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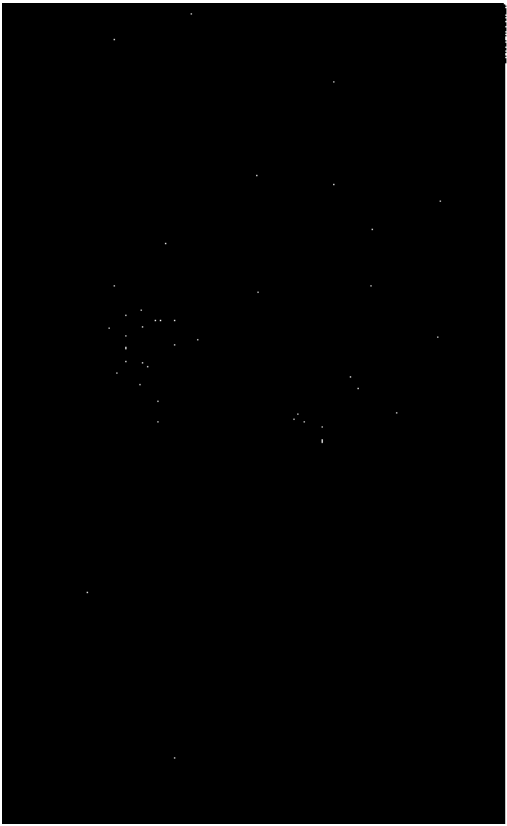


*THE TEMPLE DRAMATISTS*  
*Udall's* RALPH ROISTER DOISTER



FIRST EDITION . . . 1901  
REPRINTED . . . .1911







RALPH  
ROISTER  
DOISTER

*"The first regular English  
Comedy, by*

NICHOLAS UDALL

*Edited with a Preface, Notes  
and Glossary by*

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' In *Roister Doister* we emerge from mediaeval grotesquely and allegory into the clear light of actual life, into an agreeable atmosphere of urbanity and natural delineation. —

J. A. SYMONDS

## PREFACE

**Authorship.** The ascription of the play to Nicholas Udall rests solely upon the authority of Sir Thomas Wilson, who had been one of his pupils at Eton. In January 1553 Wilson published the third edition of a manual of logic entitled *The Rule of Reason, conteinyng the Arte of Logique*. In this edition, among examples of 'The Ambiguitie,' occurs Roister Doister's letter (Act III. Sc. iv. ll. 36-70, and Sc. v. ll. 49-83) with the following heading: 'An example of soche doubtful writing whiche by reason of poinding maie haue double sense and contrarie meaning, taken out of an entrelude made by Nicolas Vdal.' It was J. P. Collier who first inferred from this the authorship of *Ralph Roister Doister*.

**Date of Composition.** The only certainty is that the play was written before January 1553. Professor Arber found on reference that the *second* edition of Wilson's *Rule of Reason* (1552) had not the quotation from this play, which appeared in the *third* imprint, so that the earliest (extant) reference to *Ralph Roister Doister* was in January 1553. Its remarkable purity makes for the supposition that it was written for boys to **act**; and as Etonians annually produced a play or plays, the general conjecture has been that it was written for Eton boys

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during Udall's mastership (1534-1541). This view has been accepted by J. P. Collier, Cooper, Professor Ward, Mr. Maxwell Lyte (the historian of Eton College), and the late Professor Henry Morley. There is strong evidence, however, for a later date.

(1) The fact that Thomas Wilson was a pupil of Udall at Eton tells strongly against the period 1534-41 as the approximate time of composition. If Wilson had seen the play at Eton, it would have made such an impression on him by its novelty no less than by its intrinsic interest for boyhood, that when he afterwards wrote his *Rule of Reason* the famous 'letter' would have at once occurred to him as an example of 'ambiguity.' We should therefore expect to find it in his first and second editions. As it appeared in the *third* edition (Jan. 1553), but not in the *second* (1552), the presumption is that *Ralph Roister Doister* was produced in 1552.

(2) It was in the middle of 1552 that Udall took up residence as Canon of Windsor (though appointed in 1551). He was thus brought into close relation with the Court, and probably into renewed contact with Eton. Each of these relations would supply a motive for dramatic composition. The annual performances at Eton may for once have admitted an English play by a former headmaster. But more probably the Royal dramatic entertainments furnished both incentive and opportunity for the production of *Ralph Roister Doister*. The children of the Chapel Royal of Windsor were very early employed in theatrical performances.

(3) The assumption of the date 1552 explains the sudden recognition of Udall's dramatic talent in 1553-4. If this play was witnessed at Court in 1552, it is easy to understand his

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selection by Queen Mary on her accession as the recognised Court dramatist.

(4) The only internal evidence is supplied by a reference in Act V. to the law of usury. This allusion (v. vi. 19-26) is somewhat forced, and does not arise naturally from the action ; if the reference were to a recent law, it would be an effective contemporary allusion. An Act was passed in 1545 (37 Henry VIII. c. 9), defining usury, and re-enacting penal provisions. The preamble recites that the previous Acts on the subject (there had been none since 1496) were so obscure and ambiguous as to be absolutely inoperative. Hence before 1545 a threat of prosecution for usury would have had no terrors. But here the accused and (what is more) his shrewd friend Merygreeke see cause for apprehension. Again, previous legislation prohibited all usury; the Act of 1545 regulated it, and defined it as taking interest beyond 10 per cent. In the passage before us Ralph is accused, not of usury *sans phrase*, but of excessive usury (' This is too much, of conscience ').

(5) The position of the play in the development of the regular drama affords strong confirmation of this argument. Its remarkable superiority in structure and characterisation over the moralities and interludes performed before 1540 precludes the supposition of such an early date. Even the interludes of Hey wood, written between 1532 and 1540 (*The Foure P.'s* was not much earlier than 1540), are crude indeed in comparison. The date 1552 therefore fits in more satisfactorily with the literary history of the period.

**Life of the Author.** Nicholas Udall, descended from Nicholas Uvedale, Constable of Winchester, and patron of

William of Wykeham, was born in Hampshire in 1506, as is shown by an entry in the register of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Family traditions favour a conjecture that he received his early education at Winchester College. At fourteen he proceeded to Corpus College, recently founded by the versatile Bishop Fox of Winchester, at a time when the teaching of Colet and More was still a powerful tradition, and when the influence of Erasmus, though he had long left Oxford, was greater than ever through his writings. Udall joined others in an earnest and thoughtful study of the sacred scriptures, and was one of a company of young men who were arrested by order of Wolsey in 1527 for possessing Tyndale's translations of the New Testament and Luther's tracts. Most of these students, including Udall, saved their lives by making public recantation. At Oxford he formed a lasting friendship with the celebrated John Leland, who, in one of his Latin poems, acknowledges obligations to Udall for pecuniary assistance. Another of Leland's poems makes it probable that Udall, on leaving Oxford, began his career as a schoolmaster in the north of England.

After 1532, when the king himself ordered a fresh translation of the Gospels, the position of such moderate reformers as Udall was no longer one of danger. In the triumphal progress of Queen Anne Boleyn to her coronation at Westminster, 'all who took a prominent part favoured the new faith' (Arber), and it is noteworthy that the composition of the congratulatory 'verses and ditties' recited on that occasion was intrusted to John Leland and Nicholas Udall. In 1533 Udall was evidently a schoolmaster in London, as he published a Latin phrase-book, *Flowers for Latin Speakings* dedicating it to his own pupils from the Augustinian monastery in London. His

reputation as a scholar and as a teacher now secured for him the important position of Magister Informator or Headmaster of Eton, where he remained till 1541. In March of that year two of his pupils and a servant were examined by the Privy Council on a charge of stealing silver images 'and other plate' from the college chapel, and so was Udall himself on the suspicion of complicity. They were all imprisoned for a time, and Udall was as a consequence summarily dismissed from his Mastership. There are many reasons for thinking Professor Morley's comment very near the truth: 'Udall,' he says, 'had Lutheran tendencies that caused him to assent to the removal of images from the college chapel. He was charged with complicity in theft from the chapel; theologic hatred added infamous imputations that would have ruined him for life had they been true.' He retained the vicarage of Braintree in Essex till 1544; he was the bearer of the Lord Privy Seal's letter to the Bishop of Carlisle, then resident at Eton, and he was soon in high favour at Court, being occupied in literary work in conjunction with the Princess Mary. It is therefore difficult to believe the more serious charges against him, and he speedily recalled himself to a blameless life, setting to work to liquidate his debts by literary labours. In 1542 appeared his translation of part of Erasmus's *Apophthegms*. His *Flowers for Latin Speaking* was reprinted in 1544-5, still addressed to his pupils, so that he was possibly again engaged in teaching. In 1545 he published his translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrase of St. Luke's Gospel*, dedicating it to Queen Catherine Parr. The other Gospels and the Acts were translated by other hands (the Princess Mary began the Gospel of St. John), and the first **volume was** edited by Udall in 1548, with introductory matter

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that shows the strongly Protestant tendency of the translation. Udall was an active preacher at this time, when licence to preach was granted only to a few friends of the Primate. It was he who, by authority, addressed a pacificatory letter in 1549 to the rebels of Devonshire and Cornwall, who demanded the restoration of the older faith and modes of worship. His last literary service to Protestantism was a translation (1551) of Peter Martyr's *Treatises on the Eucharist*, under authority of a royal patent.

In November 1551 he was appointed Canon of Windsor, but his services as preacher were so much in request elsewhere that he did not go into residence until the middle of 1552, King Edward vI. writing specially to the Dean and Chapter to ensure indemnity for his non-residence. Next year he was appointed also Rector of Calborne in the Isle of Wight.

The Catholic revival at Mary's accession did not affect Udall. He was personally esteemed by the Queen, who had worked with him in translating Erasmus, and he had the address, while Canon of Windsor, to make himself valuable at Court by arranging and superintending dramatic performances. It was probably in 1552 that he wrote *Ralph Roister Doister*, and on Mary's ascent of the throne he became the recognised Court dramatist.

In 1555 we find him in the position of Master of Winchester School, but when the Queen in November of that year re-established, with other suppressed religious houses, the monastery at Westminster, the school seems to have been taken from him. Only another month of life remained to him 5 in December he died, and was buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster.

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His manhood was contemporary with the greater part of the English Reformation—an age which by its alternations of conscientious intolerance in one religious party and the other, was not favourable to calm strength of character. His sympathies were, by taste and education, with the scholars of the Renaissance, and also, by conviction, with the Reformers. But he was more a scholar than a reformer. His services to the Protestant party were mainly those of a scholar, and at one time he seems to have relapsed into a manner of life quite inconsistent with any religious life. We may well believe, however, that his disgrace in 1541 recalled him to his nobler self, and that in the critical times of Queen Mary's reign, when his religious opponents were in authority, it was not only his scholarship and his literary fame that shielded him, but also a well-founded esteem for his personal character. His services to English scholarship and English schools, his devotion to the reformed doctrine, and, above all, his remarkable contribution to the development of the native drama, make him a considerable figure in the history of the period.

**Editions of the Play.** Though written and acted before 1553, the earliest record of its publication in printed form occurs in the year 1566. In that year, according to the register of the Stationers' Company, Thomas Hackett paid fourpence 'for hys lycense for pryntinge of a play intituled Rauf Ruyster Duster.'—[Collier, *Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company*, 1557-1587 (ed. 1848-9), i. 154.] After this, for two centuries and a half, the play seems to have sunk into oblivion, and it was supposed that all Udall's dramatic works had perished. In 1813 Bliss, in his edition

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of Wood's *Athena Oxonienses*, wrote: 'None of Udall's dramatic pieces are now supposed to be in existence.' Five years later the Rev. T. Briggs found a copy of *Roister Doister* in a quarto collection of plays, and, after privately printing a small edition, presented the unique copy to Eton College. As this treasure-trove had no title-page, the donor had little idea of the appropriateness of his gift; it was not until 1825 that Collier ascribed the authorship to a former Master of Eton.

The copy discovered by the Rev. Mr. Briggs was in all probability printed by Thomas Hackett in 1566, though the absence of the title-page forbids a positive assertion. In this edition certain references to 'the Queen' make it evident that there had been a revision of the original text, which was written in the time of Edward vi. (see l. i. 38 ; V. vi. 45-58). These alterations Udall himself may have made during Mary's reign, for we can hardly be wrong in believing that the play was one of the interludes performed under his direction before that Queen 5 so that it is probable we have the play as Udall left it.

*Roister Doister* was reprinted in 1821 and in 1830; and in 1847 W. D. Cooper, F.S.A., edited it for the Shakespeare Society, with an introductory memoir of the author, and a few notes. Professor Arber's reprint of the Eton copy in 1868 brought the play within the reach of every one, and his scholarly introductions, as well as his careful reproduction of the text, deserve the gratitude of every earnest student.

The present text is taken from Professor Arber's reprint, with one or two corrections of obvious errors in the original copy, and such changes in the punctuation and spelling as were rendered necessary, **or desirable, by** the plan of the present series.

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**Its Position in Dramatic Evolution.** *Ralph Roister Doister* is the first finished product of processes that had been slowly developing for several centuries. The English drama had its earliest germ in ecclesiastical symbolism, which, gradually expanding into the liturgical drama, produced the miracle plays. From the dramatisation of scriptural narratives in the miracles sprang the dramatisation of scriptural doctrines in the moralities by means of allegory and personification suggested by mummings and dumb show. The crossing of the moralities with the interludes produced the new interlude of John Heywood. So far the native element had proceeded in its unaided development. It had found its proper theme in the individual, its proper sphere in common life; it had formed suitable language, dialogue, and characterisation; it had set before itself an appropriate purpose, to give pleasure rather than to convey instruction. How was it to gain the other essentials of the perfect drama—plot, action, and scenic *technique!* It was at this point that the influence of classical models began to be felt, and Nicholas Udall took the decisive step of applying the methods of Plautus and Terence to the matter and manner of John Heywood, and thus produced the first regular English comedy.

**Its Dual Character.** The combination of classical and native elements may be clearly traced. We can see the influence of Plautus and Terence in the author's direct acknowledgment of obligation (Prol. 19); in the division into acts and scenes, with the Latin headings and stage directions; in the metre, which is an attempt to naturalise the comic iambics and trochaics of Plautus and Terence; and in the two principal

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characters, which are to some extent drawn from Latin comedy, Roister Doister being the English counterpart of Pyrgopolinices in the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus, and of Thraso in the *Eunuchus* of Terence ; while Merygreeke combines the characters of the flattering parasite Artotrogus and the wily slave Palaestrio in the former, resembling still more closely the mischievous parasite Gnatho, who in the *Eunuchus* acts as 'go-between' in the love-suit of the braggart captain. The first scene of Udall's play, like the first Act of the *Miles Gloriosus*, is merely introductory, its purpose being to acquaint the audience with the character of the braggart. The soliloquy, of which this scene entirely consists, is modelled on a speech of Gnatho (*Eun.* II. ii.); and the attack on Custance's house was suggested by Thraso's assault on the house of Thais (*Eun.* IV, vii.). Again, Udall is careful to observe the dramatic unities, and where he deviates from strict rule he is following the precedent of the *Eunuchus*, both plays requiring the interval of a night between two parts of the action. (Cf. Sidney, *Apol Poet.*, ed. Arber, p. 64.)

The minor characters are purely native, and drawn from contemporary life, like those of John Hey wood. Their connexion with the moralities is indicated by their alliterative and descriptive names, showing that they were still little more than personified abstractions, and betraying an uneasy consciousness of defective characterisation. Merygreeke himself has many features in common with the Vice of the moralities, in his impish tricks, his delight in mischief, and his love of belabouring Roister Doister under various pretexts. The connexion with the moralities may also be seen in the moral conveyed by the principal character, who may be regarded as a personified

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tion of Vainglory, as it is expressly stated in the Prologue that the play 'against the vayne glorious doth inuey.' The apology for the 'mirth' of the piece, and the laboured attempt to show that it really has a moral, indicate that the drama had not yet emancipated itself from the traditions of the moralities. The author himself marks his sense of the dual element in the composition by giving it the alternative titles of 'Comedie or Enterule,' the former referring to classical, the latter to English plays.

**Connexion with 'Thersytes.'** There are many interesting points of resemblance between the present play and the interlude of *Thersytes* (Hazl. Dodsl., i. p. 389; Pollard's *Eng. Mir. Plays*) p. 126), which suggest the possibility that the latter may have been an early sketch by Udall of the character of a cowardly braggart, which he subsequently enlarged and developed into *Roister Doister*,

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

MATHEW MERYGREEKE

GAWYN GOODLUCK, affianced to Dame Custance

TRISTRAM TRUSTIE, his friend

DOBINET DOUGHTIE, 'boy' to Roister Doister

TOM TRUPENIE, servant to Dame Custance

SYM SURESBY, servant to Goodluck

SCRIVENER

Harpax

DAME CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, a widow

MARGERIE MUMBLECRUST, her nurse

TIBET TALKAPACE

ANNOT ALYFACE • her maidens

TIME : About two days

SCENE : Not indicated. ? London

## THE PROLOGUE

What creature is in health, either young or old,  
But some mirth with modesty will be glad to use?  
As we in this Interlude shall now unfold,  
Wherein all scurrility we utterly refuse,  
Avoiding such mirth wherein is abuse :  
Knowing nothing more commendable for a man's  
recreation

Than Mirth which is used in an honest fashion :  
For Mirth prolongeth life, and causeth health,  
Mirth recreates our spirits and voideth pensiveness,  
Mirth increaseth amity, not hindering our wealth, 10  
Mirth is to be used both of more and less,  
Being mixed with virtue in decent comeliness,  
As we trust no good nature can gainsay the same:  
Which mirth we intend to use, avoiding all blame.  
The wise Poets long time heretofore,  
Under merry Comedies secrets did declare,  
Wherein was contained very virtuous lore,  
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.  
Such to write neither Plautus nor Terence did spare,

## **The Prologue**

**Which among the learned at this day bears the bell:  
These with such other therein did excel. 21  
Our Comedy or Interlude which we intend to play  
Is named Roister Doister indeed.  
Which against the vain-glorious doth inveigh,  
Whose humour the roisting sort continually doth feed.  
Thus by your patience we intend to proceed  
In this our Interlude by God's leave and grace,  
And here I take my leave for a certain space.**

**FINIS**

# RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

## ACT I

### SCENE I

*Mathew Merygreeke. He entereth singing.*

As long liveth the merry man (they say)  
As doth the sorry man, and longer by a day.  
Yet the grasshopper, for all his summer piping,  
Starveth in winter with hungry griping,  
Therefore another said saw doth men advise,  
That they be together both merry and wise.  
This lesson must I practise, or else ere long,  
With me, Mathew Merygreeke, it will be wrong.  
Indeed men so call me, for by him that us bought,  
Whatever chance betide, I can take no thought, 10  
Yet wisdom would that I did myself bethink  
Where to be provided this day of meat and drink:  
For know ye, that for all this merry note of mine,  
He might appose me now that should ask where I  
dine.  
My living lieth here and there, of God's grace,  
Sometime with this good man, sometime in that place

Sometime Lewis Loytrer biddeth me come near,  
 Somewhiles Watkin Waster maketh us good cheer,  
 Sometime Davy Diceplayer, when he hath well cast,  
 Keepeth revel rout as long as it will last. 20

Sometime Tom Titivile maketh us a feast,  
 Sometime with Sir Hugh Pye I am a bidden guest,  
 Sometime at Nicol Neverthrive's I get a sop,  
 Sometime I am feasted with Bryan Blinkinsoppe,  
 Sometime I hang on Hankyn Hoddydodie's sleeve,  
 But this day on Ralph Roister Doister's by his leave.  
 For truly of all men he is my chief banker  
 Both for meat and money, and my chief shoot-  
 anchor.

For, sooth Roister Doister in that he doth say,  
 And require what ye will ye shall have no nay. 30  
 But now of Roister Doister somewhat to express,  
 That ye may esteem him after his worthiness,  
 In these twenty towns and seek them throughout,  
 Is not the like stock, whereon to graff a lout.  
 All the day long is he facing and craking  
 Of his great acts in fighting and fraymaking :  
 But when Roister Doister is put to his proof,  
 To keep the Queen's peace is more for his behoof.  
 If any woman smile or cast on him an eye,  
 Up is he to the hard ears in love by and by, 40  
 And in all the hot haste must she be his wife.  
 Else farewell his good days, and farewell his life,  
 Master Ralph Roister Doister is but dead and gone

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. I.

Except she on him take some compassion,  
Then chief of counsel must be Mathew Merygreeke,  
\* What if I for marriage to such an one seek ?'  
Then must I sooth it, what ever it is :  
For what he sayeth or doeth cannot be amiss.  
Hold up his yea and nay, be his nown white son,       49  
Praise and rouse him well, and ye have his heart won,  
For so well liketh he his own fond fashions  
That he taketh pride of false commendations.  
But such sport have I with him as I would not lese,  
Though I should be bound to live with bread and  
cheese.

For exalt him, and have him as ye lust indeed :  
Yea, to hold his finger in a hole for a need.  
I can with a word make him fain or loth,  
I can with as much make him pleased or wroth,  
I can when I will make him merry and glad,  
I can when me lust make him sorry and sad,       60  
I can set him in hope and eke in despair,  
I can make him speak rough and make him speak **fair**.  
**But I** marvel I see him not all this same day,  
I will seek him out: But lo! he cometh this **way**.  
I have yond espied him sadly coming,  
And **in love for** twenty pound, by his gloming.

**SCENE II**

*Ralph Roister Doister. Mathew Merygreeke.*

*R. Roister.* Come death when thou wilt, I am weary of my life.

*M. Mery.* I told you, I, we should woo another wife.

*R. Roister.* Why did God make me such a goodly person ?

*M. Mery.* He is in by the week, we shall have sport anon.

*R. Roister.* And where is my trusty friend, Mathew Merygreeke ?

*M. Mery.* I will make as I saw him not, he doth me seek.

*R. Roister.* I have him espied me-thinketh, yond is he.  
Ho ! Mathew Merygreeke, my friend, a word with thee.

*M. Mery.* I will not hear him, but make as I had haste,  
Farewell all my good friends, the time away doth waste. 10

And the tide, they say, tarrieth for no man.

*R. Roister.* Thou must with thy good counsel help me if thou can.

*M. Mery.* God keep thee, worshipful Master Roister Doister,

And fare well the lusty Master Roister Doister.

*R. Roister.* I must needs speak with thee a word or twain.

*M. Mery,* Within a month or two I will be here again.

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 2

Negligence in great affairs, ye know, may mar all.

*R. Roister.* Attend upon me now, and well reward thee  
I shall.

*M. Mery,* I have take my leave, and the tide is well  
spent.

*R, Roister,* I die except thou help, I pray thee be  
content. 20

Do thy part well now, and ask what thou wilt,  
For without thy aid my matter is all spilt.

*M. Mery,* Then to serve your turn I will some pains  
take,

And let all mine own affairs alone for your sake.

*R. Roister,* My whole hope and trust resteth only in  
thee.

*M. Mery,* Then can ye not do amiss, whatever it be.

*R. Roister,* Gramercies, Merygreeke, most bound to  
thee I am.

*M. Mery.* But up with that heart, and speak out like a  
ram.

Ye speak like a capon that had the cough now :

Be of good cheer, anon ye shall do well enow. 30

*R. Roister.* Upon thy comfort, I will all things well  
handle.

*M. Mery.* So, lo ! that is a breast to blow out a candle.

But what is this great matter, I would fain know ?

We shall find remedy therefore I trow.

Do ye lack money ? ye know mine old offers,

Ye have always a key to my purse and coffers.

*R. Roister.* I thank thee : had ever man such a friend ?

*M. Mery,* Ye give unto me : I must needs to you lend.

*R. Roister.* Nay, I have money plenty all things to discharge.

*M. Mery.* That knew I right well when I made offer so large. 4°

*R. Roister.* But it is no such matter.

*M. Mery.* What is it then ?

Are ye in danger of debt to any man ?

If ye be, take no thought nor be not afraid.

Let them hardly take thought how they shall be paid.

*R. Roister.* Tut, I owe nought.

*M. Mery.* What then ? fear ye imprisonment ?

*R. Roister.* No.

*M. Mery.* No, I wist ye offend not, so to be shent.

But if ye had, the Tower could not you so hold,

But to break out at all times ye would be bold.

What is it ? hath any man threatened you to beat ?

*R. Roister.* What is he that durst have put me in that heat ? 50

He that beateth me by his arms shall well find,

That I will not be far from him nor run behind.

*M. Mery.* That thing know all men ever since ye overthrew

The fellow of the lion which Hercules slew.

But what is it then ?

*R. Roister,* Of love I make my moan.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT I. SC. 2

*M. Mery.* Ah, this foolish love, wilt ne'er let us alone ?

But because ye were refused the last day,

Ye said ye would ne'er more be entangled that way.

I would meddle no more, since I find all so unkind.

*R. Roister.* Yea, but I cannot so put love out of my mind.

*M. Mery.* But is your love, tell me first, in any wise, 61

In the way of marriage, or of merchandise ?

If it may otherwise than lawful be found,

Ye get none of my help for a hundred pound.

*R. Roister.* No, by my troth, I would have her to my wife.

*M. Mery.* Then are ye a good man, and God save your life !

And what or who is she, with whom ye are in love ?

*R. Roister.* A woman whom I know not by what means to move.

*M. Mery.* Who is it ?

*R. Roister.* A woman yond.

*M. Mery.* What is her name ?

*R. Roister.* Her yonder.

*M. Mery.* Whom ?

*R. Roister.* Mistress, ah.

*M. Mery.* Fie, fie, for shame ! 70

Love ye, and know not whom? but her yond, a woman,

We shall then get you a wife, I cannot tell when.

*R. Roister.* The fair woman, that supped with us yesterday,

And I heard her name twice or thrice, and had it right.

*M, Mery,* Yea, ye may see ye ne'er take me to good cheer with you,

If ye had, I could have told you her name now.

*R, Roister,* I was to blame indeed, but the next time perchance:

And she dwelleth in this house.

*M, Mery,* What, Christian Custance?

*R, Roister,* Except I have her to my wife, I shall run mad.

*M, Mery,* Nay, unwise perhaps, but I warrant you for mad. 80

*R, Roister,* I am utterly dead unless I have my desire.

*M, Mery,* Where be the bellows that blew this sudden fire?

*R. Roister,* I hear she is worth a thousand pound and more.

*M, Mery,* Yea, but learn this one lesson of me afore :

An hundred pound of marriage-money, doubtless,

Is ever thirty pound sterling, or somewhat less,

So that her thousand pound, if she be thrifty,

Is much near about two hundred and fifty,

Howbeit woers and widows are never poor. 89

*R, Roister,* Is she a widow ? I love her better therefore.

*M, Mery,* But I hear she hath made promise to another.

*R, Roister,* He shall go without her, and he were my brother.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT I. SC. 2.

*M. Mery.* I have heard say, I am right well advised,  
That she hath to Gawyn Goodluck promised.

*R. Roister.* What is that Gawyn Goodluck ?

*M. Mery.* A merchant-man.

*R. Roister.* Shall he speed afore me? nay, sir, by  
sweet Saint Anne.

Ah, sir, *Backare*, quod Mortimer to his sow,  
I will have her mine own self I make God a vow.  
For I tell thee, she is worth a thousand pound.

*M. Mery.* Yet a fitter wife for your maship might be  
found: loo

Such a goodly man as you might get one with land,  
Besides pounds of gold a thousand and a thousand,  
And a thousand, and a thousand, and a thousand,  
And so to the sum of twenty hundred thousand,  
Your most goodly personage is worthy of no less.

*R. Roister.* I am sorry God made me so comely, doubt-  
less.

For that maketh me each where so highly favoured,  
And all women on me so enamoured.

*M. Mery.* Enamoured, quod you ? have ye spied out that ?  
Ah, sir, marry, now, I see you know what is what.  
Enamoured, ka? marry, sir, say that again, III  
But I thought not ye had marked it so plain.

*R. Roister.* Yes, each where they gaze all upon me and  
stare.

*M. Mery.* Yea, malkyn, I warrant you as much as they  
dare.

And ye will not believe what they say in the street,  
 When your maship passeth by, all such as I meet,  
 That sometimes I can scarce find what answer to  
 make.

Who is this (saith one) Sir Launcelot du Lake ?

Who is this, great Guy of Warwick, saith another ?

No (say I) it is the thirteenth Hercules brother. 120

Who is this? noble Hector of Troy, saith the third?

No, but of the same nest (say I) it is a bird.

Who is this? great Goliah, Sampson, or Colbrand?

No (say I) but it is a Brute of the Alie land.

Who is this? great Alexander? or Charle le  
 Maigne?

No, it is the tenth worthy, say I to them again :

I know not if I said well.

*R. Roister.* Yes, for so I am.

*M. Mery.* Yea, for there were but nine worthies before  
 ye came.

To some others, the third Cato I do you call.

And so as well as I can I answer them all. 130

'Sir, I pray you, what lord or great gentleman is  
 this?'

Master Ralph Roister Doister, dame (say I), ywis.

O Lord (saith she then) what a goodly man it is,

Would Christ I had such a husband as he is !

O Lord (say some) that the sight of his face we  
 lack:

It is enough for you (say I) to see his back.

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 2.

His face is for ladies of high and noble parages,  
With whom he hardly 'scapeth great marriages.  
With much more than this, and much otherwise.

*R. Roister.* I can thee thank that thou canst such  
answers devise : 140

But I perceive thou dost me throughly know.

*M. Mery.* I mark your manners for mine own learning,  
I trow.

But such is your beauty, and such are your acts,  
Such is your personage, and such are your facts,  
That all women fair and foul, more and less,  
That eye you, they lub you, they talk of you doubt-  
less.

Your p[l]easant look maketh them all merry,  
Ye pass not by, but they laugh till they be weary,  
Yea, and money could I have, the truth to tell,  
Of many, to bring you that way where they dwell.

*R. Roister.* Merygreeke, for this thy reporting well of  
me— 151

*M. Mery.* What should I else, sir ? it is my duty, pardee.

*R. Roister.* I promise thou shalt not lack, while I have  
a groat.

*M. Mery.* Faith, sir, and I ne'er had more need of a  
new coat.

*R. Roister.* Thou shalt have one to-morrow, and gold  
for to spend.

*M. Mery.* Then I trust to bring the day to a good  
end.

For as for mine own part having money enow,  
I could live only with the remembrance of you.  
But now to your widow whom you love so hot.

*R. Roister.* By Cock, thou sayest truth, I had almost  
forgot. 160

*M. Mery.* What if Christian Custance will not have you,  
what ?

*R. Roister.* Have me ? yes, I warrant you, never doubt  
of that,

I know she loveth me, but she dare not speak.

*M. Mery.* Indeed, meet it were some body should it  
break.

*R. Roister.* She looked on me twenty times yesternight,  
And laughed so.

*M. Mery.* That she could not sit upright.

*R. Roister.* No, faith, could she not.

*M. Mery.* No, even such a thing I cast.

*R. Roister.* But for wooing, thou knowest, women are  
shamefast.

But and she knew my mind, I know she would be  
glad,

And think it the best chance that ever she had. 170

*M. Mery.* To her then like a man, and be bold forth  
to start,

Wooers never speed well, that have a false heart.

*R. Roister.* What may I best do?

*M. Mery.* Sir, remain ye awhile here.

Ere long one or other of her house will appear.

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 3.

Ye know my mind.

*R. Roister.* Yea, now hardly let me alone.

*M. Mery.* In the meantime, sir, if you please, I will  
home,

And call your musicians, for in this your case

It would set you forth, and all your wooing grace.

Ye may not lack your instruments to play and sing.

*R. Roister.* Thou knowest I can do that.

*M. Mery.* As well as anything. 180

Shall I go call your folks, that ye may show a cast ?

*R. Roister.* Yea, run, I beseech thee, in all possible haste.

*M. Mery.* I go. [*Exeat*

*R. Roister.* Yea, for I love singing out of measure,

It comforteth my spirits and doth me great pleasure.

But who cometh forth yond from my sweetheart

Custance ?

My matter frameth well, this is a lucky chance.

### SCENE III

*Madge Mumblecrust, spinning on the distaff. Tibet  
Talkapace, sewing. Annot Alyface, knitting, R,  
Roister.*

*M. Mumble,* If this distaff were spun, Margerie Mumble-  
crust—

*Tib, Talk,* Where good stale ale is will drink no water  
I trust.

ACT I. SC. 3.

**Roister Doister**

*M. Mumble.* Dame Custance hath promised us good ale  
and white bread.

*Tib, Talk.* If she keep not promise, I will beshrew her  
head:

But it will be stark night before I shall have done.

*R. Roister,* I will stand here awhile, and talk with them  
anon.

I hear them speak of Custance, which doth my  
heart good.

To hear her name spoken doth even comfort my  
blood.

*M. Mumble.* Sit down to your work, Tibet, like a good  
girl.

*Tib, Talk.* Nurse, meddle you with your spindle and  
your whirl, 10

No haste but good, Madge Mumblecrust, for whip  
and whur,

The old proverb doth say, never made good fur.

*M. Mumble.* Well, ye will sit down to your work anon,  
I trust.

*Tib. Talk.* Soft fire maketh sweet malt, good Madge  
Mumblecrust.

*M. Mumble.* And sweet malt maketh jolly good ale for  
the nones.

*Tib. Talk.* Which will slide down the lane without any  
bones. *[Cantet.*

Old brown bread crusts must have much good  
mumbling.

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 3.

But good ale down your throat hath good easy tumbling.

*R. Roister,* The jolliest wench that ere I heard, little mouse, 19

May I not rejoice that she shall dwell in my house?

*Tib, Talk,* So, sirrah, now this gear beginneth for to frame.

*M, Mumble.* Thanks to God, though your work stand still, your tongue is not lame.

*Tib, Talk.* And though your teeth be gone, both so sharp and so fine,

Yet your tongue can renne on patins as well as mine.

*M, Mumble,* Ye were not for nought named Tib Talkapace.

*Tib, Talk.* Doth my talk grieve you? Alack, God save your grace.

*M, Mumble,* I hold a groat, ye will drink anon for this gear.

*Tib, Talk,* And I will pray you the stripes for me to bear.

*M, Mumble,* I hold a penny, ye will drink without a cup.

*Tib, Talk,* Wherein so e'er ye drink, I wot ye drink all up. 30

[*Enter Annot,*]

*An, Alyface,* By Cock, and well sewed, my good Tibet Talkapace.

*Tib, Talk,* And e'en as well knit, my nown Annot Alyface,

**ACT I sc. 3. Roister Doister**

*R. Roister.* See what a sort she keepeth that must be my wife.

Shall not I, when I have her, lead a merry life?

*Tib. Talk.* Welcome, my good wench, and sit here by me just.

*An. Alyface.* And how doth our old beldame here, Madge Mumblecrust?

*Tib. Talk.* Chide, and find faults, and threaten to complain.

*An. Alyface.* To make us poor girls shent to her is small gain.

*M. Mumble.* I did neither chide, nor complain, nor threaten.

*R. Roister.* It would grieve my heart to see one of them beaten. 40

*M. Mumble.* I did nothing but bid her work and hold her peace.

*Tib. Talk.* So would I, if you could your clattering cease:

But the devil cannot make old trot hold her tongue.

*An. Alyface.* Let all these matters pass, and we three sing a song,

So shall we pleasantly both the time beguile now,  
And eke dispatch all our works ere we can tell how.

*Tib. Talk.* I shrew them that say nay, and that shall not be I.

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 3

*M. Mumble.* And I am well content.

*Tib. Talk.* Sing on then, by and by.

*R, Roister,* And I will not away, but listen to their song,  
Yet Merygreeke and my folks tarry very long. 50

*Tib., An., and Margerie, do sing here.*

Pipe merry Annot, etc.

Trilla, trilla, trillarie.

Work Tibet, work Annot, work Margerie.

Sew Tibet, knit Annot, spin Margerie.

Let us see who shall win the victory.

*Tib. Talk.* This sleeve is not willing to be sewed, I  
trow.

A small thing might make me all in the ground to  
throw.

*Then they sing again.*

Pipe merry Annot, etc.

Trilla, trilla, trillarie.

What Tibet, what Annot, what Margerie. 60

Ye sleep, but we do not, that shall we try.

Your fingers be numbed, our work will not lie.

*Tib, Talk.* If ye do so again, well I would advise you  
nay.

In good sooth one stop more, and I make holy day.

*They sing the third time.*

Pipe merry Annot, etc.  
Trilla, trilla, trillarie.  
Now Tibet, now Annot, now Margerie.  
Now whippet apace for the maistry,  
But it will not be, our mouth is so dry.

*Tib. Talk,* Ah, each finger is a thumb to-day methink,  
I care not to let all alone, choose it swim or sink.

*They sing the fourth time.*

Pipe merry Annot, etc.  
Trilla, trilla, trillarie.  
When Tibet, when Annot, when Margerie.  
I will not, I cannot, no more can I.  
Then give we all over, and there let it lie.

*[Let her cast down her work.]*

*Tib. Talk,* There it lieth, the worst is but a curried  
coat,

Tut, I am used thereto, I care not a goat.

*An, Alyface,* Have we done singing since? then will I  
in again,

Here I found you, and here I leave both twain. 80

*[Exeat.]*

*M. Mumble,* And I will not be long after. Tib Talk-  
apace!

*Tib. Talk.* What is the matter?

*M. Mumble.* Yond stood a man all this space

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 3.

And hath heard all that ever we spake together.

*Tib. Talk.* Marry, the more lout he for his coming hither.

And the less good he can to listen maidens talk.

I care not and I go bid him hence for to walk :

It were well done to know what he maketh here away.

*R. Roister.* Now might I speak to them, if I wist what to say.

*M. Mumble.* Nay, we will go both off, and see what he is.

*R. Roister.* One that hath heard all your talk and singing  
i-wis. 90

*Tib. Talk.* The more to blame you, a good thrifty  
husband

Would elsewhere have had some better matters in  
hand.

*R. Roister.* I did it for no harm, but for good love I  
bear,

To your dame mistress Custance, I did your talk  
hear.

And, mistress nurse, I will kiss you for acquaintance,

*M. Mumble.* I come anon, sir.

*Tib. Talk.* Faith, I would our dame Custance  
Saw this gear.

*M. Mumble.* I must first wipe all clean, yea, I must.

*Tib. Talk.* Ill 'chieve it, doting fool, but it must be cust.

*M. Mumble.* God yelde you, sir; chad not so much,  
i-chotte not when, 99

Ne'er since chwas bore chwine, of such a gay gentle-  
man.

ACT I. SC. 3.

**Roister Doister**

*R. Roister.* I will kiss you too, maiden, for the good will  
I bear you.

*Tib. Talk.* No, forsooth, by your leave, ye shall not kiss  
me.

*R. Roister.* Yes, be not afeard, I do not disdain you a  
whit.

*Tib. Talk.* Why should I fear you? I have not so little  
wit,

Ye are but a man I know very well.

*R. Roister.* Why then ?

*Tib. Talk.* Forsooth for I will not, I use not to kiss men.

*R. Roister.* I would fain kiss you too, good maiden, if I  
might.

*Tib. Talk.* What should that need?

*R. Roister.* But to honour you by this light.

I use to kiss all them that I love, to God I vow.

*Tib. Talk.* Yea, sir? I pray you, when did ye last kiss  
your cow? no

*R. Roister.* Ye might be proud to kiss me, if ye were  
wise.

*Tib. Talk.* What promotion were therein ?

*R. Roister.* Nurse is not so nice.

*Tib. Talk.* Well, I have not been taught to kissing and  
licking.

*R. Roister.* Yet I thank you, mistress nurse, ye made no  
sticking.

*M. Mumble.* I will not stick for a kiss with such a man  
as you.

## Roister Doister

## ACT I. SC. 3.

*Tib. Talk.* They that lust: I will again to my sewing  
now.

*Enter Annot.*

*An. Alyface.* Tidings, ho ! tidings! dame Custance  
greeteth you well.

*R. Roister.* Whom ? me ?

*An. Alyface.* You, sir ? No, sir ! I do no such tale tell.

*R. Roister.* But and she knew me here.

*An, Alyface,* Tibet Talkapace,

Your mistress Custance and mine, must speak with  
your grace. 120

*Tib. Talk.* With me?

*An. Alyface,* Ye must come in to her, out of all doubts.

*Tib, Talk.* And my work not half done? A mischief on  
all louts. [*Ex, am,*

*R, Roister,* Ah, good sweet nurse !

*M, Mumble.* A good sweet gentleman.

*R. Roister.* What ?

*M. Mumble,* Nay, I cannot tell, sir, but what thing would  
you?

*R, Roister.* How doth sweet Custance, my heart of gold,  
tell me how ?

*M. Mumble,* She doth very well, sir, and command me  
to you.

*R, Roister,* To me?

*M. Mumble,* Yea, to you, sir.

*R. Roister.* To me ? Nurse, tell me plain,  
To me?

*M. Mumble.* Ye.

*R. Roister.* That word maketh me alive again.

*M. Mumble,* She command me to one last day, whoe'er  
it was.

*R. Roister,* That was e'en to me and none other, by the  
Mass. 130

*M. Mumble.* I cannot tell you surely, but one it was.

*R. Roister.* It was I and none other: this cometh to  
good pass.

I promise thee, nurse, I favour her.

*M. Mumble.* E'en so, sir.

*R. Roister.* Bid her sue to me for marriage.

*M. Mumble.* E'en so, sir.

*R. Roister.* And surely for thy sake she shall speed.

*M. Mumble.* E'en so, sir.

*R. Roister.* I shall be contented to take her.

*M. Mumble.* E'en so, sir.

*R. Roister.* But at thy request and for thy sake.

*M. Mumble.* E'en so, sir.

*R. Roister.* And, come, hark in thine ear what to say.

*M. Mumble.* E'en so, sir.

*[Here let him tell her a great long tale in her ear.]*

SCENE IV

*Mathew Merygreeke. Dobinet Dough tie, Harpax.  
Ralph Roister, Margerie Mumblecrust.*

*M. Mery.* Come on, sirs, apace, and quit yourselves like  
men,

Your pains shall be rewarded.

*D. Dough.* But I wot not when.

*M. Mery.* Do your master worship as ye have done in  
time past.

*D. Dough.* Speak to them : of mine office he shall have  
a cast.

*M. Mery.* Harpax, look that thou do well too, and thy  
fellow.

*Harpax.* I warrant, if he will mine example follow.

*M. Mery.* Curtsy, whoresons, douk you and crouch at  
every word.

*D. Dough.* Yes, whether our master speak earnest or bord.

*M. Mery.* For this lieth upon his preferment indeed.

*D. Dough.* Oft is he a wooer, but never doth he speed.

*M. Mery.* But with whom is he now so sadly rounding  
yond ? II

*D. Dough.* With *Nobs nicebecetur miserere* fond.

*M. Mery.* God be at your wedding, be ye sped already?

I did not suppose that your love was so greedy.

I perceive now ye have chose of devotion,

And joy have ye, lady, of your promotion,

*R. Roister.* Tush, fool, thou art deceived, this is not she.

*M. Mery.* Well, mock much of her, and keep her well, I  
Vise ye.

I will take no charge of such a fair piece keeping.

*M. Mumble.* What aileth this fellow? he driveth me to  
weeping. 20

*M. Mery.* What, weep on the wedding day? Be merry,  
woman,

Though I say it, ye have chose a good gentleman.

*R. Roister.* Kocks nowns, what meanest thou, man?  
tut, a whistle.

*M. Mery.* Ah, sir, be good to her; she is but a gristle.  
Ah, sweet lamb and coney 1

*R. Roister.* Tut, thou art deceived.

*M. Mery.* Weep no more, lady, ye shall be well received.  
Up with some merry noise, sirs, to bring home the  
bride.

*R. Roister.* Gogs arms, knave, art thou mad?  
I tell thee thou art wide.

*M. Mery.* Then ye intend by night to have her home  
brought.

*R. Roister.* I tell thee no.

*M. Mery.* How then?

*R. Roister.* 'Tis neither meant he thought. 30

*M. Mery.* What shall we then do with her?

*R. Roister.* Ah, foolish harebrain,  
This is not she.

*M. Mery.* No, is? why then unsaid again.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT I. SC. 4.

And what young girl is this with your maship so bold?

*R. Roister.* A girl ?

*M. Mery.* Yea. I dare say, scarce yet three score year old.

*R. Roister.* This same is the fair widow's nurse, of whom ye wot.

*M. Mery.* Is she but a nurse of a house? hence home, old trot,

Hence at once.

*R. Roister.* No, no.

*M. Mery.* What, an please your maship,

A nurse talk so homely with one of your worship ?

*R. Roister.* I will have it so: it is my pleasure and will.

*M. Mery.* Then I am content. Nurse, come again, tarry still. 40

*R. Roister.* What, she will help forward this my suit for her part.

*M. Mery.* Then is't mine own pigs nie, and blessing on my heart.

*R. Roister.* This is our best friend, man.

*M. Mery.* Then teach her what to say.

*M. Mumble.* I am taught already.

*M. Mery.* Then go, make no delay.

*R. Roister,* Yet hark, one word in thine ear.

*M. Mery.* Back, sirs, from his tail.

*R. Roister.* Back, villains, will ye be privy of my counsel ?

*M. Mery.* Back, sirs, so : I told you afore ye would be shent.

*R. Roister.* She shall have the first day a whole peck of argent.

*M. Mumble.* A peck ? *Nomine patris* have ye so much spare ?

*R. Roister.* Yea, and a cart-load thereto, or else were it bare, 50

Besides other moveables, household stuff, and land.

*M. Mumble.* Have ye lands too ?

*R. Roister.* An hundred marks.

*M. Mery.* Yea, a thousand.

*M. Mumble.* And have ye cattle too ? and sheep too ?

*R. Roister.* Yea, a few.

*M. Mery.* He is ashamed the number of them to show.

E'en round about him, as many thousand sheep goes,

As he and thou, and I too, have fingers and toes.

*M. Mumble.* And how many years old be you ?

*R. Roister.* Forty at least.

*M. Mery.* Yea, and thrice forty to them.

*R. Roister.* Nay, now thou dost jest.

I am not so old, thou misreckonest my years.

*M. Mery.* I know that: but my mind was on bullocks and steers. 60

*M. Mumble.* And what shall I show her your master-ship's name is ?

*R. Roister.* Nay, she shall make suit ere she know that, i-wis.

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 4.

*M. Mumble*, Yet let me somewhat know.

*M. Mery*. This is he, understand,

That killed the blue spider in Blanchepowder land.

*M. Mumble*, Yea, Jesus, William zee law, did he zo law ?

*M. Mery*. Yea, and the last elephant that fever he saw,

As the beast passed by, he start out of a busk,

And e'en with pure strength of arms plucked out his  
great tusk.

*M. Mumble*, Jesus, *nomine patris*, what a thing was that ?

*R. Roister*, Yea, but, Merygreeke, one thing thou hast  
forgot. 70

*M. Mery*, What ?

*R. Roister*, Of th' other elephant.

*M. Mery*. Oh, him that fled away.

*R. Roister*. Yea.

*M. Mery*. Yea, he knew that his match was in place  
that day.

Tut, he bet the king of crickets on Christmas day,

That he crept in a hole, and not a word to say.

*M. Mumble*. A sore man, by zembletee.

*M. Mery*. Why, he wrung a club

Once in a fray out of the hand of Belzebub.

*R. Roister*. And how when Mumfision?

*M. Mery*. Oh, your coustrcling

Bore the lantern a-field so before the gozeling.

Nay that is too long a matter now to be told :

Never ask his name, nurse, I warrant thee, be  
bold. 80

ACT I. SC. 4.

**Roister Doister**

He conquered in one day from Rome to Naples,  
And won towns, nurse, as fast as thou canst make  
apples.

*M. Mumble.* O Lord, my heart quaketh for fear: he is  
too sore.

*R. Roister.* Thou makest her too much afeard, Mery-  
greeke, no more.

This tale would fear my sweetheart Custance right  
evil.

*M. Mery.* Nay, let her take him, nurse, and fear not the  
devil.

But thus is our song dashed. Sirs, ye may home  
again.

*R. Roister.* No, shall they not. I charge you all here to  
remain:

The villain slaves, a whole day ere they can be  
found.

*M. Mery.* Couch on your marybones, whoresons, down  
to the ground. 90

Was it meet he should tarry so long in one place

Without harmony of music, or some solace ?

Whoso hath such bees as your master in his **head,**

**Had need** to have his spirits with music to be  
fed.

By your mastership's licence.

*R. Roister.* What is that ? a mote ?

*M. Mery.* No, it was a fowl's feather **had light on your  
coat**

## Roister Doister

ACT I. SC. 4.

*R. Roister,* I was nigh no feathers since I came from my bed.

*M. Mery.* No, sir, it was a hair that was fall from your head.

*R. Roister,* My men come when it please them.

*M. Mery,* By your leave.

*R. Roister,* What is that ?

*M. Mery,* Your gown was foul spotted with the foot of a gnat. loo

*R. Roister.* Their master to offend they are nothing afeard.

What now ?

*M. Mery,* A lousy hair from your mastership's beard.

*Omnes famuli.* And sir, for nurse's sake, pardon this one offence.

We shall not after this show the like negligence.

*R. Roister,* I pardon you this once, and come, sing ne'er the worse.

*M. Mery,* How like you the goodness of this gentleman, nurse ?

*M. Mumble,* God save his mastership that so can his men forgive.

And I will hear them sing ere I go, by his leave.

*R. Roister,* Marry and thou shalt, wench : come, we two will dance.

*M. Mumble,* Nay, I will by mine own self foot the song perchance. 110

*R. Roister,* Go to it, sirs, lustily.

*M. Mumble.* Pipe up a merry note,  
Let me hear it played, I will foot it for a  
groat.

[*Canlent.*

*R. Roister.* Now, nurse, take this same letter here to thy  
mistress.

And as my trust is in thee, ply my business.

*M. Mumble.* It shall be done.

*M. Mery.* Who made it ?

*R. Roister.* I wrote it each whit.

*M. Mery.* Then needs it no mending.

*R. Roister.* No, no.

*M. Mery.* No, I know your wit.

I warrant it well.

*M. Mumble.* It shall be delivered.

But if ye speed, shall I be considered?

*M. Mery.* Whough ! dost thou doubt of that ?

*Madge.* What shall I have ?

*M. Mery.* An hundred times more than thou canst  
devise to crave. 120

*M. Mumble.* Shall I have some new gear ? for my old  
is all spent.

*M. Mery.* The worst kitchen wench shall go in ladies'  
raiment.

*M. Mumble.* Yea?

*M. Mery.* And the worst drudge in the house shall go  
better

Than your mistress doth now.

## Roister Doister

## ACT I. SC. 5.

*Mar.* Then I trudge with your letter.

*R. Roister.* Now, may I repose me: Custance is mine own.

Let us sing and play homeward that it may be known.

*M. Mery.* But are you sure that your letter is well enough?

*R. Roister.* I wrote it myself.

*M. Mery.* Then sing we to dinner.

*[Here they sing, and go out singing.]*

### SCENE V

*Christian Custance. Margerie Mumblecrust*

*C. Custance.* Who took thee this letter, Margerie Mumblecrust?

*M. Mumble.* A lusty gay bachelor took it me of trust,  
And if ye seek to him he will love your doing.

*C. Custance.* Yea, but where learned he that manner of wooing?

*M. Mumble.* If to sue to him, you will any pains take,  
He will have you to his wife (he saith) for my sake.

*C. Custance.* Some wise gentleman, belike. I am be-spoken:

And I thought verily this had been some token

ACT I. SC. 5.

**Roister Doister**

From my dear spouse Gawin Goodluck, whom when  
him please,

God luckily send home to both our hearts' ease. 10

*M. Mumble.* A joyly man it is, I wot well by report,  
And would have you to him for marriage resort;  
Best open the writing, and see what it doth speak.

*C. Custance.* At this time, nurse, I will neither read ne  
break.

*M. Mumble.* He promised to give you a whole peck of  
gold.

*C. Custance.* Perchance, lack of a pint when it shall be  
all told.

*M. Mumble.* I would take a gay rich husband, and I  
were you.

*C. Custance.* In good sooth, Madge, e'en so would I, if  
I were thou.

But no more of this fond talk now, let us go in,  
And see thou no more move me folly to begin. 20  
Nor bring me no more letters for no man's pleasure,  
But thou know from whom.

*M. Mumble.* I warrant ye shall be sure.

**ACT II**

**SCENE I**

*Dobinet Doughtie.*

*D. Dough.* Where is the house I go to, before or behind?  
I know not where nor when nor how I shall it find.  
If I had ten men's bodies and legs and strength,  
This trotting that I have must needs lame me at  
length.  
And now that my master is new set on wooing,  
I trust there shall none of us find lack of doing :  
Two pair of shoes a day will now be too little  
To serve me, I must trot to and fro so mickle.  
'Go bear me this token, carry me this letter,  
Now this is the best way, now that way is better. 10  
Up before day, sirs, I charge you, an hour or twain,  
Trudge, do me this message, and bring word quick  
again.'  
If one miss but a minute, then, 'His arms and  
wounds,  
I would not have slacked for ten thousand pounds.  
Nay, see, I beseech you, if my most trusty page  
Go not now about to hinder my marriage.'

So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,  
 I trow, never was any creature living.  
 With every woman is he in some love's pang,  
 Then up to our lute at midnight, twangledom  
     twang, 20  
 Then twang with our sonnets, and twang with our  
     dumps,  
 And heigho from our heart, as heavy as lead  
     lumps ;  
 Then to our recorder with toodleloodle poop,  
 As the howlet out of an ivy bush should hoop.  
 Anon to our gittern, thrumpledum, thrumpledum  
     thrum,  
 Thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum,  
     thrumpledum, thrum.  
 Of songs and ballads also he is a maker,  
 And that can he as finely do as Jack Raker;  
 Yea, and extempore will he ditties compose,  
 Foolish Marsias ne'er made the like, I suppose, 30  
 Yet must we sing them, as good stuff I undertake,  
 As for such a pen-man is well fitting to make.  
 'Ah, for these long nights ! heigho ! when will it be  
     day?  
 I fear ere I come she will be wooed away.'  
 Then when answer is made that it may not be,  
 'Odeath, why comest thou not?' (byand by saith he)  
 But then, from his heart to put away sorrow,  
 He is as far in with some new love next morrow.

## Roister Doister

ACT II. SC. 2.

But in the mean season, we trudge and we trot, 39  
From dayspring to midnight, I sit not, nor rest not.  
And now am I sent to dame Christian Custance :  
But I fear it will end with a mock for pastance.  
I bring her a ring, with a token in a clout,  
And by all guess this same is her house out of  
doubt.  
I know it now perfect, I am in my right way.  
And lo ! yond the old nurse that was with us last  
day.

### SCENE II

*Madge Mumblecrust. Dobinet Doughtie.*

*M. Mumble.* I was ne'er so shoke up afore, since I was  
born.

That our mistress could not have chid, I would have  
sworn:

And I pray God I die, if I meant any harm,  
But for my life-time this shall be to me a charm.

*D. Dough.* God you save and see, nurse, and how is it  
with you ?

*M. Mumble.* Marry, a great deal the worse it is for such  
as thou.

*D. Dough.* For me ? Why so ?

*M. Mumble.* Why, were not thou one of them, say,  
That sang and played here with the gentleman last  
day?

## ACT II. SC 3.

**Roister Doister**

*D. Dough.* Yes, and he would know if you have for him spoken,

And prays you to deliver this ring and token. 10

*M. Mumble.* Now by the token that God tokened, brother,  
I will deliver no token, one nor other.

I have once been so shent for your master's pleasure,  
As I will not be again for all his treasure.

*D. Dough.* He will thank you, woman.

*M. Mumble.* I will none of his thank. [Ex.

*D. Dough.* I ween I am a prophet, this gear will prove  
blank :

But what, should I home again without answer go?

It were better go to Rome on my head than so.

I will tarry here this month, but some of the house  
Shall take it of me, and then I care not a louse. 20

But yonder cometh forth a wench or a lad,

If he have not one Lombard's touch, my luck is  
bad.

## SCENE III

*Trupenie. D. Dough tie. Tibet Talkapacc. Annot Alyface.*

*Trupenie.* I am clean lost for lack of merry company,

We 'gree not half well within, our wenches and I :

They will command like mistresses, they will for-  
bid,

If they be not served, Trupenie must be chid.

Let them be as merry now as ye can desire,

With turning of a hand, our mirth lieth in the **mire**.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT II. SC. 2.

I cannot skill of such changeable mettle,  
There is nothing with them but in dock out nettle.

*D. Dough.* Whether is it better that I speak to him  
first,

Or he first to me ? it is good to cast the worst. 10

If I begin first, he will smell all my purpose,

Otherwise I shall not need anything to disclose.

*Trupenie.* What boy have we yonder ? I will see what  
he is.

*D. Dough.* He cometh to me. It is hereabout, i-wis.

*Trupenie.* Wouldest thou ought, friend, that thou lookest  
so about ?

*D. Dough.* Yea, but whether ye can help me or no, I  
doubt.

I seek to one mistress Custance house here dwell-  
ing.

*Trupenie.* It is my mistress ye seek too, by your telling.

*D. Dough.* Is there any of that name here but she?

*Trupenie.* Not one in all the whole town that I know,  
pardee. 20

*D. Dough.* A widow she is, I trow.

*Trupenie.* And what and she be ?

*D. Dough.* But ensured to an husband.

*Trupenie.* Yea, so think we.

*D. Dough.* And I dwell with her husband that trusteth  
to be.

*Trupenie.* In faith, then must thou needs be welcome  
to me,

Let us for acquaintance shake hands together,  
And whate'er thou be, heartily welcome hither.

*Enter Tibet and Annot.*

*Tib. Talk.* Well, Trupenie, never but flinging?

*An. Alyface.* And frisking?

*Trupenie.* Well, Tibet and Annot, still swinging and whisking?

*Tib. Talk.* But ye roil abroad.

*An. Alyface.* In the street everywhere.

*Trupenie.* Where are ye twain, in chambers when ye meet me there? 30

But come hither, fools, I have one now by the hand,

Servant to him that must be our mistress' husband,  
Bid him welcome.

*An. Alyface.* To me truly is he welcome.

*Tib. Talk.* Forsooth, and as I may say, heartily welcome.

*D. Dough.* I thank you, mistress maids.

*An. Alyface.* I hope we shall better know.

*Tib. Talk.* And when will our new master come?

*D. Dough.* Shortly, I trow.

*Till Talk.* I would it were to-morrow : for till he resort,  
Our mistress, being a widow, hath small comfort,  
And I heard our nurse speak of an husband to-day  
Ready for our mistress, a rich man and a gay. 40  
And we shall go in our French hoods every day,  
In our silk cassocks (I warrant you) fresh and gay,

## Roister Doister

ACT II. SC. 3.

In our trick ferdegews and billiments of gold;  
Brave in our suits of change, seven double fold  
Then shall ye see Tibet, sirs, tread the moss so trim.  
Nay, why said I tread ? ye shall see her glide and  
swim,

Not lumperdee clumperdee like our spaniel Rig.  
*Trupenie*, Marry, then, prick-me-dainty, come toast me  
a fig,

Who shall then know our Tib Talkapace, trow ye ?  
*An, Alyface*, And why not Annot Alyface as fine as  
she ? 50

*Trupenie*, And what had Tom Trupenie, a father or  
none?

*An, Alyface*, Then our pretty new come man will look  
to be one.

*Trupenie*, We four, I trust, shall be a joyly merry knot.

Shall we sing a fit to welcome our friend, Annot ?

*An, Alyface*, Perchance he cannot sing.

*D, Dough*, I am at all assays.

*Tib, Talk*, By Cock, and the better welcome to us always.

*Here they sing,*

A thing very fit

For them that have wit

And are fellows knit,

Servants in one house to be,

60

Is fast for to sit,

And not oft to flit,

Nor vary a whit,

But lovingly to agree.

No man complaining,  
 No other disdainig,  
 For loss or for gaining,  
 But fellows or friends to be.  
 No grudge remaining,  
 No work refraining,  
 Nor help restraining,  
 But lovingly to agree.

7°

No man for despite,  
 By word or by write  
 His fellow to twite,  
 But further in honesty,  
 No good turns entw ite,  
 Nor old sores recite,  
 But let all *go* quite,  
 And lovingly to agree.

o

After drudgery,  
 When they be weary,  
 Then to be merry,  
 To laugh and sing they be free ;  
 With chip and cherie  
 Heigh derie derie,  
 Trill on the berie,  
 And lovingly to agree.

*Finis.*

*Tib. Talk,* Will you now in with us unto our mistress go?  
*D, Dough,* I have first for my master an errand or  
 two.

90

## Roister Doister

ACT II. SC. 4.

But I have here from him a token and a ring,  
They shall have most thank of her that first doth it  
bring.

*Tib. Talk.* Marry, that will I.

*Trupenie.* See, and Tibet snatch not now.

*Tib. Talk.* And why may not I, sir, get thanks as well  
as you ? *[Exeat.*

*An. Alyface.* Yet get ye not all, we will go with you  
both,

And have part of your thanks, be ye never so loth.

*[Exeant omnes.*

*D. Dough.* So my hands are rid of it: I care for no  
more.

I may now return home: so durst I not afore.

*[Exeat.*

## SCENE IV

*C. Custance. Tibet. Annot Alyface, Trupenie,*

*C. distance.* Nay, come forth all three: and come  
hither, pretty maid :

Will not so many fore warnings make you afraid ?

*Tib, Talk.* Yes, forsooth.

*C, Custance.* But still be a runner up and down,  
Still be a bringer of tidings and tokens to town.

*Tib. Talk.* No, forsooth, mistress.

*C, Custance.* Is all your delight and joy

In whisking and ramping abroad like a Tom-boy ?

*Tib. Talk.* Forsooth, these were there too, Annot and Trupenie.

*Trupenie.* Yea, but ye alone took it, ye cannot deny.

*An. Alyface.* Yea, that ye did.

*Tibet.* But if I had not, ye twain would.

*C. Custance.* You great calf, ye should have more wit,  
so ye should : 10

But why should any of you take such things in hand?

*Tibet* Because it came from him that must be your husband.

*C. Custance.* How do ye know that?

*Tibet.* Forsooth, the boy did say so.

*C. Custance.* What was his name ?

*An. Alyface.* We asked not.

*C. Custance.* No, did ?

*An. Alyface.* He is not far gone, of likelihood.

*Trupenie.* I will see.

*C. Custance.* If thou canst find him in the street, bring him to me.

*Trupenie.* Yes. *[Exeat.*

*C. Custance.* Well, ye naughty girls, if ever I perceive  
That henceforth you do letters or tokens receive,  
To bring unto me from any person or place,  
Except ye first show me the party face to face, 20  
Either thou or thou, full truly abyethou shalt.

*Tibet* Pardon this, and the next time powder me in salt.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT II. SC. 4.

*C, Custance.* I shall make all girls by you twain to beware.

*Tibet* If ever I offend again, do not me spare.

But if ever I see that false boy any more  
By your mistressship's licence, I tell you afor  
I will rather have my coat twenty times swinged,  
Than on the naughty wag not to be avenged.

*C. Custance.* Good wenches would not so ramp abroad idly. 29

But keep within doors, and ply their work earnestly.  
If one would speak with me that is a man likely,  
Ye shall have right good thank to bring me word quickly.

But otherwise with messages to come in post  
From henceforth, I promise you, shall be to your cost.

Get you in to your work.

*Tibet.* Yes, forsooth.

*C. Custance.* Hence, both twain.

And let me see you play me such a part again.

*Re-enter Trupenie.*

*Trupenie.* Mistress, I have run past the far end of the street,

Yet can I not yonder crafty boy see nor meet.

*C, Custance.* No?

*Trupenie.* Yet I looked as far beyond the people,  
As one may see out of the top of Paul's steeple. 40

**ACT II. SC.4.. Roister Doister**

*C. Custance.* Hence, in at doors, and let me no more be vexed.

*Trupenie.* Forgive me this one fault, and lay on for the next. *[Exeat.*

*C. Custance.* Now will I in too, for I think, so God me mend,

This will prove some foolish matter in the end.

*[Exeat*

ACT III

SCENE I

*Matheiv Merygreeke.*

*M. Mery.* Now say this again : he hath somewhat to  
doing

Which followeth the trace of one that is wooing,  
Specially that hath no more wit in his head,  
Than my cousin Roister Doister withal is led.

I am sent in all haste to espy and to mark  
How our letters and tokens are likely to wark.

Master Roister Doister must have answer in haste,  
For he loveth not to spend much labour in waste.

Now as for Christian Custance, by this light,  
Though she had not her troth to Gawin Goodluck

plight, 10

Yet rather than with such a loutish dolt to marry,  
I daresay would live a poor life solitary.

But fain would I speak with Custance, if I wist how,  
To laugh at the matter: yond cometh one forth  
now.

## SCENE II

*Tibet, M. Merygreeke. Christian distance.*

*Tib. Talk.* Ah, that I might but once in my life have a  
sight

Of him that made us all so ill shent: by this light,  
He should never escape if I had him by the ear,  
But even from his head I would it bite or tear.

Yea, and if one of them were not enow,  
I would bite them both off, I make God avow.

*M, Mery.* What is he, whom this little mouse doth so  
threaten ?

*Tib, Talk.* I would teach him, I trow, to make girls  
shent or beaten.

*M, Mery.* I will call her: Maid, with whom are ye so  
hasty ? 9

*Tib, Talk.* Not with you, sir, but with a little wagpasty,  
A deceiver of folks by subtle craft and guile.

*M, Mery,* I know where she is : Dobinet hath wrought  
somewile.

*Tib, Talk,* He brought a ring and token which he said  
was sent

From our dame's husband, but I wot well I was  
shent:

For it liked her as well, to tell you no lies,  
As water in her ship, or salt cast in her eyes :

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 2.

And yet whence it came neither we nor she can tell.

*M. Mery.* We shall have sport anon : I like this very well.

And dwell ye here with mistress Custance, fair maid ?

*Tib. Talk.* Yea, marry do I, sir : what would ye have said ? 20

*M. Mery.* A little message unto her by word of mouth.

*Tib. Talk.* No messages, by your leave, nor tokens forsooth.

*M. Mery.* Then help me to speak with her.

*Tib. Talk.* With a good will that.

Here she cometh forth. Now speak ye know best what.

*C. Custance.* None other life with you, maid, but abroad to skip ?

*Tib. Talk.* Forsooth, here is one would speak with your mistress-ship.

*C. Custance.* Ah, have ye been learning of mo messages now ?

*Tib. Talk.* I would not hear his mind, but bade him show it to you.

*C. Custance.* In at doors.

*Tib. Talk.* I am gone. [Ex.

*M. Mery.* Dame Custance, God ye save.

*C. Custance.* Welcome, friend Merygreeke: and what thing would ye have ? 30

*M. Mery.* I am come to you a little matter to break.

*C. Custance.* But see it be honest, else better not to speak.

*M. Mery.* How feel ye yourself affected here of late?

*C. Custance.* I feel no manner change but after the old rate.  
But whereby do ye mean ?

*M. Mery.* Concerning marriage.

Doth not love lade you ?

*C. Custance.* I feel no such carriage.

*M. Mery.* Do ye feel no pangs of dotage ? answer me right.

*C. Custance.* I dote so, that I make but one sleep all the night.

But what need all these words ?

*M. Mery.* Oh, Jesus, will ye see

What dissembling creatures these same women  
be ? 40

The gentleman ye wot of, whom ye do so love,  
That ye would fain marry him, if ye durst it move,  
Among other rich widows, which are of him glad,  
Lest ye for lesing of him perchance might run  
mad,

Is now contented that upon your suit making,  
Ye be as one in election of taking.

*C. Custance.* What a tale is this ? that **I wote of? whom**  
I love ?

*M. Mery.* Yea, and he is as loving a worm again as a dove.

E'en of very pity he is willing you to take,  
Because ye shall not destroy yourself for his sake.

*C. Custance.* Marry, God yeld his maship whatever he  
be. 51

It is gentmanly spoken.

*M. Mery.* Is it not, trow ye ?

If ye have the grace now to offer yourself, ye speed.

*C. Custance.* As much as though I did, this time it shall  
not need.

But what gentman is it, I pray you tell me plain,  
That wooeth so finely ?

*M. Mery.* Lo, where ye be again,  
As though ye knew him not.

*C. Custance.* Tush, ye speak in jest.

*M. Mery.* Nay sure, the party is in good knocking  
earnest,

And have you he will (he saith), and have you he  
must.

*C. Custance.* I am promised during my life, that is just.

*M. Mery.* Marry, so thinketh he, unto him alone. 61

*C. Custance.* No creature hath my faith and troth but  
one,

That is Gawyn Goodluck : and if it be not he,  
He hath no title this way whatever he be,

Nor I know none to whom I have such word spoken,

*M. Mery.* Ye know him not you by his letter and token.

*C. Custance.* Indeed true it is, that a letter I have,  
But I never read it yet, as God me save.

*M. Mery.* Ye a woman ? and your letter so long unread.

*C. Custance.* Ye may thereby know what haste I have to wed. 70

But now who it is, for my hand I know by guess.

*M. Mery.* Ah, well I say.

*C. Custance.* It is Roister Doister, doubtless.

*M. Mery.* Will ye never leave this dissimulation ?

Ye know him not.

*C. Custance.* But by imagination,

For no man there is but a very dolt and lout

That to woo a widow would so go about.

He shall never have me his wife while he do live.

*M. Mery.* Then will he have you if he may, so mote I thrive,

And he biddeth you send him word by me, 79

That ye humbly beseech him, ye may his wife be,

And that there shall be no let in you nor mistrust,

But to be wedded on Sunday next if he lust,

And biddeth you to look for him.

*C. Custance.* Doth he bid so ?

*M. Mery.* When he cometh, ask him whether he did or no.

*C. Custance.* Go say, that I bid him keep him warm at home,

For if he come abroad, he shall cough me a mome.

My mind was vexed, I shrew his head, sottish dolt.

*M. Mery.* He hath in his head—

*C. Custance.* As much brain as a burbolt.

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 3.

*M. Mery.* Well, dame Custance, if he hear you thus  
play choploge—

*C. Custance.* What will he ?

*M. Mery.* Play the devil in the horologe. 90

*C. Custance.* I defy him, lout.

*M. Mery.* Shall I tell him what ye say ?

*C. Custance.* **Yea**, and add whatsoever thou canst, I thee  
pray.

And I will avouch it, whatsoever it be.

*M. Mery.* Then let me alone; we will laugh well, ye  
shall see,

It will not be long ere he will hither resort.

*C. Custance.* Let him come when him lust, I wish no  
better sport.

Fare ye well, I will in, and read my great letter.

I shall to my wooer make answer the better.

[*Exeat.*]

## SCENE III

*Mathew Merygreeke. Roister Doister.*

*M. Mery.* Now that the whole answer in my devise doth  
rest,

I shall paint out our wooer in colours of the best.

And all that I say shall be on Custance's mouth,

She is author of all that I shall speak forsooth.

But yond cometh Roister Doister now in a trance.

*R. Roister.* Juno send me this **day** good luck and good  
**chance.**

I cannot but come see how Merygreeke doth speed.  
*M. Mery.* I will not see him, but give him a jut indeed.

I cry your mastership mercy.

*R. Roister.* And whither now ?

*M. Mery.* As fast as I could run, sir, in post against  
 you. 10

But why speak ye so faintly, or why are ye so sad ?

*R. Roister.* Thou knowest the proverb, because I cannot be had.

Hast thou spoken with this woman ?

*M. Mery.* Yea, that I have.

*R. Roister.* And what will this gear be ?

*M. Mery.* No, so God me save.

*R. Roister.* Hast thou a flat answer ?

*M. Mery.* Nay, a sharp answer.

*R. Roister.* What ?

*M. Mery.* Ye shall not (she saith) by her will marry her  
 cat.

Ye are such a calf, such an ass, such a block,  
 Such a lilburn, such a hoball, such a lobcock,  
 And because ye should come to her at no season,  
 She despised your maship out of all reason. 20

Beware what ye say (ko I) of such a gentman,  
 Nay, I fear him not (ko she), do the best he can.  
 He vaunteth himself for a man of prowess great,  
 Whereas a good gander, I daresay, may him beat.  
 And where he is louted and laughed to scorn,  
 For the veriest dolt that ever was born,

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 3.

And veriest lover, sloven and beast,  
Living in this world from the west to the east:  
Yet of himself hath he such opinion,  
That in all the world is not the like minion. 30  
He thinketh each woman to be brought in dotage  
With the only sight of his goodly personage :  
Yet none that will have him: we do him lout and  
flock,  
And make him among us our common sporting  
stock,  
And so would I now (ko she), save only because,  
Better nay (ko I), I lust not meddle with daws.  
Ye are happy (ko I) that ye are a woman,  
This would cost you your life in case ye were a man.

*R. Roister.* Yea, an hundred thousand pound should not  
save her life.

*M. Mery.* No, but that ye woo her to have her to your  
wife. 40

But I could not stop her mouth.

*R. Roister.* Heigh ho, alas !

*M. Mery.* Be of good cheer, man, and let the world pass.

*R. Roister.* What shall I do or say now that it will not  
be?

*M. Mery.* Ye shall have choice of a thousand as good  
as she,

And ye must pardon her, it is for lack of wit

*R. Roister.* Yea, for were not I an husband for her fit?.

Well, what should I **now** do ?

*M. Mery.* In faith I cannot tell.

*R. Roister.* I will go home and die.

*M. Mery.* Then shall I bid toll the bell ?

*R. Roister.* No.

*M. Mery.* God have mercy on your soul, ah, good  
gentleman, 49

That e'er ye should th[u]s die for an unkind woman.  
Will ye drink once ere ye go ?

*R. Roister.* No, no, I will none.

*M. Mery.* How feel your soul to God ?

*R. Roister.* I am nigh gone.

*M. Mery.* And shall we hence straight ?

*R. Roister.* Yea.

*M. Mery.* *Placebo dilexi.* [ut infra.]

Master Roister Doister will straight go home and die.

*R. Roister.* Heigh-how! alas, the pangs of death my  
heart do break.

*M. Mery.* Hold your peace for shame, sir, a dead man  
may not speak.

*Nequando.* What mourners and what torches  
shall we have ?

*R. Roister.* None.

*M. Mery. Dirige.* He will go darkling to his grave,  
*Neque lux, neque crux, neque* mourners, *neque*  
clink,

He will steal to heaven, unknowing to God, I  
think. 60

*A porta inferi.* Who shall your goods possess ?

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 3.

*R. Roister.* Thou shalt be my sectour, and have all more  
and less.

*M. Mery. Requiem cetemam.* Now, God reward your  
mastership.

And I will cry halfpenny-dole for your worship.

Come forth, sirs, hear the doleful news I shall you  
tell. *Evocat servos militis.*

Our good master here will no longer with us dwell,  
But in spite of Custance, which hath him wearied,  
Let us see his maship solemnly buried.

And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,  
Some part of his funerals let us here begin. 70

*Audivi vocem.* All men take heede by this one  
gentleman,

How you set your love upon an unkind woman.

For these women be all such mad peevish elves,  
They will not be won except it please themselves.

But in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,  
Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well.

And will ye needs go from us thus in very deed ?

*R. Roister\** Yea, in good sadness.

*M. Mery.* Now, Jesus Christ be your speed.

Good-night, Roger old knave; farewell, Roger old  
knave. 79

Good-night, Roger old knave, knave, knap. [*ut infra.*]

Pray for the late master Roister Doister's soul,

And come forth, parish clerk, let the passing bell  
toll. [*Ad servos militis.*]

ACT III. SC. 3.

**Roister Doister**

Pray for your master, sirs, and for him ring a peal.  
He was your right good master while he was in  
heal.

*Qui Lazarum.*

*R. Roister.* Heigh-how!

*M. Mery.* Dead men go not so fast

*In Paradisum.*

*R. Roister.* Heihow !

*M. Mery.* Soft, hear what I have cast.

*R. Roister.* I will hear nothing, I am past.

*M. Mery.* Whough, wellaway.

Ye may tarry one hour, and hear what I shall say,

Ye were best, sir, for a while to revive again,

And quite them ere ye go.

*R. Roister.* Trowest thou so ?

*M. Mery,* Ye, plain.

90

*R. Roister.* How may I revive, being now so far past ?

*M. Mery.* I will rub your temples, and fet you again at  
last.

*R. Roister,* It will not be possible.

*M, Mery.* Yes, for twenty pound.

*R. Roister,* Arms, what dost thou ?

*M, Mery,* Fet you again out of your sound.

By this cross ye were nigh gone indeed, I might  
**feel**

**Your** soul departing within an inch **of your heel.**

**Now follow** my counsel.

*R. Roister,* What is it ?

## **Roister Doister**

ACT III. SC. 3.

*M. Mery.* If I were you,

Custance should eft seek to me, ere I would bow.

*R. Roister.* Well, as thou wilt have me, even so will I  
do. 99

*M. Mery.* Then shall ye revive again for an hour or two.

*R. Roister,* As thou wilt, I am content for a little space.

*M. Mery,* Good hap is not hasty : yet in space com[e]th  
grace.

To speak with Custance yourself should be very  
well,  
What good thereof may come, nor I nor you can  
tell.

But now the matter standeth upon your marriage,  
Ye must now take unto you a lusty courage.  
Ye may not speak with a faint heart to Custance,  
But with a lusty breast and countenance,  
That she may know she hath to answer to a man.

*R. Roister.* Yes, I can do that as well as any can. 110

*M. Mery.* Then because ye must Custance face to face  
woo,

Let us see how to behave yourself ye can do.

Ye must have a portly brag after your estate.

*R. Roister.* Tush, I can handle that after the best rate.

*M, Mery.* Well done ! so lo, up man with your head and  
chin,

Up with that snout, man ! so lo, now ye begin !

So, that is somewhat like, but pranky cote, nay  
whan?

That is a lusty brute; hands under your side, man :  
 So lo, now is it even as it should be, 119  
 That is somewhat like, for a man of your degree.  
 Then must ye stately go, jetting up and down.  
 Tut, can ye no better shake the tail of your gown?  
 There, lo, such a lusty brag it is ye must make.

*R. Roister.* To come behind, and make curtesy, thou  
 must some pains take.

*M. Mery.* Else were I much to blame, I thank your  
 mastership.

The lord one day all to begrime you with worship,  
 Back, sir sauce, let gentlefolks have elbow room,  
 'VoId, sirs, see ye not master Roister Doister come ?  
 Make place, my masters.

*R. Roister.* Thou jostlest now too nigh.

*M. Mery.* Back, all rude louts.

*R. Roister.* Tush 1

*M. Mery.* I cry your maship mercy. 130  
 Hoighdagh, if fair fine mistress Custance saw you  
 now,

Ralph Roister Doister were her own, I warrant you.

*R. Roister.* Near an M by your girdle ?

*M. Mery.* Your good mastership's  
 Mastership, were her own mistress-ship's mistress-  
 ships,  
 Ye were take up for hawks, ye were gone, ye were  
 gone,  
 But now one other thing more yet **I think upon.**

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC.3.

*R. Roister.* Show what it is.

*M. Mery.* A wooer, be he never so poor,  
Must play and sing before his best-beloved's door,  
How much more than you ?

*R. Roister.* Thou speakest well, out of doubt.

*M. Mery.* And perchance that would make her the  
sooner come out. **140**

*R. Roister.* Go call my musicians, bid them hie apace.

*M. Mery.* I will be here with them ere ye can say *trey*  
*ace.* [*Exeat.*

*R. Roister.* This was well said of Merygreeke, I 'low his  
wit.

Before my sweetheart's door we will have a fit,  
That if my love come forth, that I may with her  
talk,

I doubt not but this gear shall on my side walk.  
But lo, how well Merygreeke is returned sence.

*Re-enter Merygreeke.*

*M. Mery.* There hath grown no grass on my heel since  
I went hence,

Lo, here have I brought that shall make you past-  
ance.

*R. Roister.* Come, sirs, let us sing to win my dear **love**  
Custance. **150**

*Cantent.*

*M. Mery.* Lo, where she cometh, some countenance to  
her make,

And ye shall hear me be plain with her for your sake,



## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC 4.

*C. Custance.* I will not be served with a fool in no wise,  
When I choose an husband I hope to take a man.

*M. Mery.* And where will ye find one which can do that  
he can ?

Now this man toward you being so kind,  
You not to make him an answer somewhat to his  
mind.

*C. Custance.* I sent him a full answer by you, did I  
not?

*M. Mery.* And I reported it.

*C. Custance.* Nay, I must speak it again. 20

*R. Roister.* No, no, he told it all.

*M. Mery.* Was I not metely plain ?

*R. Roister.* Yes.

*M. Mery.* But I would not tell all; for faith, if I had,  
With you, dame Custance, ere this hour it had been  
bad,

And not without cause : for this goodly personage  
Meant no less than to join with you in marriage.

*C. Custance.* Let him waste no more labour nor suit  
about me.

*M. Mery.* Ye know not where your preferment lieth, I  
see,

He sending you such a token, ring and letter,

*C. Custance.* Marry, here it is ; ye never saw a better.

*M. Mery.* Let us see your letter.

*C. Custance.* Hold, read it if ye can. 30

And see what letter it is to win a woman.

ACT III. SC. 4.

**Roister Doister**

*M. Mery.* 'To mine own dear coney bird, sweetheart,  
and pigsny,

Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by.'  
Of this superscription do ye blame the style?

*C. Custance.* With the rest as good stuff as ye read a  
great while.

*M. Mery.* 'Sweet mistress, where as I love you nothing  
at all,

Regarding your substance and riches chief of all,  
For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit,  
I commend me unto you never a whit.

Sorry to hear report of your good welfare. 40

For (as I hear say) such your conditions are,  
That ye be worthy favour of no living man,  
To be abhorred of every honest man.

To be taken for a woman inclined to vice.

Nothing at all to virtue giving her due price.

Wherefore, concerning marriage, ye are thought  
Such a fine paragon, as ne'er honest man bought.

And now by these presents I do you advertise

That I am minded to marry you in no wise. 49

For your goods and substance, I could be content

To take you as ye are. If ye mind to be my wife,

Ye shall be assured for the time of my life,

I will keep you right well, from good raiment and  
fare,

Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care.

Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty,

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 4.

Do and say what ye lust, ye shall never please me,  
But when ye are merry, I will be all sad;  
When ye are sorry, I will be very glad.  
When ye seek your heart's ease, I will *be* unkind,  
At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find. 60  
But all things contrary to your will and mind,  
Shall be done : otherwise I will not be behind  
To speak. And as for all them that would do you  
wrong

I will so help and maintain, ye shall not live long.  
Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you but I.  
I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you till I die,  
Thus, good mistress Custance, the Lord you save  
and keep,  
From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or  
sleep.

Who favoureth you no less (ye may be bold) 69  
Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold.'

*C. Custance*, How by this letter of love? is it not fine?

*R. Roister*. By the arms of Caleys it is none of mine.

*M. Mery*. Fie, you are foul to blame, this is your own  
hand.

*C Custance*. Might not a woman be proud of such an  
husband?

*M. Mery*. Ah, that ye would in a letter show such  
despite.

*R. Roister*, Oh, I would I had him here, the which did it  
endite.

*M. Mery.* Why, ye made it yourseK, ye told me by this  
light.

*R. Roister.* Yea, I meant I wrote it mine own self yester-  
night.

*C. Custance.* I-wis, sir, I would not have sent you such a  
mock.

*R. Roister.* Ye may so take it, but I meant it not so, by  
Cock. 80

*M. Mery.* Who can blame this woman to fume and fret  
and rage ?

Tut, tut I yourself now have marred your own  
marriage.

Well, yet mistress Custance, if ye can this remit,  
This gentleman otherwise may your love requit.

*C. Custance.* No, God be with you both, and seek no  
more to me. [Exeat.

*R. Roister.* Wough ! she is gone for ever, I shall her  
no more see.

*M. Mery.* What, weep ? fie, for shame, and blubber ?  
For manhood's sake,

Never let your foe so much pleasure of you take.  
Rather play the man's part, and do love refrain.

If she despise you, e'en despise ye her again. 90

*R. Roister.* By Goss, and for thy sake I defy her in-  
deed.

*M. Mery.* Yea, and perchance that way ye shall much  
sooner speed,

For one mad property these women have in fey,

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 4.

When ye will, they will not: will not ye, then will they.

Ah, foolish woman ! ah, most unlucky distance !

Ah, unfortunate woman ! ah, peevish Custance!

Art thou to thine harms so obstinately bent,

That thou canst not see where lieth thine high preferment ?

Canst thou not lub dis man, which could lub dee so well ?

Art thou so much thine own foe ?

*R. Roister.* Thou dost the truth tell. 100

*M. Mery.* Well I lament.

*R. Roister.* So do I.

*M. Mery.* Wherefore ?

*R. Roister.* For this thing  
Because she is gone.

*M. Mery.* I mourn for another thing.

*R. Roister.* What is it, Merygreeke, wherefore thou dost grief take ?

*M. Mery.* That I am not a woman myself for your sake,  
I would have you myself, and a straw for yond Gill,  
And mock much of you though it were against my will.

I would not, I warrant you, fall in such a rage,  
As so to refuse such a goodly personage.

*R. Roister.* In faith, I heartily thank thee, Merygreeke.

*M. Mery.* And I were a woman——

*R. Roister.* Thou wouldest to me seek. 110

*M. Mery.* For, though I say it, a goodly person ye be.

*A\ Roister,* No, no.

*M. Mery,* Yes, a goodly man as e'er I did see.

*R. Roister,* No, I am a poor homely man, as God made me.

*M. Mery.* By the faith that I owe to God, sir, but ye be,  
Would I might for your sake, spend a thousand  
pound land.

*R, Roister,* I dare say thou wouldest have ine to thy  
husband.

*M. Mery,* Yea : and I were the fairest lady in the shire,  
And knew you as I know you, and see you now  
here.

Well, I say no more.

*R, Roister,* Gramercies, with all my heart.

*M, Mery.* But since that cannot be, will ye play a wise  
part? 120

*R. Roister,* How should I ?

*M, Mery,* Refrain from Custance a while now,  
And I warrant her soon right glad to seek to you.  
Ye shall see her anon come on her knees creeping,  
And pray you to be good to her, salt tears weeping.

*R, Roister.* But what and she come not ?

*M. Mery.* In faith, then, farewell she.

Or else if ye be wroth, ye may avenged be.

*R. Roister.* By Cock's precious potstick, and e'en so I  
shall.

I will utterly destroy her, and house and all.

## Roister Doister

ACT III. SC. 4.

But I would be avenged in the mean space, 129

On that vile scribbler, that did my wooing disgrace.

*M. Mery.* Scribbler (ko you), indeed he is worthy no less.

I will call him to you, and ye bid me doubtless.

*R. Roister.* Yes, for although he had as many lives,

As a thousand widows, and a thousand wives,

As a thousand lions, and a thousand rats,

A thousand wolves, and a thousand cats,

A thousand bulls, and a thousand calves,

And a thousand legions divided in halves,

He shall never 'scape death on my sword's point,

Though I should be torn therefore joint by joint.

*M. Mery.* Nay, if ye will kill him, I will not bet him, 141

I will not in so much extremity set him ;

He may yet amend, sir, and be an honest man,

Therefore pardon him, good soul, as much as ye can.

*R. Roister.* Well, for thy sake, this once with his life he  
shall pass,

But I will hew him all to pieces, by the Mass.

*M. Mery.* Nay, faith, ye shall promise that he shall no  
harm have,

Else I will not bet him.

*R. Roister.* I shall so, God me save.

But I may chide him a good.

*M. Mery.* Yea, that do hardly.

*R. Roister.* Go, then.

*M. Mery.* I return, and bring him to you by and by. 150

[*Ex.*

## SCENE V

*Roister Doister. Mathew Merygreeke. Scrivener.*

*R. Roister.* What is a gentleman but his word and his promise ?

I must now save this villain's life in any wise,  
And yet at him already my hands do tickle,  
I shall uneth hold them, they will be so fickle.  
But lo, and Merygreeke have not brought him  
sens.

*M. Mery.* Nay, I would I had of my purse paid forty pens.

*Scrivener.* So would I too: but it needed not that stound.

*M. Mery.* But the gentman had rather spent five thousand pound,

For it disgraced him at least *five* times so much.

*Scrivener.* He disgraced himself, his loutishness is such.

*R. Roister.* How long they stand prating ! Why comest thou not away ? ||

*M. Mery.* Come now to himself, and hark what he will say.

*Scrivener.* I am not afraid in his presence to appear.

*R. Roister.* Art thou come, fellow ?

*Scrivener.* How think you ? am I not here ?

*R. Roister.* What hindrance hast thou done me, and what villainy ?

## **Roister Doister**

ACT III. SC. 5.

*Scrivener.* It hath come of thyself, if thou hast had any.

*R. Roister.* All the stock thou comest of later or rather,  
From thy first father's grandfather's father's father,  
Nor all that shall come of thee to the world's end,  
Though to threescore generations they descend, 20  
Can be able to make me a'just recompense,  
For this trespass of thine and this one offence.

*Scrivener.* Wherein?

*R. Roister.* Did not you make me a letter, brother?

*Scrivener.* Pay the like hire, I will make you such another.

*R. Roister.* Nay, see and these whoreson Pharisees and Scribes

Do not get their living by polling and bribes.

If it were not for shame——

*Scrivener.* Nay, hold thy hands still.

*M. Mery.* Why, did ye not promise that ye would not him spill?

*Scrivener.* Let him not spare me.

*R. Roister.* Why wilt thou strike me again?

*Scrivener.* Ye shall have as good as ye bring of me, that is plain.

*M. Mery.* I cannot blame him, sir, though your blows would him grieve.

For he knoweth present death to ensue of all ye give.

*R. Roister.* Well, this man for once hath purchased thy pardon.

ACT III. SC. 5.

**Roister Doister**

*Scrivener.* And what say ye to me? or else I will be gone.

*R, Roister.* I say the letter thou madest me was not good.

*Scrivener.* Then did ye wrong copy it, of likelihood.

*R, Roister.* Yes, out of thy copy word for word I wrote.

*Scrivener.* Then was it as ye prayed to have it, I wot,  
But in reading and pointing there was made some fault.

*R. Roister.* I wot not, but it made all my matter to halt. 40

*Scrivener.* How say you, is this mine original or no?

*R. Roister.* The self same that I wrote out of, so mote I go.

*Scrivener.* Look you on your own fist, and I will look on this,

And let this man be judge whether I read amiss.

'To mine own dear coney bird, sweetheart, and pigsny,

Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by.'

How now? doth not this superscription agree?

*R. Roister.* Read that is within, and there ye shall the fault see.

*Scrivener.* ' Sweet mistress, whereas I love you, nothing at all 49

Regarding your riches and substance : chief of all

For your personage, beauty, demeanour, and wit

I commend me unto you : never a whit

## **Roister Doister**

ACT III. SC 5

Sorry to hear report of your good welfare.  
For (as I hear say) such your conditions are,  
That ye be worthy favour : of no living man  
To be abhorred : of every honest man  
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice  
Nothing at all: to virtue giving her due price.  
Wherefore concerning marriage, ye are though  
Such a fine paragon, as ne'er honest man bought.  
And now by these presents I do you advertise, 61  
That I am minded to marry you : in no wise  
For your goods and substance : I can be content  
To take you as you are : if ye will be my wife,  
Ye shall be assured for the time of my life,  
I will keep you right well: from good raiment and  
fare,  
Ye shall not be kept: but in sorrow and care  
Ye shall in no wise live : at your own liberty,  
Do and say what ye lust: ye shall never please me  
But when ye are merry : I will be all sad 70  
When ye are sorry : I will be very glad  
When ye seek your heart's ease : I will be unkind  
At no time : in me shall ye much gentleness find.  
But all things contrary to your will and mind  
Shall be done otherwise : I will not be behind  
To speak : and as for all them that would do you  
wrong,  
(I will so help and maintain ye) shall not live  
long.

Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you, but I,  
 I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you till I die.  
 Thus, good mistress Custance, the Lord you save  
 and keep, 80

From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep,  
 Who favoureth you no less (ye may be bold),  
 Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold.'  
 Now, sir, what default can ye find in this letter?

*R, Roister.* Of truth, in my mind there cannot be a  
 better.

*Scrivener,* Then was the fault in reading, and not in  
 writing,

No, nor I dare say in the form of enditing.

But who read this letter, that it sounded so naught?

*M. Mery.* I read it, indeed.

*Scrivener,* Ye read it not as ye ought.

*R, Roister,* Why, thou wretched villain, was all this  
 same fault in thee? 90

*M, Mery,* I knock your costard if ye offer to strike me.

*R, Roister,* Strikest thou, indeed? and I offer but in jest?

*M, Mery,* Yea, and rap you again except ye can sit in  
 rest.

And I will no longer tarry here, me believe.

*R. Roister,* What, wilt thou be angry, and I do thee  
 forgive?

Fare thou well, scribbler, I cry thee mercy indeed.

*Scrivener,* Fare ye well, bibbler, and worthily may ye  
 speed.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT III. SC.5.

*R. Roister,* If it were another but thou, it were a knave.

*M, Mery,* Ye are another yourself, sir, the Lord us both  
save.

Albeit in this matter I must your pardon crave, Ioo  
Alas, would ye wish in me the wit that ye have ?

But as for my fault I can quickly amend,

I will show Custance it was I that did offend.

*R. Roister,* By so doing her anger may be reformed.

*M, Mery,* But if by no entreaty she will be turned,

Then set light by her and be as testy as she,

And do your force upon her with extremity.

*R, Roister,* Come on, therefore, let us go home in sad-  
ness.

*M, Mery,* That if force shall need all may be in a readi-  
ness,

And as for this letter hardly let all go, 110

We will know where she refuse you for that or no.

*[Exeant am.]*

**ACT IV****SCENE I***Sym Suresby,*

*Sym Sure.* Is there any man but I, Sym Suresby, alone,  
That would have taken such an enterprise him upon,  
In such an outrageous tempest as this was,  
Such a dangerous gulf of the sea to pass ?  
I think, verily, Neptune's mighty godship  
Was angry with some that was in our ship,  
And but for the honesty which in me he found,  
I think for the others' sake we had been drowned.  
But fie on that servant which for his master's wealth  
Will stick for to hazard both his life and his health.  
My master, Gawyn Goodluck, after me a day, II  
Because of the weather, thought best his ship to  
    stay,  
And now that I have the rough surges so well  
    past,  
God grant I may find all things safe here at last.  
Then will I think all my travail well spent.  
Now the first point wherefore my master hath me sent

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 2.

Is to salute dame Christian Custance, his wife  
Espoused, whom he tendereth no less than his life.  
I must see how it is with her, well or wrong, 19  
And whether for him she doth not now think long :  
Then to other friends I have a message or tway,  
And then so to return and meet him on the way.  
Now will I go knock that I may despatch with  
speed,  
But lo, forth cometh herself happily indeed.

### SCENE II

*Christian Custance. Sym Suresby.*

*C. Custance.* I come to see if any more stirring be here,  
But what stranger is this which doth to me appear?

*Sym Sure.* I will speak to her : Dame, the Lord you save  
and see.

*C. Custance.* What, friend Sym Suresby? Forsooth,  
right welcome ye be,

How doth mine own Gawyn Goodluck, I pray thee  
tell?

*Sym Sure.* When he knoweth of your health he will be  
perfect well.

*C. Custance.* If he have perfect health, I am as I would be.

*Sym Sure.* Such news will please him well, this is as it  
should be.

*C. Custance.* I think now long for him.

*Sym Sure.* And he as long for you.

*C. Custance.* When will he be at home ?

*Sym Sure.* His heart is here e'en now, 10  
His body cometh after.

*C. Custance.* I would see that fain.

*Sym Sure.* As fast as wind and sail can carry it amain.

But what two men are yond coming hitherward ?

*C. Custance.* Now I shrew their best Christmas cheeks  
both togetherward.

### SCENE III

*Christian Custance. Sym Suresby. Ralph Roister.  
Mathew Merygreeke. Trupenie.*

*C. Custance.* What mean these lewd fellows thus to  
trouble me still ?

Sym Suresby here perchance shall thereof deem  
some ill.

And shall suspect in me some point of naughtiness,  
And they come hitherward.

*Sym Sure.* What is their business ?

*C. Custance.* I have nought to them; nor they to me in  
sadness.

*Sym Sure.* Let us hearken them; somewhat there is, I  
fear it.

*R. Roister.* I will speak out aloud best, that she **may**  
hear it.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT IV. SC. 3.

*M. Mery.* Nay, alas, ye may so fear her out of her wit.

*R. Roister.* By the cross of my sword, I will hurt her no whit.

*M. Mery.* Will ye do no harm indeed ? shall I trust your word ? 10

*R. Roister.* By Roister Doister's faith, I will speak but in borde.

*Sym Sure.* Let us hearken them; somewhat there is, I fear it.

*R. Roister.* I will speak out aloud, I care not who hear it:

Sirs, see that my harness, my target, and my shield,  
Be made as bright now, as when I was last in  
field,

As white as I should to war again to-morrow:

For sick shall I be, but I work some folk sorrow.

Therefore see that all shine as bright as Saint  
George,

Or as doth a key newly come from the smith's forge,  
I would have my sword and harness to shine so  
bright, 20

That I might therewith dim mine enemies' sight,

I would have it cast beams as fast, I tell you plain,

As doth the glittering grass after a shower of rain.

And see that in case I should need to come to  
arming,

All things may be ready at a minute's warning,

For such chance may chance in an hour, do ye hear?

*M. Mery.* As perchance shall not chance again in seven year.

*A\ Roister.* Now draw we near to her, and hear what shall be said.

*M. Mery.* But I would not have you make her too much afraid.

*R. Roister.* Well found, sweet wife (I trust), for all this your sour look. 30

*C. distance.* Wife, why call ye me wife ?

*Sym Sure.* Wife ? this gear goeth acrook.

*M. Mery.* Nay, mistress Custance, I warrant you, our letter

Is not as we read e'en now, but much better,  
And where ye half stomached this gentleman afore,  
For this same letter, ye will love him now there-  
fore,

Nor it is not this letter, though ye were a queen,  
That should break marriage between you twain, I  
ween.

*C. Custance.* I did not refuse him for the letter's sake.

*R. Roister.* Then ye are content me for your husband to take?

*C, Custance.* You for my husband to take ? nothing less truly. 40

*R, Roister.* Yea, say so, sweet spouse, afore strangers hardly.

## **Roister Doister**

ACT IV. SC. 3.

*M. Mery.* And though I have here his letter of love with me,

Yet his ring and tokens he sent, keep safe with ye.

*C. Custance,* A mischief take his tokens, and him and thee too.

But what prate I with fools? have I naught else to do?

Come in with me, Sym Suresby, to take some repast.

*Sym Sure.* I must ere I drink, by your leave, go in all haste,

To a place or two, with earnest letters of his.

*C. Custance,* Then come drink here with me.

*Sym Sure,* I thank you!

*C. Custance.* Do not miss.

You shall have a token to your master with you. 50

*Sym Sure,* No tokens this time, gramercies, God be with you. *[Exeat*

*C. Custance,* Surely this fellow misdeemeth some ill in me.

Which thing but God help, will go near to spill me.

*E. Roister.* Yea, farewell, fellow, and tell thy master Goodluck

That he cometh too late of this blossom to pluck.

Let him keep him there still, or at leastwise make no haste,

As for his labour hither he shall spend in waste.

His betters be in place now.

*M. Mery.* As long as it will hold.

*C. distance.* I will be even with thee, thou beast, thou  
mayst be bold.

*R. Roister,* Will ye have us then ?

*C. Custance.* I will never have thee. 60

*R. Roister.* Then will I have you ?

*C. Custance.* No, the devil shall have thee.

I have gotten this hour more shame and harm by  
thee,

Than all thy life days thou canst do me honesty.

*M. Mery.* Why now may ye see what it cometh to, in  
the end,

To make a deadly foe of your most loving friend :

And i-wis this letter, if ye would hear it now——

*C. Custance.* I will hear none of it.

*M. Mery.* In faith, would ravish you.

*C. Custance.* He hath stained my name for ever, this is  
clear.

*R. Roister.* I can make all as well in an hour,

*M. Mery.* As ten year.

How say ye, will ye have him ?

*C. Custance.* No.

*M. Mery.* Will ye take him ? 70

*C. Custance.* I defy him.

*M'. Mery.* At my word ?

*C. Custance.* A shame take him.

Waste no more wind, for it will never be.

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 3-

*M. Mery.* This one fault with twain shall be mended,  
ye shall see.

Gentle mistress Custance, now, good mistress  
Custance !

Honey mistress Custance, now, sweet mistress  
Custance !

Golden mistress Custance, now, white mistress  
Custance !

Silken mistress Custance, now, fair mistress  
Custance !

*C. Custance.* Faith, rather than to marry with such a  
doltish lout,

I would match myself with a beggar, out of doubt.

*M. Mery.* Then I can say no more ; to speed we are not  
like, 80

Except ye rap out a rag of your rhetoric.

*C. Custance.* Speak not of winning me : for it shall never  
be so.

*R. Roister.* Yes, dame, I will have you, whether ye will  
or no.

I command you to love me, wherefore should ye  
not?

Is not my love to you chafing and burning hot ?

*M. Mery.* To her, that is well said.

*R. Roister.* Shall I so break my brain

To dote upon you, and ye not love us again ?

*M. Mery.* Well said yet.

*C. Custance.* Go to, you goose.

*R. Roister.* I say, Kit Culance,

In case ye will not haze, well, better yes perchance.

*C. Culance.* Avaunt, lozel! pick thee hence.

*M. Mery.* Well, sir, ye perceive, 90

For all your kind offer, she will not you receive.

*R. Roister.* Then a straw for her, and a straw for her  
again,

She shall not be my wife, would she never so fain ;

No, and though she would be at ten thousand pound  
cost.

*M. Mery.* Lo, dame, ye may see what an husband ye  
have lost.

*C. Culance.* Yea, no force, a jewel much better lost  
than found.

*M. Mery.* Ah, ye will not believe how this doth my  
heart wound.

How should a marriage between you be toward,

If both parties draw back, and become so froward?

*R. Roister.* Nay, dame, I will fire thee out of thy  
house, 100

And destroy thee and all thine, and that by and by.

*M. Mery.* Nay, for the passion of God, sir, do not so.

*R. Roister.* Yes, except she will say yea to that she said no.

*C. Culance.* And what, be there no officers, trow we, in  
town

To check idle loiterers, bragging up and down?

Where be they, by whom vacabunds should be  
represt?

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 3.

That poor silly widows might live in peace and rest.  
Shall I never rid thee out of my company?  
I will call for help : what ho, come forth Trupenie !

*Enter Trupenie.*

*Trupenie.* Anon. What is your will, mistress ? did ye  
call me ? no

*C. Custance.* Yea ; go run apace, and as fast as may be,  
Pray Tristram Trustie, my most assured friend,  
To be here by and by, that he may me defend.

*Trupenie.* That message so quickly shall be done, by  
God's grace,

**That** at my return ye shall say, I went apace.

*[Exeat.*

*C. Custance.* Then shall we see, I trow, whether ye shall  
do me harm.

*R Roister.* Yes, in faith, Kit, I shall thee and thine so  
charm,

That all women incarnate by thee may beware.

*C. Custance.* Nay, as for charming me, come hither if  
thou dare,

I shall clout thee till thou stink, both thee and thy  
train, 120

And coil thee mine own hands, and send thee home  
again.

*R. Roister.* Yea, sayest thou me that, dame ? dost thou  
me threaten ?

Go we, I still see whether I shall **be beaten.**

## ACT IV. sc. 4.

## Roister Doister

*M. Mery*, Nay, for the paishe of God, let me now treat  
peace,

For bloodshed will there be in case this strife  
increase.

Ah, good dame Custance, take better way with you.

*C, Custance*. Let him do his worst.

*M, Mery*. Yield in time.

*R, Roister*, Come hence, thou.

*Exeant Roister et Mery,*

## SCENE IV

*Christian Custance, Annot Alyface, Tibet T.*

*M, Mumblecrust,*

*C, Custance*, So, sirrah, if I should not with him take this  
way,

I should not be rid of him, I think, till doom's day.

I will call forth my folks, that without any mocks,

If he come again we may give him raps and knocks.

Madge Mumblecrust, come forth, and Tibet  
Talkapace.

Yea, and come forth too, mistress Annot Alyface.

*An, Alyface*, I come.

*Tibet*. And I am here.

*M, Mumble\** And I am here too, at length.

*C. Custance*. Like warriors, if need be, ye must show  
**your strength.**

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 4.

The man that this day hath thus beguiled you,  
Is Ralph Roister Doister, whom ye know well  
inowe, 10  
The most lout and dastard that ever on ground  
trod.

*Tib, Talk,* I see all folk mock him when he goeth  
abroad.

*C, Custance,* What, pretty maid? will ye talk when I  
speak?

*Tib, Talk,* No, forsooth, good mistress.

*C, Custance.* Will ye my tale break?

He threateneth to come hither with all his force  
to fight,

I charge you, if he come, on him with all your  
might.

*M, Mumble,* I with my distaff will reach him one rap.

*Tib, Talk,* And I with my new broom will sweep him  
one swap,

And then with our great club I will reach him one  
rap.

*An, Alyface,* And I with our skimmer will fling him one  
flap. 20

*Tib, Talk,* Then Trupenie's firefork will him shrewdly  
fray,

And you with the spit may drive him quite away.

*C Custance,* Go, make all ready, that it may be even so.

*Tib, Talk,* For my part I shrew them that last about  
it go. *Exeant*

## SCENE V

*Christian Custance. Trupenie, Tristram Trustie.*

*C. Custance.* Trupenie did promise me to run a great  
pace,

My friend Tristram Trustie to fet into this place.

Indeed he dwelleth hence a good start, I confess :

But yet a quick messenger might twice since, as I  
guess,

Have gone and come again. Ah, yond I spy him  
now.

*Trupenie.* Ye are a slow goer, sir, I make God avow.

My mistress Custance will in me put all the blame,

Your legs be longer than mine: come apace for  
shame.

*C. Custance.* I can thee thank, Trupenie, thou hast done  
right well.

*Trupenie.* Mistress, since I went no grass hath grown on  
my heel,

But master Tristram Trustie here maketh no speed.

*C. Custance.* That he came at all, I thank him in very  
deed,

For now have I need of the help of some wise  
man.

*T. Trustie.* Then may I be gone again, for none such  
I [a]m.

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 5.

*Trupenie*, Ye may be by your going : for no Alderman  
Can go I dare say a sadder pace than ye can.

*C. Custance*, Trupenie, get thee in, thou shalt among  
them know,

How to use thyself, like a proper man I trow.

*Trupenie*, I go. *Exeant.*

*C. Custance*, Now, Tristram Trustie, I thank you right  
much.

For at my first sending to come ye never grutch. 20

*T. Trustie*, Dame Custance, God ye save, and while my  
life shall last,

For my friend Goodluck's sake ye shall not send in  
wast.

*C. Custance*, He shall give you thanks.

*T. Trustie*, I will do much for his sake.

*C. Custance*, But alack, I fear, great displeasure shall  
be take.

*T. Trustie*. Wherefore ?

*C. Custance*, For a foolish matter.

*T. Trustie*. What is your cause ?

*C. Custance*. I am ill accombred with a couple of daws.

*T. Trustie*, Nay, weep not, woman : but tell me what  
your cause is.

As concerning my friend is anything amiss ?

*C. Custance*. No, not on my part: but here was Sym  
Suresby.

*T. Trustie*. He was with me and told me so.

*C. Custance*. **And** he stood by 30

While Ralph Roister Doister with help of Mery-  
greekke,

For promise of marriage did unto me seek.

*T. Trustie.* And had ye made any promise before them  
twain ?

*C. Custance.* No, I had rather be torn in pieces and  
slain,

No man hath my faith and troth, but Gawyn Good-  
luck,

And that before Suresby did I say, and there stuck,  
But of certain letters there were such words spoken.

*T. Trustie.* He told me that too.

*C. Custance.* And of a ring and token.

That Suresby I spied did more than half suspect,

That I my faith to Gawyn Goodluck did reject. 40

*T. Trustie.* But there was no such matter, dame Cus-  
tance, indeed ?

*C. Custance.* If ever my head thought it, God send me  
ill speed.

Wherefore, I beseech you, with me to be a witness,

That in all my life I never intended thing less,

And what a brainsick fool Ralph Roister Doister  
is,

Yourself know well enough.

*T. Trustie.* Ye say full true, i-wis.

*C. Custance.* Because to be his wife I ne grant nor  
apply,

Hither will he come, he sweareth, by and by,

## Roister Doister

## ACT IV. SC. 6.

To kill both me and mine, and beat down my house  
flat.

Therefore I pray your aid.

*T. Trustie.* I warrant you that. So

*C. Custance,* Have I so many years lived a sober life,  
And showed myself honest, maid, widow, and wife.  
And now to be abused in such a vile sort ?

Ye see how poor widows live all void of comfort.

*T. Trustie.* I warrant him do you no harm nor wrong at  
all.

*C. Custance.* No, but Mathew Merygreeke doth me most  
appall,

That he would join himself with such a wretched  
lout.

*T, Trustie.* He doth it for a jest, I know him out of  
doubt,

And here cometh Merygreeke.

*C. Custance.* Then shall we hear his mind.

## SCENE VI

*Merygreeke. Christian Custance. Trist Trustie.*

*M. Mery.* Custance and Trustie both, I do you here well  
find.

*C. Custance.* Ah, Mathew Merygreeke, ye have used me  
well.

*M. Mery.* Now for altogether ye must your answer  
tell

Will ye have this man, woman ? or else will ye not?

Else will he come never boar so brim nor toast so hot.

*Tris. and Cus.* But why join ye with him ?

*T. Trustie.* For mirth ?

*C. Custance.* Or else in sadness ?

*M. Mery.* The more fond of you both hardly that matter guess.

*T. Trustie.* Lo, how say ye, dame ?

*M. Mery.* Why do ye think, dame distance,  
That in this wooing I have meant ought but past-  
ance?

*C. distance.* Much things ye spake, I wot, to maintain  
his dotage. 10

*M. Mery.* But well might ye judge I spake it all in  
mockage.

For why? Is Roister Doister a fit husband for  
you?

*T. Trustie.* I daresay ye never thought it.

*M. Mery.* No, to God I vow.

And did not I know afore of the insurance  
Between Gawyn Goodluck and Christian Custance?  
And did not I for the nonce, by my conveyance,  
Read his letter in a wrong sense for dalliance ?

**That** if you could have take it up at the first bound,  
We should thereat such a sport and pastime have  
**found,**

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 6.

That all the whole town should have been the  
merrier. 20

*C. Custance.* Ill ache your heads both ! I was never  
wearier,

Nor never more vexed since the first day I was born.

*T. Trustie.* But very well I wist he here did all in scorn.

*C. Custance.* But I feared thereof to take dishonesty.

*M. Mery.* This should both have made sport and  
showed your honesty,

And Goodluck, I dare swear, your wit therein would  
low.

*T. Trustie.* Yea, being no worse than we know it to be  
now.

*M. Mery.* And nothing yet too late; for when I come to  
him,

Hither will he repair with a sheep's look full grim,

By plain force and violence to drive you to yield. 30

*C. Custance.* If ye two bid me, we will with him pitch a  
field,

I and my maids together.

*M. Mery.* Let us see, be bold.

*C. Custance.* Ye shall see women's war.

*71 Trustie.* That fight will I behold.

*M. Mery.* If occasion serve, taking his part full brim,  
I will strike at you, but the rap shall light on him,  
When we first appear.

*C. Custance.* Then will I run away  
As though I were afeard.

## ACT IV. SC. 7.

**Roister Doister**

7. *Trustie*. Do you that part well play  
And I will sue for peace.
- Af. Afery*. And I will set him on.  
Then will he look as fierce as a Cotsold lion.
- 71 *Trustie*. But when goest thou for him ?
- Af. Mery*. That do I very now. 40
- C. Custance*. Ye shall find us here.
- Af. Mery*. Well, God have mercy on you. [Ex.
- 71 *Trustie*. There is no cause of fear ; the least boy in  
the street——
- C. Custance*. Nay, the least girl I have, will make him  
take his feet  
But hark! methink they make preparation.
- 71 *Trustie*. No force, it will be a good recreation.
- C. Custance*. I will stand within, and step forth speedily,  
And so make as though I ran away dreadfully.

## SCENE VII

- R. Roister. Af. Aferygreeke. C. distance. D. Doughtie.  
Harpax. Tristram Trustie.*
- R. Roister*. Now, sirs, keep your ray, and see your hearts  
be stout.  
But where be these caitiffs ? methink they dare not  
rout.  
**How** sayest thou, Merygreeke ? What doth Kit Cus-  
tance say?

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 7.

*M. Mety.* I am loth to tell you.

*R. Roister.* Tush, speak, man : yea or nay?

*M. Mery.* Forsooth, sir, I have spoken for you all **that** I can.

**But** if ye win her, ye must e'en play the man,  
E'en to fight it out, ye must a man's heart take.

*R. Roister.* Yes, they shall know, and thou knowest I have a stomach.

[*M. Mery.*] A stomach (quod you), yea, as good as e'er man had.

*R. Roister.* I trow they shall find and feel that I am a lad. 10

*M. Mery.* By this cross, I have seen you **eat** your meat as well

As any that e'er I have seen of or heard tell.

A stomach, quod you ? he that will that deny,

I know, was never at dinner in your company.

*R. Roister.* Nay, the stomach of a man it is that I mean.

*M. Mery.* Nay, the stomach of a horse or a dog, I ween

*R. Roister.* Nay, a man's **stomach with a weapon**, mean I.

*M. Mery.* **Ten men** can scarce match you **with a spoon in a pie**.

*R. Roister.* Nay, the stomach of a man to try in strife.

*M. Mery.* I never saw your stomach cloyed yet in my life. 20

ACT IV. SC. 7.

**Roister Doister**

*R, Roister,* Tush, I mean in strife or fighting to try.

*M, Mery,* We shall see how ye will strike now, being  
angry.

*R, Roister,* Have at thy pate then, and save thy head if  
thou may.

*M, Mery,* Nay, then have at your pate again by this  
day.

*R. Roister,* Nay, thou mayst not strike at me again in no  
wise.

*M, Mery,* I cannot in fight make to you such warrantise:  
But as for your foes, here let them the bargain  
bie.

*R, Roister,* Nay, as for they, shall every mother's child  
die.

And in this my fume a little thing might make me  
To beat down house and all, and else the devil take  
me. 30

*M, Mery,* If I were as ye be, by Gog's dear mother,  
I would not leave one stone upon another,  
Though she would redeem it with twenty thousand  
pounds.

*R, Roister,* It shall be even so, by his lily wounds.

*M, Mery,* Be not at one with her upon any amends.

*R. Roister,* No, though she make to me never so many  
friends.

Nor if all the world for her would undertake,  
No, not God himself neither, shall not her peace  
make,

## **Roister Doister**

ACT IV. SC. 7.

**On, therefore, march forward, soft, stay a while yet,**

*M. Mery.* **On.**

*R. Roister.* **Tarry.**

*M. Mery.* **Forth.**

*R. Roister.* **Back.**

*M. Mery.* **On.**

*R. Roister.* **Soft. Now forward set.** 40

*C. distance.* **What business have we here? Out! alas, alas !**

*R. Roister.* **Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha !**

**Didst thou see that, Merygreeke, how afraid she was?**

**Didst thou see how she fled apace out of my sight ?**

**Ah, good sweet Custance, I pity her by this light.**

*M. Mery.* **That tender heart of yours will mar altogether,**

**Thus will ye be turned with wagging of a feather.**

*R. Roister.* **On, sirs, keep your ray.**

*M. Mery.* **On, forth, while this gear is hot.**

*R. Roister.* **Soft, the arms of Caleys, I have one thing forgot.**

*M. Mery.* **What lack we now ?**

*R. Roister.* **Retire, or else we be all slain.** 50

*M. Mery.* **Back, for the pash of God I back, sirs, back again !**

**What is the great matter ?**

*R. Roister.* **This hasty forthgoing**

**Had almost brought us all to utter undoing,**

**It made me forget a thing most necessary.**

*M. Mery.* **Well remembered of a captain, by Saint Mary.**

## ACT IV. SC. 7.

**Roister Doister**

*R. Roister,* It is a thing must be had.

*M. Mery.* Let us have it then.

*R. Roister,* But I wot not where nor how.

*M. Mery,* Then wot not I when.

But what is it ?

*R. Roister.* Of a chief thing I am to seek.

*M. Mery,* Tut, so will ye be, when ye have studied a week.

But tell *me* what it is ?

*R. Roister.* I lack yet an headpiece.

*M. Mery,* The kitchen collocavit, the best hens to  
grece, 60

Run, fet it, Dobinet, and come at once withal,

And bring with thee my potgun, hanging by the  
wall. [Exit Dobinet.

I have seen your head with it full many a time,

Covered as safe as it had been with a skrine :

And I warrant it save your head from any stroke,

Except perchance to be amazed with the smoke :

I warrant your head therewith, except for the mist,

As safe as if it were fast locked up in a chest:

And lo, here our Dobinet cometh with it now.

[Re-enter Dobinet.

*D. Doughtie,* It will cover me to the shoulders well  
enow. 70

*M. Mery.* Let me see it on.

*R. Roister,* In faith, it doth metely well

*M. Mery,* There can be no fitter thing. Now ye **must**,  
us tell

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 7.

What to do.

*R. Roister.* Now forth in ray, sirs, and stop no more.

*M. Mery.* Now, Saint George to borrow, drum dub-a-dub afore.

*T. Trustie.* "What mean you to do, sir, commit manslaughter?"

*R. Roister.* To kill forty such is a matter of laughter.

*T. Trustie.* And who is it, sir, whom ye intend thus to spill?

*R. Roister.* Foolish Custance here forceth me against my will.

*T. Trustie.* And is there no mean your extreme wrath to slake?

She shall some amends unto your good maship make. 80

*R. Roister.* I will none amends.

*T. Trustie.* Is her offence so sore?

*M. Mery.* And he were a lout she could have done no more.

She hath called him fool, and dressed him like a fool,

Mocked him like a fool, used him like a fool.

*T. Trustie.* Well, yet the sheriff, the justice, or constable, Her misdemeanour to punish might be able.

*R. Roister.* No, sir, I mine own self will, in this present cause,

Be sheriff, and justice, and whole judge **of the laws,**  
**This** matter to amend, all officers be I shall,

Constable, bailiff, sergeant.

*M. Mery*, And hangman and all.

*T. Trustie*. Yet a noble courage, and the heart of a  
man, 90

Should more honour win by bearing with a woman.

Therefore take the law, and let her answer thereto.

*R. Roister*. Merygreeke, the best way were even so to do.

What honour should it be with a woman to fight ?

*M. Mery*, And what then, will ye thus forgo and lese  
your right ?

*R. Roister*, Nay, I will take the law on her withouten  
grace.

*T Trustie*, Or if your maship could pardon this one  
trespace,

I pray you forgive her.

*R. Roister*, Hoh I

*M. Mety*. Tush, tush, sir, do not.

Be good, master, to her.

*R, Roister*. Hoh !

*M. Mery*. Tush, I say, do not. 100

And what, shall your people here return straight  
home?

*T..Trustie*. Yea; levy the camp, sirs, and hence again  
each one.

*R. Roister*. But be still in readiness, if I hap to call,

I cannot tell what sudden chance may befall.

*M. Mery*. Do not off your harness, sirs, I you advise,

At the least for this fortnight in no manner wise,

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 8.

Perchance in an hour when all ye think least,  
Our master's appetite to fight will be best.

But soft, ere ye go, have one at Custance house.

*R. Roister.* Soft, what wilt thou do ?

*M. Mery.* Once discharge my harquebouse, no  
And, for my heart's ease, have once more with my  
potgun.

*R. Roister.* Hold thy hands, else is all our purpose clean  
fordone.

*M. Mery.* And it cost me my life.

*R. Roister.* I say, thou shalt not.

*M. Mery.* By the matte, but I will. Have once more  
with hail shot.

I will have some pennyworth, I will not lese all.

### SCENE VIII

*M. Merygreeke. C. Custance. R. Roister. Tib. Talk.*  
*An. Alyface. M. Muntblecrust. Trupenie. Dobinet*  
*Doughtie. Harpax. Two drums with their ensigs.*

*C. Custance.* What caitiffs are those that so shake my  
house wall ?

*M. Mery.* Ah, sirrah ! now Custance, if ye had so much  
wit,

I would see you ask pardon, and yourselves submit.

*C. Custance.* Have I still this ado with a couple of fools ?

*M. Mery.* **Hear ye** what she saith ?

*C. Custance.* Maidens come forth with your tools.

*R. Roister.* In a ray.

*M. Mery.* Dubba dub, sirrah.

*R. Roister.* In a ray.

They come suddenly on us.

*M. Mery.* Dubbadub.

*R. Roister.* In a ray.

That ever I was born, we are taken tardy.

*M. Mery.* Now, sirs, quit ourselves like tall men and  
hardy. 9

*C. Custance.* On afore, Trupenie; hold thine own, Annot;  
On toward them, Tibet, for 'scape us they cannot.

Come forth, Madge Mumblecrust, to stand fast  
together.

*M. Mery.* God send us a fair day.

*R. Roister.* See, they march on hither.

*Tib. Talk.* But, mistress——

*C. Custance.* What sayest you?

*Tib. Talk.* Shall I go fet our goose?

*C. Custance.* What to do?

*Tib. Talk.* To yonder captain I will turn her loose,

And she gape and hiss at him, as she doth at me,

I durst jeopard my hand she will make him flee.

*C. Custance.* On forward.

*R. Roister.* They come.

*M. Mery.* Stand.

*R. Roister.* Hold.

*M. Mery.* Keep.

## Roister Doister

ACT IV. SC. 8.

*R. Roister.* There.

*M. Mery.* Strike.

*R. Roister.* Take heed

*C. Custance.* Well said, Trupenfe.

*Trupenie.* Ah, whoresons.

*C. Custance.* Well done, indeed.

*M. Mery.* Hold thine own, Harpax; down with them,  
Dobinet. 20

*C. Custance.* Now Madge, there Annot: now stick them,  
Tibet.

*Tib. Talk.* All my chief quarrel is to this same little  
knave,

That beguiled me last day, nothing shall him  
save.

*D. Doughtie.* Down with this little quean, that hath at  
me such spite;

Save you from her, master, it is a very sprite.

*C. Custance.* I myself will mounsire grand captain  
undertake.

*R. Roister.* They win ground.

*M. Mery.* Save yourself, sir, for God's sake.

*R. Roister.* Out, alas ! I am slain, help !

*M. Mery.* Save yourself.

*R. Roister.* Alas !

*M. Mery.* Nay, then, have at you, mistress.

*R. Roister.* Thou hittest me, alas !

*M. Mery.* I will strike at Custance here.

*R. Roister.* Thou hittest me.

*M. Mery.* So I will. 30

Nay, mistress Custance.

*R. Roister.* Alas ! thou hit test me still.

Hold.

*M. Mery.* Save yourself, sir.

*R. Roister.* Help! out, alas ! I am slain.

*M. Mery.* Truce, hold your hands; truce for a pissing  
while or twain:

Nay, how say you, Custance, for saving of your  
life,

Will ye yield and grant to be this gentman's  
wife?

*C. Custance.* Ye told me he loved me; call ye this  
love?

*M. Mery.* He loved a while even like a turtle-dove.

*C. Custance.* Gay love, God save it : so soon hot, so soon  
cold.

*M. Mery.* I am sorry for you : he could love you yet, so  
he could.

*R. Roister.* Nay, by Cock's precious, she shall be none  
of mine. 40

*M. Mery.* Why so ?

*R. Roister.* Come away, by the matte she is mankin.

I durst adventure the loss of my right hand,

If she did not ssee her other husband :

And see if she prepare not again to fight.

*M. Mery.* What then? Saint George to borrow, our  
ladies' knight.

## Roister Doister

## ACTIV. SC. 3

*R. Roister.* Slee else whom she will, by gog she shall  
not slee me.

*M. Mery.* How then ?

*R. Roister.* Rather than to be slain, I will flee.

*C. Custance.* To it again, my knightesses ; down with  
them all.

*R. Roister.* Away, away, away I she will else kill us  
all.

*M. Mery.* Nay, stick to it, like an hardy man and a  
tall. 50

*R. Roister.* Oh bones, thou hittest me ! Away, or else  
die we shall.

*M. Mery.* Away, for the pashe of our sweet Lord Jesus  
Christ.

*C. Custance.* Away, lout and lubber, or I shall be thy  
priest. [*Eeant om.*

So this field is ours, we have driven them all  
away.

*Tib. Talk.* Thanks to God, mistress, ye have had a fair  
day.

*C. Custance.* Well, now go ye in, and make yourself  
some good cheer.

*Omnes pariter.* We go.

*T. Trustie.* Ah, sir, what a field we have had here!

*C Custance,* Friend Tristram, I pray you be a witness  
with me.

*T. Trustie.* Dame Custance, I shall depose for your  
honesty, ,

**ACT I. sc. 8.**

**Roister Doister**

And now fare ye well, except something else ye  
would. 60

*C. distance.* Not now, but when I need to send I will  
be bold.

I thank you for these pains. [*Exeat*] And now I  
will get me in.

Now Roister Doister will no more wooing begin.

[*Exeat.*]

ACT V

SCENE I

*Gawyn Goodluck, Sym Suresby,*

*G, Good,* Sym Suresby, my trusty man, now advise thee well,

And see that no false surmises thou me tell,  
Was there such ado about distance of a truth ?

*Sym Sure,* To report that I heard and saw, to me is ruth,

But both my duty and name and property  
Warneth me to you to show fidelity.

It may be well enough, and I wish it so to be,  
She may herself discharge and try her honesty.  
Yet their claim to her methought was very large,  
For with letters, rings and tokens, they did her charge. 10

Which when I heard and saw I would none to you bring.

*G, Good,* No, by Saint Marie, I allow thee in that thing.  
Ah, sirrah, now I see truth in the proverb old,  
All things that shineth is not by and by pure gold.

If any do live a woman of honesty,  
I would have sworn Christian Custance had been  
she.

*Sym Sure.* Sir, though I to you be a servant true and  
just,

Yet do not ye therefore your faithful spouse mis-  
trust.

But examine the matter, and if ye shall it find  
To be all well, be not ye for my words unkind. 20

*G. Good.* I shall do that is right, and as I see cause why.  
But here cometh Custance forth, we shall know by  
and by.

## SCENE II

*C. Custance. Gawyn Goodluck. Sym Suresby.*

*C. Custance.* I come forth to see and hearken for news  
good,

For about this hour is the time of likelihood,  
That Gawyn Goodluck by the sayings of Suresby  
Would be at home, and lo, yond I see him, I.  
What! Gawyn Goodluck, the only hope of my life!  
Welcome home, and kiss me your true espoused wife.

*G. Good.* Nay, soft, dame Custance; I must first, by your  
licence,

See whether all things be clear in your conscience.

## Roister Doister

## ACT v. sc. 2.

I hear of your doings to me very strange.

C. *Custance*. What fear ye, that my faith towards you  
should change? 10

G. *Good*. I must needs mistrust ye be elsewhere en-  
tangled.

For I hear that certain men with you have  
wrangled

About the promise of marriage by you to them made.

C. *Custance*. Could any man's report your mind therein  
persuade?

G. *Good*. Well, ye must therein declare yourself to stand  
clear,

Else I and you, dame Custance, may not join this  
year.

C. *Custance*. Then would I were dead, and fair laid in  
my grave

Ah, Suresby, is this the honesty that ye have?

To hurt me with your report, not knowing the thing.

*Sym Sure*. If ye be honest my words can hurt you  
nothing. 20

But what I heard and saw, I might not but report.

C. *Custance*. Ah, Lord, help poor widows, destitute of  
comfort!

Truly, most dear spouse, nought was done but **for**  
pastance.

G. *Good*. But such kind of sporting is homely dalliance.

C. *Custance*. If ye knew the truth, ye would take all in  
good part.

ACT V. SC. 3.

**Roister Doister**

*G. Good.* By your leave, I am not half well skilled in that art.

*C. Custance.* It was none but Roister Doister, that foolish mome.

*G. Good.* Yea, Custance, better (they say) a bad 'scuse than none.

*C. Custance,* Why, Tristram Trustie, sir, your true and faithful friend,

Was privy both to the beginning and the end. 30  
Let him be the judge, and for me testify.

*G. Good.* I will the more credit that he shall verify,  
And because I will the truth know e'en as it is,  
I will to him myself, and know all without miss.  
Come on, Sym Suresby, that before my friend thou  
may  
Avouch the same words, which thou didst to me  
say. *[Exeant.*

SCENE I I I

*Christian Custance.*

*C. Custance.* O Lord! how necessary it is now of days,

That each body live uprightly all manner ways ;

For let never so little a gap be open,

And be sure of this, the worst shall be spoken.

How innocent stand I in this for deed or thought 1

## Roister Doister

ACT V. SC. 4.

And yet see what mistrust towards me it hath wrought.

But thou, Lord, knowest all folks' thoughts and eke intents,

And thou art the deliverer of all innocents.

Thou didst help the advoutress, that she might be amended, 9

Much more then help, Lord, that never ill intended.

Thou didst help Susanna, wrongfully accused,

And no less dost thou see, Lord, how I am now abused.

Thou didst help Hester, when she should have died,

Help also, good Lord, that my truth may be tried.

Yet if Gawyn Goodluck with Tristram Trustie speak,

I trust of ill report the force shall be but weak.

And lo, yond they come, sadly talking together,

I will abide, and not shrink for their coming hither.

### SCENE IV

*Gawyn Goodluck. Tristram Trustie. C. Custance.  
Sym Suresby.*

*G. Good.* And was it none other than ye to me report ?

*Tristram.* No, and here were ye wished to have seen the sport.

*G. Good.* Would I had, rather than half of that in my purse.

*Sym Sure,* And I do much rejoice the matter was no worse,

And like as to open it I was to you faithful,  
So of dame Custance honest truth I am joyful.

For God forfend that I should hurt her by false report.

*G. Good,* Well, I will no longer hold her in discomfort.

*C. Custance,* Now come they hitherward, I trust all shall be well.

*G. Good,* Sweet Custance, neither heart can think nor tongue tell, 10

How much I joy in your constant fidelity.

Come now, kiss me, the pearl of perfect honesty.

*C. Custance,* God let me no longer to continue in life,  
Than I shall towards you continue a true wife.

*G. Good.* Well, now to make you for this some part of amends,

I shall desire first you, and then such of our friends  
As shall to you seem best, to sup at home with me,  
Where at your fought field we shall laugh and merry be.

*Sym Sure,* And mistress, I beseech you, take with me no grief,

I did a true man's part, not wishing you reproof.

*C. Custance,* Though hasty reports through surmises growing

## Roister Doister

## ACT V. SC 5.

May of poor innocents be utter overthrowing,  
Yet because to thy master thou hast a true heart,  
And I know mine own truth, I forgive thee for my  
part.

*G. Good.* Go we all to my house, and of this gear no  
more.

Go, prepare all things, Sym Suresby; hence, run  
afore.

*Sym Sure.* I go. *[Ex.*

*G. Good.* But who cometh yond, M. Merygreeke ?

*C. Custance.* Roister Doister's champion, I shrew his  
best cheek.

*T. Trustie.* Roister Doister self, your wooer, is with him  
too. 29

Surely some thing there is with us they have to do.

### S C E N E V

*M. Merygreeke. Ralph Roister. Gawyn Goodluck.*

*Tristram Trustie. C. Custance.*

*M. Mery.* Yond I see Gawyn Goodluck, to whom lieth  
my message;

I will first salute him after his long voyage,  
And then make all thing well concerning your  
behalf.

*R. Roister.* Yea, for the pash of God.

*M. Mery.* Hence out of sight, ye calf,

H 1 1 3

Till I have spoke with them, and then I will you fet.

*R. Roister.* In God's name. *[Exit R. Roister.*

*M. Mery.* What, master Gawyn Goodluck, well met!

And from your long voyage I bid you right welcome home.

*G. Good,* I thank you.

*M. Mery.* I come to you from an honest mome.

*G. Good.* Who is that ?

*M. Mery.* Roister Doister, that doughty kite.

*C. Custance.* Fie ! I can scarce abide ye should his name recite. 10

*M. Mery.* Ye must take him to favour, and pardon all past,

He heareth of your return, and is full ill aghast.

*G. Good.* I am right well content he have with us some cheer.

*C. Custance.* Fie upon him, beast! then will not I be there.

*G. Good.* Why, Custance, do ye hate him more than ye love me ?

*C. Custance.* But for your mind, sir, where **he were** would I not be.

*T. Trustie.* He would make us all laugh.

*M. Mery.* Ye ne'er had better sport

*G. Good.* I pray you, sweet Custance, let him to us resort.

*C. Custance.* To your will I assent.

## Roister Doister

ACT V. SC. 6.

*M, Mery,* Why, such a fool it is,

As no man for good pastime would forgo or miss.

*G, Good,* Fet him to go with us. 21

*M. Mery,* He will be a glad man. [*Ex,*

*T, Trustie,* We must to make us mirth, maintain him  
all we can.

And lo, yond he cometh, and Merygreeke with  
him.

*C. Custance,* At his first entrance ye shall see I will him  
trim.

But first let us hearken the gentleman's wise talk.

*T. Trustie,* I pray you, mark, if ever ye saw crane so  
stalk.

## SCENE VI.

*R. Roister. M, Merygreeke, C, Custance,  
G, Goodluck, T, Trustie, D, Doughtie, Harpax.*

*R, Roister.* May I then be bold ?

*M, Mery,* I warrant you on my word,

They say they shall be sick, but ye be at their  
board.

*R, Roister:* They were not angry, then ?

*M, Mery,* Yes, at first, and made strange,

But when I said your anger to favour should  
change,

And therewith had commended you accordingly,

They were all in love with your maship by and by,

And cried you mercy that they had done you wrong.

*R. Roister,* For why, no man, woman, nor child can hate me long.

*M, Mery.* We fear (quod they) he will be avenged one day,

Then for a penny give all our lives we may. 10

*R, Roister,* Said they so indeed ?

*M, Mery,* Did they ? yea, even with one voice.

He will forgive all (quod I). Oh, how they did rejoice.

*R, Roister,* Ha, ha, ha.

*M, Mery,* Go fet him (say they) while he is in good mood,

For have his anger who lust, we will not, by the Rood.

*R, Roister,* I pray God that it be all true, that thou hast me told,

And that she fight no more.

*M, Mery,* I warrant you, be bold.

To them, and salute them.

*R, Roister,* Sirs, I greet you all well.

*Omnes,* Your mastership is welcome.

*C. Custance,* Saving my quarrel.

For sure I will put you up into the Exchequer.

*M, Mery,* Why so ? better nay: wherefore ?

*C, Custance,* For an usurer. 20

*R, Roister.* I am no usurer, good mistress, by his arms.

## Roister Doister

ACT V. SC. 6.

*M. Mery.* When took he gain of money to any man's harms ?

*C. Custance.* Yes, a foul usurer he is, ye shall see else.

*R. Roister.* Didst not thou promise she would pick no mo quarrels ?

*C. Custance.* He will lend no blows, but he have in recompense

Fifteen for one, which is too much of conscience.

*R. Roister.* Ah, dame, by the ancient law of arms, a man Hath no honour to foil his hands on a woman.

*C. Custance.* And where other usurers take their gains yearly,

This man is angry but he have his by and by. 30

*G. Good.* Sir, do not for her sake bear me your displeasure.

*M. Mery.* Well, he shall with you talk thereof more at leisure.

Upon your good usage, he will now shake your hand.

*R. Roister.* And much heartily welcome from a strange land.

*M. Mery.* Be not afeard, Gawyn, to let him shake your fist.

*G. Good.* Oh, the most honest gentleman that e'er I wist.

I beseech your maship to take pain to sup with us.

*M. Mery.* He shall not say you nay, and I too, by Jesus,

ACT v. sc. 6.

Roister Doister

Because ye shall be friends, and let all quarrels  
pass.

R. *Roister*. I will be as good friends with them as ere I  
was. 40

M. *Mery*. Then let me fet your quire that we may have  
a song.

R. *Roister*, Go. [Exit M. *Mery*.

G. *Good*. I have heard no melody all this year long.

*Re-enter M. Mery.*

M. *Mery*. Come on, sirs, quickly.

R. *Roister*. Sing on, sirs, for my friends' sake.

D. *Dough*. Call ye these your friends ?

R. *Roister*. Sing on, and no mo words make.

[Here they sing.

G. *Good*. The Lord preserve our most noble Queen of  
renown,

And her virtues reward with the heavenly crown.

C. *Custance*. The Lord strengthen her most excellent  
Majesty,

Long to reign over us in all prosperity.

T. *Trustie*. That her godly proceedings the faith to  
defend, 49

He may 'stablish and maintain through to the end.

M. *Mery*. God grant her, as she doth, the Gospel to  
protect,

Learning and virtue to advance, and vice to correct

## Roister Doister

ACT V. SC. 6.

R. *Roister*. God grant her loving subjects both the mind  
and grace,

Her most godly proceedings worthily to embrace.

*HarPax*. Her highness' most worthy counsellors, God  
prosper

With honour and love of all men to minister.

*Omnes*. God grant the nobility her to serve and love,

With all the whole commonty as doth them behave.

AMEN,

CERTAIN SONGS TO BE SUNG BY THOSE WHICH  
SHALL USE THIS COMEDY OR INTERLUDE.

### *The Second Song.*

Whoso to marry a minion wife,

Hath had good chance and hap,

Must love her and cherish her all his life,

And dandle her in his lap.

If she will fare well, if she will go gay,

A good husband ever still,

Whatever she lust to do, or to say,

Must let her have her own will.

About what affairs soever he go,

He must show her all his mind. 10

**None of his counsel she may be kept fro,**

**Else is he a man unkind.**

*The Fourth Song,*

I mun be married a Sunday,  
 I mun be married a Sunday,  
 Whosoever shall come that way,  
 I mun be married a Sunday.

Roister Doister is my name,  
 Roister Doister is my name,  
 A lusty brute I am the same,  
 I mun be married a Sunday.

Christian Custance have I found,  
 Christian Custance have I found, 10  
 A widow worth a thousand pound,  
 I mun be married a Sunday.

Custance is as sweet as honey,  
 Custance is as sweet as honey,  
 I her lamb and she my coney,  
 I mun be married a Sunday.

When we shall make our wedding feast,  
 When we shall make our wedding feast,  
 There shall be cheer for man and beast,  
 I mun be married a Sunday. 20  
 I mun be married a Sunday, etc.

*The Psalmody.**Placebo dilexi,*

Master Roister Doister will straight go home and die,  
Our Lord Jesus Christ his soul have mercy upon :  
Thus you see to-day a man, to-morrow John.

Yet saving for a woman's extreme cruelty,  
He might have lived yet a month or two or three,  
But in spite of Custance which hath him wearied,  
His maship shall be worshipfully buried.  
And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,  
Some part of his funerals let us here begin.

*Dirige.* He will go darkling to his grave. 10  
*Neque lux, neque crux, nisi solum* clink,  
Never gentman so went toward heaven, I think.

Yet, sirs, as ye will the bliss of heaven win,  
When he cometh to the grave lay him softly in,  
And all men take heed by this one gentleman,  
How you set your love upon an unkind woman :  
For these women be all such mad peevish elves,  
They will not be won except it please themselves.  
But in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,  
Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well. 20  
Good night, Roger old knave; farewell, Roger old knave  
Good night, Roger old knave, knave, knap.

*Nequando. Audivi vocem. Requiem æternam.*

**THE PEAL OF BELLS RUNG BY THE PARISH CLERK  
AND ROISTER DOISTER'S FOUR MEN.**

*The first Bell a Triple.* When died he? When died he?

*The second.* We have him, we have him.

*The third.* Roister Doister, Roister Doister.

*The fourth Bell.* He cometh, he cometh.

*The great Bell.* Our own, our own.

## GLOSSARY

- ABYE, pay for, expiate; II. iv. 21.
- ACCOMBRED encumbered, burdened; IV. v. 26. Cf. Skelton, *Magnyfycence*, 2242, 'acomberyd with wyt.'
- ADVOUTRESSE, adulteress; v. iii. 9.
- ALIE, kindred, with probably a play upon 'ale'; cf. 'Alyface' I. ii. 124.
- AMASED, bewildered, confounded; IV. vii. 66. Palsgrave, 'I amase, I make dull or passe ones wittes.'
- AND, if; I. ii. 92, etc.
- APPOSE, puzzle, nonplus; I. i. 14. Cf. *Coventry Plays*, p. 206—  
'Be he nevyr so wyse a clerke,  
I xal apposyn hym withinne a tyde.'
- ARMS, a common oath; III. iii. 94; V. vi. 21. Cf. Stubbes, *Anatomic Of Abuses* (ed. Pickering, 1836), p. 149—'At euery other worde you shal heare either woundes, bloud, sides, heart, nailes, foote, or some other part of Christes blessed body sworne by. . . . When thou swearest by his armes, thou swearest by his power.'
- ASSAYS, AT ALL, ready for every event; II. iii. 55. Cf. *History of Jacob and Esau* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 231)—'Jacob: Come on, then, follow me, Mido, a little ways. Mido: Whither ye shall lead me: I am at all assays.' In this sense generally after the word 'armed.'
- 'At all assayes, *en tous poynts*, or *a tons poynts*.' (Palsgrave.)
- BAWAVE, beware; III. iii. 21.
- BET, past tense of *beat*; I. iv, 72. Still used in various dialects. Cf. Eng. Dial. Dict., s.v.
- BIBBLER, tippler; III. v. 97. Still used provincially.
- 'BIE=*abye*; IV. vii. 27.
- BILLIMENTS, 'ornaments of goldsmith's work, probably worn round the neck or bosom, and not infrequently set with pearls, diamonds, rubies, etc' (Madden); II. iii. 43.
- BONES, a common oath; iv. viii. 51. Cf. *armes*.
- BORD, jest, joke; I. iv. 8; IV. iii. II. Cf. Skelton, *Why Come Ye*, 782, 'In earnest or in borde.'
- BORE, past participle of *bear*) I. iii. 100.
- BORROW, pledge, surety; iv. vii. 74; iv. viii. 45. *Borrow* is a noun, as in 'to wife.' Cf. Gower, *Conf. Am.*, v., 'And toke him self seint John to borwe.'
- BRAG, a swagger; III. iii. 113; 123.
- BREAK, *i.e.* the seal; I. v. 14. Used with 'up' in *Merchant of Venice*, II. iv. 10.
- BREAK BRAIN, make foolish; IV. iii. 84. Cf. Lyly, *Endimion*, v. iii., '(love) which breaketh the

## GLOSSARY

- braines, and never bruseth the brow.'
- BREAST, voice; I. ii. 32; III. iii. 108.
- BRUTE, famous personage; I. ii. 124; III. iii. 118; 4th Song. Cf. Greene, *Friar Bacon*, xiii. 78, 'these brave lusty brutes.' Lyly, *Euphues* (ed. Arber), p. 36, 'so noble a brute.' This meaning comes from *Brute*, the mythical founder of London; hence, generally, a hero, 'brave,' gallant.
- BRIM, fierce; iv. vi. 5; iv. vi. 33. A common epithet of 'boar.' Cf. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'BRYM, or fers. *Ferus, ferox.*'
- BURBOLT, bird-bolt, a blunt-headed arrow used by fools; III. ii. 88. Cf. *Much Ado*, I. i. 35; *Henry V.* III. vii. 132.
- BUSK, bush; I. iv. 66.
- BY AND BY, immediately, at once.
- CASSOCK, a long loose coat, worn by horsemen, rustics, and even women; II. iii. 42. Cf. Greene, *Menaphon* (ed. Arber); p. 44, 'she . . . drest her selfe up in Carmelas russet cassocke.'
- CAST, think; I. ii. 167; III. iii. 86.
- CHAD = *ich had*, I had; I. iii. 99. Cf. *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, I. ii. 'Chad nede blesse me'; *Lear*, iv. vi. 211. Defoe speaks of the Somersetshire dialect as 'abridging the speech, *cham* for I am, *chil* for I will.'
- CHARM, silencing; II. ii. 4; to silence; iv. iii. 115. Cf. Ben Jonson, *Barth. Fair*, II. i., 'He is the man must charm you'; Middleton, *Fair Quarrel*, V. i. 298, 'Charm your man, I beseech you.
- CHIEVE, succeed; I. iii. 98. Cf. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'CHEVYN, or thryvyn'. *Vigeo* 'IIIchieve it' = bad luck to her. literally 'may it (she) succeed ill.
- CHOPLOGE, quibbler, usually 'choplogic'; III. ii. 89. Cf. Udall, *Erasm. Apoph.*, 'choplogues, or greate pratlrs.'
- CHWAS = *ich was*, I was; I. iii. 100
- CHW'NE, I ween; I. iii. 100.
- COCKE, BY, a common oath; I. ii. 160, etc.
- COLLOCAVIT, probably a Latinised form of *collock*, a large pail with an erect handle; iv. vii. 60. Cf. Coles (1677), 'Collock, a one-handed pail, or great piggin.' Bailey (1720), 'Collock, a pail with one handle.'
- Co MM ANDE, commended; I. iii. 126, 129. Cf. Skelton, *Magnyfyence*, 319, 'commaunde me to mesure.'
- COMMONTIE, commonalty; v. vi. 58. Still used in Scotland = *commonage*.
- CONEY, rabbit, common term of endearment; I. iv. 25; III. iv. 32, 'Perhaps-*incony*, 'sweet,' 'pretty.' Shak. *Love's Labour's Lost*, III. 136, etc. See Nares, s.v.
- CONVEYANCE, artful management; iv. vi. 16.
- COSTARD, head, literally 'apple'; III. v. 91.
- COUSTRELING, probably diminutive of *custrel* (*coistrel, coystrel*), a groom, attendant; I. iv. 76. Palsgrave gives 'Coustrell that wayteth on a speare, *covsteillier*' Cotgrave, ' *Coustillisr*: an Esquire of the body; an Armourbearer unto a Knight; the servant

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# GLOSSARY

- of a man at Arms ; also, a groom of a stable, a horse-keeper.'
- COIL, beat; IV. iii. 119. Palsgrave, 'I coyle ones kote, I beate Shym. *Je bastonne.*'
- CRACKING, boasting; I. i. 35. Palsgrave, 'I CRAKE, I boste. *Je me vante.*'
- CURRIED, beaten; I. iii. 77. Palsgrave, 'I CURRY, or beate. *Je*
- CUST, kissed; I. iii. 98. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'KYS, or kws. *Osculum, basium.*'
- DALLIANCE, sport; IV. vi. 17; v. ii. 24. Cotgrave, '*Esbat*: Spoit, pastim, play, recreation; delight, pleasure dalliance, jesting.'
- DANGER, liability to proserution; I. ii. 42. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* A. 1849, 'withouten raunson or daunger.' Cf. *periculum.*
- DAW, foolish fellow; III. iii. 36, etc.
- DEVISE, decision, direction; III. iii. I. Chaucer, *C. T.*, A. 816, 'And we wolde rewled ben at his devys.'
- DOUK, duck, bow; I. iv. 7.
- DRESSED, addressed; iv. vii. 83.
- DRINK, suffer punishment; I. iii. 27, 29. Palsgrave, 'I drinke, I suffer correctyon for a faulte. *Je compaire.*' Lyly, *Mydas*, I. ii., 'least we drinke of a drie cup.'
- DUMP, melancholy tune; II. i.
- ENTWITE, twit, reproach; II. iii. 77. Udall's Letter, 'never after to entwite [our offences] or to remember them again.'
- ELECTION, IN, likely (Halliwell); III. ii. 46. Shirley, *A Witty Fair*
- One*, II. ii., 'is in election to be of the peace and quorum.'
- EFT, afterwards, again; III. iii. 98.
- FACING, bullying, hectoring; I. i. 35. Palsgrave, 'I face, as one dothe that brauletb, or falleth out with another to make hym a frayde.'
- FACTS, deeds; I. ii. 144.
- FALSE, cowardly; I. ii. 172.
- FEAR, frighten; I. iv. 84.
- FERDEGEWS, farthingales; II. iii. 43. Cf. Spanish 'Verdugado, a verdingall reaching to the feete' (Minsheu). [Arber prints *serdegws.*]
- FETTE, FET, fetch.
- FEY, faith; III. iv. 93.
- FIREFORK, a fork for stirring the fire; iv. iv. 21. *Prompt. Parv.* 'FYR FORKE. *Ticionarium*, CATH. *pala, arpagio.*' Palsgrave. 'Fyre forke — foorche a fev. Nares quotes Withals' *Dictionarie* (1608), 'A fire-forke, *furca ignaria.*'
- FIST, handwriting; III. v. 43; v. vi. 35. Middleton, *Blurt*, etc., I. ii. 138, 'the duke has sent his fist to me.' Milton, *Areop.* (ed. Hales), p. 3a, l. 7, 'an overseeing fist.'
- FLINGING, frisking; II. iii. 27. Palsgrave, 'I flyng, as a horse dothe. *Je rue.*'
- FLOCK, stuffy cram with false stories; III. iii. 33. Palsgrave, 'I FLOCK E, I stuffe a beed, or suche lyke thyng with flockes.'
- FoIL, defile, make foul, sully; v. vi. 28. Kyd, *Cornelia* (Hazl. Dodsl., v. 184), foyldst our infant town with guiltless blood.' [Bailey (1733) gives 'to set off to advantage' as a meaning.]

## GLOSSARY

- FOND, foolish; I. i. 51, etc.  
 FORCE, NO, no matter; Iv. iii. 94; Iv. vi. 44. Palsgrave, 'I gyve no force, I care not. I I ne men chaull.' FOR WHY, because; v. vi. 8.  
 FRESH, smart; II. iii. 42. Palsgrave, 'Fresshe, gorgyouse, gay, or well besene.' Common in Skelton.  
 FUR, furrow; I. iii. 12. Cawin Douglas, Prol. xii. *Aen.*, 88, 'the scherald fur.' *Old Mortality* (Cent. Ed.), p. 159.  
 GAUDYNG, merry-making; HI. iv. I.  
 GEAR, matter, business; I. iii. 21, etc.  
 GLOMYNG, looking gloomy; I. i. 64. Skelton, *Colyn Chute*, 83, 'A glommyng and a mummyng.'  
 GRÄFF, graft; I. i. 34.  
 GRECE, fatten; iv. vii. 60. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'GRESYN, or anoyntyn wythe grese. *Sagino.*'  
 GRISTLE, a young pig; I. iv. 24. *Thersytes*, 391—  
     'It is a sowe !  
     No, by my faith, it is but a  
     grestle,  
     And on the backe it hath never  
     a brystle.'  
 Applied to young girls. Lyly, *Endimion*, v. ii., 'I love no grissels.' Middleton, *A Mad World*, II. vii. 66.  
 GOGS, corruption of 'God's'; I. iv. 28, etc.  
 GOSSE, corruption of 'God'; III. iv. 91.  
 HARD, used adjectivally with the same sense as in 'hard by,' 'hard at,' etc.; I. i. 40. *First Sketch Of*

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- Merry Wives* (ed. Halliwell, p. 13), 'in love up to the hard eares.' We find also 'at the harde heeles' (Gosson, *School Of Abuse*); 'by the harde rootes' (Skelton).  
 HARDLY, HARDELY, certainly, surely; I. ii. 44, etc.  
 HARQUEBOUSE, musket; iv. vii. no. Cotgrave, '*Arqttebuse*, an harquebuse or handgun.'  
 HAZE, have us; III. iv. 7; iv. iii. 87.  
 HEAL, health; III. iii. 84.  
 HIGH, hie, hasten; III. iii. 141.  
 HOBALL, lout, lubber; III. iii. 18. *Trial Of Treasure* (Hazl. Dodsl., iii. 277).  
 HOLD, wager; I. iii. 27. Palsgrave, 'I holde, as one holdeth a wager. *Je gaige.*'  
 HOLD UP, flatter; I. i. 49. Hoccleve, *De Reg. Princ.*, 600, 'They held hym up with her flatrye', Skelton, *Bowge*, 188.  
 HOWLET, young owl; II. i. 24. The usual spelling.  
 HUSBANDE, economist; x. iii. 91. Cotgrave, '*Qnatre mesnage*. An ill, improvident, or unskilful husband; a waste-good, spill-good, or spill-thrift.'  
 ICHOTTE = *ich wot*, I know; I. iii. 99.  
 IETTING, strutting; III. 111.121.  
 INOWE, enough; I. ii. 157; III. ii. 5.  
 INSURANCE, affiance; iv. vi. 14.  
 IOYLY, jolly; I. v. 11; II. iii. 53. *Hist. Jacob and Esau* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 249), 'I had joyly game.'  
 1ST = is it; I. iv. 42.  
 IUST, certain; HI. ii. 60. Palsgrave, 'lust, suer—certain.'  
 IUT, jolt, justle; III. iii. 8.

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- KA**, contraction of *quotha*; I. ii. xxx.  
**KITE**, perhaps applied to Roister Doister with an allusion to the provincial meaning 'belly'; v. v. 9. Bailey (1733), gives 'KiTE, a Belly. *Cumberl* Cf. Jamieson.  
**KNACKING**, mocking; III. ii. 53. Skelton, *Magn.*, 33—  
 'Fel. Here you not howe this gentylman mockys?  
*Lyb.* Ye, to knock ynge ernyst what and it preue?'  
 Jamieson, 'To KNACK, to taunt, mock.'  
**KNAP**, perhaps = *Knave*; III. iii. 81. Jamieson, 'KNAPE, a servant, esp. a groom.' (A.S. *cnapa*.) [Skeat explains as vb. = 'toll,' 'strike' (the bell).]  
**KNOT**, jovial company; II. iii. 53. *Merry Wives*, III. i. 5a.  
**Ko**, quoth; III. iii. 35, etc.  
**KOCKS NOWNES**, corruption of God's wounds'; I. iv. 23. *Like Will to Like* (Hazl. Dodsl., iii. 327), 'By Gogs nowns.  
**LAD**, brave fellow; iv. vii. 10. Irish *lath*, youth, champion. *Hist. Jacob and Esau* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 237), 'I am a lad.'  
**LAW**, an exclamation; I. iv. 64. Written *la!* in Shak.  
**LEESE**, LESS, lose; I. i. 51, etc.  
**LIETH UPON**, is of importance to, concerns; I. iv. 9. *jack Juggler* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 142), 'the matter lieth greatly me upon.'  
**LILBURN**, dolt, lout; III. iii. 18.  
**LOBCOCK**, clown; III. iii. x8.  
**LOUTED**, fooled; III. iii. 25, 33; x *Henry VI.*, iv. iii. 13.  
**Lows**, allow, approve; I. v. 3, etc.  
**LOZELL**, worthless fellow; iv. iii. 88.  
**LUB**, LUBBE, love; I. ii. 146J III. IV. 99. *Two Gent. Ver. II.* v. 44, 47.  
**LUST**, pleases (impers.); I. i. 53, etc.  
**MAISTER, BE GOOD**, exert authority over; iv. vii. 87. *Winter's Tale*, v. ii. 188. Skelton, *Magn.*, 809.  
**MALKYN**, an oath, 'by Mary'; I. ii. 114. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'MALKYNE. or Mawt, propyr name. *Matildis*. [Usually said to be dimin. of Mary.]  
**MANKINE**, applied to women 'mas-cuhne'; iv. viii. 41. *Coriol.*, iv. ii. 16.  
**MARYBONES**, marrow-bones; I. iv. 89.  
**MASHIP**, mastership; I. ii. 100, 116.  
**MATTR**, a corruption of 'Mass'; iv. vii. 114; iv. viii. 41.  
**MINION**, darling; 2nd Song.  
**MOCK**, make (perhaps with a play on the word); x. iv. 18; III. iv. 106.  
**MOME**, stupid fellow; III. ii. 86, etc.  
**MOTE**, a rotten thread; I. iv. 95. Palsgrave, 'Mote on a gowne or garment — *povtie*.' Cotgrave, 'Poutie, look Potie.' 'Pone: A knot in Wollen cloth; or, rotten thred, or threds end, ready to fall from cloth.' *Damon and Pythias* (Hazl. Dodsl., iv. 64), '\*he left not one mote in your coat.'  
**MOTE**, may; III. ii. 78; III. V. 42.  
**MUN**, must; 4th Song. Still used provincially.  
**NE**, neither, nor; I. iv. 30; iv. v.  
**NEARE**, never; I. ii. 56.  
**NERE**, nearer; III. iv. 5.

## GLOSSARY

- NONES, FOR THE, for the once, for the occasion; I. iii. 15.  
 NOT = NE *wot*, know not; III. iv. 18.  
 NOWN, own; 1. i. 49; 1. iii. 32.  
 PAINT OUT, give an unfavourable account of; III. iii. 2. Bacon, *Adv. Learn.* (ed. Wright, p. 15), 'the errors of Cicero painted out by his own pencil.'  
 PAISHE, PASHE, passion; iv. iii. 122; iv. vii. 50, etc.  
 PARAGE, lineage; I. ii. 137. *Rede me*, etc. (ed. Arber, p. 61), 'lordes of worthy parage.'  
 PARAGON, HI. iv. 47; acc. to Puttenham, 'specially of faire women,' *Arte of Poesie* (ed. Arber), p. 241.  
 PARDEE, corruption of *par Dieu*; I. ii. 152; II. iii. 20.  
 PASTANCE, pastime; II. i. 41, etc.  
 PATINS, pattens; I. iii. 24. Cf. Way's note to *pateyne*. {*Prompt. Parv.*}  
 PAIN TAKE, used of accepting an invitation; v. vi. 37. Peele, *Dav. and Bath.*, 1. 1., 'But let my lord the King himself take pains.' Middleton, *Spanish Gypsy*, iv. ii. 26.  
 PEEVISH, silly; III. iii. 73, etc.  
 PENNYWORTH, revenge; iv. vii. 102. *Terence in English*, 'I will take my penny-worths of thee. I will punish thee. *De te sumam supplicium.*'  
 PICK, depart; iv. iii. 90. Palsgrave, 'I pycke me forth out of a place, or I pycke me hence. *Je me tyre auant.*' *Jack Juggler* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 125), 'Pick and walk.'  
 PIGSNY, PYGS NIE, common term of endearment; III. iv. 32; I. iv. 42.

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- Literally 'pig's eye.' Chaucer, *C.T.A.* 3268 (with Skeat's note).  
 POLLING, fleecing, plundering; III. v. 26. Originally 'cutting the hair.' Often used with 'shave,' and 'pill.'  
 POTGUN, blunderbuss; iv. vii. 62, 98. Originally 'pop-gun,' an imitative word. Cotgrave, '*Calonnicre*: a pot-gun, made of a quill, or elder stick.'  
 POTSTICK, pole; III. iv. 127. Palsgrave, 'Potstycke — *batton*.' 'Probably the rod on which the sponge was lifted up—a common symbol of the passion' (Skeat).  
 POWDER, to salt; II. iv. 22. *I Henry IV*, v. iv. 112.  
 PKANKY, fine, gorgeous; III. iii. 17. Corruption of *pranked*. Skelton, *The Maner of the World*, 21, 'Such pranked cotes and sieves.'  
 PRECIOUS, common epithet in oaths; iv. viii. 40. Some subs. (e.g. *potsticke*, in. iv. 127), understood. Chapman, *Mons. d'Olive* (ed. Pearson, p. 246), 'Gods precious.'  
 PRICKMEDAINTY, finical, affected; II. iii. 48. Skelton, *Elynour Rumwyng*, 582, 'There was a pryckmedenty.' In *St. Ronan's Well* (Centenary Edition, p. 130), Luckie Dods speaks of 'sic *prick-my-dainty* doings.'  
 PROPRETY, character, disposition; v. i. 5. Cotgrave, '*Propriete*, the nature, quality, inclination, or disposition of.'  
 QUITE, requite; III. iii. 90.  
 QUOD, quoth; 1. ii. 109; iv. vii. 9.  
 RAMPING, romping; II. iv. 6, 29. Palsgrave, 'I RAMPE, I playe the callet. *Je ramponne*'

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- RATHER, earlier; III. v. 17.  
RAY, array; iv. vii. 1, etc. Skelton, *Speke, Parrot*, 415.  
RECORDER, a kind of flute; II. i. 23.  
RENNE, run; I. 111. 24.  
REPRIEF, reproof; v. iv. 20.  
REVELL ROUT, revelry; I. i. 20. Skelton, *Bowge*, 368.  
ROIL, roam; II. lii. 29. Bailey (1733), 'To ROIL, to range.'  
ROUNDING, whispering; I. iv. IT.  
ROUSE, extol; I. i. 50. Jamieson, 'To RUSE, ROOSE, to extol, commend highly.'  
ROUTE, assemble; iv. vii. 2. Palsgrave, 'I rowte, I assemble together in routes, or I styrre aboute.'  
SADLY, seriously, earnestly; I. iv. IX.  
SADNESS, earnestness; III. iii. 78, etc.  
SAID SAWS, proverb; I. i. 5. Puttenham, *Arte of Eng. Poesie* (ed. Arber), p. 199, 'common prouerbs, or as we vse to call them, old said sawes.'  
SAID, WELL, well done; iv. iii. 84; iv. viii. 19. Frequently used of actions.  
SECTOUR, executor; III. iii. 62. *Prompt, Parv.* 'SEKETOWRE (or executowre, seketur or esseketour).'  
SEEK, TO, deficient; iv. vii. 57.  
SENCE, SENS, SINCE, already; III. iii 147; III. v. 5.  
SET FORTH, recommend, embellish; I. ii. 178. Palsgrave, 'I set forthe, as a workeman setteth forthe his craft, or as one thing sheweth the beaulte of another. *Je donne lustre.*'  
SHENT, chidden; I. iii. 38.  
SHOKE UP, rebuked; II. ii. 1. Cooper's *Thesaurus* (1578), '*Exagito*, to chide, to shake up with shrewde wordes.' Chapman, *All Fooles* (ed. Pearson, p. 124), 'shake him up, as if your wrath were bard to be reflected.'  
SHOOTANKER, sheet-anchor; I. i. 28. Spelt *skotanker*, Heywood, *The Four P's*, I. 78.  
SILLY, harmless; iv. iii. 107.  
SKILL, CAN NOT, do not understand; II. iii. 7. (Can=know.)  
SKIMMER, ladle; iv. iv. 20. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'SCOMOWRE, cokys instrument. *Despumarium.*'  
SKRINE, coffer; iv. vii. 64. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'SCHRYNE. *Scrinium.*' Cooper's *Thesaurus*, '*Scrinium*, a coffer or other like place wherein jewels or secret things are kept.'  
SOOTH, assent to; I. i. 29, 47. Baret (1580), '*Sooth*, to flatter immoderatelic, or hold vp one in his talke, and affirme it to be true which he speaketh.'  
SORT, company; I. iii. 33.  
SOUND, swoon; III. iii. 94. Puttenham, *Arte Eng. Poes.* (ed. Arber), p. 227, 'sound and faint.'  
SPILL, destroy; I. ii. 22, etc.  
STANDETH UPON, concerns; III. iii. 105.  
STICK FOR, hesitate at; I. iii. 115. *Cambists* (Hazl. Dodsl., iv. 182), 'I will not stick for that' [a kiss].  
STOMACK, courage; iv. vii. 8.  
STOMACKED, were angry with; iv. STOUND, time; III. v. 7.  
STRANGE, MADE, scrupled, made a difficulty about; v. vi. 3. Skelton,

## GLOSSARY

- Garl. of Laur.*, 444, 'I made it strange.'
- SWAP, blow; iv. iv. 18. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'SWAP, or stroke. *Ictus.*'
- SWIM, move gracefully; II. iii. 46. *Two Noble Kinsmen*, III. v. 28, 'Swim with your bodies.' Cf. note in Furness' *Variorum*, A.G.L.I.. v. iv. 73.
- SWINGED, beaten; II. iv. 27. Cotgrave, 'Dober, to beat, swindle, lam, be thwack, to canvass thoroughly.'
- TAIL, perhaps with play on *tail* and *tale* I. iv. 45. *Two Gent. Ver.* xi. iii. 55.
- TALL, stout, sturdy; iv. viii. 9.
- TARDY, TAKEN, caught napping; iv. viii. 8. Lyly, *Moth. Bom.*, II. iv. 1, 'We are all taken tardie.'
- TENDRETH, tenderly loves; iv. i. 18.
- THINK LONG, expect with impatience; iv. i. 20; iv. ii. 9. *Rom. and July* iv. v. 41.
- TOOK, gave; I. v. I.
- TREY ACE, three and one (at dice); III. iii. 142.
- TRICK, neat, trim; II. iii. 43. Ascham, *Toxopk.* (ed. Arber), p. 28, 'tricke and trimme.'
- TRIM, chide, scold; v. v. 24. *Lusty Juventus* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 84), 'I will trim the knave.'
- TROT, OLD, common term of contempt for an old woman; I iii 43; i. iv. 36. ...
- TRY, prove; Iiii 01, etc.
- TUT A WHISTLE, exclamation of impatience; I. iv. 23. Skelton, *Colyn Chute*, 1x87, set not by us a whystell.'
- TWAY, two; iv. i. 21.
- UNETH, scarcely, with difficulty; III. v. 4.
- UNKNOWING, unknown; III. iii. 60. So *beholding* frequently for *be holden*.
- VACABUNDS, vagabonds; iv. iii 106.
- VOID, drive out; Prol. 9: make way; III. iii. 128.
- WAG, boy; II. iv. 28. Common in Lyly.
- WAG PASTY, scapegrace; III. ii. 10. *Jack Juggler* (Hazl. Dodsl., ii. 141), 'this wage-pasty is either drunken or mad.' Heywood, *Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, v. iv., 'this wanton wag-pasty.'
- WAKRANTISE, warrant, guarantee' iv. vii. 26. More's *Utopia*, trans. Robynson (ed. Arber, p. 98) 'assuraunce or warrauntise.'
- WASTE, IN, in vain; III. i. 8; iv. iii. 55; iv. v. 22.
- WHAN? when? III. iii 117. Common exclamation of impatience.
- WHERE, whether; III. v. xxx.
- WHIPPET, move quickly; I. iii. 68. Peele, *Arr. of Par.*, I. i 5, 'whipt apace.'
- WHIRL, perforated disk of stone added to the spindle to give momentum and steadiness; L. iii. 10. Minsheu, 'Whirle, of a spindle.'
- WHITE, favourite, darling; I. i 49. *Like Will to Like* (Hazl. Dodsl., iii. 529), 'thou wast once a white son. Greene, *Friar Bacon*, vii. 81.
- WHUR, hurry; I. iii. II.
- WIDE, mistaken; I. iv. 28.
- WORMS, lover; III. ii 48. Lyly, *Camp.*, v. iv., \*Two loving

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- wormes. Kobinson, *Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (ed. Arber, 1873), 'ye louing wormes.'
- P**wOUGH, an exclamation; III. iv. 86.
- YELDE, reward, requite; I, iii. 99;
- III. ii. 51. Found as 'God 'ild you,' in Shak.
- Ywis, certainly; I. ii. 132, etc
- ZEE, provincial for 'see'; I. iv. 64.
- ZEMBLETEE, likelihood; I. iv. 74.
- Zo, so; I. iv. 64.

## NOTES

*Prol.* I I . *More and less, high and low.* Cf. *Hen. IV.*, IV. iii. 68.

I. i. 25. *Hang on . . . sleeve.* Cf. Chapman, *Humorous Dayes Myrth* (ed. Pearson, p. 63): 'Enter Besha hanging upon Martia sleeve.' *Ter. in Eng.* "Solus est quern diligunt dii. Prosperitie hangs on his sleeve.'

I. i. 49. Cf. Lyly, *Euphues and his Ephoebus* (ed. Arber), p. 149: 'These be they that sooth young youths in al their sayings, that vphold them in al their doings, with a yea or a nay.'

I. i. 56. *Hold his finger in a hole.* Cf. Middleton, *Anything for a Quiet Life*, III. i. 94: 'I 'll put one finger in a hole rather.'

I. ii. 4. *In by the week.* Cf. *Ter. in Eng.* : 'Captus est. He is taken, he is in the snare; he is in for a bird, he is in by the weeke.'—Shak. *L. L. L.*, v. ii. 61.

I. ii. 54. *Lion which Hercules slew.* Cf. *Thersytes*, 88: 'Hercules . . . when he kyllled the Lyons.'

I. ii. 80. / *warrant you for mad: i.e. against madness.* Cf. Shak. *Temp.*, 1. i. 49: 'I 'I I warrant him for drowning.'

I. ii. 97. *Backare quod Mortimer to his sow.* A common proverbial expression to rebuke presumption. Cf. Camden, *Rem.*, 293: 'Backare, quoth Mortimer unto his sow'; Heywood, *Epigr.*, p. 34. *Baccare* (=go back) occurs in Lyly, *Midas*, v. ii., and in Shak., *Tarn. Shr.*, II i. 73.

I ii. 115 *seq.* Cf. Plautus, *Mil. Glor.*, 1. i. 58 *seq.*, from which this passage is adapted.

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## NOTES

I. ii. 118. *Sir Launcelot du lake . . . Guy of Warwike . . . Colbrande*. Cf. *Thersytes*, 136 and 116.

I. ii. 120. *Thirteenth Hercules brother*. Either (1) take *brother* as vocative, or (2) nominative, *thirteenth* referring either (a) to *Hercules*, or (b) to *brother*. Against (1) the corresponding passage in Plautus, *Mil. Glor.*, 61, has '*hicine Achilles est ? inquit mihi. Immo eius frater inquam*' and Merygreeke is addressing women. The 'thirteenth Hercules,' like the 'tenth Worthie,' and the 'thirde Cato.' ridicules Ralph under pretence of an heroic comparison.

I. ii. 126. *The tenth Worthy*. The Nine Worthies are enumerated by Caxton in his preface to *Morte D'Arthur*. A somewhat different list is given in Shak. *L. L. L.* Horace (*Sat.* ii. 3, 296) speaks of a philosopher as *sapientum octavus*, the eighth of the Seven Wise Men.

1. ii. 129. *The third Cato*. Cf. Juvenal, ii. 40: '*Tertius e cælo eccidit Cato?*'

I. ii. 173. *Sir, remain ye a while*. The word *here* is omitted in Arber's reprint, but seems necessary for metre and rhyme. It was probably lost through 'lipography' caused by the following *ere*.

1. ii. 183. *Out of measure*. For play on two meanings, (1) exceedingly, (2) out of tune, cf. Ben Jonson, *Every Man in his Humour*, III. i. 102.

1. iii. 51. *Pipe merry Annot*. Probably the refrain of some popular song. It is mentioned in a poem, *A pore Helpe*, reprinted by Hazlitt, *Early Popular Poetry*, iii. 260.

I. iii. 71. *Swim or sink*. A common phrase. Cf. *Hist. Jacob and Esau* (Hazl. DodsL, ii. 216): 'Choose you sink or swimme.' *Merry Devil of Edmonton*, I. ii. 40.

I. iii. 97. *Wipe all clean*. A common phrase in connection with kissing. Cf. Chaucer, *C. T.*, A. 3730; Greene, *Menaphon* (ed. Arber), p. 89.

I. iii. 98. *Ill chieve it: i.e.* bad luck to her; literally, 'may it (*i.e.* she) succeed ill.'

I. iv. 12. *With Nobs nicebteetur miserere fonde.* *Nobs* and *nicebecetur* are both found as terms of endearment. Cf. *The Trial of Treasure* (Hazl. Dodsl., iii. 293): 'My mouse, my nobs, and coney sweet'; Skelton, *Elynour Rummyng*, 225; Clement Robinson, *Handefulle of Pleasant Delites* (Arber's *Eng. Schol. Libr.*, No. 3, p. 14): 'Farewell, good Nicibicetur.' *Miserere* may be (a) a verb, the imper. of *miser tor*, 'I pity'; (b) a noun, either (1)—'lamentation,' from *Miserere*, the first word of the penitential Psalm li., or (2)—'wretch,' as *miser* was used.

The line may thus be taken in four ways—the first two as a *continuation* of Merygreeke's speech, the last two as an *answer* to it.

(1) With his fond '*Nobs nicebecetur, miserere*\*: *i.e.* 'with his fond "Darling, pity me !"' (This use of 'with' is very common in Skelton.)

(2) With his fond *miserere*, '*Nobs nicebteetur*': *i.e.* 'with his fond mumbling "Darling."' The objection to this is the separation of *miserere* from *nobs nicebteetur*.

(3) With his *nobs nicebteetur*, fond *miserere* 1 *i.e.* 'with his darling, fond wretch that he is !' The same objection holds against this as against the last.

(4) With his fond *nobs nicebtcttur miserere*, all three epithets referring to Mumblecrust, the last describing the woebegone appearance of the old beldame.

Of these, (1) and (4) seem most probable.

1. iv. 64. *That killed the blue Spider: i.e.* Tom Thumb.

I. iv. 66. *Elephant, etc.* Taken from Plautus, *Mil. Glor.* 1.

I. iv. 73. *The King of Crickets, etc.* Cf. *Tarn. Shrew*, IV. iii. S08,

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I. iv. 76. *Belzebug*. Cf. *Thersytes*, 515.

I. iv. 93. *Bees in his head*. Cf. *Dam. and Pyth.* (Hazl. Dodsl., iv. 25): 'My master hath bees in his head.'

I. iv. 96. *Fowl's feather*. For the play on the words *fool* and *fowl*, cf. 3 *Hen*, VI., V. vi. 18-20; Middleton, *Women Beware Women*, I. ii. 118.

I. iv. 100. *Foot of a gnat* Hazlitt suggests *fute*, 'scent,' 'track.' Cf. *Prompt. Parv.*, 'FEWTE, *Vestigium*.' 'FUTE, *odowre*' (with Way's note).

II. i. 28. *Jack Raker*. Cf. Skelton, *Against Garnesche*, 108: 'Ye wolde be callyd a maker, And make moche lyke Jake Rakar'; *Speke, Parrot*, 165; *Why Come Ye*, 270.

II. ii. 18. *Go to Pome on my head*. Cf. *Hickscorner* (Hazl. Dodsl., i. 168): 'I will ride to Rome on my thumb.' *Thersytes*, 430-

II. ii. 22. *One Lombard's touch*: i.e. a single quality or characteristic of a Lombard. The 'touch' or characteristic quality of a Lombard would be to take and keep *gold*, and Dobinet wants to get some one belonging to Custance's household to take and keep the gold ring.

II. iii. 8. *In dock, out nettle*: a proverbial expression for inconstancy. The dock was supposed to be an antidote to the nettle. Cf. Taylor's *Works* (1630):

'Uncertaine, certaine, never loves to settle,  
But here, there, everywhere; in dock, out nettle.'

II. iii. 47. *Our spaniel Pig*. Dogs were often taught to dance. Cf. Caius, *Of English Dogs*, 1576 (*Arber's Eng. Garn.*, iii. 261): 'Of the dog called the Dancer.' *Pig* was a common name for dogs. Cf. Fulwel, *Art of Flattery*: 'Their verie dogs, Rug, Rig, and Risbie.' *A Hundred Mery Talys* (ed. Hazl. p. 99): 'Colle

my dogge hathe these iii. whelpes, Ryg, Trygge, and Try-boll.'

II. iii. 85. *Chip and cherie*. *Chirre* is used for 'chirp' (Nares and Halliwell), and *chip* may be a corruption of 'cheep,' so that the phrase may= 'twitter and chirp,' like birds.

II. iii. 86. *Heigh derie derie*. A common refrain in old songs. Cf. *Conflict of Conscience* (Hazl. Dodsl., vi. 78): 'I must sing too, *heigh, dery, dery, dery.*'

II. iii. 87. *Trill on the berie*. Cf. *The Four Elements* (Pollard's *Eng. Mir, Plays*), 417: 'Synge tyrll on the bery.' Browne, *Brit. Past.*, i. 2: 'Piping on thine oaten eede upon this little berry (some yleep a hillock)' [*New. Eng. Dict.*]. Apparently the refrain of an old song.

III. ii. 54. *As much, etc.: i.e.* 'I do speed, as much as though I did offer myself: this time there is no need to offer myself, for I am already engaged.'

III. ii. 82. *Wedded on Sunday*. Cf. Middleton, *Women Beware*, IV. ii. 86: 'I MI have a wife next Sunday.'

III. ii. 85. *Keepe him warme at home*. Cf. *Much Ado*, 1. i. 56: 'Wit enough to keep himself warm' (with Wright's note); Chapman, *Wid. Tears* (ed. Pearson, p. 17): 'Has thy wits fine engine taken cold?' Middleton, *Roaring Girl*, in. ii. 43.

III. ii. 86. *Cough me a mome*. A common play on the other meaning of *cough*— 'procure,' 'purchase' (Scotch *coff*, Germ. *kaufen*). Cf. Lyly, *Moth. Bomb.* (ed. Fairholt, ii. 82): 'Hee will cough for anger . . . but he shall cough me a foole.' Skelton, *Magn.*, 1073: 'Cough me a dawe'; *ib.* 1077; Latimer, *Serm.* (Craik's *Eng. Prose Sel.*, i. 234): 'Cough the king twenty thousand pounds . . . ye will cough in hell.'

III. ii. 90. *Play the devil in the horologe: i.e.* strike. The idea of striking is generally suggested by the similar expression *Jack of the Clock*, the iron or bronze figure on the outside of some old

clocks, which struck the hour upon the bell. Cf. *Rich. III.*, iv. ii. 118. Nares quotes from Dekker: 'The jacke of a clock-house . . . his office is to do nothing but strike.'

III. iii. 51. *Will ye drink* Refers to the custom of offering something to drink to a criminal on his way to execution. Chambers's *Bk. Days*, ii. 558. (Skeat.)

III. iii. 52. *How feel your soul ?* Cf. Skelton, *Magn.*, 2417: 'How fele you your selfe?' Lyly, *Endim.* (ed. Fairholt, p. 71). Skeat inserts ye.

III. iii. 53. *Placebo dilexi*, words from the Burial Service. The *Placebo* was the office for the dead at Vespers, which began : '*Placebo domino*,' Ps. cxvi. 9. *Dilexi quoniam* are the first words of the same psalm. Cf. Skelton, *Phyl Spar.*, 1-3 : '*Placebo*, Who is there, who? *Dilexi*.'

III. iii. 57. *Nequando*, from the Burial Service, Ps. vii. 2: '*Nequando rapiat*,' etc., read at Matins.

III. iii. 58. *Dirige*, the first word of one of the antiphons in the Officium Defunctorum : '*Dirige, Domine, Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam*.' Cf. Ward's note on Marlowe, *Faustus*, vii. 77,

III. iii. 59. *Neque lux, etc.* : i.e. without candle, cross, mourners, and bell, the usual accompaniments of a funeral. Parker writes to Fox of the burial of the Duchess of Norfolk: 'All things were done honourably, *sine crux sine lux etnon sine tinkling*' (*Notes and Queries*, ser. 4, vol. iv., p. 521). For *clinke*, cf. Chaucer, *C. T.*, C. 664 (with Skeat's note).

III. iii. 61. *A porta inferi*, another antiphon: '*A porta inferi erne, Domine, animas eorum*.' Cf. Skelton, *Phyl. Spar.*, 239.

III. iii. 63. *Requiem ceiernam*, the first words of a common refrain in the Office of the Dead: '*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine*,' etc. *Phyl. Spar.*, 575.

III. iii. 64. *Halfpenny dole*. It was customary to distribute alms to the poor at funerals. Brand, ii. 287: 'A dole to poor

people • . . to be dealed penny meal.' Caxton (Craik's *Eng. Prose Sel.*, i. 102).

III. iii. 71. *Audiui vocem*, another antiphon in the Officium Defunctorum: '*Audiui uocem de cash*,' etc., Rev. xiv. 13. Cf. *Phyl Spar.*, 243.

in. iii. 85. *Qui Lazarum*, the beginning of another antiphon: '*Qui Lazarum resuscitasti a monumento fœtidum*,' etc.

III. iii. 86. As the corpse was carried to the grave, a prayer was said, beginning: '*In Paradisum deducant te Angeli*.'

III. iii. 126. *All to begrime*. Altogether bedaub, besmear you. For *all to*, vide Morris, *Hist, Outl.* (revised by Kellner and Bradley), sect. 335.

III. iii. 133. *Near an M. by your girdle ? i.e.* 'have you no such word as *Master* ready to hand ?' A common expression in Elizabethan English, and used by Scott in *Old Mortality* (Cent. Ed., p. 378). Cf. Marston, *Eastward Ho*, IV. ii. 193: 'You might carry an M. under your girdle.'

III. iii. 135. *Ye were take up for hawks: i.e.* 'You would be snapped up for a husband like hawks' meat.' Cf. *Cambyses* (Hazl. Dodsl., iv. 232): 'That husband for hawks' meat of them is up snatched.'

III. iv. 5. *Look partly*: perhaps a reminiscence of Plautus, *Mil. Glor.*, 1217: '*aspicito limis*.'

III. iv. 32. Cf. Plautus, *Asin.*, III. iii. 103: '*Igitur me anaticulam, columbam, vel catellum*.'

HI. iv. 72. *By the arms of Caleys*. The same phrase occurs in Skelton, *Bowge of Courte*, 398(*Calyce*); *Magnyf*, 685 (*Calys*); where Dyce doubts whether Calais in France, or Cales (Cadiz), is alluded to. It may refer to the large quantity of ordnance kept at Calais. Cf. Harrison, *Eliz, Eng.* (Cam. Ser., p. 225): 'It was commonly said after the loss of Calais that England should never recover the store of ordnance there left and lost.'

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III. v. 6. *Forty pence*: a favourite sum in wagers, etc. (*vide* Nares). Cf. Skelton, *Magnyf.*, 1073.

IV. ii. 14. *Their best Christmas cheeks*. Cf. v. iv. 28; *Gam. Gurt. Needle*, v. ii.: 'Beshrewe thy smothe cheekes.' Is the frequent mention of Christmas a 'topical' allusion?

IV. iii. 20. Taken from Plautus, *Mil. Glor.*, 1. i. 1 *seq.*

iv. iii. 47. *Ere I drink*. For drinking as an essential part of betrothal, *vide* Brand, *Pop. Ant.*, ii. 90: 'No dry bargain would hold on such occasions.' Add to the passages there quoted, Middleton, *The Witch*, v. i. 48.

iv. iii. 81. *A rag of your Rhetoric*. Cf. Skelton, *A Reply-cacion, etc.*, 1: 'A lytell ragge of rethorike.'

iv. iii. 123. *I still see*: perhaps=Ist 'ill see. Halliwell gives *Ist* as Northern English for 'I will.'

IV. iv. 10. *Inowe*. Arber has *mowe*.

IV. v. 15. *Alderman*. Cf. Cotgrave, *Pas d' Abbe*; 'A leisurely walking, slow gate, Alderman's pace.' Ray, *Eng. Prov.*, p. 175: 'He is paced like an Alderman.'

IV. vi. 7. *The more fond, etc.* \*The more foolish on the part of both of you to find any difficulty in guessing that matter.'

IV. vi. 39. *Cotsold lion-*, *i.e.* a sheep. Cf. *Thersytes*, 124: 'Now have at the Lyons on Cotsolde.' Ray, *Eng. Prov.*, p. 242: 'As fierce as a lion of Cotswald: *i.e.* a sheep.' The phrase occurs in Heywood's *Proverbs* and Harrington's *Epigrams*.

IV. vii. 60. *The kitchen collocavit*. In *Cambyses* (Hazl. Dodsl., iv. 176), the Vice enters 'with an old capcase on his head, an old pail about his hips for harness, a scummer and a potlid by his side, and a rake on his shoulder.' Cf. Aristophanes, *Birds*, 361.

*Ibid.* *The best hens to grece*, perhaps means 'the best thing to fatten hens with': Ralph being called a 'hen,' as being a coward, and to 'fatten' implying that he is more fond of eating

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than fighting. Cf. the play on the word *stomach* above. For *hen*—coward, cf. Skelton, *Colyn Cloute*, 169, 'herted lyke an hen'; *All's Well*, 11. iii. 24. [As *hennes* is the M.E. spelling of *hence* and *Grece* of *Greece*, it might conceivably mean •the best from here to Greece.' Cf. Hey wood's *Epigrams*: 'No goose need go barefoot betweene this and Greece.']

IV. vii. 86. *Her misdemeanour*: i.e. abusive language. Cf. *Cymb. II. iii. 154*: 'Cloten. You have abused me: " His meanest garment!' *Imogen*. Ay, I said so, sir. If you will make 't an action, call witness to 't.'

iv. vii. 99. *Hoh*: an exclamation used by heralds to stop a fight. Cf. Chaucer, *C. T.*, A. 1706. [Arber's reprint has a note of interrogation after *Hoh* in both lines, but it is probably only the printer's substitute in the original edition for the note of exclamation, which was wanting in his fount.]

IV. viii. 45. *Our ladies' knight*: a common title of St. George. Cf. Skelton, *Against the Scottes*, 141 (with Dyce's note).

IV. viii. 10-12. Cf. Terence, *Eun.*, iv. viii. 4.

iv. viii. 14. *What sayst you ? You* is probably printed for *thou* (v = p). Cf. Gloss., *yat, ye*. Custance would scarcely address her servant as 'you.'

iv. viii. 53. / *shall be thy priest*: i.e. sacrifice, slay. Cf. *The Thracian Wonder* (Hazlitt's Webster, iv. 125): 'This hand shall be his priest.' Cf. *The Spanish Tragedy*, in. iii. 37: 'Who first lays hands on me, I'll be his priest.'

V. v. 9. *Doughty kite*. Cf. 'the coward kite,' Chaucer, *Parl., Foules*, 349.

## THE PSALMODIE.

4. *To-day a man, to-morrow John*, The title-page of *Sir Walter Rawleigh's Farewell to his Lady*, 1644 (Ashbee's Reprints), has for heading: 'To-day a man, To-morrow none.' For the contemptuous use of 'John,' *vide* Skeat's note on Chaucer, *C. T.*, B. 4000.









