fifth element of the world, and consultation were better to sit safely between yea and no than to fall suddenly with a hasty no, or to stand weakly with a simple yea. My affection is ready to subscribe to any indifferent articles of accord (for bona fide I affect agreement), but my reason hath reason to pause awhile, and a scruple or two of some dependence may seem to say no. But even those two negatives (upon a firm & undefeasible security, *sine dolo malo*) would be conformable enough to conclude an affirmative, and will not stick at any transaction or composition that is not unreasonable. To make short (for no let or loadstone so attractive as lines, that draw unto them so many self-offering sentences, and I have already unmeasurably exceeded my stint), he that longeth to enjoy the fruit of private amity and public favour hasteth not to embrace the blossom, or to dote upon the shadow. His only small request and affectionate prayer is that howsoever poor men be used, the dear tears of Christ and the cheap tears of repentance be not abused. All is well that endeth effectually well, & so in some haste he endeth, that wisheth you entirely well, and for your instruction can assure you he needeth not to send to Athens for honey, or to Spain for sugar, or to Italy for aniseeds, or to the Orient for sanders or pearls, that may find as fine and dainty choice nearer hand. I can say nothing for myself, whose date is expired, but I dare ascertain you, three drops of the oil of roses or three drops of the mercury of bugloss will enstrengthen the brain or comfort the heart more than six and six ounces of their common syrups. A greater difference betwixt artificial and rude styles, refined and drossy wits, skilful and ignorant judgements, available and unprofitable works, I commend to the consideration of the press, with a right hearty farewell. This 16 of September, 1593. Your assured, wherein he may pleasure you, Gabriel Harvey.

## Sonnet

## Gorgon, or the Wonderful Year

St. Fame, disposed to cony-catch the world,  
 Upreared a wonderment of eighty-eight;  
 The earth, adreading to be overwhirled,  
 What now avails, quoth she, my balance weight?  
 The circle smiled to see the centre fear;  
 The wonder was, no wonder fell that year.

Wonders enhance their power in numbers odd;  
 The fatal year of years is ninety-three;  
 Parma hath kissed, De Mayenne entreats, the rod;  
 War wondereth, peace in Spain and France to see;  
 Brave Eggenberg the doughty bashaw shames;  
 The Christian Neptune Turkish Vulcan tames;  
 Navarre woos Rome, Charlemagne gives Guise the fie;  
 Weep, Paul's, thy Tamburlaine vouchsafes to die.

## L'envoy

The hugest miracle remains behind,  
 The second Shakerley rash-swash to bind.

A stanza declarative to the lovers of admirable works.

Pleased it hath a gentlewoman rare,  
 With phoenix quill in diamond hand of art,  
 To muzzle the redoubtable bull-bear,  
 And play the galliard championess's part;  
 Though miracles surcease, yet wonder see  
 The mightiest miracle of ninety-three.  
*Vis consilij expers, mole ruit sua.*

The writer's postscript, or a friendly caveat to the second Shakerley of Paul's.

Slumbering I lay in melancholy bed  
 Before the dawning of the sanguine light,  
 When Echo shrill, or some familiar spright  
 Buzzed an epitaph into my head:

*Magnific minds, bred of Gargantua's race,  
 In grisly weeds his obsequies wayment,  
 Whose corps on Paul's, whose mind triumphed on Kent,  
 Scorning to bate Sir Rodomont an ace.*

I mused awhile, and having mused awhile,  
 Jesu (quoth I), is that Gargantua mind  
 Conquered, and left no Scanderbeg behind?  
 Vowed he not to Paul's a second bile?  
 What bile or kibe? (quoth that same early spright),  
 Have you forgot the scanderbegging wight?

## Gloss

Is it a dream, or is it [sic?] the highest mind  
 That ever haunted Paul's, or hunted wind,  
 Bereft of that same sky-surmounting breath,  
 That breath that taught the tympany to swell?

He and the plague contended for the game;  
 The haughty man extols his hideous thoughts,  
 And gloriously insults upon poor souls  
 That plague themselves, for faint hearts plague themselves,  
 The tyrant sickness of base-minded slaves,  
 Oh, how it domineers in Coward Lane;  
 So surquidry rang out his larum-bell,  
 When he had girmed at many a doleful knell.

The grand disease disdained his toad conceit,  
 And, smiling at his Tamburlaine contempt,  
 Sternly struck home the peremptory stroke;  
 He that nor feared God, nor dreaded devil,  
 Nor aught admired but his wondrous self,  
 Like Juno's gaudy bird, that proudly stares  
 On glittering fan of his triumphant tail,  
 Or like the ugly bug that scorned to die,  
 And mounts of glory reared in towering wit.  
 Alas, but Babel pride must kiss the pit.

## L'envoy

Paul's steeple, and a hugier thing is down;  
 Beware, the next bull-beggar of the town.  
*Fata immature vagantur.*

## Errata

Slight faults are soon corrected, as that of *fine marshalling* without a comma(?), in the leaf C. or any the like, but in the same leaf there escaped a gross error, to be corrected thus:

*Her beginning, like the purest oil in the crown of the roundlet; her proceeding, like the sovereignest wine in the midst of the butt; her ending, like the sweetest honey in the bottom of the honey-pot.*

FINIS.