

SUMMARY: *Strange News*, entered in the Stationers' Register to John Danter on 12 January 1593 under the title *The Apology of Pierce Penilesse, or Strange News of the intercepting certain letters and a convoy of verses as they were going to victual the Low Counties*, is Thomas Nashe's response to Gabriel Harvey's *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, which had been entered in the Stationers' Register on 4 December 1592, and printed by John Wolfe, in whose house Harvey was residing at the time. There was a long background behind the Harvey-Nashe quarrel (see the account of the quarrel on this website), and although the main force of Nashe's attack in *Strange News* is directed against *Four Letters*, Nashe also alludes to several of the earlier tracts which formed part of that background, including Gabriel Harvey's *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (which Nashe invariably refers to as *Aedes Valdinenses*) and *Three Witty and Proper Familiar Letters*, Nashe's own epistle to Greene's *Menaphon* and his *Pierce Penilesse*, Richard Harvey's *The Lamb of God*, and Robert Greene's *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*. Nashe also mentions in *Strange News* that the second of Harvey's letters in *Four Letters* had been published separately in mid-September 1592 as 'a short pamphlet of six leaves', although *Four Letters* itself was not published until December. For obvious reasons Nashe does not attempt to refute Harvey's earlier 'pamphlet of six leaves', but focuses his entire point by point refutation on the book issued by Harvey in December 1592 under the title *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*. In his refutation, Nashe focuses particular attention on the third of the letters in *Four Letters*, in which Harvey attempts to excuse his injudicious publication in 1580 of his private correspondence with Edmund Spenser in *Three Proper and Witty Familiar Letters*, and the difficulties his allusion in *Three Letters* to his 'old controller' at Cambridge, the 'old fox' Dr. Andrew Perne, had involved him in in 1580 with Sir James Croft, Controller of the Household, who took the allusion as a disparaging reference to himself, and for which, in *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, Greene claimed Harvey had been 'orderly clapped in the Fleet' prison. In this third letter Harvey also blames John Lyly for incensing the 17th Earl of Oxford against Harvey with respect to the English hexameter verses entitled 'Speculum Tuscanismi' in *Three Letters*, verses against which Nashe takes particular umbrage, both in *Strange News* and in *Have With You to Saffron Walden*. At some point in the printing of *Strange News* a problem arose with respect to a passage in Nashe's epistle dedicated to 'Master Apis lapis', and the book was reissued with a new title page in which John Danter is named as the printer and in which a new passage is substituted for the offending passage in the earlier version of the epistle (see McKerrow, vol. I, p.248). Considering the speed with which *Strange News* was written and printed, Nashe's obvious familiarity with *Three Proper and Witty Familiar Letters* of 1580 raises intriguing questions as to how the young Thomas Nashe had possession of a copy of this long out of print work at his disposal and how he obtained inside information concerning the political repercussions for Harvey which had resulted from the publication of *Three Letters* in 1580. Harvey's three allusions to *Gratulationes Valdinenses*, published in 1578, raise even more questions concerning Nashe's familiarity with a long out of print work and with the circumstances of the Queen's visit to Audley End in 1578, particularly since Nashe's line 'Musa Ricardetti fratrizat sat bene pretty' in *Strange News* is a direct parody of the line 'Musa Ricardetti fratrizat sat bene' in an obscure poem entitled 'Italorum duorum Xena Encomiastica' in Harvey's *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (see McKerrow, Ronald B., *The Works of Thomas*

Nashe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958, vol. IV, p.178 and Jameson, Thomas Hugh, *The Gratulationes Valdinenses of Gabriel Harvey*, Unpublished Yale University dissertation (1938), p.60). The modern spelling version of *Strange News* below was prepared from the 1958 edition by F.P. Wilson of Ronald B. McKerrow's original edition of 1904.

STRANGE NEWS

of the intercepting certain letters and a convoy of verses as they were going privily to
victual the Low Countries

Unda impellitur unda

By Thomas Nashe, gentleman

Printed 1592

To the most copious carminist of our time, and famous persecutor of Priscian, his very friend, Master Apis lapis, Thomas Nashe wisheth new strings to his old tawny purse, and all honourable increase of acquaintance in the cellar

Gentle Master William, that learned writer, Rhenish wine & sugar, in the first book of his comment upon red-noses, hath this saying, *Veterem ferendo iniuriam inuitas nouam*, which is as much in English as, One cup of nippitate pulls on another. In moist consideration whereof, as also in zealous regard of that high countenance you show unto scholars, I am bold, instead of new wine, to carouse to you a cup of news, which, if your Worship (according to your wonted Chaucerism) shall accept in good part, I'll be your daily orator to pray that that pure sanguine complexion of yours may never be famished with pot-luck, that you may taste till your last gasp, and live to see the confusion of both your special enemies, small beer and grammar rules.

It is not unknown to report what a famous pottle-pot patron you have been to old poets in your days, & how many pounds you have spent (and, as it were, thrown into the fire) upon the dirt of wisdom called alchemy. Yea, you have been such an infinite Maecenas to learned men that not any that belong to them (as sumners, and who not) but have tasted of the cool streams of your liberality.

I would speak in commendation of your hospitality likewise, but that it is chronicled in the archdeacon's court, and the fruits it brought forth (as I guess) are of age to speak for themselves. Why should virtue be smothered by blind circumstance? An honest man of Saffron Walden kept three sons at the university together a long time, and you kept three maids together in your house a long time. A charitable deed, & worthy to be registered in red letters.

Shall I presume to dilate of the gravity of your round cap and your dudgeon-dagger? It is thought they will make you be called upon shortly to be alderman of the Steelyard. And that's well remembered; I heard say, when this last term was removed to Hertford, you fell into a great study and care by yourself to what place the Steelyard should be removed. I promise you truly, it was a deep meditation, and such as might well have beseemed Elderton's parliament of noses to have sit upon.

A tavern in London, only upon the motion, mourned all in black, and forbare to girt her temples with ivy because the grandam of good-fellowship was like to depart from amongst them. And I wonder very much that you Samsoned not yourself into a consumption with the profound cogitation of it.

Diu viuas in amore iocisque, Whatsoever you do, beware of keeping diet. Sloth is a sin, and one sin (as one poison) must be expelled with another. What can he do better that hath nothing to do, than fall a-drinking to keep him from idleness?

Faugh! Methinks my jests begin already to smell of the cask, with talking so much of this liquid provender.

In earnest thus: there is a *Doctor and his fart* that have kept a foul stinking stir in Paul's Churchyard. I cry him mercy. I slandered him; he is scarce a Doctor till he hath done his acts. This doddypoll, this didapper, this professed political braggart, hath railed upon me without wit or art in certain four pennyworth of letters and three farthingworth of sonnets. Now do I mean to present him and Shakerley to the Queen's fool-taker for coach-horses, for two that draw more equally in one oratorical yoke of vainglory there is not under heaven.

What say you, Master Apis lapis, will you, with your eloquence and credit, shield me from carpers? Have you any odd shreds of Latin to make this letter-monger a coxcomb of?

It stands you in hand to arm yourself against him, for he speaks against cony-catchers, and you are a cony-catcher, as cony-catching is divided into three parts: the verser, the setter, and the barnacle.

A setter I am sure you are not, for you are no musician, nor a barnacle, for you never were of the order of the Barnardines, but the verser I cannot acquit you of, for Master Vaux of Lambeth brings in sore evidence of a breakfast you won of him one morning at an unlawful game called riming. What lies not in you to amend, play the doctor and defend.

A fellow that I am to talk with by and by, being told that his father was a rope-maker, excused the matter after this sort: *And hath never saint had reprobate to his father?* They are his own words; he cannot go from them. You see here he makes a reprobate and a rope-maker *voces conuertibiles*. Go to, take example by him to wash out dirt with ink, and run up to the knees in the channel if you be once wet-shod. You are amongst grave doctors and men of judgment in both laws every day; I pray, ask them the question in my absence, whether such a man as I have described this epistler to be, one that hath a good handsome picke-devant, and a pretty leg to study the civil law with, that hath made many proper rimes of the old cut in his day, and deserved infinitely of the state by extolling himself and his two brothers in every book he writes, whether (I say) such a famous pillar of the press, now in the fourteenth or fifteenth year of the reign of his rhetoric, giving money to have this illiterate pamphlet of letters printed (whereas others have money given them to suffer themselves to come in print), it is not to be counted as flat simony, and be liable to one and the same penalty?

I tell you, I mean to trounce him after twenty in the hundred, and have a bout with him with two staves and a pike for this gear.

If he get anything by the bargain, let whatsoever I write henceforward be condemned to wrap bombast in.

Carouse to me good luck, for I am resolutely bent; the best blood of the brothers shall pledge me in vinegar. O, would thou hadst a quaffing-bowl which, like Gawain's skull,

should contain a peck, that thou might'st swap off a hearty draught to the success of this voyage.

By whatsoever thy visage holdeth most precious I beseech thee, by John Davies' soul and the blue boar in the Spittle I conjure thee, to draw out thy purse and give me nothing for the dedication of my pamphlet.

Thou art a good-fellow, I know, and hadst rather spend jests than money. Let it be the task of thy best terms to safe-conduct this book through the enemy's country.

Proceed to cherish thy surpassing carminical art of memory with full cups (as thou dost); let Chaucer be new scoured against the day of battle, and Terence come but in now and then with the snuff of a sentence, and *Dictum puta*, we'll strike it as dead as a door-nail; *Haud teruntij estimo*, we have cat's-meat and dog's-meat enough for these mongrels. However I write merrily, I love and admire thy pleasant witty humour, which no care or cross can make unconvertible. Still be constant to thy content, love poetry, hate pedantism. *Vade, vale, caue ne titubes, mandataq{ue}; frangas.*

Thine entirely,

Tho. Nashe

To the gentlemen readers

Gentlemen, the strong faith you have conceived that I would do works of supererogation in answering the Doctor hath made me break my day with other important business I had, and stand darting of quills awhile like the porcupine.

I know there want not well-willers to my disgrace, who say my only muse is contention, and other that with Tiberius Caesar, pretending to see in the dark, talk of strange objects by them discovered in the night, when in truth they are nothing else but the glimmering of their eyes.

I will not hold the candle to the devil, unmask my holiday muse to envy, but if any such deep-insighted detractor will challenge me to whatsoever quiet adventure of art wherein he thinks me least conversant, he shall find that I am *Tam Mercurio quam Marti*, a scholar in something else but contention.

If idle wits will needs tie knots on smooth bulrushes with their tongues, faith, the world might think I had little to attend if I should go about to unloose them with my pen.

I cannot tell how it comes to pass, but in these ill-eyed days of ours every man delights with Ixion to beget children of clouds, dig for pearls in dunghills, and wrest oil out of iron.

Poor *Pierce Penillesse* have they turned to a conjuring book, for there is not that line in it with which they do not seek to raise up a ghost, and like the hog that converts the sixth part of his meat into bristles, so have they converted six parts of my book into bitterness.

Aretine, in a comedy of his, wittily complaineth that upstart commentators, with their annotations and glozes, had extorted that sense and moral out of Petrarch which, if Petrarch were alive, a hundred strappadoes might not make him confess or subscribe to; so may I complain that rash heads, upstart interpreters, have extorted & raked that unreverent meaning out of my lines which a thousand deaths cannot make me e'er grant that I dreamed of.

To them that are abused by their own jealous collections, and no determined trespass of mine, this advice, by way of example, will I give.

One coming to Doctor Perne on a time, and telling him he was miserably railed on such a day in a sermon at Saint Mary's in Cambridge, *Aye, but*, quoth he (in his puling manner of speaking), *did he name me, did he name me? I warrant you, go and ask him, and he will say he meant not me.* So they that are ungroundedly offended at anything in *Pierce Penillesse*, first let them look if I did name them; if not, but the matter hangeth in suspense, let them send to me for my exposition, and not buy it at the second hand, and I do not doubt but they will be thoroughly satisfied.

He that wraps himself in earth, like the fox, to catch birds, may haps have a heavy cart go over him before he be aware, and break his back.

A number of apes may get the glow-worm in the night, and think to kindle fire with it because it glisters so, but, God wot, they are beguiled. It proves in the end to be but fool's fire; the poor worm alone with their blowing is warmed, they starved for cold whiles their wood is untouched. Who but a fop will labour to anatomize a fly? Fables were free for any bondman to speak in old time, as Aesop, for an instance; their allusion was not restrained to any particular humour of spite, but generally applied to a general vice. Now a man may not talk of a dog but it is surmised he aims at him that giveth the dog in his crest; he cannot name straw but he must pluck a wheat-sheaf in pieces, *Intelligendo faciunt ut nihil intelligent.*

Whatever they be that thus persecute art (as the alchemists are said to persecute nature), I would wish them to rebate the edge of their wit, and not grind their colours so hard; having found that which is black, let them not, with our forenamed gold-falsifiers, seek for a substance that is blacker than black, or angle for frogs in a clear fountain.

From the admonition of these uncourteous misconstruers, I come to the kill-cow champion of the three brethren; he, forsooth, will be the first that shall give *Pierce Penilesse* a non placet.

It is not enough that he bepissed his credit about twelve years ago with *Three proper and witty familiar letters*, but still he must be running on the letter, and abusing the Queen's English without pity or mercy.

Be it known unto you (Christian readers), this man is a forestaller of the market of fame, an engrosser of glory, a mountebank of strange words, a mere merchant of babies and cony-skins.

Hold up thy hand, G.H., thou art here indicted for an encroacher upon the fee-simple of the Latin, an enemy to carriers, as one that takes their occupation out of their hands, and dost nothing but transport letters up and down in thy own commendation; a conspirator and practiser to make printers rich by making thyself ridiculous; a manifest briber of booksellers and stationers to help thee to sell away thy books (whose impression thou paid'st for), that thou mayest have money to go home to Trinity Hall to discharge thy commons.

I say no more but Lord have mercy upon thee, for thou art fallen into his hands that will plague thee.

Gentlemen, will you be instructed in the quarrel that hath caused him to lay about him with his pen and ink-horn so courageously? About two years since (a fatal time to familiar epistles), a certain theological gimpanado, a demi-divine no higher than a tailor's pressing-iron, brother to this huge book-bear that writes himself *one of the Emperor Justinian's courtiers*, took upon him to set his foot to mine, and over-crow me with

comparative terms. I protest I never turned up any cow-shard to look for this scarab fly. I had no conceit as then of discovering a breed of fools in the three brothers' books; marry, when I beheld ordinance planted on edge of the pulpit against me, & that there was no remedy but the blind vicar would needs let fly at me with his church-door keys, & curse me with bell, book and candle because in my alphabet of idiots I had overskipped the H's, what could I do but draw upon him with my pen, and defend myself with it and a paper buckler as well as I might?

Say I am as very a Turk as he that three years ago ran upon ropes, if ever I spelled either his or any of his kindred's name in reproach before he barked against me as one of the enemies of the Lamb of God, and fetched allusions out of the buttery to debase me.

Here beginneth the fray: I upbraid godly predication with his wicked conversation, I squirt ink into his decayed eyes with iniquity to mend their diseased sight, that they may a little better descend into my scholarship and learning. The ecclesiastical dunce, instead of recovery, waxeth stark blind thereby (as a preservative to some is poison to others); he gets an old fencer, his brother, to be revenged on me for my physic, who, flourishing about my ears with his two-hand sword of oratory and poetry, peradventure shakes some of the rust of it on my shoulders, but otherwise strikes me not but with the shadow of it, which is no more than a flap with the false scabbard of contumely. Whether am I, in this case, to arm myself against his intent of injury, or sit still with my finger in my mouth, in hope to be one of simplicity's martyrs?

A quest of honourable-minded cavaliers go upon it, and if they shall find by the law of arms or of ale that I, being first provoked, am to be enjoined to the peace, or be sworn true servant to cowardice & patience when wrong presseth me to the wars, then will I bind myself prentice to a cobbler, and fresh underlay all those writings of mine that have trod awry.

Be advertised (gentle audience) that the Doctor's proceedings have thrust upon me this southerly metaphor, who, first contriving his confutation in a short pamphlet of six leaves, like a pair of summer pumps, afterward (winter growing on), clapped a pair of double soles on it like a good husband, added eight sheets more, and pricked those sheets or soles as full of the hobnails of reprehension as they could stick.

It is not those his new-clouted startups, iwis, that shall carry him out of the dirt.

Sweet gentlemen, be but indifferent, and you shall see me desperate. Here lies my hat, and there my cloak, to which I resemble my two epistles, being the upper garments of my book, as the other of my body. Saint Fame for me, and thus I run upon him.

Thomas Nashe

The *Four Letters* confuted

Gabriel, and not only Gabriel, but Gabrielissime Gabriel, no angel but angelos, id est, nuntius, a fawnguest messenger twixt Master Bird and Master Demetrius, behold, here stands he that will make it good on thy *Four Letters*' body that thou art a filthy vain fool. Thy book I commend as very well printed, and like wondrous well because all men dislike it.

I agree with thee that there are in it *some matters of note*, for there are a great many barefoot rimes in it that go as jump as a fiddle with every ballad-maker's note, and if, according to their manner, you had tuned them over the head it had been ne'er the worse, for by that means you might have had your name chanted in every corner of the street, than the which there can be nothing more *melodiously addulce* to your *divine entelechy*. O, they would have trolled off bravely to the tune of *O man in desperation*, and like Marenzio's madrigals, the mournful note naturally have affected the miserable ditty.

Do you know your own misbegotten bodgery, *entelechy* and *addulce*? With these two hermaphrodite phrases, being half Latin and half English, hast thou pulled out the very guts of the ink-horn.

Letters:

To all courteous minds that will vouchsafe the reading.

Comment:

In their absence, this be delivered to Meg Curtis in Shoreditch, to stop mustard-pots with.

The particular contents

- L. *A preface to courteous minds.*
- C. As much to say as proface, much good do it you, would it were better for you.
- L. *A letter to Master Emanuel Demetrius, with a sonnet thereto annexed.*
- C. That is, as it were, a purgation upon a vomit, buskins upon pantofles.
- L. *A letter to Master Bird.*
- C. Or little matter wrapped up in many words.
- L. *A letter to every favourable and indifferent reader.*
- C. Id est, an exhortation to all readers that they shall read nothing but his works.
- L. *Another letter to the same, extorted after the rest.*
- C. By interpretation, a letter whereof his invention had a hard stool, and yet it was for his ease, though not for his honesty, and so forth, as the text shall direct you at large.

Here beginneth the first epistle and first book of orator Gabriel to the Catilinarie or Philippic

Wherein is divulged that *venom is venom, and will infect, that that which is done cannot (de facto) be undone, that favour is a courteous reader, and G.H. your thankful debtor.*

A comment upon the text

The learned orator in this epistle *taketh precise order* he will not be too eloquent, and yet it shall be (L) *as well for inditing unworthy to be published, as for publishing unworthy to be indited.*

C. He had many adversaries in those times that he wrote, amongst the which cloth-breeches and velvet-breeches (his father's poverty and his own pride, were none of the meanest).

After them start up one *Pierce Penillesse*, and he likewise was a stumbling-block in his way. (Penury not long tarries after pride; pray all the ropes in Saffron Walden that I do not prophesy. Amen, amen, quoth Master Bird and Master Demetrius.)

He forbears to speak much in this place of the one or the other *because his letters are more forward to accuse them than their own books to condemn them*, yet for a touch by the way, he talks that Greene is no livery for this winter, *it is pitifully blasted and faded in every mead* by the strong breath of his barbarism.

He hath a twitch at *Pierce Penillesse* too, at the parting stile, and terms him *the devil's orator by profession, and his dam's poet by practice*, wherein methinks (the surreverence of his works not impaired) he hath very highly overshot himself, for no more is *Pierce Penillesse* to be called the devil's orator for making a supplication to the devil than he is to be held for a rhetorician for setting forth *Gabriel's Scurvy Rhetor*, wherein he thought to have knocked out the brains of poor Tully's *Orator*, but in verity did nothing else but gather a flaunting unsavoury fore-horse nosegay out of his well-furnished garland.

The advancement of the devil's oratorship which he ascribeth to *Pierce Penillesse*, methinks had been a fit place for his doctorship when he missed the oratorship of the university, of which, in the sequel of his book, he most slanderously complaineth. Doctor Perne, Greene, no dead man he spareth.

What he should mean subaudi by *his dam's poet* I scarce apprehend, except this, that Pierce's father was Dame Laws[on]'s poet, and writ many goodly stories of her in *An Almond for a Parrot*.

Those that will take a lecture in our orator's letters must not *read, excuse, commend, credit or believe any approved truth* in *Pierce Penillesse*, especially if it be anything that upbraideth the great baboon, his brother.

He will stop the beginning, id est, when he hath come behind a man and broke his head, seek to bind him to the good abearing, *or else the end were like to prove pernicious and perilous*, to his confusion.

Somewhat he mutters of *defamation and just commendation*, & what a hell it is for him, that hath built his heaven in vainglory, to be pulled by the sleeve and bid *Respice funem*, look back to his father's house, but I overslip it as frivolous, because all the world knows him better than he knows himself, & though he play the Pharisee never so in justifying his own innocence, there's none will believe him.

Let this be spoken once for all, as I have a soul to save, till this day in all my life, with tongue nor pen, did I ever in the least word or tittle derogate from the Doctor. If his brother (without any former provocation on my part, God is my witness) railed on me grossly, expressly named me, compared me to Martin, endeavoured to take from me all estimation of art or wit, have I not cause to bestir me?

Gabriel, I will bestir me, for all like an ale-house knight thou cravest of *justice to do thee reason*; as for *impudence and calumny*, I return them in thy face, that in one book of ten sheets of paper hast published above two hundred lies.

Had they been witty lies, or merry lies, they would never have grieved me, but palpable lies, damned lies, lies as big as one of the Guards' chines of beef, who can abide?

I'll make thee of my counsel because I love thee (not): when I was in Cambridge, and but a child, I was indifferently persuaded of thee; methought by thy apparel and thy gait thou shouldst have been a fine fellow. Little did I suspect that thou wert brother to *Io Paeon* (whom inwardly I always grudged at for writing against Aristotle), or any of the H's of Hemp Hall, but a cavalier of a clean contrary house. Now thou hast quite spoiled thyself; from the foot to the head I can tell how thou art fashioned.

Teterrime frater, and not *fraterrime frater*, mayest thou very woefully exclaim, for in helping him thou hast cracked thy credit through the ring, made thy infamy current as far as the Queen's coin goes.

But it may be thou hast a sider cloak for this quarrel; thou wilt object thy father was abused, & that made thee write. What, by me, or Greene, or both?

If by Greene and not me, thou shouldst have written against Greene and not me. If by both, I will answer for both. But not by both, therefore I will answer but for one.

Give an instance, if thou canst for thy life, wherein in any leaf of *Pierce Penilesse* I had so much as half a syllable's relation to thee, or offered one jot of indignity to thy father more than naming the greatest dignity he hath, when, for variety of epithets, I called thy brother *the son of a rope-maker*.

We shall have a good son of you anon if you be ashamed of your father's occupation; ah, thou wilt ne'er thrive, that art beholding to a trade and canst not abide to hear of it.

Thou dost live by the gallows, & wouldst not have a shoe to put on thy foot if thy father had no traffic with the hangman. Had I a rope-maker to my father, & somebody had cast it in my teeth, I would forthwith have writ in praise of rope-makers, & proved it by solid syllogistry to be one of the 7 liberal sciences.

Somewhat I am privy to the cause of Greene's inveighing against the three brothers. Thy hot-spirited brother Richard (a notable ruffian with his pen), having first took upon him in his blundering *Percival* to play the Jack of both sides twixt Martin and us, and snarled privily at Pap-hatchet, Pasquil & others that opposed themselves against the open slander of that mighty platformer of atheism, presently after dribbed forth another fool's-bolt, a book, I should say, which he christened *The Lamb of God*.

That book was a learned book, a laboured book, for three year before he put it in print, he had preached it all without book.

I myself have some of it in a book of sermons that my tutor at Cambridge made me gather every Sunday. Then being very young, I counted it the abjectest and frothiest form of divinity that came in that place. Now more confirmed in age and art, I confirm my ill opinion of it.

Neither do I urge this as if it were a heinous thing for a man to put sermons in print after he preached them, but observe the proud humour of the pert Didimus, that thinks nothing he speaks but deserves to be put in print, and speaks not that sentence in the pulpit which before he rough-hews not over with his pen. Besides, I tax him for turning an old coat (like a broker), and selling it for a new.

These and a thousand more imperfections might have been buried with his books in the bottom of a dryfat, and there slept quietly amongst the shavings of the press, if in his epistle he had not been so arrogantly censorial.

Not me alone did he revile and dare to the combat, but glicked at Pap-hatchet once more, and mistermed all our other poets and writers about London piperly make-plays and makebates.

Hence Greene, being chief agent for the company (for he writ more than four other, how well I will not say, but *Sat cito, si sat bene*), took occasion to canvass him a little in his *Cloth-breeches and Velvet-breeches*, and because by some probable collections he guessed the elder brother's hand was in it, he coupled them both in one yoke, and, to fulfil the proverb *Tria sunt omnia*, thrust in the third brother, who made a perfect pair-royal of pamphleters.

About some seven or eight lines it was which hath plucked on an invective of so many leaves. Had he lived, Gabriel, and thou shouldst so unartificially and odiously libelled

against him as thou hast done, he would have made thee an example of ignominy to all ages that are to come, and driven thee to eat thy own book buttered, as I saw him make an apparitor once in a tavern eat his citation, wax and all, very handsomely served twixt two dishes.

Out upon thee for an arrant dog-killer; strike a man when he is dead?

So hares may pull dead lions by the beard.

Memorandum: I borrowed this sentence out of a play. The Theatre, poets' hall, hath many more such proverbs to persecute thee with, because thou hast so scornfully derided their profession, and despitefully maligned honest sports.

Before I unbowel the lean carcass of thy book any further, I'll drink one cup of lamb's-wool to *The Lamb of God and his Enemies*.

In the first four leaves of it, I have singled out these godly and fruitful observations.

Noble Lord, I do it even upon former premises, not for any future consequents.

My book is not worthy of so honourable speciality as your patronage.

I will not prosecute it with theological peculiars, but from the mouth of the sword I speak, etc.

The hearts of the wicked pant, their spirits fail them, they may well call for butter out of a lordly dish.

You that be gentle readers, do you not laugh at this lawyers' English of *former premises and future consequents*?

O finicality, *your patronage's speciality*, but if he prosecute it with *theological peculiars*, we must needs thrust him *inter oves & boves, & reliqua pecora campi*.

From the mouth of the sword I speak it, *that butter out of a lordly dish* is but lewd diet for the pulpit.

But this is not half the litter of inkhornism that those four pages have pigged. I must tell you of the *octonarium of Ramus, the sesquiamus of Freigius, the Carthusianism of Guilielmus Rickel, of annals, diaries, chronologies & tropological schoolmen, the Abetilis of the Ethiopians or Preto-Ioanans, of Guilielmus Minatensis, & St. Jerome's allegorized Abdias, Lyra, Grisone, Porta, Pantaleon.*

All which he reckons up to make the world believe he hath read much, but allegeth nothing out of them, nor, I think, on my conscience, ever read or knew what they mean

but as he hath stole them by the wholesale out of some bookseller's catalogue, or a table of tractates.

Here are some of his profound annotations: *Jacob took Leah for his bedfellow in the dark by night, instead of Rachel, whereby I learn to buy my wife candle to go to bed withal, and admit her not by dark, but by light.*

Jacob was deceived by Laban's words; ergo, obligations are better than bills, and we must believe no man except he will wax and multiply in words, and call ink & parchment to witness.

Jacob laid peeled rods with white strakes in the watering-places of the sheep, whereby I note that in carnal mixture the senses are opened.

Judge, you that be the fathers of the church, whether this be fit matter to edify, or no.

It was not for nothing, brother Richard, that Greene told you you kissed your parishioners' wives with holy kisses, for you that will talk of *opening the senses by carnal mixture* (the very act of lechery) in a theological treatise, and in the pulpit, I am afraid in a privater place you will practise as much as you speak. *Homines raro misi male locuti male faciunt. Olet hircum, olet hircum*, any modest ear would abhor to hear it.

Farewell, unclean vicar, and God make thee an honest man, for thou art too bawdy for me to deal withal.

It follows in the text:

To my very good friend, Master Emanuel Demetrius.

This letter of Master Bird to Master Demetrius should seem, by all reference or collation of styles, to be a letter which Master Bird's secretary, Doctor Gabriel, indited for him in his own praise, and got him to set his hand to when he had done. Or rather, it is not a letter, but a certificate (such as rogues have) from the head-man of the parish where he was born, *that Gabriel is an excellent general scholar, and his father of good behaviour.*

We will not believe it except we see the town seal set to it, but say we should believe it, what doth it make for thee? Have the townsmen of Saffron Walden ever heard thee preach, that they should commend thee for an excellent general scholar, or (because thou professest thyself a civilian) hast thou solicited any of their causes in the bawdy courts thereabouts? If not, go your ways a dolt as you came; Master Bird's letter shall not reprieve you from the ladder.

But *Velvet-breeches and Cloth-breeches* (by the judgment of the best man of none of the least towns in Essex) *is a fantastical and fond dialogue, and one of the most licentious intolerable invectives that ever he read.*

Why?

In it is abused an ancient neighbour of his.

How is he abused?

Instead of his name, he is called by the craft he got his living with.

He hath borne office in Walden above twenty year since (hoc est, had the keeping of the town stock, alias the stocks); ergo, he is no rope-maker.

He hath maintained four sons at Cambridge; ergo, Greene is a lewd fellow to say he gets his living backward.

Three of his sons universally ridiculously reputed of (for inamoratos on their own works) *in both universities and the whole realm.* The fourth is shrunk in the wetting, or else the print should have heard of him.

One of the three (whom the *Quip* entitles the physician) *returning sick from Norwich to Lynn in July last*, was past writing any more almanacs before Greene e'er imagined God had thought so well of him to take him to him.

Livor post fata quiescat. Mother Livers of Newington is a better fortune-teller than he was a physician.

A dash through the dudgeon sonnet against Greene

*Put up thy smiter, O gentle Peter,
Author and halter make but ill metre;
I scorn to answer thy mis-shapen rime,
Blocks have called scholars bayards ere this time.*

I would trot a false gallop through the rest of his ragged verse, but that if I should retort his rime doggerel aright, I must make my verses (as he doth his) run hobbling like a brewer's cart upon the stones, and observe no length in their feet, which were *absurdum per absurdius*, to infect my vein with his imitation.

The analysis of the whole is this: an old mechanical metre-monger would fain rail, if he had any wit. If Greene were *dog-sick and brain-sick*, sure he (poor secular satirist) is dolt-sick and brainless, that with the toothless gums of his poetry so betuggeth a dead man.

But I cannot be induced to believe a grave man of his sort should be e'er so ravingly bent; when all comes to all, *shortest vowels and longest mutes* will bewray it to be a web of your own looms, Master Gabriel: you *mute* forth many such phrases in the course of your book, which I will point out as I pass by.

I will not rob you of your due commendation in anything; in this sonnet you have counterfeited the style of the old Vice in the morals, as right up and down as may be.

*Let. Greene, the cony-catcher, of this dream the author,
For his dainty devise, deserveth the halter.*

*Vice. Hey, nan, anon sir; soft, let me make water,
Whip it to go; I'll kiss my master's daughter.
Tum diddy, tum da, falangtedo diddle;
Sol la me fa sol, conatus in fiddle.*

I am afraid your *Doctor's fart* will fall out to be a fatal foist to your breeches, if we follow you at the hard heels as we have begun.

Thou shalt not breathe a whit; trip and go, turn over a new leaf.

*Master Bird, in the absence of Master Demetrius. Perge porro. I found his wife
courteous; byrlady, sir, that is suspicious.*

A woman is well holpen up that does you any courtesy in the absence of her husband, when you cannot keep it to yourself, but you must blab it in print.

If it were any other but Mistress Demetrius (whom I have heard to be a modest sober woman, and indeed with many virtues), I would play upon it a little more. In regard that she is so, I forbear, and crave pardon in that I have spoken so much.

Yet would I have her understand how well *the general scholar*, her guest, hath rewarded her for his kind entertainment by bringing her name in question in print.

Master Bird and Master Demetrius, I know neither of you by sight, but this I'll say, being of that wealth you are, you had better have spent a great deal of money than come in the mouth of this base companion.

What reason have I (seeing your names subscribed as his bolsterer in a matter of defame that concerns me) but to go through-stitch with you as well as him?

He thinks to overbear us as poor beggars with the great ostentation of your rich acquaintance.

Let all noblemen take heed how they give this Thraso the least beck or countenance, for if they bestow but half a glance on him, he'll straight put it very solemnly in print, and make it ten times more than it is.

I'll tell you a merry jest.

The time was when this Timothy Tiptoes made a Latin oration to her Majesty. Her Highness, as she is unto all her subjects most gracious, so to scholars she is more loving and affable than any prince under heaven. In which respect, of her own virtue and not his desert, it pleased her so to humble the height of her judgment as to grace him a little, while he was pronouncing, by these or suchlike terms: *'Tis a good pretty fellow, a looks like an Italian*, and after he had concluded, to call him to kiss her royal hand. Hereupon he goes home to his study, all entranced, and writes a whole volume of verses, first, *De vultu Itali*, of the countenance of the Italian; and then *De osculo manus*, of his kissing the Queen's hand. Which two Latin poems he published in a book of his called *Aedes Valdinenses*, proclaiming thereby (as it were to England, France, Italy and Spain) what favour he was in with her Majesty.

I dismiss this parenthesis, and come to his *next business*, which indeed is his first business, for till Greene awaked him out of his self-admiring contemplation, he had nothing to do but walk under the yew-tree at Trinity Hall, and say:

*What may I call this tree? An yew-tree? O bonny yew-tree,
Needs to thy boughs will I bow this knee, and vail my bonneto.*

Or make verses of weathercocks on the top of steeples, as he did once of the weathercock of All Hallows in Cambridge:

*O thou weathercock that stands on the top of the church of All Hallows,
Come thy ways down if thou dar'st for thy crown, and take the wall on us.*

O heathenish and pagan hexameters, come thy ways down from thy doctorship, & learn thy primer of poetry over again, for certainly thy pen is in a state of a reprobate with all men of judgment and reckoning.

Come thy ways down from thy doctorship, said I? *Erraui demens*, thou never went'st up to it yet.

Fie on hypocrisy and dissimulation, that men should make themselves better than they are!

Alas, a God's will, thou art but a plain moth-eaten Master of Art, and never polluted'st thyself with any plastery or daubing of doctorship.

List, Paul's Churchyard (the peruser of every man's works, & Exchange of all authors), you are a many of you honest fellows, and favour men of wit.

So it is that a good gown and a well pruned pair of mustachios, having studied sixteen year to make thirteen ill English hexameters, came to the university court *regentium & non*, to sue for a commission to carry two faces in a hood; they not using to deny honour to any man that deserved it, bade him perform all the scholarlike ceremonies and disputative right appertaining thereto, and he should be installed.

Noli me tangere; he liked none of that.

A stripling that hath an indifferent pretty stock of reputation abroad in the world already, and some credit amongst his neighbours, as he thinketh, would be loath to jeopard all at one throw at the dice.

If he should have disputed for his degree, descended *in arenam & puluerem philosophicum*, and have been foiled, *Ay me, quoth Wit, in lamentable sort*, what should have become of him? He might have been shot through, ere he were aware, with a syllogism.

No point; ergo, it were wisely done of goodman boor's son if he should go to the wars for honour, and return with a wooden leg, when he may buy a captainship at home better cheap.

Pumps and pantofles, because they were well blacked, and glistered jolly freshly on it, being rubbed over with ink, had their grace at length to be Doctor, *Ea lege*, that they should do their acts (that is, perform more than they were able).

Cursed be the time that ever there were any obligations made with conditions, *Unde habeas quaerit nemo, sed oportet habere*. How Dorbel comes to be Doctor, none asks, but Doctor he must be, to make him right worshipful.

Acts are but idle words, and the scripture saith we must give account for every idle word.

Pumps and pantofles swear they will jet away with a clear conscience at the day of judgment, and therefore do no acts, give no offence with idle words, only like a hawk let fly at a partridge, that turns the tail and betakes her to a walnut-tree, so to Oxford they trudge, having their grace *ad disputandum*, and there are confirmed in the same degree they took at Cambridge, which is as if a prentice here in London, as soon as he is enrolled, should run to some such town as Ipswich, and there crave to have his freedom confirmed as of London, which in truth is no freedom, because he hath not served out his prenticeship.

Trust me not for a dodkin if there be not all the doctorship he hath, yet will the insolent inkworm write himself *right worshipful of the laws*, and personate this man and that man calling him *my good friend, Master Doctor*, at every word.

Doctor or no Doctor, *Greene surfeited not of pickled herring, but of an exceeding fear* of his familiar epistles.

He offered in his extremest want twenty shillings to the printer to leave out the matter of the three brothers.

Haud facile credo, I am sure the printer, being of that honesty that I take him for, will not affirm it.

Marry, this I must say, there was a learned doctor of physic (to whom Greene in his sickness sent for counsel) that, having read over the book of *Velvet-breeches and Cloth-breeches*, and laughing merrily at the three brothers' legend, willed Greene in any case either to mitigate it, or leave it out, not for any extraordinary account he made of the fraternity of fools, but for one of them was proceeded in the same faculty of physic he professed, and willingly he would have none of that excellent calling ill spoken of.

This was the cause of the altering of it, the fear of his physician's displeasure, not any fear else.

I keep your *conscious mind*, with all other odd ends of your half-faced English, till the full conclusion of my book, where in an honourable index they shall be placed according to their degree and seniority.

We are to vex you mightily for plucking Elderton out of the ashes of his ale, and not letting him enjoy his nappy muse of ballad-making to himself, but now, when he is as dead as dead beer, you must be finding fault with the brewing of his metres.

Hough, Thomas Deloney, Philip Stubbs, Robert Armin, etc. Your father Elderton is abused. Revenge, revenge on coarse paper and want of matter, that hath most sacrilegiously contaminated the divine spirit & quintessence of a penny a quart.

Helter-skelter, fear no colours, course him, trounce him; one cup of perfect bonaventure liquor will inspire you with more wit and scholarship than he hath thrust into his whole packet of *Letters*.

You that be lookers-on perhaps imagine I talk like a merry man, and not in good earnest, when I say that Elderton's ghost and Gabriel are at such odds, but then you know nothing, for there hath been monstrous emulation twixt Elderton and him time out of mind. Yea, they were rivals in riming four year before the great frost. He expressly writ against him, 1580, in his *short but sharp and learned judgment of earthquakes*.

Broom-boys and corn-cutters (or whatsoever trade is more contemptible) come not in his way, stand forty foot from the execution place of his fury, for else, in the full tide of his standish, he will carry your occupations handsmooth out of town before him, besmear them, drown them; down the river they go privily to the Isle of Dogs with his pamphlets.

O, it is a pestilent libeller against beggars; he means shortly to set forth a book called his Paraphrase upon Paris Garden, wherein he will so tamper with the interpreter of the puppets, and betouse Harry of Tame and great Ned, that *Titius shall not upbraid Caius with everything and nothing, nor Zoilus more flirt Homer, nor Thersites fling at Agamemnon*.

Holla, holla, holla, *flirt, fling*, what resty rhetoric have we here? Certes, certes, brother hoddy-doddy, your pen is a colt, by cock's body.

As touching the liberty of orators and poets, I will confer with thee somewhat gravely, although thou beest a goose-cap, and hast no judgment.

A liberty they have, thou sayest, *but no liberty without bounds, no licence without limitation*.

Jesu, what mister wonders dost thou tell us? Everything hath an end, and a pudding hath two.

That liberty poets of late in their invectives have exceeded, they have borne their sword up, where it is not lawful for a poinado that is but the page of prowess, to intermeddle.

Thou bringest in *Mother Hubbard* for an instance. Go no further, but here confess thyself a flat nodgecomb before all this congregation, for thou hast dealt by thy friend as homely as thou didst by thy father.

Who publicly accused, or of late brought *Mother Hubbard* into question, that thou shouldst by rehearsal rekindle against him the sparks of displeasure that were quenched?

Forgot he the *pure sanguine of his Faerie Queen*, sayest thou?

A *pure sanguine* sot art thou, that in vainglory to have Spenser known for thy friend, and that thou hast some interest in him, censurest him worse than his deadliest enemy would do.

If any man were undeservedly touched in it, thou hast revived his disgrace that was so touched in it by renaming it when it was worn out of all men's mouths and minds.

Besides, whereas before I thought it a made matter of some malicious moralizers against him, and no substance of slander in truth, now, when thou (that proclaimest thyself the only familiar of his bosom, and therefore shouldst know his secrets) gives it out in print that he overshot himself therein, it cannot choose but be suspected to be so indeed.

Immortal Spenser, no frailty hath thy fame but the imputation of this idiot's friendship; upon an unspotted Pegasus should thy gorgeous attired *Faerie Queen* ride triumphant through all report's dominions, but that this mud-borne bubble, this bile on the brow of the university, this bladder of pride new blown, challengeth some interest in her prosperity.

Of pitch who hath any use at all shall be abused by it in the end.

High grass that flourisheth for a season on the housetop fadeth before the harvest calls for it, and may well make a fair show, but hath no sweetness in it. Such is this *ass in*

presenti, this gross painted image of pride, who would fain counterfeit a good wit, but scornful pity, his best patron, knows it becomes him as ill as an unwieldy elephant to imitate a whelp in his wantonness.

I wot not how it falls out, but his invention is over weaponed; he hath some good words, but he cannot writhe them and toss them to and fro nimbly, or so bring them about that he may make one straight thrust at his enemy's face.

Coldly and dully *idem per idem*, who cannot indite? But with life and spirit to limn deadness itself, *Hoc est oratoris proprium*.

L. *Invectives by favour have been too bold, and satires by usurpation too presumptuous*. What pleasure brings this to the reader? Jack of the Falcon in Cambridge can say as much, and give no reason for it.

But I can prompt you with a demonstration wherein invectives have been too bold. Do you remember what you writ in your item for earthquakes of *double-faced Jani, changeable chameleons, aspen leaves, painted sheaths and sepulchres, asses in lions' skins, dunghill-cocks, slippery eels, dormice, etc.*? Besides your testimonial of Doctor Perne, wherein it pleased you, of your singular liberality and bounty, to bestow upon him this beautiful encomium: *A busy and dizzy head, a brazen forehead, a leaden brain, a wooden wit, a copper face, a stony breast, a factious and elvish heart, a founder of novelties, a confounder of his own and his friends' good gifts, a morning book-worm, an afternoon malt-worm, a right juggler, as full of his sleights, wiles, fetches, casts of legerdemain, toys to mock apes withal, odd shifts and knavish practices, as his skin can hold*.

Notwithstanding all this, you *defy cut and long-tail that can accuse you of any scandalous part, either in word or deed*.

Tully, Horace, Archilochus, Aristophanes, Lucian, Julian, Aretine go for no payment with you; their declamatory styles, brought to the grand test of your judgment, are found counterfeit; *they are a venomous and viperous brood of railers*, because they have brought in a new kind of a quick fight which your decrepit slow-moving capacity cannot fadge with.

Tush, tush, you take the grave peak upon you too much; who would think you could so easily shake off your old friends? Did not you in the forty-one page, line 2, of your epistles to Colin Clout use this speech?

Extra iocum, I like your Dreams passing well, and the rather because they savour of that singular extraordinary vein and invention which I ever fancied most, and in a manner admired only in Lucian, Petrarch, Aretine, Pasquil.

Dic sodes (God-a-mercy on Dick Sot's soul, for he was a better dancer than thou art an inditer, & with his legs he made some music; there is none in thy *Letters*), answer me

briefly, I say, to the point, have I varied one vowel from thy original text in this allegation? If not, I cannot see how the doctors may well be reconciled, one while to commend a man *because his writings savour of that singular extraordinary vein which he only admired in Lucian, Petrarch, Aretine, Pasquil*, and then in another book afterward, to come and call those *singular extraordinary admired men a venomous and viperous brood of railers*.

The ancients sort of poets and orators shall plead their own worthiness.

Tully never over-reached himself in railing so much as in flattery. His *Philippics* (sound physic applied to a body that could not digest it) are the things that especially commended him to this art-thriving age of ours, and had not these been, he would certainly have been sentenced by a general verdict of histories for a timorous time-pleaser.

Who cannot draw a curtain before a deformed picture? Plautus personated no parasite but he made him a slave or a bondman.

Fawning and crouching are the natural gestures of fear, and if it be a virtue for a vassal to lick a man's shoes with his tongue, sure it is but borrowed from the dogs, and so is biting too, if it be accompanied with over-loud barking, or in such wise as it cannot pinch but it must break the flesh and draw blood.

Horace, Perseus, Juvenal, my poor judgment lendeth you plentiful allowance of applause; yet had you, with the Phrygian melody that stirreth men up to battle and fury, mixed the Dorian tune that favoureth mirth and pleasure, your unsugared pills (however excellently medicinable) would not have been so harsh in the swallowing. So likewise Archilochus; thou, like the preachers to the courtesans in Rome that expound to them all law and no gospel, art all gall and no spleen. Hence came it to pass that with the mere efficacy of thy incensed iambics thou madest a man run and hang himself that had angered thee.

Thee I embrace, Aristophanes, not so much for thy comedy of the cloud, which thou wrotest against philosophers, as for in all other thy inventions thou interfusest delight with reprehension.

Lucian, Julian, Aretine, all three admirably blest in the abundant gifts of art and nature, yet religion, which you sought to ruin, hath ruined your good names, and the opposing of your eyes against the bright sun hath caused the world condemn your sight in all other things. I protest, were you aught else but abominable atheists, I would obstinately defend you, only because laureate Gabriel articles against you.

This I will justify against any Dromidote ergonist whatsoever: there is no other un-lascivious use or end of poetry but to infamize vice and magnify virtue, and that if they assemble all the examples of verse-founders from Homer to Hugh Copland, they shall not find any of them but hath encountered with the general abuses of his times.

Whatsoever harpeth not of one of these two strings of praise and reproof is, as it were, a dirge in prick-song without any ditty set to it, that haply may tickle the ear, but never edifies.

In the Roman commonwealth it was lawful for poets to reprove that enormity in the highest chairs of authority which none else durst touch, always the sacred majesty of their Augustus kept inviolate, for that was a planet exalted above their hexameter horizon, & it was capital to them in the highest degree to dispute of his setting and rising, or search inquisitively into his predominance and influence.

The secrets of God must not be searched into. Kings are gods on earth; their actions must not be sounded by their subjects.

Seneca, Nero's tutor, found his death in no verse but Octavia. Imperious Lucan sprinkled but one drop of blood on his imperial chair, and perished by him also.

Ovid once saw Augustus in a place where he would not have been seen; he was exiled presently to those countries no happy man hears of.

Long might he, in a blind *Metamorphosis*, have played upon all the wenches in Rome, and registered their privy scapes; upbraided inhospitality with the fable of Lycaon; alluded to some ambodexter lawyer under the story of Battus; have described a noted unthrift whose substance hawks and hounds have devoured in the tale of Actaeon, that was eaten up by his own dogs; mocked alchemists with Midas; pictured inamoratos under Narcissus, and shrouded a picked effeminate carpet-knight under the fictionate person of Hermaphroditus; with a thousand more such unexileable overthwart merriments, if lust had not led him beyond the prospect of his birth, or he seen a meaner man sinning than an emperor.

Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis, how hath my pen lost itself in a crowd of poets?

Gaffer Jobbernowl, once more well overtaken. How dost thou, how dost thou? Hold up thy head, man, take no care; though Greene be dead, yet I may live to do thee good.

But *by the means of his death thou art deprived of the remedy in law which thou intended'st to have had against him for calling thy father rope-maker*. Mass, that's true. What action will it bear? *Nihil pro nihilo*, none in law. What it will do upon the stage I cannot tell, for there a man may make action besides his part when he hath nothing at all to say, and if there, it is but a clownish action that it will bear, for what can be made of a rope-maker more than a clown? Will Kempe, I mistrust it will fall to thy lot for a merriment one of these days.

In short terms, thus I demur upon thy long Kentish-tailed declaration against Greene.

He inherited more virtues than vices; a jolly long red peak, like the spire of a steeple, he cherished continually without cutting, whereat a man might hang a jewel, it was so sharp and pendent.

Why should art answer for the infirmities of manners? He had his faults, and thou thy follies.

Debt and deadly sin, who is not subject to? With any notorious crime I never knew him tainted (& yet tenting is no infamous surgery for him that hath been in so many hot skirmishes).

A good-fellow he was, and would have drunk with thee for more angels than the Lord thou libelledst on gave thee in Christ's College, and in one year he pissed as much against the walls as thou and thy two brothers spent in three.

In a night & a day would he have yarked up a pamphlet as well as in seven year, and glad was that printer that might be so blest to pay him dear for the very dregs of his wit.

He made no account of winning credit by his works, as thou dost that dost no good works, but thinks to be famed by a strong faith of thy own worthiness; his only care was to have a spell in his purse to conjure up a good cup of wine with at all times.

For the lousy circumstance of his poverty before his death, and sending that miserable writ to his wife, it cannot be but thou liest, learned Gabriel.

I and one of my fellows, Will. Monox (hast thou never heard of him and his great dagger?) were in company with him a month before he died, at that fatal banquet of Rhenish wine and pickled herring (if thou wilt needs have it so), and then the inventory of his apparel came to more than three shillings (though thou sayest the contrary). I know a broker in a spruce leather jerkin with a great number of gold rings on his fingers and a bunch of keys at his girdle shall give you thirty shillings for the doublet alone, if you can help him to it. Hark in your ear, he had a very fair cloak with sleeves, of a grave goose-turd green; it would serve you as fine as may be. No more words, if you be wise; play the good husband and listen after it. You may buy it ten shillings better cheap than it cost him. By St. Silver, it is good to be circumspect in casting for the world; there's a great many ropes go to ten shillings. If you want a greasy pair of silk stockings also, to show yourself in at the court, they are there to be had, too, amongst his movables. *Frustra fit per plura quod fieri potest per pauciora*: It is policy to take a rich pennyworth whiles it is offered.

Alas, even his fellow writer, that proper young man, almost scorns to cope with thee, thou art such a crow-trodden ass; dost thou in some respects wish him well, and spare his name? In some respects so doth he wish thee as well (hoc est, to be as well known for a fool as my Lord Wells), and promiseth by me to talk very sparingly of thy praise. For thy name, he will not stoop to pluck it out of the mire and put it in his mouth.

By this blessed cup of sack which I now hold in my hand and drink to the health of all Christian souls in, thou art a puissant epitapher.

Yea, thy muse's foot of the twelves? Old Long Meg of Westminster? Then I trow thou wilt stride over Greene's grave, and not stumble. If you do, we shall come to your taking up.

Letter:

*Here lies the man whom Mistress Isam crowned with bays,
She, she that joyed to hear her nightingale's sweet lays.*

Comment:

*Here, Mistress Isam, Gabriel flouts thy bays;
Scratch out his eyes that printeth thy dispraise.*

She, she will scratch, and like a scritchng night-owl come and make a dismal noise under thy chamber-window, for deriding her so dunstically. A big fat lusty wench it is, that hath an arm like an Amazon, and will *bang thee abominably*, if ever she catch thee in her quarters. It is not your *poet garish and your fore-horse of the parish* that shall redeem you from her fingers, but she will *make actual proof of you*, according as you desire of God in the underfollowing lines.

The next week Master Bird (if his inkpot have a clear current), he will have at you with a cap-case full of French occurrences, that is, shape you a mess of news out of the second course of his conceit, as his brother is said out of the fabulous abundance of his brain to have invented the news out of Calabria (John Doleta's prophecy of flying dragons, comets, earthquakes and inundations).

I am sure it is not yet worn out of men's scorn, for every miller made a comment of it, and not an oyster-wife but mocked it.

When that fly-boat of Frenchery is once launched, your trencher-attendant, Gamaliel Hobgoblin, intends to tickle up a treatise of the barley-kernel which you set in your garden, out of which there sprung (as you avouched) twelve several ears of corn at one time.

Redoubted Parma was never so matched, if he kindle the match of his metredom, and let drive at him with a volley of verses. Let not his principality trust too much to it because his name is Latin for a shield, for poet Hobbinoll, *having a gallant wit and a brazen pen, will honourably bethink him, and even ambitiously frame his style to a noble emulation of Livy, Homer, and the divinest spirits of all ages*, as he hath done to the emulation of Tully heretofore when he compiled a pamphlet called *Ciceronis consolatio ad Dolabellam*, and published it as a new part of Tully which had been hidden in a wall a thousand and odd years, and was found out by him before it ever found being.

The circumstance was this: going down the water at Cambridge one summer evening, and asking certain questions of the echo at Barnwell wall (as the manner is, passing by), holding her very narrowly to the point, she revealed unto him what a treasure she had hidden amongst her stones, namely this new part of *Gabrielis Ciceronis consolatio ad Dolabellam*, and though she was very loath to disclose it, yet because she knew not how soon God might call her, videlicet, how suddenly she might fall, to discharge her conscience before her death she would deliver it up as freely unto him as ever it was hers; come and dig for it, he should have it. Never more glad was she in her life that since she must needs surrender it to the light, she had chanced upon such a cardinal corregidor of incongruity, and Tully's next and immediate successor, under Carr, to whose careful repolishing she might commit it.

Keep it, quoth she?

No, if it were a book of gold, it is thine; read it, new print it, dedicate it *from thy gallery at Trinity Hall* to whom thou wilt.

Whether he used a spade or a mattock for the unburying of it I know not, but extant it is, and of a hundred I have heard that it is his.

O Gabriel, if thou hast any manhood in thy starched peak, look upon me and weep not.

From this day forward shall a whole army of boys come wondering about thee as thou goest in the street, and cry kulleloo, kulleloo, with whip hoo, there goes the ape of Tully, tee-hee-hee, steal Tully, steal Tully, away with the ass in the lion's skin.

Nay, but in sadness, is it not a sinful thing for a scholar & a Christian to turn Tully; a Turk would never do it.

Be counselled in thy calamity, write no more *Consolatio ad Dolabellam*, but *Consolatio ad Doctore Gabrielem*; thyself comfort thyself, and learn to make a virtue of contempt.

Ad ruentem parietem ne inclina is a proverb which would have prevented all this, if thou couldst have suffered thyself to have been directed by it, for first and foremost, hadst not thou stepped forth to underprop the ruinous wall of thy brother's reputation, I had never meddled with thee; if thou hadst not leaned too much to an old wall when thou pluck'st Tully out of a wall, the damnation of this jest had been yet unbegotten.

He that hath borne sail in two tempests of shame makes a sport of shipwreck of good name ever after.

The wall of the welfare of France that is started from her King, her true foundation, thy writings (more wretched than France) would fain cleave unto if they could tell how, and count it a felicity to have the opportunity of so heroical an argument.

God help Alexander if he have no other poet to emblazon his achievements but Cherillus.

High-resolved Earl of Essex and victorious Sir John Norris, England's champions, envied tranquility's confidence, unworthy are your adventures' iliads to be reported by such a ragged reed as the jarring pipe of this Batillus. The Portugal's & Frenchmen's fear will lend your Honours richer ornaments than his low-flighted affection (fortune's summer-follower) can frame them.

The seal that I set to your virtues be silence; the argument of praise is unauthorized in any man's mouth but old age.

When the better part of youth's fervence is boiled away, and that the showers of many sorrows have seasoned our green heads with experience, with the wither-faced weather-beaten mariner that talks quaking and shudderingly of a storm that he hath newly toiled through, our world will be written in our visage.

Even as the sun, so no science shines in its complete glory till it be ready to decline.

These be the conclusions that grey hairs prune & cut down the prosperity of young years with, as fast as it aspires, but let the sere oak look himself in the glass of truth, and he shall find that Methusalem's blessing is imbecility, bestowed on any creature but the fox, who never is a right fox till he be ripe for the dunghill.

If my style hold on this sober mule's pace but a sheet or two further, I shall have a long beard like an Irish mantle drop out of my mouth before I be aware.

Mary, God forfend, for at no hand can I endure to have my cheeks muffled up in fur like a Muscovian, or wear any of this Welsh frieze on my face.

O, it is a miserable thing to dress hair like tow twixt a man's teeth, when one cannot drink but he must thrust a great sponge into the cup, & so cleanse his cool porridge, as it were through a strainer, ere it comes to his lips.

This second epistle I have said prettily well to; I think we were best begin THIRDLY WHEREAS, for fear a volume steal upon us unlooked for.

The arraignment and execution of the third letter

To every reader favourably or indifferently affected

Text, stand to the bar. Peace, there below.

Albeit for these twelve or thirteen years no man hath been more loath or more scrupulous than myself, etc.

The body of me, he begins like a proclamation; sufficeth it we know you your mind, though you say no more.

Is not this your drift? You would have the world suppose you were urged to that which proceeded of your own good nature, like some that will seem to be entreated to take a high place of preferment upon them, which privily before they have prayed and paid for, and put all their strength to climb up to.

You would foist in *non causam pro causa*, have it thought your flight from your old companions, obscurity and silence, was only, with Aeneas, to carry your father on your back through the fire of slander, and by that shift, with a false plea of patience unjustly driven from his kingdom, filch away the hearts of the Queen's liege people.

The back of those cripple excuses I have broke in the beginning of my book; if you have any new infringement to destitute the indictment of forgery that I bring against you, so it is.

Here enters *argumentum a testimonio humano*, like Tamburlaine drawn in a chariot by four kings.

I THAT IN MY YOUTH FLATTERED NOT MYSELF WITH THE EXCEEDING
COMMENDATION OF THE GREATEST SCHOLAR IN THE WORLD, ETC.

Ille ego qui quondam gracili modulatus auena.

Ah, neighbourhood, neighbourhood, dead and buried art thou with Robin Hood; a poor creature here is fain to commend himself for want of friends to speak for him.

Not the least, but the greatest, scholars in the WORLD have not only, but exceedingly, fed him fat in his humour of *braggadocio glorioso*.

*Yea, Spenser him hath often Homer termed,
And Monsieur Bodkin vowed as much as he,
Yet cares not Nashe for him a halfpenny.*

Lamentable, lamentable that an indifferent untoward civil lawyer, who hath read Plutarch *De utilitate capienda ab inimicis*, & can talk of Titius and Sempronius, should be no more set by, but SET BY, thrust aside, while his betters carry the breadth of the street before them.

Misery will humble the haughtiest heart in the world: *Habemus reum confitente*. He confesseth himself a sinner in insufficiency; yet for all that, the adversity of universal obloquy hath laid a heavy hand on him, still he retaineth (like concealed land) some part of his proud mind in a beggar's purse, scorneth to say *Fortune my foe*, or make a good word for God's sake of any man.

In the plainness of his puffed-up nature, he will defy any man that dares accuse him of that he is.

Why, why, infractissime PISTLEPRAGMOS, though you *were young in years, fresh in courage, green in experience, and overweening in conceit* (we will refuse nothing that you give us) when you privately wrote the letters *that afterward* (by no other but yourself) *were publicly divulged*, yet when the bladder is burst that held you up swimming in self-love, you must not be discontented though you sink.

I have *touched the ulcer of your oratorship* in requiting the nickname of *the devil's orator*. An ulcer you may well christen it, as an ulcer is a swelling, for it was a swelling of ambition, no *modest petition* of any merit of yours that did crave it.

The old fox, Doctor Perne, throughly discovered you for a young fop, or else half a word of our *high chancellor's commendation* had stood with him inviolable as an Act of Parliament.

Great men, in writing to those they are acquainted with, have privy watchwords of denial, even in the highest degree of praising; they have many followers, whose dutiful service must not be disgraced with a bitter repulse in any suit, though unlawful.

It may be some of these long deservers of his followers laboured him for thee; he, like Argus, having eyes that pierce into all estates, saw thee when thou wert unseen of thyself, and knowing thee to be unworthy of any place of worth, would not discountenance his men in so small a matter, but writ for thee very vehemently outwardly, when the soul of his letter (into which thy shallow brain could not descend) included thy utter dislike.

Young blood is hot, youth hasty, ingenuity open, abuse impatient, choler stomachous, temptations busy. In a word, the gentleman was vexed, and cut his bridle for very anger.

The tickling and stirring invective vein, the puffing and swelling satirical spirit came upon him, as it came on Coppinger and Arthington when they mounted into the pease-cart in Cheapside and preached. Needs he must cast up certain crude humours of English hexameter verses that lay upon his stomach; a nobleman stood in his way as he was vomiting, and from top to toe he all-to-bewrayed him with Tuscanism.

The map of Cambridge lay not far off when he was in the depths of his drudgery; some part of the excrements of his anger fell upon it. Poor Doctor's Perne's picture stood in a corner of that map, and by the misdemeanour of his mouth it was clean defaced.

Signor Immerito (so called because *he was and is his friend* undeservedly) was counterfeitly brought in to play a part in that his interlude of epistles that was hissed at, thinking his very name (as the name of Ned Alleyn on the common stage) was able to make an ill matter good.

I durst on my credit undertake Spenser was no way privy to the committing of them to the print. Committing I may well call it, for in my opinion G.H. should not have reaped so much discredit by being committed to Newgate as by committing that misbelieving prose to the press.

I have usually seen uncircumcised doltage have the porch of his paynim pilferies hugely pestered with praises. Hey gee (gentlemen) comes in with his plowman's whistle in praise of Peter Scurf the penman, and turlery ginkes, in a lightfoot jig, libels in commendation of little wit very loftily, but for an author to renounce his Christendom to write in his own commendation, to refuse the name which his godfathers and godmothers gave him in his baptism, and call himself *a well-willer to both the writers* when he is the only writer himself, with what face do you think he can answer it at the day of judgment? *Est in te facies, sunt apti lusibus anni*: Gabriel, thou canst play at fast and loose as well as any man in England.

I will not lie or backbite thee as thou hast done me, but are not these thy words *to the courteous buyer*?

Show me, or Immerito, two English letters in print in all points equal to these, both for the matter itself, and also for the manner of handling, and say we never saw good English in our lives.

Again, I esteem them for two of the rarest and finest treaties, as well for ingenuous devising as significant uttering & cleanly conveying of his matter, that ever I read in this tongue, & I heartily thank God for bestowing upon us such proper and able men with their pen.

You must conceit he was in his chamber-fellow *well-willer's* cloak when he spake this: the white-livered slave was modest, and had not the heart to say so much in his own person, but he must put on the vizard of *an indiscreet friend*.

It is not worth the rehearsal: *he scribbled it in jest for exercise of his speech and style, etc., and it was the sinister hap of those unfortunate letters to be derided & scoffed at throughout the whole realm.*

The sharpest part of them were read over at [the] Council table, and he referred over to the Fleet, to bear his old verse-fellow, noble Master Vallenger, company.

There was no remedy for it but melancholy patience.

A recantation he was glad to make *by way of articles or positions*, which he moderates with a milder name of an *apology*, & that recantation purchased his liberty. Wherefore in grateful lieu of the benefit he received by it (*although he hath hitherto unworthily suppressed it*), yet he means to take occasion by this extraordinary provocation to publish it, with not so few as forty such academical exercises, and sundry other politic discourses.

And I deem he will be as good as his word, for ever yet it hath been his wont, if he writ but a letter to any friend of his in the way of thanks for the pot of butter, gammon of bacon, or cheese that he sent him, straight to give copies of it abroad in the world, and propound it to young gentlemen he came in company with as a more necessary & refined method of familiar epistles than the English tongue hath hitherto been privy to.

Lord, that men should be so maliciously bent *to frame a matter of something; he takes a pleasurable delight to behave himself so that he may be laughed at.* How would you prate and insult, if you knew as much by him as he knows by himself.

Nashe, do thy worst; the three brothers bid a fico for thee. Discommend them never so much, they will palpably praise, and so consequently dispraise, themselves more in one book they set forth than thou canst disparage them in ten; yea, rather than fail, Master Bird shall leave copying out letters of news, and metre it mischievously in maintenance of their scurrilitiship and rudity.

Three to one, *par ma foy*, is odds; not one of them writes an almanac but he reckons up all his brothers.

Be it spoken here in private, *Musa Ricardetti fratrizat sat bene pretty*, The muse of dapper Dickie doth sing as sweet as a cricket.

Nosti manum & stilum, Gabriel? It is thine own verse in *Aedes Valdinenses*, all save the inserting of *pretty* instead of *certe*, for rime's sake.

Had physician John lived, or not died a little afore dog-days, a synod of piss-pots would have concluded that *Pierce Penillesse* should be confounded without reprieve.

The Spaniards called their invasive fleet against England the navy invincible, yet it was overcome. Low shrubs have outlived high cedars; one true man is stronger than two thieves. Gabriel & Richard, I proclaim open wars with you; march on, Iocus, Ludus, Lepos, my valiant men-at-arms, and forage the frontiers of his *fantasticity* as you have begun.

Tubalcan [sic?], alias Tubal, first founder of Farriers' Hall, here is a great complaint made that *vtriusque Academiae Robertus Greene* hath mocked thee because he said that, as thou wert the first inventor of music, so Gabriel Howliglasse was the first inventor of English hexameter verses. *Quid respondes?* Canst thou brook it, yea or no? Is it any treason to thy well-tuned hammers to say they begat so renowned a child as music? Neither thy hammers nor thou, I know, if they were put to their book-oaths, will ever say it.

The hexameter verse I grant to be a gentleman of an ancient house (so is many an English beggar), yet this clime of ours he cannot thrive in. Our speech is too craggy for him to set his plow in; he goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gait which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins.

Homer and Virgil, two valorous authors; yet were they never knighted. They wrote in hexameter verses; ergo, Chaucer and Spenser, the Homer and Virgil of England, were far overseen that they wrote not all their poems in hexameter verses also.

In many countries, velvet and satin is a commoner wear than cloth amongst us: ergo, we must leave wearing of cloth, and go every one in velvet and satin, because other countries use so.

The text will not bear it, good Gilgilis Hobbledehoy.

Our English tongue is nothing too good, but too bad to imitate the Greek and Latin.

Master Stanyhurst (though otherwise learned) trod a foul, lumbering, boisterous, wallowing measure in his translation of Virgil. He had never been praised by Gabriel for his labour if therein he had not been so famously absurd.

Greene, for dispraising his practice in that kind, is the Greene master of the black art, the founder of ugly oaths, the father of misbegotten Infortunatus, the scrivener of crossbiters, the patriarch of shifters, etc.

The monarch of crossbiters, the wretched fellow, prince of beggars, emperor of shifters, he had called him before, but like a drunk man that remembers not in the morning what he speaks overnight, still he fetcheth metaphors from cony-catchers, & doth nothing but torment us with tautologies.

Why, thou arrant butter-whore, thou cotquean & scratop of scolds, wilt thou never leave afflicting a dead carcass, continually read the rhetoric lecture of Ram Alley? A wisp, a wisp, a wisp, rip, rip, you kitchen-stuff wrangler.

Wert thou put in the Fleet for pamphleting? Bedlam were a meeter place for thee. Be not ashamed of your promotion; they did you honour that said you were Fleet bound, for men of honour have sailed in that Fleet.

Waste-paper made thee betake thyself to limbo patrum; had it been a book that had been vendible, yet the opprobry had been the less, but for chandlers' merchandise to be so massacred, for sheets that serve for nothing but to wrap the excrements of housewifery in, Proh Deum, what a spite is it. I have seen your name cut with a knife in a wall of the Fleet, I, when I went to visit a friend of mine there.

Let Master Butler of Cambridge's testimonial end this controversy, who at that time that thy joys were in the Fleeting, and thou crying for the Lord's sake out at an iron window in a lane not far from Ludgate Hill, questioned some of his companions very inquisitively that were newly come from London what novelties they brought home with them; amongst the rest, he broke into this hexameter interrogatory very abruptly:

*But ah, what news do you hear of that good Gabriel Huff-Snuff,
Known to the world for a fool, and clapped in the Fleet for a rimer?*

Is't true, Gibraltar? Have I found you? It was not without foundation that you burst into that magnificent insultation, I THAT IN MY YOUTH FLATTERED NOT MYSELF, ETC., for Master Butler, for a physician being none of the least scholars, hath commended you exceedingly for a fool & a rimer. *He that threatened to conjure up Martin's wit* hath written something too in your praise, in *Pap-hatchet*, for all you accuse him to have courtly incensed the Earl of Oxford against you. Mark him well; he is but a little fellow, but he hath one of the best wits in England. Should he take thee in hand again (as he flieth from such inferior concertation), I prophesy that there would more gentle readers die of a merry mortality, engendered by the eternal jests he would maul thee with, than there have done of this last infection. I myself, that enjoy but a mite of wit in comparison of his talent, in pure affection to my native country make my style carry a press sail, am fain to cut off half the stream of thy sport-breeding confusion, for fear it should cause a general hicket throughout England.

Greene, I can spare thy revenge no more room in this book. Thou hast physician John with thee; cope thou with him, & let me alone with the civilian & divine, whom, if I live, I will so uncessantly haunt that, to avoid the hot chase of my fiery quill, they shall be constrained to ensconce themselves in an old urinal case that their brother left behind him. Yet ere I bid thee good-night, receive some notes as touching his physicality deceased. *He had his grace to be Doctor ere he died.* As time may work all things. *In Norfolk where he practised, he was reputed a proper toward man at a medicine for the toothache, & one of the skilfullest physicians in casting the heavens' water that ever came there.*

How well beloved of the chiefest gentlemen (& gentlewomen especially) in that shire, it is incredible to be spoken. *Astra petit disertus;* he is gone to heaven to write more astrological discourses. His brothers live to inherit his old gowns, and remember his notable sayings, amongst the which this was one: *Vale Galene,* farewell, mine own dear Gabriel: *Valete humanae artes,* heart and goodwill, but never a rag of money.

Tunc tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet.

Cloth-breeches' house is burnt, and the flame goes a-feasting to Pierce Penilesse' house next.

Never till now, Gregory Haberdine, went thy *Four Letters* up Newgate, up Holborn, up Tyburn, to hanging.

Gentlemen, by that which hath been already laid open, I do not doubt but you are unwaveringly resolved this indigested chaos of doctorship, and greedy pot-hunter after applause, is an apparent publican and sinner, a self-love-surfeited sot, a broken-winded galled-back jade, that hath borne up his head in his time, but now is quite foundered & tired, a scholar in nothing but the scum of scholarship, a stale soaker at Tully's *Offices*, the drone of drones and master drumble-bee of non-proficients. What hath he wrote but

hath had a woeful end? When did he dispute, but he dulled all his auditory? His poetry more spiritless than small beer, his oratory art's bastard, not able to make a man ravishingly weep that hath an onion at his eye. In Latin, like a louse, he hath many legs, many locks fleeced from Tully to carry away and clothe a little body of matter, but yet he moves but slowly, is apparelled very poorly.

In English, ice is not so cold yet on the ice of ignorance will he slide. No wise man pity him that perisheth so wilfully.

Judge the world, judge the highest courts of appeal from the miscarried world's judgment (Cambridge and Oxford), wherein I have trespassed in *Pierce Penillesse* that he should talk of *gnashing of teeth, young Phaetons, young Icari, young Choroebi, young Babingtons*.

Never was I in earnest till thus he twitted me with the comparison of a traitor.

Babington, high was thy birth, I a bondslave of fortune in comparison of thee, thy fall greater than Phaeton's, thy offence as heinous as Judas's. May nevermore such foul seeds of offence be sown in so fair a shape, may they be marked always to mischief that mean as thou didst. The branches of thy stock remains yet unblasted with any disobedience. God forbid that our foreheads should forever be blotted with our forefathers' misdemeanours. Die, ill deeds, with your ungracious ill-doers; the living have no portion with the dead; hell once paid his due, heaven-gates are open to succeeding posterity.

Prate of Pierce Penillesse and his paltry as long as thou wilt; I will play at put-pin with thee for all that thou art worth, but of thy betters get thee a better discoursing pen before thou descants of.

L. Greene's inwardest companion, pinched with want, vexed with discredit, tormented with other men's felicity, and overwhelmed with his own misery, in a raving and frantic mood most desperately exhibiteth a supplication to the devil.

C. Herein thou thinkst thou hast won the spurs from all writers, but God and dame fiction knows thou art far wide of thy aim, for neither was I Greene's companion any more than for a carouse or two, nor pinched with any ungentlemanlike want when I invented *Pierce Penillesse*.

Pauper non est cui rerum suppetit vsus; only the discontented meditation of learning, generally now-a-days little valued, and her professors set at naught & disheartened, caused me to handle that plaintive subject more seriously.

Vexed with discredit (Gabriel) I never was, as thou hast been ever since *Familiaritas peperit contemptum*, thy familiar epistles brought thee in contempt.

Though I have been pinched with want (as who is not at one time or another *Pierce Penillesse*), yet my muse never wept for want of maintenance as thine did in *Musarum*

lachrimae, that was miserably flouted at in Master Wingfield's comedy of *Pedantius* in Trinity College.

How am I tormented with other men's felicity otherwise than saying I know a cobbler that was worth five hundred pound, an hostler that had built a goodly inn, & might dispend forty pound yearly by his land, a carman that had whipped a thousand pound out of his horse' tail? If I had likewise reckoned up a rope-maker that, by tormenting of hemp, & going backward (which the devil would ne'er do), had turned as many mill-sixpences over the thumb as kept three of his sons at Cambridge a long time, & that which is more, three proud sons, that when they met the hangman (their father's best chapman) would scarce put off their hats to him, why then thou shouldst have had some colour of quarrel, thy accusation might justly have entered his title *pro aris & focis*, whereas now it is frivolous and forceless.

The sharpest wits, I perceive, have none of the best memories; if they had, thou shouldst ne'er have touched me with tormenting myself with other men's felicity, for how didst thou torment thyself with other men's felicity when, in the 28 page of thy first tome of epistles, thou exclaim'st *that in no age so little was so much made of, nothing advanced to be something, numbers made of ciphers*; that is, by interpretation: all those that were advanced either in the court or commonwealth at that time had little to commend them, nothing in account worthy preferment, but were mere meacocks & ciphers in comparison of thy excellent outcast self, that lived'st at Cambridge unmounted.

Hang thee, hang thee, thou common cozener of courteous readers, thou gross shifter for shitten tapsterly jests, have I *imitated Tarleton's play of the seven deadly sins in my plot of Pierce Penilesse*? Was sin so utterly abolished with Tarleton's play of the seven deadly sins that there could be nothing said *supra* of that argument?

Canst thou exemplify unto me (thou impotent mote-catching carper) one minim of the particular device of his play that I purloined? There be many men of one name that are nothing a kindred. Is there any further distribution of sins not shadowed under these 7 large spreading branches of iniquity on which a man may work, and not tread on Tarleton's heels? If not, what blemish is it to *Pierce Penilesse* to begin where the stage doth end, to build virtue a church on that foundation that the devil built his chapel?

Gabriel, if there be any wit or industry in thee, now I will dare it to the uttermost: write of what thou wilt, in what language thou wilt, and I will confute it, and answer it. Take truth's part, and I will prove truth to be no truth, marching out of thy dung-voiding mouth.

Divinity I except, which admits no dalliance, but in any other art or profession of which I am not yet free, and thou shalt challenge me to try masteries in, I'll bind myself prentice to, and study throughly, though it never stand me in any other stead, while I live, but to make one reply, only because I will have the last word of thee.

I would count it the greatest punishment that *In speech* could lay upon me to be bound to study the Danish tongue, which is able to make any Englishman have the mumps in his mouth that shall but plunge through one full point of it, yet the Danish tongue, or any Turk's, or hog's, or dog's tongue whatsoever would I learn rather than be put down by such a ribaldry Don Diego as thou art.

Heigh, drawer, fill us a fresh quart of *new-found phrases*, since Gabriel says we borrow all our eloquence from taverns, but let it be of the mighty Bordeaux grape, pure *vino de monte*, I conjure thee, by the same token that the *devil's dancing-school in the bottom of a man's purse that is empty* hath been a greybeard proverb two hundred years before Tarleton was born: ergo, *no gramercy*, Dick Tarleton. But the *sum of sums is this*, I drink to you, Master Gabriel, on that condition, that you shall not excruciate your brain to be conceited, and have no wit.

Since we are here on our prating bench in a close room, and that there is none in company but you, my approved good friends, *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* your pages, I will rehearse unto you some part of the method of my demeanour in *Pierce Penillesse*.

First, insomuch as the principal scope of it is a most lively anatomy of sin, the devil is made special supervisor of it; to him it is dedicated, as if a man should dedicate it to the quartermasters of Bridewell, because they are best able to punish it.

Wherefore as there is no fire without some smoke, no complaint without some precedent cause of grievance, I introduce a discontented scholar under the person of Pierce Penillesse, tragically exclaiming upon his partial-eyed fortune, that kept an alms-box of compassion in store for everyone but himself. He tells how he tossed his imagination like a dog in a blanket, searched every corner of the house of charity, to see if he could light on any that would set a new nap of an old threadbare cloak, but like him that, having a letter to deliver to a Scottish lord, when he came to his house to inquire for him found nobody at home but an ape that sat in the porch and made mops and mows at him, so he, delivering his unperused papers to Paul's Churchyard, the first that took them up was the ape Gabriel, who made mops and mows at them, beslaving the outside of them a little, but could not enter into the contents, which was an ace beyond his understanding.

With the first and second leaf he plays very prettily, and in ordinary terms of extenuating, verdicts *Pierce Penillesse for a grammar school wit*, says his *margin is as deeply learned as Fauste praecor gelida*, that his *muse sobbeth and groaneth very piteously*, bids him not cast himself headlong into the horrible gulf of desperation, comes over him that *he is a creature of wonderful hope*, as his own inspired courage divinely suggesteth, wills him to enchant some magnificent Maecenas, to honour himself in honouring him, with a hundred such grace-wanting ironies cut out against the wool, that would jeopard the best joint of *Poetica licentia* to procure laughter, when their crinkled, crabbed countenance (the very resemblance of a sodden dog's face) hath sworn it would never consent thereunto.

Not the most exquisite thing that is, but the Council table ass, Richard Clarke, may so carterly deride.

Every milkmaid can gird with, is't true? How say you, lo? Who would have thought it? Good bear, bite not. *A man is a man though he hath but a hose on his head.*

No such light payment, Gabriel, hast thou at my hands; I tell thee where, when, and how thou showdst thyself a dunsival.

Only external defects thou casts in my dish; nothing internal in thee but I prove that it is altogether excremental.

A few elegiacal verses of mine thou pluckest in pieces most ruthfully, and quotes them against me as advantageable, together with some dismembered margin notes, but all is ink cast away; you recover no costs and charges. With one minute's study I'll destroy more than thou art able to build in ten days.

Squeeze thy heart into thy ink-horn, and it shall but congeal into cloddered garbage of confutation. Thy soul hath no effects of a soul; thou canst not sprinkle it into a sentence, & make every line leap like a cup of neat wine new poured out, as an orator must do that lies aright in wait for men's affections.

Whom hast thou won to hate me by light crawling over my text like a cankerworm?

Some superficial slime of poison hast thou drivelled from thy pen in thy shallow-footed sliding through my *Supplication*, which one penful of repurified ink will excessively wash out. Shall I inform thee (that unfruitfully endeavour'st to inform authority against me) why I infixed those poetical Latin margent notes to some few pages in the beginning of *Pierce Penillesse*? I did it to explain to such expected spy-faults as thou art, that it was no uncouth abhorreny from the custom of former writers for a man openly to bewail his undeserved ill destiny.

In the uncasing of thy brother Richard, I calculated the nativity of the *Astrological Discourse*; I apparently suggested what a lewd piece of prophecy it was; I registered the infinite scorn that the whole realm entertained it with, the adages that ran upon it, Tarleton's and Elderton's *nigrum THETA* set to it, yet wilt thou, that art the son and heir to shameless impudence, the unlineal usurper of judgment from all his true owners, the HOYDEN and pointing-stock of Trinity Hall, *Vanitas vanitatis & omnia vanitas*, invest that in the highest throne of art and scholarship which a scrutiny of so many millions of well-discerning condemnations hath concluded to be viler than newsmongery, & that which is vilest of all, no less vile than thy epistles?

Most voices, most voices, most voices; who is on my side, who? Whether is the *Astrological Discourse* a better book than *Pierce Penillesse*? Gabriel Hangetelow says it is; I am the defendant, and deny it, and yet I do not over-cull my own works. His assertion he countermures thus:

Pierce Penillesse is a man better acquainted with the devils of hell than the stars of heaven: ergo, the Astrological Discourse is better than the notorious diabolical discourse of Pierce Penillesse.

Once again I deny his argument to be of lawful age. *Pierce Penillesse* is a better star-monger than a devil-monger, which needeth no other FOR to corroborate it but this, that my yea at all times is as good as his nay.

How is the *Supplication* a diabolical discourse, otherwise than as it entreats of the divers natures and properties of devils and spirits? In that far-fetched sense may the famous *Defensative Against Supposed Prophecies* and the *Discovery of Witchcraft* be called notorious diabolical discourses as well as the *Supplication*, for they also entreat of the illusions and sundry operations of spirits; likewise may I say that those his *Four Letters* now on their trial are four notorious lousy discourses because they lyingly discourse little else save Greene's lousy estate before his death.

Master Churchyard, our old quarrel is renewed; when nothing else can be fastened on me, this *Letter-leaper* upbraideth me with *crying you mercy*; I cannot tell, but I think you will have a saying to him for it. There's no reason that such a one as he should presume to intermeddle in your matters; it cannot be done with any intent but to stir me up to write against you afresh, which nothing under heaven shall draw me to do. I love you unfeignedly, and admire your aged muse, that may well be grandmother to our grandeloquentest poets at this present:

Sanctum & venerabile vetus omne Poema.

Shore's Wife is young, though you be stepped in years; in her shall you live when you are dead.

For that unadvised endamage I have done you heretofore, I'll be your champion henceforward against any that dare write against you. Only, as ever you would light upon a good cup of old sack when you are most dry, pocket not up this sly abuse at a rake-hell rampallion's hands, one that, when an injury is deep buried in the grave of oblivion, shall seek to dig it up again, recall that into men's memories which was consumed and forgotten.

Whoreson ninny-hammer, that wilt assault a man, & have no stronger weapons.

The Italian saith a man must not take knowledge of injury till he be able to avenge it.

Nay, but in plain good-fellowship, art thou so innocent & unconceiving that thou shouldst e'er hope to dash me quite out of request by telling me *of the Counter, and my hostess Penia*?

I yield that I have dealt upon spare commodities of wine and capons in my days; I have sung George Gascoigne's Counter-tenor. What then? Wilt thou peremptorily define that it is a place where no honest man or gentleman of credit ever came?

Hear what I say: a gentleman is never throughly entered into credit till he hath been there, & that poet or novice, be he what he will, ought to suspect his wit, and remain half in a doubt that it is not authentical, till it hath been seen and allowed in unthrift's consistory.

Grande doloris ingenium. Let fools dwell in no stronger houses than their fathers built them, but I protest I should never have writ passion well, or been a piece of a poet, if I had not arrived in those quarters.

Trace the gallantest youths and bravest revellers about town in all the bypaths of their expense, & you shall unfallibly find that once in their lifetime they have visited that melancholy habitation.

Come, come, if you will go to the sound truth of it, there is no place of the earth like it to make a man wise.

Cambridge and Oxford may stand under the elbow of it.

I vow if I had a son, I would sooner send him to one of the Counters to learn law than to the Inns of Court or Chancery.

My hostess Penia, that's a bug's-word; I prithee, what moral hast thou under it? I will depose, if thou wilt, that till now I never heard of any such English name.

There is a certain thing called *Christian verity*, & another hight *common sense*, and a third clept *humility*; they are more requisite and necessary for thee than *modesty or discretion for me and my companions*, of which would thou shouldst understand we are so well provided that we can lend thee and thy brother Richard a great deal, and yet keep more than we shall have need of for ourselves.

Wilt thou be so hardy and iron-visaged to gainsay that thy brother vicar's bachelor's hood was not turned over his ears for abusing of Aristotle? I know thou hast more grace than so; thou dost not contradict it flatly, but slubbers it over faintly, and comes to recapitulate, not confute, some of the phrases I used in the unhandsoming of his divinityship.

I myself, in the same order of disgracing thou singles them forth, will have them up again, and see if thou, or any man, can absurdify the worst of them.

I say, and will make it good, **that in the Astrological Discourse, thy brother (as if he had lately cast the heavens' water, or been at the anatomizing of the sky's entrails in Surgeon's Hall), prophesieth of such strange wonders to ensue from the stars'**

distemperature, and the unusual adultery of planets, as none but he that is bawd to those celestial bodies could every descry.

This too I will ratify for truthable & legible English, **that his astronomy broke his day with his creditors, and Saturn & Jupiter proved honest men than all the world took them for.**

That the whole university hissed at him, Tarleton at the Theatre made jests of him, and Elderton consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing in bear-baiting him with whole bundles of ballads.

All this he barely repeats without any disprovement or denudation at all, as if it were so lame in itself that it would annihilate itself with the only rehearsal of it.

For the gentility of the Nashes (though it might seem a humour borrowed from thee to brag of it), yet some of us, who never sought into it till of late, can prove the extancy of our ancestors before there was ever a rope-maker in England. We can vaunt larger pedigrees than patrimonies, yet of such extrinsical things, common to ten thousand calves and oxen, would not I willingly vaunt, only it hath pleased Master Printer, both in this book and *Pierce Penillesse*, to entail a vain title to my name which I care not for, without my consent or privity, I here avouch.

But on the gentility of T.N.'s beard, the master butler of Pembroke Hall, still I will stand to the death, for it is the very prince-elect of peaks, a beard that I cannot be persuaded but was the Emperor Dionysius's (surnamed the Tyrant) when he played the schoolmaster in Corinth.

Gabriel, thou hast a pretty polliwog sparrow's-tail peak, yet mayest thou not compare with his; thy father, for all by thy own confession *he makes hairs*, had never the art to twilt up such a grim triangle of hair as that.

Be not offended, honest T.N., that I am thus bold with thee, for I affect thee for the name's sake as much as any one man can do another, and know thee to be a fine fellow, and fit to discharge a far higher calling than that wherein thou livest.

What more stuff lurketh behind in this letter to be distributed into shop dust?

*Pierce Penillesse is as childish and garish a book as ever came in print; when he talks of the sheepish discourse of the Lamb of God and his Enemies, he says **it is monstrous and absurd, and not to be suffered in a Christian congregation, that Richard hath scummed over the schoolmen, and of the froth of their folly made a dish of divinity brewis which the dogs would not eat.***

If he said so (as he did) and can prove it (as he hath done) by Saint Lubeck, then the *Lamb of God* is as childish and garish stuff as ever came in print, indeed.

Aye, but how doth Pierce Penillesse expiate the coinquination of these objections?

Richard, (whom, because he is his brother, he therefore censures more curious and rigorous, in calling him M.H. than he would have done otherwise) read the philosophy lecture in Cambridge with good liking and singular commendation, when A per se a was not so much as Idoneus auditor ciuilis scientiae; ergo, the Lamb of God bears a better fleece than he gives out it doth.

A per se a is improved nothing since, excepting his old Flores Poetarum, and Tarleton's surmounting rhetoric, with a little euphuism and Greeneness enough.

Gabriel reports him to the favourablest opinion of those that know A per se a's prefaces, rimes, and the very tympany of his Tarltonizing wit, his Supplication to the Devil.

Quiet yourselves a little, my masters, and you shall see me disperse all those clouds well enough. That Richard read the philosophy lecture at Cambridge, I do not withstand; but how?

Very Lentenly and scantly (far be it we should slander him so much as his brother Gabriel hath done, to say he read it with good liking and singularity). Credit me, any that hath but a little refuse colloquium Latin to interseam a lecture with, and can say but *Quapropter vos mei auditores*, may read with equivalent commendation and liking.

I remember him wondrous well. In the chief pomp of that, his false praise, I both heard him, and heard what was the universal slender valuation of him.

There was eloquent Master Knox (a man whose loss all good learning can never sufficiently deplore); 'twas he and one Master Jones of Trinity College that, in my time, with more special approbation conversed in those readings.

Since, I have heard of two rare young men, Master Meriton and another, that in supplying that place of succession have surmounted all former mediocrity, and won themselves an everlasting good name in the university.

These thou shouldst have memorized, if any, but thou art given to speak well of none but thyself and thy two brothers.

Thrice fruitful St. John's how many hundred perfecter scholars than the three brothers hast thou nursed at thy paps, that yet have not shaken off obscurity?

Mellifluous PLAYFERE, one of the chief props of our aged & ancientest & absolutest universities present flourishing, where do thy supereminent gifts shine to themselves, that the court cannot be acquainted with them?

Few such men speak out of fame's highest pulpits, though out of her highest pulpits speak the purest of all speakers.

Let me add one word, and let it not be thought derogatory to any: I cannot bethink me of two in England in all things comparable to him for his time. Seldom have I beheld so pregnant a pleasant wit coupled with a memory of such huge incomprehensible receipt, deep reading and delight better mixed than in his sermons.

Sed quorsum haec, how do these digressions link in with our *subiectum circa quod*?

Flaunting Richard and his philosophy lecture was under our fingers even now, howsoever we have lost him. Hold the candle, and you shall see me cast a figure for him extempore; Oho, I have found him without any further seeking. Give me your ears, *Io Paeon*; God save them, they are long ones.

Now, between you and me declare, as if you were at shrift, whether you be not a superlative block, for all you read the philosophy lecture at Cambridge. Briefly, briefly; let me not stand all day about you.

His conscience accuseth him, he is struck stark dumb; only by signs he craves to be admitted *in forma pauperis*, that we should let him pass for a poor fellow, and he will sell his birthright in learning, with Esau, for a mess of porridge.

Curae leues loquuntur; he hath but a little cure to look to. *Maiores stupent*, more living would make him study more.

For this once we dispense with you, because you look so penitently on it, but let not me catch you selling any more such twice-sodden sawdust divinity as *The Lamb of God and his Enemies*, for if I do, I'll make a dearth of paper in Paternoster Row (such as was not this seven year) only with writing against thee.

A per se a can do it; tempt not his clemency too much.

A per se a?

Passion of God, how came I by that name? My godfather Gabriel gave it me, and I must not refuse it. Nor if you were privy whence it came would you hold it worthy to be refused, for before I had the reversion of it, he bestowed it on a nobleman, whose new fashioned apparel and *Tuscanish gestures, cringing side neck, eyes' glancing, fisnamy smirking*, having described to the full, he concludes with this verse:

Every inch A per se a, his terms and braveries in print.

Hold you your peace, Nashe; *that was before you were Idoneus auditor ciuilis scientiae*. It may be so, for thou wert a libeller before I was born. Yet under correction be it spoken, I have come to the schools and purged rheum many a time when your brother was philosophy lecturer; he wanted no *supplosus pedum*, to spend away his hour, that I could help him with.

What since I am improved you partly have proved to your cost, and may do more at large if God send us more leisure.

As for *Flores Poetarum*, they are flowers that yet I never smelt to. I'll pawn my hand to a halfpenny I have read more good poets through than thou ever heard'st of.

The flowers of your *Four Letters* it may be I have overlooked more narrowly, and done my best devoir to assemble them together into [a] pathological posy, which I will here present to Master Orator Edge for a New-year's gift, leaving them to his *wordy* discretion to be censured, whether they be current in inkhornism or no.

Conscious mind; canicular tales; egregious an argument (whenas *egregious* is never used in English but in the extreme ill part); *ingenuity; Jovial mind; valorous authors; ink-horn adventures; ink-horn pads; putative opinions; putative artists; energetical persuasions; rascality; materiality; artificiality; fantasticality; divine entelechy; loud mentery; deceitful perfidy; addicted to theory; the world's great incendiary; sirenized furies; sovereignty immense; abundant cautels; cautelous and adventurous; cordial liquor; Catilinarie and Philippics; perfunctory discourses; David's sweetness Olympic; the idee high and deep abyss of excellence; the only unicorn of the muses; the Aretinish mountain of huge exaggerations; the gracious law of amnesty; amicable terms; amicable end; effectuate; addulce his melody; magie; polymechany; extensively employed; precious trainment; novelets; notoriety; negotiation; mechanician.*

Nor are these all, for every third line hath some of this over-racked absonism. Nor do I altogether scum off all these as the new-engendered foam of the English, but allow some of them for a need to fill up a verse, as *trainment*, and one or two words more, which the liberty of prose might well have spared. In a verse, when a word of three syllables cannot thrust in but sidelings, to joint him even we are oftentimes fain to borrow some lesser quarry of elocution from the Latin, always retaining this for a principle, that a leak of indesinece, as a leak in a ship, must needly be stopped with what matter soever.

Chaucer's authority, I am certain, shall be alleged against me for a many of these balductums. Had Chaucer lived to this age, I am verily persuaded he would have discarded the tone half of the harsher sort of them.

They were the ooze which overflowing barbarism, withdrawn to her Scottish Northern channel, had left behind her. Art, like young grass in the spring of Chaucer's flourishing, was glad to peep up through any slime of corruption, to be beholding to she cared not whom for apparel, travelling in those cold countries. There is no reason that she, a banished queen into this barren soil, having monarchized it so long amongst the Greeks and Romans, should (although war's fury had humbled her to some extremity) still be constrained, when she hath recovered her state, to wear the robes of adversity, jet it in her old rags when she is wedded to new prosperity.

Vtere moribus praeteritis, saith Caius Caesar in Aulus Gellius, *loquere verbis praesentibus*.

Thou art mine enemy, Gabriel, and that which is more, a contemptible underfoot enemy, or else I would teach thy old truantship the true use of words, as also how more inclinable verse is than prose to dance after the horrisonant pipe of inveterate antiquity.

It is no matter. Since thou hast brought godly instruction out of love with thee, use thy own destruction, reign sole emperor of inkhornism; I wish unto thee all superabundant increase of the singular gifts of absurdity and vainglory. From this time forth for ever, ever, evermore mayest thou be canonized as the nonpareil of impious epistlers; the short shredder out of sandy sentences without lime, as Quintilian termed Seneca all lime and no sand, all matter and no circumstance; the factor for the fairies and night urchins in supplanting and setting aside the true children of the English, and suborning ink-horn changelings in their stead; the gallimaufrier of all styles in one standish, as imitating everyone, & having no separate form of writing of thy own; and, to conclude, the only feather-driver of phrases, and putter of a good word to it when thou hast once got it, that is bewixt this and the Alps. So be it world without end. Chroniclers, hear my prayers. Good Master Stowe, be not unmindful of him.

That's well remembered; now I talk of chroniclers, I found the *Astrological Discourse* the other night in the *Chronicle*. Gabriel will outface us it is a work of such deep art & judgment, when it is expressly passed under record for a cozening prognostication. The words are these, though somewhat abbreviated, for he makes a long circumlocution of it:

In the year 1583, by means of an astrological discourse upon the great and notable conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, the common sort of people were almost driven out of their wits, and knew not what to do, but when no such thing happened, they fell to their former security, and condemned the discourser of extreme madness and folly.

Ipsissima sunt Aristotelis verba, they are the very words of John Tell-troth in the 1357 folio of the last edition of the great Chronicle of England.

Mehercule quidem, if it be so taken up, Pierce Penilesse may well cast his cap after it for ever overtaking it. But something even now, Gabriel, thou wert girding *against my prefaces and rimes, and the tympany of my Tarltonizing wit*.

Well, these be your words, *prefaces and rimes*; let me study a little, *prefaces and rimes*. *Minime vero; si ais nego*. I never printed rime in my life but those verses in the beginning of *Pierce Penilesse*, though you have set forth:

*The stories quaint of many a doughty fly
That read a lecture to the venturous elf.*

And so forth as followeth in chambling row.

Prefaces two, or a pair of epistles, I will receive into the protection of my parentage, out of both which suck out one solecism or mis-shapen English word, if thou canst for thy guts.

Wherein have I borrowed from Greene or Tarleton, *that I should thank them for all I have?* Is my style like Greene's, or my jests like Tarleton's? Do I talk of any counterfeit birds, or herbs, or stones, or rake up any new-found poetry from under the walls of Troy? If I do, trip me with it; but I do not, therefore I'll be so saucy as trip you with the grand lie. Ware stumbling of whetstones in the dark there, my masters.

This I will proudly boast (yet am I nothing a kindred to the three brothers), that the vein which I have (be it a median vein or a madman) is of my own begetting, and calls no man father in England but myself, neither Euphues, nor Tarleton, nor Greene.

Not Tarleton nor Greene but have been contented to let my simple judgment overrule them in some matters of wit. *Euphues* I read when I was a little ape in Cambridge, and then I thought it was *ipse ille*; it may be excellent good still, for aught I know, for I looked not on it this ten year, but to imitate it I abhor, otherwise than it imitates Plutarch, Ovid, and the choicest Latin authors.

If you be advised, I took *shortest vowels and longest mutes* in the beginning of my book as suspicious of being accessory to the making of a sonnet whereto *Master Christopher Bird's* name is set; there I said that you mute forth many such phrases in the course of your book which I would point at as I passed by. Here I am as good as my word, for I note that thou, being afraid of bewraying thyself with writing, *wouldst fain be a mute* when it is too late to repent. Again, thou reviest on us, and sayest *that mutes are coursed and vowels haunted*. Thou art no mute, yet shalt thou be haunted and coursed to the full. I will never leave thee as long as I am able to lift a pen.

Whether I seek to be counted a terrible bull-beggar or no, I'll bait thee worse than a bull, so that thou shalt desire somebody on thy knees to help thee with letters of commendation to Bull, the hangman, that he may dispatch thee out of the way before more affliction come upon thee.

All the invective and satirical spirits shall then be thy familiars, as the furies in hell are the familiars of sinful ghosts, to follow them and torment them without intermission; thou shalt be double girt with girds, and scoffed at till those that stand by do nothing but cough with laughing.

Thou sayest I profess the art of railing; thou shalt not say so in vain, for if there be any art or depth in it more than Aretine or Agrippa have discovered or dived into, look that I will sound it and search it to the uttermost, but ere I have done with thee, I'll leave thee the miserablest creature that the sun ever saw.

There is no kind of peaceable pleasure in poetry but I can draw equally in the same yoke with the haughtiest of those foul-mouthed backbiters that say I can do nothing but rail.

I have written in all sorts of humours privately, I am persuaded, more than any young man of my age in England.

The weather is cold, and I am weary with confuting; the remainder of the cold contents of this epistle be these.

He enviously endeavours, since he cannot revenge himself, to incense men of high calling against me, and would enforce it into their opinions that whatsoever is spoken in *Pierce Penilesse* concerning peasants, clowns, & hypocritical hotspurs, Midases, buckram giants, & the mighty prince of darkness, is meant of them; let him prove it, or bring the man to my face to whom I ever made any undutiful exposition of it. I am to be my own interpreter first in this case. I say, in *Pierce Penilesse* I have set down nothing but that which I have had my precedent for in foreign writers, nor had I the least allusion to any man set above me in degree, but only glanced at vice generally.

The tale of the bear and the fox, however it may set fools' heads a-work afar off, yet I had no concealed end in it but, in the one, to describe the right nature of a bloodthirsty tyrant, whose indefinite appetite all the pleasures in the earth have no power to bound in goodness, but he must seek a new felicity in variety of cruelty, and destroying all other men's prosperity; for the other, to figure an hypocrite: let it be *Martin*, if you will, or some old dog that bites sorer than he, who secretly goes and seduceth country swains.

Makes them believe that that honey which their bees brought forth was poisonous and corrupt.

That they may buy honey cheaper than by being at such charges in keeping of bees.

That it is not necessary they should have such stately hives, or lie sucking at such precious honeycombs.

If this (which is nothing else but to swim with the stream) be to tell tales as shrewdly as *Mother Hubbard*, it should seem *Mother Hubbard* is no great shrew; however, thou treading on her heels so oft, she may be tempted beyond her ten commandments.

A little before this, the foresaid fanatical Phobetor, geremumble, terlery-whisco, or what you will, called forth the biggest gunshot of my thundering terms, steeped in aquafortis and gunpowder, to come and try themselves on his paper target.

But that is no credit, Galpogas, to discharge a cannon gainst a louse. Thou shouldst not call in vain; thou shouldst hear Tom a Lincoln roar with a witness. Woe worth the day & the year when thou hearest him. I fear-blast thee now but with the wind of my weapon. With the waste of my words I lay waste all the feeble fortifications of thy wit. Show me the university's hand and seal that thou art a Doctor sealed and delivered in the presence of a whole commencement, and I'll present thee with my whole artillery-store of eloquence.

A bots on thee for me for a lumpish, leaden-heeled letter-dauber; my style, with treading in thy clammy steps, is grown as heavy-gaited as if it were bound to an alderman's pace with the irons at Newgate called the widow's alms.

Ere I was chained to thee thus by the neck, I was as light as the poet Accius, who was so low and so slender that he was fain to put lead into his shoes for fear the wind should blow him into another country.

Those that catch leopards set cups of wine before them; those that will win liking and grace of the readers must set before them continually that which shall cheer them and revive them.

Gabriel, thou hast not done so; thou canst not do so; therefore thy works neither have, nor can, any way hinder me, nor benefit the printer.

Even in the packing up of my book, a hot ague hath me by the back. Maugre sickness' worst, a lean arm put out of the bed shall grind and pash every crumb of thy book into pin-dust.

The next piece of service thou dost against *Pierce Penillesse* is the naming of him *woeful poveretto*, and *pleasant supposing thou pulled'st him by the ragged sleeve*; then matchest thou thyself to Ulysses, and him to Irus. *Irrita sunt haec omnia*; it is a sleeveless jest. I have beslived thee already for it; it toucheth the body and not the mind. Besides, I was never altogether Peter Poveretto, utterly thrown down, desperately separated from all means of relieving myself, since I knew to separate a knave from an honest man, or throw my cloak over my nose when I sallied by the Counters.

The ragged cognizance on the sleeve, I may say to thee, carried meat in the mouth when time was; do not dispraise it yet, for it hath many high partakers. *Quae sequuntur huiusmodi sunt*.

Thou turmoil'st thy pia mater to prove base births better than the offspring of many descents because thou art a mushroom sprung up in one night, a seely mouse begotten on a mole-hill, that wouldst fain perch thyself on the mountains when thy legs are too short to overcome such a long journey of glory.

My margent note, *Meritis expendite causam*, thou wouldst rather than anything wrest to an inditement of arrogance, & so branch me into thy tiptoe stock. I cannot see how thou canst compass it, for though I bade them weigh the cause by deserts, yet I did not assume too much to my own deserts when I expostulated why cobblers, hostlers and carmen should be worth so much, and so much, and I, a scholar and a good-fellow, a beggar. How thou hast arrogated to thyself more than Lucifer, or any miles gloriosus in the world would do, I have already noted at large in his due place and order. If thou bestow'st any courtesy on me, and I do not requite it, then call me cut, and say I was brought up at Hog's Norton, where pigs play on the organs.

Wert thou well acquainted with me, thou shouldst perceive that I am very frank where I take, & send away none empty-handed that give me but half an ill word.

It is a good sign of grace in thee that thou confessest thou *hast offences enough of thy own to answer, though thou beest not charged with thy father's*. Once in thy life thou speak'st true yet; I believe thee, and pity thee. God make thee a good man, for thou hast been a wild youth hitherto.

Thy hexameter verses, or thy hue and cry after *a person as clear as crystal*, I do not so deeply commend, for all *Master Spenser long since embraced it with an over-loving sonnet*.

Why should friends dissemble one with another? They are very ugly and artless. You will never leave your old tricks of drawing Master Spenser into every piebald thing you do. If ever he praised thee, it was because he had picked a fine vain fool out of thee, and he would keep thee still a fool by flattering thee till such time as he had brought thee into that extreme love with thyself that thou shouldst run mad with the conceit, and so be scorned of all men.

Yet, yet, Gabriel, are not we set nonplus; thy roister-doisterdom hath not dashed us out of countenance. If any man *use boisterous horse-play, or be beholding to carters' logic*, it is thyself, for with none but clownish and roinish jests dost thou rush upon us, and keepst such *a flirting and a flinging* in every leaf, as if thou wert the only resty jade in a country.

Scolding, thou sayest, *is the language of shrews, railing the style of rake-hells*; what conclud'st thou from thence? Do I scold? Do I rail?

Scolding & railing is loud miscalling and reviling one another without wit, speaking everything a man knows by his neighbour, though it be never so contrary to all humanity and good manners, and would make the standers-by almost perbrake to hear it. Such is thy invective against Greene, where thou talk'st of his lousiness, his surfeiting, his beggary, and the mother of Infortunatus' infirmities. If I scold, if I rail, I do but *cum ratione insanire*; Tully, Ovid, all the old poets, Agrippa, Aretine, and the rest are all scolds and railers, and by thy conclusion flat shrews and rake-hells, for I do no more than their examples do warrant me.

The intoxicate spirit of grisly Eurydice I can toss over as lightly to thee as thou hast puffed it to me; my heart is preoccupied with better spirits which have left her no house-room. Thou hast no spirit, as it should appear by thy writing; entertain her and the spirit of the buttery out of hand, or thou wilt be beaten handsmooth out of Bucklersbury.

When I parted with thy brother in *Pierce Penilesse*, **I left him to be tormented world without end of our poets and writers about London, for calling them piperly make-**

plays and makebates, not doubting but they would drive him to this issue, that he should be constrained to go to the chief beam of his benefice, and there beginning a lamentable speech with *cur scripsi, cur perij*, end with *Prauum praua decent, iuuat inconcessa voluptas*, & so with a trice, truss up his life in the string of his sance bell. Now here thou thank'st God thou art not so uncharitably bent to put so much wit in a speech, like a parson in Lancashire that kneeled down on his knees in a zealous passion, and very heartily thanked God he never knew what that vile antichristian Romish popish Latin meant. Did I exhort ink and paper to pray that they might not be troubled with him any more? Ink and paper, if they be true Protestants, will pray that they may not be contaminated any more with such abomination of desolation as the three brothers' Apocrypha pamphleting.

After all this foul weather ensueth a calm dilatement of others' too forward harmfulness, and thy own backward irefulness; that's dispatched; the court hath found it otherwise.

Then thou goest about to bribe me to give over this quarrel, and sayest if I will hold my peace thou wilt bestow more compliments of rare amplifications upon me than ever thou bestowed'st on Sir Philip Sidney and gentle Master Spenser.

Thou flatter'st me, and praisest me.

To make me a small seeming amends for the injuries thou hast done me, thou reckon'st me up *amongst the dear lovers and professed sons of the muses, Edmund Spenser, Abraham France, Thomas Watson, Samuel Daniel.*

With a hundred blessings, and many prayers, thou entreat'st me to love thee.

Content thyself, I will not.

Thou protests it was not my person thou misliked (I am afraid thou wilt make me thy ingle), but my fierce running at parson Richard, excusest me by my youth, & promisest to cancel thy impertinent pamphlet.

It were good hanging thee now thou art in such a good mind, yet for all this a dog will be a dog, & returns to his vomit, do what a man can; thou must have one squib more at the devil's orator & his dam's poet, or thy pen is not in clean life. I will permit thee to say what thou wilt *to underlie* (as thou desirest) *the verdict of fame herself*, so I may lie above thee. LIE above thee, tell greater lies than thou dost, no man is able.

Thus, O heavenly muse, I thank thee, for thou hast given me the patience to travel through the tedious wilderness of this Gomorrean epistle. Not Hercules, when he cleansed the stables of Augeas, undertook such a stinking unsavoury exploit. By thy assistance, through a whole region of golden lanes have I journeyed, & now am safely arrived at *not speedily dispatched, but hastily bungled up, as you see.* Grant that all such slow dispatchers & hasty bunglers may have a long time of reproach to repent them in, and not come abroad to corrupt the air & impostumate men's ears with their pan-pudding

prose any more. So be it, say all English people after me, that have ears to hear or eyes to read.

Feci, feci, feci, had I my health, now I had leisure to be merry, for I have almost washed my hands of the Doctor.

His own regenerate verses *of the jolly fly, & Ghibelline and Guelph*, some peradventure may expect that I should answer. So I would if there were anything in them which I had not answered before, but there is nothing; if there were, having driven his sword to his head, I respect not what he can do with his dagger. Only I will look upon the last sonnet of Master Spenser's to the right worshipful Master G.H., Doctor of the Laws; or it may so fall out that I will not look upon it, too, because (Gabriel) though I vehemently suspect it to be of thy own doing, it is popped forth under Master Spenser's name, and his name is able to sanctify anything, though falsely ascribed to it.

The fourth letter of our orator's, to the same favourable or indifferent reader, was a letter which this many a long summer's day, I dare jeopard my maidenhead, had lien hidden in his desk, for it is a shipman's hose that will serve any man as well as Greene or me.

To make short, in it, as forty times before, he brides it and simpers it out a cry: No, forsooth, dild you, he would not that he would; none so desirous of quiet as he, good old man, who with a pure intent of peace first put fire to the flame that hath hedged him in.

He hath prevented Master Bunny of the second part of his treatise of pacification, for like some crafty ringleader of rebellion, when he hath stirred up a dangerous commotion, and finds, by the too late examination of his fore-unexamined defects in himself, that so sweet a root will hardly effect correspondent fruits, straight, in policy to get his pardon, he strikes sail to that tempest of sedition, and is thrice as earnest in preaching pacification, obedience, and submission; so Gabriel, when he hath stirred up against me what tumults he can in stationers' shops, and left the quiver of his envy not an arrow undrawn out, he finds, by the audit of his ill-consumed defects, that he is not of force enough to hold out, wherefore in policy, to avoid further arrearages of infamy, he tires the text of reconciliation out of breath, and hopeth by the intercession of *a cup of white wine and sugar, to be made friends with his fellow-writers*.

It cannot choose but he must of necessity be a very sore fellow that is so familiar with white wine & sugar, for white wine, in a manner, is good for nothing but to wash sores in, and smudge up withered beauty with. Well, for all he would have Pierce make no wars on him, he makes wars on *Pierce Penillesse*, he bebeggereth him again in this epistle very bountifully; he says that *lords must take heed how they lord it in his presence*.

That the ass is the only author he allegeth.

That Greene is an ass in print, and he a calf in print.

That they are both chieftains in licentiousness, and, truth can say, the abominable villainies of such base shifting companions, good for nothing but to cast away themselves, spoil their adherents, etc.

For my beggary, let that travel the countries; I have said more for it than a richer man would have done, but that I take upon me to lord it over great lords, thou art a most lewd-tongued lurdan to say it.

Must they take heed how they lord it in my presence? What must they do then in thy presence?

*That sitting like a looker-on
Of this world's stage, dost note with critic pen
The sharp dislikes of each condition,
Ne fawnest for the favour of the great,
Ne fearest foolish reprehension,
But freely dost, of what thee list, entreat,
Like a great lord of peerless liberty,
Lifting the good up to high honour's seat,
And th' evil damning evermore to die,
For life and death is in thy doomful writing.*

Whereas thou sayest the ass, in a manner, is the only author I allege, I must know how you define an ass before I can tell how to answer you, for Cornelius Agrippa maketh all the philosophers, orators and poets that ever were, asses. And if so you understand that I allege no author but the ass, for all authors are asses, why I am for you; if otherwise, thou art worse than a Cumane ass, to leap before thou look'st, and condemn a man without cause.

What authors dost thou allege in thy book? Not two but any grammar-scholar might have alleged.

There is not three kernels of more than common learning in all thy *Four Letters*. Common learning? Not common sense in some places.

Of force I must grant that Greene came oftener in print than men of judgment allowed of, but nevertheless he was a dainty slave to content the tail of a term, and stuff serving-men's pockets.

An ass, Gabriel, it is hard thou shouldst name him; for calling me calf, it breaks no square, but if I be a calf, it is in comparison of such an ox as thyself.

The chieftains of licentiousness, and, truth can say, the abominable villainies of such base shifting companions, good for nothing, etc. I am of the mind we shall not digest this neither.

Answer me *succincte & expedite*, what one period any way leaning to licentiousness canst thou produce in *Pierce Penilesse*?

I talk of a great matter when I tell thee of a period, for I know two several periods or full points in this last epistle at least forty lines long apiece.

For the order of my life, it is as civil as a Seville orange; I lurk in no corners, but converse in a house of credit, as well governed as a college, where there be more rare qualified men and selected good scholars than in any nobleman's house that I know in England.

If I had committed *such abominable villainies, or were a base shifting companion*, it stood not with my Lord's honour to keep me, but if thou hast said it & canst not prove it, what slanderous dishonour hast thou done him, to give it out that he keeps *the committers of abominable villainies and base shifting companions*, when they are far honester than thyself.

If I were by thee, I would pluck thee by the beard and spit in thy face but I would dare thee, and urge thee beyond all excuse, to disclose and prove for thy heart-blood, what villainy or base shifting by me thou canst; I defy all the world in that respect.

Because thou used'st at Cambridge to shift for thy Friday at night suppers, and cozen poor victuallers and pie-wives of doctors' cheese and puddings, thou think'st me one of the same religion too.

What Greene was, let some other answer for him as much as I have done; I had no tuition over him. He might have writ another *Galateo* of manners for his manners every time I came in his company; I saw no such base shifting or abominable villainy by him. Something there was which I have heard, not seen, that he had not that regard to his credit in which had been requisite he should.

What a calamanco am I to plead for him, as though I were as near him as his own skin. A thousand there be that have more reason to speak in his behalf than I, who since I first knew him about town, have been two years together and not seen him.

But I'll do as much for any man, especially for a dead man that cannot speak for himself. Let us hear *how we are good for nothing but to cast away ourselves, spoil our adherents, prey on our favourers, dishonour our patrons*. Have I ever took any likely course of casting away myself?

Whom canst thou name that kept me company, and reaped any discommodity by me? I can name divers good gentleman *that have been my adherents and favourers a long time*. Let them report how I have spoiled them, or preyed on them, or put them to one penny detriment since I first consorted with them.

Have an eye to the main chance, or no sooner shall they understand what thou hast said by me of them, but they'll go near to have thee about the ears for this gear, one after another.

My patrons, or any that bind me to them by the least good turn, there is no man in England that is, or shall (for my small power) be more thankful unto than I. Never was I unthankful unto any, no, not to those of whom for deeds I received nothing but unperformed deed-promising words. It is an honour to be accused, and not convinced.

One of these months I shall challenge martyrdom to myself, and write large stories of the persecution of tongues. Troth, I am as like to persecute as be persecuted. Let him take up his cross and bless himself that crosseth me, for I will cross shins with him though every sentence of his were a thousand tuns of discourse, as Gabriel saith every sentence of his is a discourse. Quods, quods, give me my text-pen again, for I have a little more text to lance.

The secretaries of art and nature, if it were not for frivolous contentions, might bestead the commonwealth with many puissant engines. As, for example, Bacon's brazen nose, Architas' wooden dove, dancing balls, fire-breathing gourds, artificial flies to hang in the air by themselves, an egg-shell that shall run up to the top of a spear.

Archimedes made a heaven of brass, but we have nothing to do with old brass and iron.

Apollonius [and] Regiomontanus did many pretty juggling tricks, but we had rather drink out of a glass than a jug, use a little brittle wit of our own than borrow any miracle metal of devils.

Amongst all other stratagems and puissant engines, what say you to Mate's pump in Cheapside, to pump over mutton and porridge into France? This cold weather our soldiers, I can tell you, have need of it, and, poor field-mice, they have almost got the colic and stone with eating of provant.

Consider of it well, for it is better than all Bacon's, Architas', Archimedes', Apollonius' or Regiomontanus' devices, for Gabriel, that professeth all these, with all their help cannot make the bias bowl at Saffron Walden run down the hill when it is thrown down with the hardest hand that may be, but it will turn up the hill again in spite of a man's teeth, and that which is worst, give no reason for it.

The parrot and the peacock have leisure to revive & repolish their expired works. You speak like a friend; we'll listen to you when you have repolished and expired your perfected degree. A demi-doctor; what a shame is it?

Because your books do call for a little more drink and a few more clothes when they are gone to bed, that is, when they lie dead, you think ours should do so too. No, no, we do not use to clap a coat over a jerkin, or thrust any of the children of our brain into their mother's womb again, & beget them anew after they are once born. If it be a horn-book at

his first conception, let it be a horn-book still, and turn not cat in the pan, convert the paternoster to a primer when it hath begged itself out at the elbows up and down the country.

Thou didst thou knew'st not what in eking this, thy short-waisted pamphlet; iwis, as thou sayest of thyself, *Thou art an old truant, fitter to play the dumb dog with some ancients than the hissing snake.*

Who be these ancient dumb dogs? We shall have you a Martinist when all comes to all, because you cannot thrive with the civil law, and that you may marry her for anything you are a kindred to her; therefore you will compare Whitgift and Cartwright, white and black together, name the highest governors of the church without giving them any reverence or titles of honour, embrace any religion which will be even with the profession that favours not you.

There is no bail or mainprize for it, but we must have you in the first peeping forth of the spring preaching out of a pulpit in the woods; you have put on wolves' raiment already, seduced many simple people under the habit of a sheet in Wolfe's print. If you protest & lie any more, it is not your ending here like a sermon that will make you be reputed for a saint.

Readers, a decayed student, lately shipwrecked with *Si vales bene est*, having four lighters of *Letters* clean cast away on the rocks called the bishop & his clerks, desires you all to pray for him, and he will recommend you all to God in the next sermon he penneth for his brother Richard.

He hath a mind to pay every man his own, though he hath sustained great loss in fight; *that which he cannot effect, he beseecheth the Lord to accomplish, and even to work a miracle upon the deaf.*

Lord, if it be thy will, let him be an ass still. Gentlemen, I have no more to say to the Doctor; dispose of the victory as you please. Shortly I will present you with something that shall be better than nothing, only give me a gentle hire for my dirty day-labour, and I am your bounden orator forever.

Sonetto

*Were there no wars, poor men should have no peace;
Uncessant wars with wasps and drones I cry;
He that begins, oft knows not how to cease;
They have begun, I'll follow till I die.
I'll hear no truce, wrong gets no grave in me,
Abuse pell-mell encounter with abuse;
Write he again, I'll write eternally;
Who fees revenge hath found an endless muse.
If death e'er made his black dart of a pen,*

*My pen his special bailie shall become;
Somewhat I'll be reputed of 'mongst men
By striking of this dunce or dead or dumb.
Await the world the tragedy of wrath;
What next I paint shall tread no common path.*

Aut numquam tentes aut perfice.

Tho. Nashe.

Observations for the readers of this book

Item, whatsoever for the most part is here in this book in change of letter is our adversary's own text and unvaried words, either in this his convicted Four Letters, or some other fusty treatise set forth by him heretofore.

Then, that I am wrested and utterly divorced from my own invention, & constrained still still [sic], before I am warm in any one vein, to start away suddenly and follow him in his vanity.

Finally, printers have many false stitches, which are thus to be drawn up

In the second page of C., for *baboon brother*, read *baboon his brother*; in the 7, for *allegorized & Abdias*, read *allegorized Abdias*; in the 8, for *set hand*, read *set his hand*; idem, for *headmen*, read *headman*; in the first of D, for *Liur post quiescat*, read *Liur post fata quiescat*; in the 5, for *plaster of doctorship*, read *plastery or daubing of doctorship*; in the 7, for *insolent ink-horn worm*, read *insolent inkworm*; in the 2 of E., for *ass in present*, read *ass in presenti*; in the 3, for *bestow upon*, read *bestow upon him*; in the 5, for *effect*, read *efficacy*; in the 4 of F, for *virtuous Sir John Norris*, read *victorious Sir John Norris*; in the 5 page of H., for *I introduce in a discontented scholar*, read *I introduce a discontented scholar*; in the 8 of H., for *His assentrion*, read *His assertion*; in the 5 of I, for *very company*, read *very tympany*; in the 5 page of K, for *in this first case*, read *first in this case*.

FINIS