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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE ***

The True and Honorable History of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle,
the Good Lord Cobham. Attributed in part to William Shakespeare.

The Actors Names in the History of Sir John Oldcastle.

King Henry the Fifth.
Sir John Old-castle, Lord Cobham.
Harpoole, Servant to the Lord Cobham.
Lord Herbert, with Gough his man.
Lord Powis, with Owen and Davy his men.
The Mayor of Hereford, and Sheriff of Herefordshire, with Bailiffs and Servants.
Two Judges of Assize.
The Bishop of Rochester and Clun his Sumner.
Sir John the Parson of Wrotham, and Doll his Concubine.
The Duke of Suffolk.
The Earl of Huntington.

The Earl of Cambridge.
Lord Scroop and Lord Grey.
Chartres the French Agent.
Sir Roger Acton.
Sir Richard Lee.
M. Bourn, M. Beverly, and Murley the Brewer of Dunstable, rebels.
M. Butler, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber.
Lady Cobham and Lady Powis.
Cromer, Sheriff of Kent.
Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.
Lieutenant of the Tower.
The Mayor, Constable, and Gaoler of S. Albans.
A Kentish Constable and an Ale-man.
Soldiers and old men begging.
Dick and Tom, servants to Murley.
An Irishman.
An Host, Hostler, a Carrier and Kate.

THE PROLOGUE.

The doubtful Title (Gentlemen) prefixt
Upon the Argument we have in hand,
May breed suspence, and wrongfully disturb
The peaceful quiet of your settled thoughts.
To stop which scruple, let this brief suffice:
It is no pampered glutton we present,
Nor aged Counsellor to youthful sin,
But one, whose virtue shone above the rest,
A valiant Martyr and a virtuous peer;
In whose true faith and loyalty expressed
Unto his sovereign, and his country’s weal,
We strive to pay that tribute of our Love,
Your favours merit. Let fair Truth be graced,
Since forged invention former time defaced.

ACT I. SCENE I. Hereford. A street.

[Enter Lord Herbert, Lord Powis, Owen, Gough, Davy,
and several other followers of the lords Herbert and Powis;
they fight. In the fight, enter the Sheriff and two of his men.]

SHERIFF.
My Lords, I charge ye in his Highness’ name,
To keep the peace, you, and your followers.

HERBERT.
Good Master Sheriff, look unto your self.

POWIS.
Do so, for we have other business.

[Profer to fight again.]

SHERIFF.
Will ye disturb the Judges, and the Assize?
Hear the King’s proclamation, ye were best.

POWIS.
Hold then, let’s hear it.

HERBERT.
But be brief, ye were best.

BAILIFF.
Oyes!

DAVY.
Cousin, make shorter O, or shall mar your Yes.

BAILIFF.
Oyes!

OWEN.
What, has her nothing to say but O yes?

BAILIFF.
Oyes!

DAVY.
O nay! pye Cosse plut down with her, down with her!
A Pawesse! a Pawesse!

GOUGH.
A Herbert! a Herbert! and down with Powis!

[Helter skelter again.]

SHERIFF.
Hold, in the King’s name, hold.

OWEN.
Down i’ tha knave’s name, down.

[In this fight, the Bailiff is knocked down, and the Sheriff and the other run away.]

HERBERT.
Powesse, I think thy Welsh and thou do smart.

POWIS.
Herbert, I think my sword came near thy heart.

HERBERT.
Thy heart’s best blood shall pay the loss of mine.

GOUGH.
A Herbert! a Herbert!

DAVY.
A Pawesse! a Pawesse!

[As they are lifting their weapons, enter the Mayor of Hereford, and his Officers and Towns-men with clubs.]

MAYOR.
My Lords, as you are liege men to the Crown,
True noblemen, and subjects to the King,
Attend his Highness’ proclamation,
Commanded by the Judges of Assize,
For keeping peace at this assembly.

HERBERT.
Good Master Mayor of Hereford be brief.

MAYOR.
Sergeant, without the ceremony of Oyes,
Pronounce aloud the proclamation.

SERVANT.
The King’s Justices, perceiving what public mischief may ensue this private quarrel, in his majesty’s name do straightly charge and command all persons, of what degree soever, to depart this city of Hereford, except such as are bound to give attendance at this Assize, and that no man presume to wear any weapon, especially welsh-hooks, forest bills—

OWEN.
Haw, no pill nor wells hoog? ha?

MAYOR.

Peace, and hear the proclamation.

SERVANT.
And that the Lord Powesse do presently disperse and discharge
his retinue, and depart the city in the King’s peace, he and his
followers, on pain of imprisonment.

DAVY.
Haw? pud her Lord Pawesse in prison? A Pawes!
A Pawesse! cossone live and tie with her Lord.

GOUGH.
A Herbert! a Herbert!

[In this fight the Lord Herbert is wounded, and falls to the
ground; the Mayor and his company go away, crying clubs;
Powesse runs away; Gough and other of Herbert’s faction
busy themselves about Herbert; enter the two Judges in
their robes, the Sheriff and his Bailiffs afore them, &c.]

FIRST JUDGE.
Where’s the Lord Herbert? is he hurt or slain?

SHERIFF.
He’s here, my Lord.

SECOND JUDGE.
How fares his Lordship, friends?

GOUGH.
Mortally wounded, speechless; he cannot live.

FIRST JUDGE.
Convey him hence; let not his wounds take air,
And get him dressed with expedition.

[Ex. Herbert & Gough.]

Master Mayor of Hereford, Master Shrieve o’ the shire,
Commit Lord Powesse to safe custody,
To answer the disturbance of the peace,
Lord Herbert’s peril, and his high contempt
Of us, and you the King’s commissioners.
See it be done with care and diligence.

SHERIFF.
Please it your Lordship, my Lord Powesse is gone

Past all recovery.

SECOND JUDGE.
Yet let search be made,
To apprehend his followers that are left.

SHERIFF.
There are some of them. Sirs, lay hold of them.

OWEN.
Of us? and why? what has her done, I pray you?

SHERIFF.
Disarm them, Bailiffs.

MAYOR.
Officers, assist.

DAVY.
Hear you, Lor shudge, what resson is for this?

OWEN.
Cosson pe puse for fighting for our Lord?

FIRST JUDGE.
Away with them.

DAVY.
Harg you, my Lord.

OWEN.
Gough my Lord Herbert’s man’s a shitten kanave.

DAVY.
Ise live and tie in good quarrel.

OWEN.
Pray you do shustice; let all be preson.

DAVY.
Prison! no.
Lord shudge, I wool give you pale, good suerty.

SECOND JUDGE.
What Bail? what sureties?

DAVY.
Her coozin ap Ries, ap Evan, ap Morris, ap Morgan, ap

Lluellyn, ap Madoc, ap Meredith, ap Griffen, ap Davy, ap
Owen, ap Shinken Shones.

SECOND JUDGE.
Two of the most sufficient are ynow.

SHERIFF.
And ’t please your Lordship, these are all but one.

FIRST JUDGE.
To Jail with them, and the Lord Herbert’s men;
We’ll talk with them, when the Assize is done.

[Exeunt.]

Riotous, audacious, and unruly Grooms,
Must we be forced to come from the Bench,
To quiet brawls, which every Constable
In other civil places can suppress?

SECOND JUDGE.
What was the quarrel that caused all this stir?

SHERIFF.
About religion, as I heard, my Lord.
Lord Powesse detracted from the power of Rome,
Affirming Wickliffe’s doctrine to be true,
And Rome’s erroneous. Hot reply was made
By the lord Herbert, they were traitors all
That would maintain it: Powesse answered,
They were as true, as noble, and as wise
As he, that would defend it with their lives;
He named for instance sir John Old-castle
The Lord Cobham: Herbert replied again,
“He, thou, and all are traitors that so hold.”
The lie was given, the several factions drawn,
And so enraged, that we could not appease it.

FIRST JUDGE.
This case concerns the King’s prerogative,
And’s dangerous to the State and common wealth.
Gentlemen, Justices, master Mayor, and master Shrieve,
It doth behoove us all, and each of us
In general and particular, to have care
For suppressing of all mutinies,
And all assemblies, except soldiers’ musters
For the King’s preparation into France.
We hear of secret conventicles made,

And there is doubt of some conspiracies,
Which may break out into rebellious arms
When the King’s gone, perchance before he go:
Note as an instance, this one perilous fray;
What factions might have grown on either part,
To the destruction of the King and Realm.
Yet, in my conscience, sir John Old-castle,
Innocent of it, only his name was used.
We, therefore, from his Highness give this charge:
You, master Mayor, look to your citizens;
You, master Sheriff, unto your shire; and you
As Justices, in every one’s precinct,
There be no meetings. When the vulgar sort
Sit on their Ale-bench, with their cups and cans,
Matters of state be not their common talk,
Nor pure religion by their lips profaned.
Let us return unto the Bench again,
And there examine further of this fray.

[Enter a Bailiff and a Servant.]

SHERIFF.
Sirs, have ye taken the lord Powesse yet?

BAILIFF.
No, nor heard of him.

SERVANT.
No, he’s gone far enough.

SECOND JUDGE.
They that are left behind shall answer all.

[Exeunt.]

ACT I. SCENE II. Eltham. An antechamber in the palace.

[Enter Suffolk, Bishop of Rochester, Butler, parson of Wrotham.]

SUFFOLK.
Now, my lord Bishop, take free liberty
To speak your mind: what is your suit to us?

BISHOP.
My noble Lord, no more than what you know,

And have been oftentimes invested with:
Grievous complaints have past between the lips
Of envious persons to upbraid the Clergy,
Some carping at the livings which we have,
And others spurning at the ceremonies
That are of ancient custom in the church.
Amongst the which, Lord Cobham is a chief:
What inconvenience may proceed hereof,
Both to the King and to the commonwealth,
May easily be discerned, when like a frenzy
This innovation shall possess their minds.
These upstarts will have followers, to uphold
Their damned opinion, more than Harry shall
To undergo his quarrel gainst the French.

SUFFOLK.
What proof is there against them to be had,
That what you say the law may justify?

BISHOP.
They give themselves the name of Protestants,
And meet in fields and solitary groves.

SIR JOHN.
Was ever heard, my Lord, the like til now?
That thieves and rebels—sblood, heretics,
Plain heretics, I'll stand tooth to their teeth—
Should have, to colour their vile practices,
A title of such worth as Protestant?

[Enter one with a letter.]

SUFFOLK.
O, but you must not swear; it ill becomes
One of your coat to rap out bloody oaths.

BISHOP.
Pardon him, good my Lord, it is his zeal;
An honest country prelate, who laments
To see such foul disorder in the church.

SIR JOHN.
There's one—they call him Sir John Old-castle—
He has not his name for naught: for like a castle
Doth he encompass them within his walls;
But till that castle be subverted quite,
We ne'er shall be at quiet in the realm.

BISHOP.
That is not our suit, my Lord, that he be ta’en,
And brought in question for his heresy.
Beside, two letters brought me out of Wales,
Wherein my Lord Hereford writes to me,
What tumult and sedition was begun,
About the Lord Cobham at the Sises there,
(For they had much ado the calm the rage),
And that the valiant Herbert is there slain.

SUFFOLK.
A fire that must be quenched. Well, say no more,
The King anon goes to the counsel chamber,
There to debate of matters touching France:
As he doth pass by, I’ll inform his grace
Concerning your petition: Master Butler,
If I forget, do you remember me.

BUTLER.
I will, my Lord.

[Offer him a purse.]

BISHOP.
Not for a recompence,
But as a token of our love to you,
By me my Lords of the clergy do present
This purse, and in it full a thousand Angels,
Praying your Lordship to accept their gift.

SUFFOLK.
I thank them, my Lord Bishop, for their love,
But will not take they money; if you please
To give it to this gentleman, you may.

BISHOP.
Sir, then we crave your furtherance herein.

BUTLER.
The best I can, my Lord of Rochester.

BISHOP.
Nay, pray ye take it; trust me but you shall.

SIR JOHN.
—Were ye all thee upon New Market heath,
You should not need strain curtsey who should ha’t;
Sir John would quickly rid ye of that care.

SUFFOLK.
The King is coming. Fear ye not, my Lord;
The very first thing I will break with him
Shall be about your matter.

[Enter King Henry and Huntington in talk.]

KING.
My Lord of Suffolk,
Was it not said the Clergy did refuse
To lend us money toward our wars in France?

SUFFOLK.
It was, my Lord, but very wrongfully.

KING.
I know it was, for Huntington here tells me,
They have been very bountiful of late.

SUFFOLK.
And still they vow, my gracious Lord, to be so,
Hoping your majesty will think of them
As of your loving subjects, and suppress
All such malicious errors as begin
To spot their calling, and disturb the church.

KING.
God else forbid: why, Suffolk, is there
Any new rupture to disquiet them?

SUFFOLK.
No new, my Lord; the old is great enough,
And so increasing as, if not cut down,
Will breed a scandal to your royal state,
And set your Kingdom quickly in an uproar.
The Kentish knight, Lord Cobham, in despite
Of any law, or spiritual discipline,
Maintains this upstart new religion still,
And divers great assemblies by his means
And private quarrels are commenced abroad,
As by this letter more at large, my liege,
Is made apparent.

KING.
We do find it here:
There was in Wales a certain fray of late,
Between two noblemen, but what of this?

Follows it straight, Lord Cobham must be he
Did cause the same? I dare be sworn, good knight,
He never dreamt of any such contention.

BISHOP.
But in his name the quarrel did begin,
About the opinion which he held, my liege.

KING.
How if it did? was either he in place,
To take part with them, or abet them in it?
If brabling fellows, whose inkindled blood,
Seethes in their fiery veins, will needs go fight,
Making their quarrels of some words that past
Either of you, or you, amongst their cups,
Is the fault yours, or are they guilty of it?

SUFFOLK.
With pardon of your Highness, my dread lord,
Such little sparks, neglected, may in time
Grow to a might flame: but that’s not all;
He doth, beside, maintain a strange religion,
And will not be compelled to come to mass.

BISHOP.
We do beseech you, therefore, gracious prince,
Without offence unto your majesty,
We may be bold to use authority.

KING.
As how?

BISHOP.
To summon him unto the Arches,
Where such offences have their punishment.

KING.
To answer personally? is that your meaning?

BISHOP.
It is, my lord.

KING.
How, if he appeal?

BISHOP.
He cannot, my Lord, in such a case as this.

SUFFOLK.
Not where Religion is the plea, my lord.

KING.
I took it always, that our self stood out,
As a sufficient refuge, unto whom
Not any but might lawfully appeal.
But we’ll not argue now upon that point.
For Sir John Old-castle, whom you accuse,
Let me entreat you to dispence awhile
With your high title of pre-eminence.

[In scorn.]

Report did never yet condemn him so,
But he hath always been reputed loyal:
And in my knowledge I can say thus much,
That he is virtuous, wise, and honourable.
If any way his conscience be seduced,
To waver in his faith, I’ll send for him,
And school him privately; if that serve not,
Then afterward you may proceed against him.
Butler, be you the messenger for us,
And will him presently repair to court.

[Exeunt.]

SIR JOHN.
How now, my lord, why stand you discontent?
In sooth, me thinks the King hath well decreed.

BISHOP.
Yea, yea, sir John, if he would keep his word;
But I perceive he favours him so much,
As this will be to small effect, I fear.

SIR JOHN.
Why, then, I’ll tell you what y’are bets to do:
If you suspect the King will be but cold
In reprehending him, send you a process too
To serve upon him: so you may be sure
To make him answer ’t, howsoe’er it fall.

BISHOP.
And well remembered! I will have it so.
A Sumner shall be sent about it straight.

[Exit.]

SIR JOHN.
Yea, do so. In the mean space this remains
For kind sir John of Wrotham, honest Jack.
Me thinks the purse of gold the Bishop gave
Made a good show; it had a tempting look.
Beshrew me, but my fingers' ends to itch
To be upon those rudduks. Well, tis thus:
I am not as the world does take me for;
If ever wolf were clothed in sheep's coat,
Then I am he,—old huddle and twang, yfaith,
A priest in show, but in plain terms a thief.
Yet, let me tell you too, an honest thief,
One that will take it where it may be spared,
And spend it freely in good fellowship.
I have as many shapes as Proteus had,
That still, when any villainy is done,
There may be none suspect it was sir John.
Besides, to comfort me,—for what's this life,
Except the crabbed bitterness thereof,
Be sweetened now and then with lechery?—
I have my Doll, my concubine, as twere,
To frolic with, a lusty bouncing girl.
But whilst I loiter here, the gold may scape,
And that must not be so. It is mine own;
Therefore, I'll meet him on his way to court,
And shrive him of it: there will be the sport.

[Exit.]

ACT I. SCENE III. Kent. An outer court before lord Cobham's house.

[Enter three or four poor people: some soldiers, some old men.]

FIRST.
God help! God help! there's law for punishing,
But there's no law for our necessity:
There be more stocks to set poor soldiers in,
Than there be houses to relieve them at.

OLD MAN.
Faith, housekeeping decays in every place,
Even as Saint Peter writ, still worse and worse.

FOURTH.
Master mayor of Rochester has given commandment, that none shall go abroad out of the parish; and they have set an order down forsooth, what every poor householder must give towards our relief: where there be some ceased, I may say to you, had almost as much need to beg as we.

FIRST.
It is a hard world the while.

OLD MAN.
If a poor man come to a door to ask for God’s sake, they ask him for a license, or a certificate from a Justice.

SECOND.
Faith we have none but what we bear upon our bodies, our maimed limbs, God help us.

FOURTH.
And yet, as lame as I am, I’ll with the king into France, if I can crawl but a shipboard. I had rather be slain in France, than starve in England.

OLD MAN.
Ha, were I but as lusty as I was at the battle of Shrewbury, I would not do as I do: but we are now come to the good lord Cobham’s, to the best man to the poor that is in all Kent.

FOURTH.
God bless him! there be but few such.

[Enter Lord Cobham with Harpoole.]

COBHAM.
Thou peevish, froward man, what wouldst thou have?

HARPOOLE.
This pride, this pride, brings all to beggary.
I served your father, and your grandfather;
Show me such two men now!
No! No! Your backs, your backs, the devil and pride,
Has cut the throat of all good housekeeping.—
They were the best Yeomens’ masters,
That ever were in England.

COBHAM.
Yea, except thou have a crew of seely knaves
And sturdy rogues still feeding at my gate,
There is no hospitality with thee.

HARPOOLE.
They may sit at the gat well enough, but the devil of any thing you give them, except they will eat stones.

COBHAM.
Tis long, then, of such hungry knaves as you.

[Pointing to the beggars.]

Yea, sir, here’s your retinue; your guests be come.
They know their hours, I warrant you.

OLD MAN.
God bless your honour! God save the good Lord Cobham
And all his house!

SOLDIER.
Good your honour, bestow your blessed alms
Upon poor men.

COBHAM.
Now, sir, here be your Alms knights. Now are you
As safe as the Emperour.

HARPOOLE.
My Alms knights! nay, th’ are yours.
It is a shame for you, and I’ll stand too ’t;
Your foolish alms maintains more vagabonds,
Than all the noblemen in Kent beside.
Out, you rogues, you knaves! work for your livings!—
Alas, poor men! O Lord, they may beg their hearts out,
There’s no more charity amongst men than amongst
So many mastiff dogs!—What make you here,
You needy knaves? Away, away, you villains.

SECOND SOLDIER.
I beseech you, sir, be good to us.

COBHAM.
Nay, nay, they know thee well enough. I think that all the beggars in this land are thy acquaintance. Go bestow your alms; none will control you, sir.

HARPOOLE.
What should I give them? you are grown so beggarly, you have scarce a bit of bread to give at your door. You talk of your religion so long, that you have banished charity from amongst you; a man may make a flax shop in your kitchen chimneys, for any fire there is stirring.

COBHAM.
If thou wilt give them nothing, send them hence: let them not stand here starving in the cold.

HARPOOLE.
Who! I drive them hence? If I drive poor men from your door, I'll be hanged; I know not what I may come to my self. Yea, God help you, poor knaves; ye see the world, yfaith! Well, you had a mother: well, God be with thee, good Lady; thy soul's at rest. She gave more in shirts and smocks to poor children, than you spend in your house, & yet you live a beggar too.

COBHAM.
Even the worst deed that ere my mother did was in relieving such a fool as thou.

HARPOOLE.
Yea, yea, I am a fool still. With all your wit you will die a beggar; go too.

COBHAM.
Go, you old fool; give the poor people something. Go in, poor men, into the inner court, and take such alms as there is to be had.

SOLDIER.
God bless your honor.

HARPOOLE.
Hang you, rogues, hang you; there's nothing but misery amongst you; you fear no law, you.

[Exit.]

OLD MAN.
God bless you, good master Rafe, God save your life; you are good to the poor still.

[Enter the Lord Powis disguised, and shroud himself.]

COBHAM.
What fellow’s yonder comes along the grove?
Few passengers there be that know this way:
Me thinks he stops as though he stayed for me,
And meant to shroud himself amongst the bushes.
I know the Clergy hate me to the death,
And my religion gets me many foes:
And this may be some desperate rogue, suborned
To work me mischief.—As it pleaseth God!
If he come toward me, sure I’ll stay his coming—
Be he but one man—what so’er he be.

[The Lord Powis comes on.]

I have been well acquainted with that face.

POWIS.
Well met, my honorable lord and friend.

COBHAM.
You are welcome, sir, what ere you be;
But of this sudden, sir, I do not know you.

POWIS.
I am one that wisheth well unto your honor;
My name is Powis, an old friend of yours.

COBHAM.
My honorable lord, and worthy friend,
What makes your lordship thus alone in Kent,
And thus disguised in this strange attire?

POWIS.
My Lord, an unexpected accident
Hath at this time inforc’d me to these parts;
And thus it hapt:—Not yet full five days since,
Now at the last Assize at Hereford,
It chanced that the lord Herbert and my self,
Mongst other things, discoursing at the table,
Did fall in speech about some certain points
Of Wickliffe’s doctrine gainst the papacy
And the religion catholique, maintained
Through the most part of Europe at this day.
This wilful teasty lord stuck not to say
That Wickliffe was a knave, a schismatic,
His doctrine devilish and heretical,
And what soe’er he was maintained the same,

Was traitor both to God and to his country.
Being moved at his peremptory speech,
I told him some maintained those opinions,
Men, and truer subjects than lord Herbert was:
And he replying in comparisons,
Your name was urged, my lord, gainst his challenge,
To be a perfect favourer of the truth.
And to be short, from words we fell to blows,
Our servants and our tenants taking parts—
Many on both sides hurt—and for an hour
The broil by no means could be pacified,
Until the Judges, rising from the bench,
Were in their persons forced to part the fray.

COBHAM.
I hope no man was violently slain.

POWIS.
Faith, none, I trust, but the lord Herbert’s self,
Who is in truth so dangerously hurt,
As it is doubted he can hardly scape.

COBHAM.
I am sorry, my good lord, of these ill news.

POWIS.
This is the cause that drives me into Kent,
To shroud my self with you, so good a friend,
Until I hear how things do speed at home.

COBHAM.
Your lordship is most welcome unto Cobham;
But I am very sorry, my good lord,
My name was brought in question in this matter,
Considering I have many enemies,
That threaten malice, and do lie in wait
To take advantage of the smallest thing.
But you are welcome: and repose your lordship,
And keep your self here secret in my house,
Until we hear how the lord Herbert speeds.
Here comes my man.

[Enter Harpoole.]

Sirra, what news?

HARPOOLE.
Yonder’s one master Butler of the privy chamber,

is sent unto you from the King.

POWIS.
I pray God the lord Herbert be not dead,
And the King, hearing whither I am gone,
Hath sent for me.

COBHAM.
Comfort your self my lord, I warrant you.

HARPOOLE.
Fellow, what ails thee? doost thou quake? dost thou shake? dost thou tremble? ha?

COBHAM.
Peace, you old fool! Sirra, convey this gentleman in the back way, and bring the other into the walk.

HARPOOLE.
Come, sir; you are welcome, if you love my lord.

POWIS.
God have mercy, gentle friend.

[Exeunt.]

COBHAM.
I thought as much: that it would not be long,
Before I heard of something from the King
About this matter.

[Enter Harpoole with Master Butler.]

HARPOOLE.
Sir, yonder my lord walks, you see him;
I’ll have your men into the Cellar the while.

COBHAM.
Welcome, good master Butler.

BUTLER.
Thanks, my good lord: his Majesty doth commend
His love unto your lordship,
And wills you to repair unto the court.

COBHAM.
God bless his Highness, and confound his enemies!

I hope his Majesty is well.

BUTLER.
In health, my lord.

COBHAM.
God long continue it! Me thinks you look
As though you were not well: what ails you, sir?

BUTLER.
Faith, I have had a foolish odd mischance,
That angers me: coming over Shooters hill,
There came a fellow to me like a Sailor,
And asked me money; and whilst I stayed my horse
To draw my purse, he takes th’ advantage of
A little bank and leaps behind me, whips
My purse away, and with a sudden jerk,
I know not how, threw me at least three yards
Out of my saddle. I never was so robbed
In all my life.

COBHAM.
I am very sorry, sir, for your mischance. We will send
our warrant forth, to stay such suspicious persons as
shall be found. Then, master Butler, we will attend you.

BUTLER.
I humbly thank your lordship, I will attend you.

ACT II. SCENE I. The same.

[Enter the Sumner.]

SUMNER.
I have the law to warrant what I do; and though the
Lord Cobham be a noble man, that dispenses not
with law: I dare serve process were a five noble men.
Though we Sumners make sometimes a mad slip in a
corner with a pretty wench, a Sumner must not go always
by seeing: a man may be content to hide his eyes, where
he may feel his profit. Well, this is my Lord Cobham’s
house if I can devise to speak with him; if not, I’ll clap
my citation upon’s door: so my lord of Rochester bid
me. But me thinks here comes one of his men.

[Enter Harpoole.]

HARPOOLE.
Welcome, good fellow, welcome; who wouldst thou speak with?

SUMNER.
With my lord Cobham I would speak, if thou be one of his men.

HARPOOLE.
Yes, I am one of his men, but thou canst not speak with my lord.

SUMNER.
May I send to him then?

HARPOOLE.
I’ll tell thee that, when I know thy errand.

SUMNER.
I will not tell my errand to thee.

HARPOOLE.
Then keep it to thy self, and walk like a knave as thou camest.

SUMNER.
I tell thee, my lord keeps no knaves, sirra.

HARPOOLE.
Then thou servest him not, I believe: what lord is thy master?

SUMNER
My lord of Rochester.

HARPOOLE.
In good time! And what wouldst thou have with my lord Cobham?

SUMNER.
I come, by virtue of a process, to ascite him to appear before my lord in the court at Rochester.

HARPOOLE.
[Aside.] Well, God grant me patience! I could eat this conger. My lord is not at home; therefore it were good, Sumner, you carried your process back.

SUMNER.
Why, if he will not be spoken withal, then will I leave it here; and see you that he take knowledge of it.

HARPOOLE.
Swounds, you slave, do you set up your bills here! go to; take it down again. Doest thou know what thou dost? Dost thou know on whom thou servest process?

SUMNER.
Yes, marry, do I; Sir John Old-castle, Lord Cobham.

HARPOOLE.
I am glad thou knowest him yet: and, sirra, dost not thou know, that the lord Cobham is a brave lord, that keeps good beef and beer in his house, and every day feeds a hundred poor people at’s gate, and keeps a hundred tall fellows?

SUMNER.
What’s that to my process?

HARPOOLE.
Marry, this, sir! is this process parchment?

SUMNER.
Yes, marry.

HARPOOLE.
And this seal wax?

SUMNER.
It is so.

HARPOOLE.
If this be parchment, & this wax, eat you this parchment and this wax, or I will make parchment of your skin, and beat your brains into wax: Sirra Sumner, dispatch; devour, sirra, devour.

SUMNER.
I am my lord of Rochester’s Sumner; I came to do my office, and thou shalt answer it.

HARPOOLE.
Sirra, no railing, but betake you to your teeth. Thou shalt eat no worse than thou bringst with thee: thou

bringst it for my lord, and wilt thou bring my lord worse than thou wilt eat thy self?

SUMNER.
Sirra, I brought it not my lord to eat.

HARPOOLE.
O, do you sir me now? all's one for that: but I'll make you eat it, for bringing it.

SUMNER.
I cannot eat it.

HARPOOLE.
Can you not? sblood I'll beat you until you have a stomach.

[He beats him.]

SUMNER.
O hold, hold, good master serving-man! I will eat it.

HARPOOLE.
Be champing, be chawing, sir; or I'll chaw you, you rogue! the purest of the honey! Tough wax is the purest of the honey.

SUMNER.
O Lord, sir! oh! oh!

[He eats.]

HARPOOLE.
Feed, feed! wholesome, rogue, wholesome! Cannot you, like an honest Sumner, walk with the devil your brother, to fetch in your Bailiffs' rents, but you must come to a noble man's house with process? Sblood! if thy seal were as broad as the lead that covers Rochester church, thou shouldst eat it.

SUMNER.
O, I am almost choked! I am almost choked!

HARPOOLE.
Who's within there? will you shame my Lord? is there no beer in the house? Butler! I say.

[Enter Butler.]

BUTLER.
Here, here.

HARPOOLE.
Give him Beer.

[He drinks.]

There; tough old sheepskin’s bare, dry meat.

SUMNER.
O sir, let me go no further; I’ll eat my word.

HARPOOLE.
Yea, marry, sit! so I mean: you shall eat more than your own word, for I’ll make you eat all the words in the process. Why, you drab monger, cannot the secrets of all the wenches in a shire serve your turn, but you must come hither with a citation? with a pox! I’ll cite you. [He has then done.] A cup of sack for the Sumner.

BUTLER.
Here, sir, here.

HARPOOLE.
Here, slave, I drink to thee.

SUMNER.
I thank you, sir.

HARPOOLE.
Now if thou findst thy stomach well—because thou shalt see my Lord keep’s meat in’s house—if thou wilt go in, thou shalt have a piece of beef to the break fast.

SUMNER.
No, I am very well, good Master serving-man, I thank you; very well sir.

HARPOOLE.
I am glad on’t. Then be walking towards Rochester to keep your stomach warm; and Sumner, if I may know you disturb a good wench within this Diocese; if I do not make thee eat her petticoat, if there were four yards of Kentish cloth in’t, I am a villain.

SUMNER.

God be with you, Master serving-man.

[Exit.]

HARPOOLE.
Farewell, Sumner.

[Enter Constable.]

CONSTABLE.
God save you Master Harpoole.

HARPOOLE.
Welcome, Constable, welcome, Constable; what news with thee?

CONSTABLE.
And’t please you, Master Harpoole, I am to make hue and cry, for a fellow with one eye that has robbed two Clothiers, and am to crave your hindrance, for to search all suspected places; and they say there was a woman in the company.

HARPOOLE.
Hast thou been at the Alehouse? hast thou sought there?

CONSTABLE.
I durst not search, sir, in my Lord Cobham’s liberty, except I had some of his servants, which are for my warrant.

HARPOOLE.
An honest Constable! an honest Constable! Call forth him that keeps the Alehouse here.

CONSTABLE.
Ho! who’s within there?

[Enter Ale-man.]

ALE MAN.
Who calls there? come near a God’s name! Oh, is’t you, Master Constable and Master Harpoole? you are welcome with all my heart. What make you here so early this morning?

HARPOOLE.
Sirra, what strangers do you lodge? there is a robbery done this morning, and we are to search for all suspected persons.

ALE MAN.
God’s bores! I am sorry for’t: yfaith, sir, I lodge no body but

a good honest merry priest,—they call him sir John a Wrotham—
and a handsome woman that is his niece, that he says he has
some suit in law for; and as they go up & down to London,
sometimes they lie at my house.

HARPOOLE.
What, is he here in thy house now?

ALE MAN.
She is, sir. I promise you, sir, he is a quiet man; and because
he will not trouble too many rooms, he makes the woman lie
every night at his bed’s feet.

HARPOOLE.
Bring her forth! Constable, bring her forth! let’s see her, let’s
see her.

ALE MAN.
Dorothy, you must come down to Master Constable.

DOLL.
Anon, forsooth.

[She enters.]

HARPOOLE.
Welcome, sweet lass, welcome.

DOLL.
I thank you, good Master serving-man, and master
Constable also.

HARPOOLE.
A plump girl by the mass, a plump girl! Ha, Doll, ha!
Wilt thou forsake the priest, and go with me?

CONSTABLE.
A! well said, Master Harpoole; you are a merry old man,
yfaith. Yfaith, you will never be old. Now, by the mack,
a pretty wench indeed!

HARPOOLE.
Ye old mad merry Constable, art thou advised of that. Ha,
well said, Doll! fill some ale here.

DOLL.
[Aside.] Oh, if I wist this old priest would not stick to me,

by Jove, I would ingle this old serving-man.

HARPOOLE.
Oh you old mad colt! yfaith, I'll feak you! fill all the pots in the house there.

CONSTABLE.
Oh, well said, Master Harpoole! you are heart of oak when all's done.

HARPOOLE.
Ha, Doll, thou hast a sweet pair of lips, by the mass.

DOLL.
Truly you are a most sweet old man, as ever I saw; by my troth, you have a face, able to make any woman in love with you.

HARPOOLE.
Fill, sweet Doll; I'll drink to thee.

DOLL.
'I pledge you, sir, and thank you therefore,
And I pray you let it come.'

HARPOOLE.
[Embracing her.] Doll, canst thou love me? A mad merry lass! would to God I had never seen thee!

DOLL.
I warrant you, you will not out of my thoughts this twelvemonth; truly you are as full of favour, as a man may be. Ah, these sweet grey locks! by my troth, they are most lovely.

CONSTABLE.
God boores, master Harpoole, I will have one buss too.

HARPOOLE.
No licking for you, Constable! hand off, hand off!

CONSTABLE.
Bur lady, I love kissing as well as you.

DOLL.
Oh, you are an odd boy; you have a wanton eye of your own! ah, you sweet sugar lipped wanton, you will win as many women's hearts as come in your company.

[Enter Priest.]

WROTHAM.
Doll, come hither.

HARPOOLE.
Priest, she shall not.

DOLL.
I’ll come anon, sweet love.

WROTHAM.
Hand off, old fornicator.

HARPOOLE.
Vicar, I’ll sit here in spite of thee. Is this fit stuff for a priest to carry up and down with him?

WROTHAM.
Ah, sirra, dost thou not know that a good fellow parson may have a chapel of ease, where his parish Church is far off?

HARPOOLE.
You whoreson stoned Vicar!

WROTHAM.
You old stale ruffin! you lion of Cotswold!

HARPOOLE.
Swounds, Vicar, I’ll geld you!

[Flies upon him.]

CONSTABLE.
Keep the King’s peace!

DOLL.
Murder! murder! murder!

ALE MAN.
Hold! as you are men, hold! for God’s sake be quiet! Put up your weapons; you draw not in my house.

HARPOOLE.
You whoreson bawdy priest!

WROTHAM.
You old mutton monger!

CONSTABLE.
Hold, sir John, hold!

DOLL.
[To the Priest.] I pray thee, sweet hear, be quiet. I was but sitting to drink a pot of ale with him, even as kind a man as ever I met with.

HARPOOLE.
Thou art a thief, I warrant thee.

WROTHAM.
Then I am but as thou hast been in thy days. Let’s not be ashamed of our trade; the King has been a thief himself.

DOLL.
Come, be quiet. Hast thou sped?

WROTHAM.
I have, wench: here be crowns, yfaith.

DOLL.
Come, let’s be all friends then.

CONSTABLE.
Well said, mistress Dorothy, yfaith.

HARPOOLE.
Thou art the maddest priest that ever I met with.

WROTHAM.
Give me thy hand, thou art as good a fellow. I am a singer, a drinker, a bencher, a wencher! I can say a mass, and kiss a lass! Faith, I have a parsonage, and because I would not be at too much charges, this wench serves me for a sexton.

HARPOOLE.
Well said, mad priest, we’ll in and be friends.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE II. London. A room in the Axe Inn, without Bishop-gate.

[Enter sir Roger Acton, master Bourne, master Beverly, and William Murley the brewer of Dunstable.]

ACTON.
Now, master Murley, I am well assured
You know our arrant, and do like the cause,
Being a man affected as we are.

MURLEY.
Mary, God dild ye, dainty my dear! no master, good sir Roger Acton Knight, master Bourne, and master Beverly esquires, gentlemen, and justices of the peace—no master I, but plain William Murley, the brewer of Dunstable, your honest neighbour, and your friend, if ye be men of my profession.

BEVERLY.
Professed friends to Wickliffe, foes to Rome.

MURLEY.
Hold by me, lad; lean upon that staff, good master Beverly: all of a house. Say your mind, say your mind.

ACTON.
You know our faction now is grown so great,
Throughout the realm, that it begins to smoke
Into the Clergy’s eyes, and the King’s ear.
High time it is that we were drawn to head,
Our general and officers appointed;
And wars, ye wot, will ask great store of coin.
Able to strength our action with your purse,
You are elected for a colonel
Over a regiment of fifteen bands.

MURLEY.
Fue, paltry, paltry! in and out, to and fro! be it more or less, upon occasion. Lord have mercy upon us, what a world is this! Sir Roger Acton, I am but a Dunstable man, a plain brewer, ye know: will lusty Cavaliering captains, gentlemen, come at my calling, go at my bidding? Dainty my dear, they’ll do a god of wax, a horse or cheese, a prick and a pudding. No, no, ye must appoint some lord, or knight at least, to that place.

BOURNE.
Why, master Murley, you shall be a Knight:
Were you not in election to be shrieve?
Have ye not past all offices but that?

Have ye not wealth to make your wife a lady?
I warrant you, my lord, our General
Bestows that honor on you at first sight.

MURLEY.
Mary, God dild ye, dainty my dear!
But tell me, who shall be our General?
Where’s the lord Cobham, sir John Old-castle,
That noble alms-giver, housekeeper, virtuous,
Religious gentleman? Come to me there, boys,
Come to me there!

ACTON.
Why, who but he shall be our General?

MURLEY.
And shall he knight me, and make me colonel?

ACTON.
My word for that: sir William Murley, knight.

MURLEY.
Fellow sir Roger Acton, knight, all fellows—I mean
in arms—how strong are we? how many partners? Our
enemies beside the King are might: be it more or less
upon occasion, reckon our force.

ACTON.
There are of us, our friends, and followers,
Three thousand and three hundred at the least;
Of northern lads four thousand, beside horse;
>From Kent there comes with sir John Old-castle
Seven thousand; then from London issue out,
Of masters, servants, strangers, prentices,
Forty odd thousands into Ficket field,
Where we appoint our special rendezvous.

MURLEY.
Fue, paltry, paltry, in and out, to and fro! Lord have
mercy upon us, what a world is this! Where’s that
Ficket field, sir Roger?

ACTON.
Behind saint Giles in the field near Holborne.

MURLEY.
Newgate, up Holborne, S. Giles in the field, and to
Tiborne: an old saw. For the day, for the day?

ACTON.
On Friday next, the fourteenth day of January.

MURLEY.
Tyllie vallie, trust me never if I have any liking of that day! fue, paltry, paltry! Friday, quoth a! Dismal day! Childermass day this year was Friday.

BEVERLY.
Nay, master Murley, if you observe the days,
We make some question of your constancy.
All days are like to men resolved in right.

MURLEY.
Say Amen, and say no more; but say, and hold, master Beverly: Friday next, and Ficket field, and William Murley, and his merry men shall be all one. I have half a score jades that draw my beer carts,
And every jade shall bear a knave,
And every knave shall wear a jack,
And every jack shall have a skull,
And every skull shall shew a spear,
And every spear shall kill a foe
At Ficket field, at Ficket field.
John and Tom, and Dick and Hodge,
And Rafe and Robin, William & George,
And all my knaves shall fight like men,
At Ficket field on Friday next.

BOURNE.
What sum of money mean you to disburse?

MURLEY.
It may be modestly, decently, soberly, and handsomely I may bring five hundred pound.

ACTON.
Five hundred, man! five thousand’s not enough!
A hundred thousand will not pay our men
Two months together. Either come prepared
Like a brave Knight, and martial Colonel,
In glittering gold, and gallant furniture,
Bringing in coin a cart load at he least,
And all your followers mounted on good horse,
Or never come disgraceful to us all.

BEVERLY.
Perchance you may be chosen Treasurer.
Ten thousand pound’s the least that you can bring.

MURLEY.
Paltry, paltry! in and out, to and fro, upon occasion I have ten thousand pound to spend, and ten too. And rather than the Bishop shall have his will of me for my conscience, it shall out all. Flame and flax, flame and flax! it was got with water and malt, and it shall fly with fire and gun powder. Sir Roger, a cart load of money till the axetree crack, my self and my men in Ficket field on Friday next: remember my Knighthood, and my place. There’s my hand; I’ll be there.

[Exit.]

ACTON.
See what Ambition may persuade men to,
In hope of honor he will spend himself.

BOURNE.
I never thought a Brewer half so rich.

BEVERLY.
Was never bankerout Brewer yet but one,
With using too much malt, too little water.

ACTON.
That’s no fault in Brewers now-adays.
Come, away, about our business.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE III. An audience-chamber in the palace at Eltham.

[Enter King Henry, Suffolk, Butler, and Old-castle kneeling to the King.]

KING.
Tis not enough, Lord Cobham, to submit;
You must forsake your gross opinion.
The Bishops find themselves much injured,
And though, for some good service you have done,
We for our part are pleased to pardon you,
Yet they will not so soon be satisfied.

COBHAM.
My gracious Lord, unto your Majesty,
Next unto my God, I owe my life:
And what is mine, either by nature’s gift,
Or fortune’s bounty, all is at your service.
But, for obedience to the Pope of Rome,
I owe him none, nor shall his shaveling priests
That are in England alter my belief.
If out of holy Scripture they can prove,
That I am in an error I will yield,
And gladly take instruction at their hands;
But otherwise, I do beseech your grace,
My conscience may not be encroached upon.

KING.
We would be loath to press our subjects’ bodies,
Much less their souls, the dear redeemed part
Of him that is the ruler of us all;
Yet let me counsel ye, that might command:
Do not presume to tempt them with ill words,
Nor suffer any meetings to be had
Within your house, but to the uttermost,
Disperse the flocks of this new gathering sect.

COBHAM.
My liege, if any breathe, that dares come forth,
And say my life in any of these points
Deserves th’attaindor of ignoble thoughts,
Here stand I, craving no remorse at all,
But even the utmost rigor may be shown.

KING.
Let it suffice; we know your loyalty.
What have you there?

COBHAM.
A deed of clemency;
Your Highness’ pardon for Lord Powis’ life,
Which I did beg, and you, my noble Lord,
Of gracious favour did vouchsafe to grant.

KING.
But yet it is not signed with our hand.

COBHAM.
Not yet, my Liege.

[One ready with pen and ink.]

KING.
The fact, you say, was done,
Not of prepensed malice, but by chance.

COBHAM.
Upon mine honor so, no otherwise.

KING.
There is his pardon; bid him make amends,

[Writes.]

And cleanse his soul to God for his offence.
What we remit, is but the body’s scourge—

[Enter Bishop.]

How now, Lord Bishop?

BISHOP.
Justice, dread Sovereign!
As thou art King, so grant I may have justice.

KING.
What means this exclamation? let us know.

BISHOP.
Ah, my good Lord, the state’s abused,
And our decrees most shamefully profaned.

KING.
How? or by whom?

BISHOP.
Even by this heretic,
This Jew, this Traitor to your majesty.

COBHAM.
Prelate, thou liest, even in thy greasy maw,
Or whosoever twits me with the name
Of either traitor, or of heretic.

KING.
Forbear, I say: and, Bishop, shew the cause
>From whence this late abuse hath been derived.

BISHOP.
Thus, mighty King:—By general consent,
A messenger was sent to cite this Lord,
To make appearance in the consistory;
And coming to his house, a ruffian slave,
One of his daily followers, met the man,
Who, knowing him to be a parroter,
Assaults him first and after, in contempt
Of us and our proceedings, makes him cate
The written process, parchment, scale and all:
Whereby his master neither was brought forth,
Nor we but scorned for our authority.

KING.
When was this done?

BISHOP.
At six a clock this morning.

KING.
And when came you to court?

COBHAM.
Last night, my Lord.

KING.
By this it seems, he is not guilty of it,
And you have done him wrong t’accuse him so.

BISHOP.
But it was done, my lord, by his appointment,
Or else his man durst ne’er have been so bold.

KING.
Or else you durst be bold to interrupt,
And fill our ears with frivolous complaints.
Is this the duty you do bear to us?
Was’t not sufficient we did pass our word
To send for him, but you, misdoubting it,
Or—which is worse—intending to forestall
Our regal power, must likewise summon him?
This savors of Ambition, not of zeal,
And rather proves you malice his estate,
Than any way that he offends the law.
Go to, we like it not; and he your officer,
That was employed so much amiss herein,
Had his desert for being insolent.

[Enter Huntington.]

So, Cobham, when you please you may depart.

COBHAM.
I humbly bid farewell unto my liege.

[Exit.]

KING.
Farewell.—What’s the news by Huntington?

HUNTINGTON.
Sir Roger Acton and a crew, my Lord,
Of bold seditious rebels are in Arms,
Intending reformation of Religion.
And with their Army they intend to pitch
In Ficket field, unless they be repulsed.

KING.
So near our presence? Dare they be so bold?
And will proud war, and eager thirst of blood,
Whom we had thought to entertain far off,
Press forth upon us in our native bounds?
Must we be forced to hansell our sharp blades
In England here, which we prepared for France?
Well, a God’s name be it! What’s their number, say,
Or who’s the chief commander of this rout?

HUNTINGTON.
Their number is not known, as yet, my Lord,
But tis reported Sir John Old-castle
Is the chief man on whom they do depend.

KING.
How, the Lord Cobham?

HUNTINGTON.
Yes, my gracious Lord.

BISHOP.
I could have told your majesty as much
Before he went, but that I saw your Grace
Was too much blinded by his flattery.

SUFFOLK.
Send post, my Lord, to fetch him back again.

BUTLER.
Traitor unto his country, how he smoothed,
And seemed as innocent as Truth it self!

KING.
I cannot think it yet he would be false;
But if he be, no matter; let him go.
We’ll meet both him and them unto their woe.

[Exeunt all but Bishop.]

BISHOP.
This falls out well, and at the last I hope
To see this heretic die in a rope.

ACT III. SCENE I. An avenue leading to lord Cobham’s house in Kent.

[Enter Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop, Gray, and Chartres the French factor.]

SCROOP.
Once more, my Lord of Cambridge, make rehearsal,
How you do stand entitled to the Crown.
The deeper shall we print it in our minds,
And every man the better be resolved,
When he perceives his quarrel to be just.

CAMBRIDGE.
Then thus, Lord Scroop, sir Thomas Gray, & you,
Monsieur de Chartres, agent for the French:—
This Lionel, Duke of Clarence, as I said,
Third son of Edward (England’s King) the third,
Had issue Phillip, his sole daughter and heir;
Which Phillip afterward was given in marriage
To Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March,
And by him had a son called Roger Mortimer;
Which Roger, likewise, had of his descent
Edmund, Roger, Anne, and Eleanor—
Two daughters and two sons—but those three
Died without issue. Anne, that did survive,
And now was left her father’s only heir,
My fortune was to marry, being too
By my grandfather of Kind Edward’s line:
So of his sirname, I am called, you know,
Richard Plantagenet. My father was
Edward, the Duke of York, and son and heir

To Edmund Langley, Edward the third’s fifth son.

SCROOP.
So that it seems your claim comes by your wife,
As lawful heir to Roger Mortimer,
The son of Edmund, which did marry Phillip,
Daughter and heir to Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

CAMBRIDGE.
True, for this Harry and his father both,
Harry the first, as plainly doth appear,
Are false intruders and usurp the Crown.
For when young Richard was at Pomfret slain,
In him the title of prince Edward died,
That was the eldest of king Edward’s sons:
William, of Hatfield, and their second brother,
Death in his nonage had before bereft:
So that my wife, derived from Lionel,
Third son unto king Edward, ought proceed,
And take possession of the Diadem
Before this Harry, or his father king,
Who fetched their title but from Lancaster,
Forth of that royal line. And being thus,
What reason ist but she should have her right?

SCROOP.
I am resolved our enterprise is just.

GRAY.
Harry shall die, or else resign his crown.

CHARTRES.
Perform but that, and Charles, the king of France,
Shall aid you, lords, not only with his men,
But send you money to maintain your wars.
Five hundred thousand crowns he bade me profer,
If you can stop but Harry’s voyage for France.

SCROOP.
We never had a fitter time than now,
The realm in such division as it is.

CAMBRIDGE.
Besides, you must persuade ye, there is due
Vengeance for Richard’s murder, which, although
It be deferred, yet will it fall at last,
And now as likely as another time.
Sin hath had many years to ripen in,

And now the harvest cannot be far off,
Wherein the weeds of usurpation
Are to be cropped, and cast into the fire.

SCROOP.
No more, earl Cambridge; here I plight my faith,
To set up thee and thy renowned wife.

GRAY.
Gray will perform the same, as he is knight.

CHARTRES.
And to assist ye, as I said before,
Charters doth gage the honor of his king.

SCROOP.
We lack but now Lord Cobham’s fellowship,
And then our plot were absolute indeed.

CAMBRIDGE.
Doubt not of him, my lord; his life’s pursued
By the incensed Clergy, and of late,
Brought in displeasure with the king, assures
He may be quickly won unto our faction.
Who hath the articles were drawn at large
Of our whole purpose?

GRAY.
That have I, my Lord.

CAMBRIDGE.
We should not now be far off from his house;
Our serious conference hath beguiled the way.
See where his castle stands. Give me the writing.
When we are come unto the speech of him,
Because we will not stand to make recount,
Of that which hath been said, here he shall read

[Enter Cobham.]

Our minds at large, and what we crave of him.

SCROOP.
A ready way. Here comes the man himself,
Booted and spurred; it seems he hath been riding.

CAMBRIDGE.
Well met, lord Cobham.

COBHAM.
My lord of Cambridge?
Your honor is most welcome into Kent,
And all the rest of this fair company.
I am new come from London, gentle Lords;
But will ye not take Cowling for your host,
And see what entertainment it affords?

CAMBRIDGE.
We were intended to have been your guests:
But now this lucky meeting shall suffice
To end our business, and defer that kindness.

COBHAM.
Business, my lord? what business should you have
But to be merry? We have no delicates,
But this I'll promise you: a piece of venison,
A cup of wine, and so forth—hunters' fare;
And if you please, we'll strike the stag our selves
Shall fill our dishes with his well-fed flesh.

SCROOP.
That is, indeed, the thing we all desire.

COBHAM.
My lords and you shall have your choice with me.

CAMBRIDGE.
Nay, but the stag which we desire to strike
Lives not in Cowling; if you will consent,
And go with us, we'll bring you to a forest,
Where runs a lusty herd; amongst the which
There is a stag superior to the rest,
A stately beast that, when his fellows run,
He leads the race, and beats the sullen earth,
As though he scorned it, with his trampling hooves.
Aloft he bears his head, and with his breast,
Like a huge bulwark, counter-checks the wind:
And when he standeth still, he stretcheth forth
His proud ambitious neck, as if he meant
To wound the firmament with forked horns.

COBHAM.
Tis pity such a goodly beast should die.

CAMBRIDGE.
Not so, sir John, for he is tyrannous,

And gores the other deer, and will not keep
Within the limits are appointed him.
Of late he’s broke into a several,
Which doth belong to me, and there he spoils
Both corn and pasture. Two of his wild race,
Alike for stealth and covetous encroaching,
Already are removed; if he were dead,
I should not only be secure from hurt,
But with his body make a royal feast.

SCROOP.
How say you, then; will you first hunt with us?

COBHAM.
Faith, Lords, I like the pastime; where’s the place>

CAMBRIDGE.
Peruse this writing; it will shew you all,
And what occasion we have for the sport.

[He reads.]

COBHAM.
Call ye this hunting, my lords? Is this the stag
You fain would chase—Harry our dread king?
So we may make a banquet for the devil,
And in the stead of wholesome meat, prepare
A dish of poison to confound our selves.

CAMBRIDGE.
Why so, lord Cobham? See you not our claim?
And how imperiously he holds the crown?

SCROOP.
Besides, you know your self is in disgrace,
Held as a recreant, and pursued to death.
This will defend you from your enemies,
And stablish your religion through the land.

COBHAM.
Notorious treason! yet I will conceal [Aside.]
My secret thoughts, to sound the depth of it.
My lord of Cambridge, I do see your claim,
And what good may redound unto the land
By prosecuting of this enterprise.
But where are the men? where’s power and furniture
To order such an action? We are weak;
Harry, you know’s a mighty potentate.

CAMBRIDGE.
Tut, we are strong enough: you are beloved,
And many will be glad to follow you;
We are the like, and some will follow us.
Besides, there is hope from France: here’s an ambassador
That promiseth both men and money too.
The commons likewise (as we hear) pretend
A sudden tumult; we will join with them.

COBHAM.
Some likelihood, I must confess, to speed;
But how shall I believe this is plain truth?
You are, my lords, such men as live in Court,
And highly have been favoured of the king,
Especially lord Scroop, whom oftentimes
He maketh choice of for his bedfellow;
And you, lord Gray, are of his privy counsel:
Is not this a train to entrap my life?

CAMBRIDGE.
Then perish may my soul! What, think you so?

SCROOP.
We’ll swear to you.

GRAY.
Or take the sacrament.

COBHAM.
Nay, you are noble men, and I imagine,
As you are honorable by birth and blood,
So you will be in heart, in thought, in word.
I crave no other testimony but this:
That you would all subscribe, and set your hands
Unto this writing which you gave to me.

CAMBRIDGE.
With all our hearts. Who hath any pen and ink?

SCROOP.
My pocket should have one: yea, here it is.

CAMBRIDGE.
Give it me, lord Scroop.—There is my name.

SCROOP.
And there is my name.

GRAY.
And mine.

COBHAM.
Sir, let me crave,
That you would likewise write your name with theirs,
For confirmation of your master’s word,
The king of France.

CHARTRES.
That will I, noble Lord.

COBHAM.
So now this action is well knit together,
And I am for you. Where’s our meeting, lords?

CAMBRIDGE.
Here, if you please, the tenth of July next.

COBHAM.
In Kent? agreed: now let us in to supper.
I hope your honors will not away to night.

CAMBRIDGE.
Yes, presently; for I have far to ride,
About soliciting of other friends.

SCROOP.
And we would not be absent from the court,
Lest thereby grow suspicion in the king.

COBHAM.
Yet taste a cup of wine before ye go.

CAMBRIDGE.
Not now, my lord, we thank you: so farewell.

[Exeunt all but Cobham.]

COBHAM.
Farewell, my noble lords.—My noble lords?
My noble villains, base conspirators.
How can they look his Highness in the face,
Whom they so closely study to betray?
But I’ll not sleep until I make it known.
This head shall not be burdened with such thoughts,
Nor in this heart will I conceal a deed

Of such impiety against my king.
Madam, how now?

[Enter Harpoole and the rest.]

LADY COBHAM.
You are welcome home, my Lord.
Why seem ye so disquiet in your looks?
What hath befallen you that disquiets your mind?

LADY POWIS.
Bad news, I am afraid, touching my husband.

COBHAM.
Madam, not so: there is your husband’s pardon.
Long may ye live, each joy unto the other.

POWIS.
So great a kindness as i know not how
To make reply; my sense is quite confounded.

COBHAM.
Let that alone: and madam, stay me not,
For I must back unto the court again
With all the speed I can. Harpoole, my horse.

LADY COBHAM.
So soon, my Lord? what, will you ride all night?

COBHAM.
All night or day; it must be so, sweet wife.
Urge me not why or what my business is,
But get you in. Lord Powis, bear with me,
And madam, think your welcome ne’er the worse:
My house is at your use. Harpoole, away.

HARPOOLE.
Shall I attend your lordship to the court?

COBHAM.
Yes, sir; your gelding! mount you presently.

[Exeunt.]

LADY COBHAM.
I prithee, Harpoole, look unto thy Lord.
I do not like this sudden posting back.

POWIS.
Some earnest business is a foot belike;
What e’er it be, pray God be his good guide.

LADY POWIS.
Amen! that hath so highly us bested.

LADY COBHAM.
Come, madam, and my lord, we’ll hope the best;
You shall not into Wales till he return.

POWIS.
Though great occasion be we should depart,
Yet madam will we stay to be resolved
Of this unlooked for, doubtful accident.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE II. A road near Highgate.

[Enter Murley and his men, prepared in some filthy order for war.]

MURLEY.
Come, my hearts of flint, modestly, decently, soberly, and handsomely, no man afore his Leader; follow your master, your Captain, your Knight that shall be, for the honor of Meal-men, Millers, and Malt-men. Dunne is the mouse. Dick and tom, for the credit of Dunstable, ding down the enemy to morrow; ye shall not come into the field like beggars. Where be Leonard and Laurence, my two loaders? Lord have mercy upon us, what a world is this? I would give a couple of shillings for a dozen of good feathers for ye, and forty pence for as many scarfs to set ye out withal. Frost and snow! a man has no heart to fight till he be brave.

DICK.
Master, I hope we be no babes. For our manhood, our bucklers and our town foot-balls can bear witness: and this light parrel we have shall off, and we’ll fight naked afore we run away.

TOM.
Nay, I am of Laurence mind for that, for he means to leave his life behind him; he and Leonard, your two loaders, are making their wills because they have wives.

Now we Bachelors bid our friends scramble for our goods if we die: but, master, pray ye, let me ride upon Cutte.

MURLEY.
Meal and salt, wheat and malt, fire and tow, frost and snow! why, Tom, thou shalt. Let me see: here are you, William and George are with my cart, and Robin and Hodge holding my own two horses: proper men, handsome men, tall men, true men.

DICK.
But, master, master, me thinks you are a mad man to hazard your own person and a cart load of money too.

TOM.
Yea, and, master, there’s a worse matter in’t. If it be as I heard say, we go to fight against all the learned Bishops, that should give us their blessing; and if they curse us, we shall speed ne’er the better.

DICK.
Nay, bir lady, some say the King takes their part; and, master, dare you fight against the King?

MURLEY.
Fie, paltry, paltry! in and out, to and fro, upon occasion; if the King be so unwise to come there, we’ll fight with him too.

TOM.
What, if ye should kill the King?

MURLEY.
Then we’ll make another.

DICK.
Is that all? do ye not speak treason?

MURLEY.
If we do, who dare trip us? we come to fight for our conscience, and for honor. Little know you what is in my bosom; look here, mad knaves, a pair of gilt spurs.

TOM.
A pair of golden spurs? Why do you not put them on your heels? Your bosom’s no place for spurs.

MURLEY.

Be’t more or less upon occasion, Lord have mercy upon us,
Tom, th’art a fool, and thou speakest treason to knighthood.
Dare any wear golden or silver spurs till he be a knight? No,
I shall be knighted to morrow, and then they shall on. Sirs,
was it ever read in the church book of Dunstable, that ever
malt man was made knight?

TOM.
No, but you are more: you are meal-man, maltman, miller,
corn-master and all.

DICK.
Yea, and half a brewer too, and the devil and all for wealth.
You bring more money with you, than all the rest.

MURLEY.
The more’s my honor. I shall be a knight to morrow! Let
me spose my men: Tom upon cut, Dick upon hob, Hodge
upon Ball, Raph upon Sorell, and Robin upon the forehorse.

[Enter Acton, Bourne, and Beverly.]

TOM.
Stand, who comes there?

ACTON.
All friends, good fellow.

MURLEY.
Friends and fellows, indeed, sir Roger.

ACTON.
Why, thus you shew your self a Gentleman,
To keep your day, and come so well prepared.
Your cart stands yonder, guarded by your men,
Who tell me it is loaden with coin.
What sum is there?

MURLEY.
Ten thousand pound, sir Roger: and modestly,
decently, soberly, and handsomely, see what I
have here against I be knighted.

ACTON.
Gilt spurs? tis well.

MURLEY.

But where’s your army, sir?

ACTON.
Dispersed in sundry villages about:
Some here with us in Highgate, some at Finchley,
Totnam, Enfield, Edmunton, Newington,
Islington, Hogsdon, Pancredge, Kensington;
Some nearer Thames, Ratcliffe, Blackwall and Bow;
But our chief strength must be the Londoners,
Which, ere the Sun to morrow shine,
Will be near fifty thousand in the field.

MURLEY.
Mary, God dild ye, dainty my dear! but upon occasion,
sir Roger Acton, doth not the King know of it, and
gather his power against us?

ACTON.
No, he’s secure at Eltham.

MURLEY.
What do the Clergy?

ACTON.
Fear extremely, yet prepare no force.

MURLEY.
In and out, to and fro, Bully my boikin, we shall carry
the world afore us! I vow by my worship, when I am
knighted, we’ll take the King napping, if he stand on
their part.

ACTON.
This night we few in Highgate will repose.
With the first cock we’ll rise and arm our selves,
To be in Ficket field by break of day,
And there expect our General.

MURLEY.
Sir John Old-castle? what if he come not?

BOURNE.
Yet our action stands.
Sir Roger Acton may supply his place.

MURLEY.
True, Master Bourne, but who shall make me knight?

BEVERLY.
He that hath power to be our General.

ACTON.
Talk not of trifles; come, let’s away.
Our friends of London long till it be day.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE III. A high road in Kent.

[Enter sir John of Wrotham and Doll.]

DOLL.
By my troth, thou art as jealous a man as lives.

PRIEST.
Canst thou blame me, Doll? thou art my lands, my goods, my jewels, my wealth, my purse. None walks within xl. miles of London, but a plies thee as truly as the parish does the poor man’s box.

DOLL.
I am as true to thee as the stone is in the wall; and thou knowest well enough, sir John, I was in as good doing, when I came to thee, as any wench need to be; and therefore thou hast tried me, that thou hast: by God’s body, I will not be kept as I have been, that I will not.

PRIEST.
Doll, if this blade hold, there’s not a peddlar walks with a pack, but thou shalt as boldly choose of his wares, as with thy ready money in a Merchant’s shop. We’ll have as good silver as the King coins any.

DOLL.
What, is all the gold spent you took the last day from the Courtier?

PRIEST.
Tis gone, Doll, tis flown; merely come, merely gone: he comes a horse back that much pay for all. We’ll have as good meat as money can get, and as good gowns as can be bought for gold. Be merry, wench, the malt-man comes on Monday.

DOLL.

You might have left me at Cobham, until you had been
better provided for.

PRIEST.
No, sweet Doll, no: I do not like that. Yond old ruffian is
not for the priest: I do not like a new clerk should come in
the old belfry.

DOLL.
Ah, thou art a mad priest, yfaith.

PRIEST.
Come, Doll; I'll see thee safe at some alehouse here at Cray,
and the next sheep that comes shall leave his fleece.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE IV. Blackheath.

[Enter the King, Suffolk and Butler.]

KING.
[In great haste.] My lord of Suffolk, post away for life,
And let our forces of such horse and foot,
As can be gathered up by any means,
Make speedy rendezvous in Tuttle fields.
It must be done this evening, my Lord;
This night the rebels mean to draw to head
Near Islington, which if your speed prevent not,
If once they should unite their several forces,
Their power is almost thought invincible.
Away, my Lord; I will be with you soon.

SUFFOLK.
I go, my Sovereign, with all happy speed.

[Exit.]

KING.
Make haste, my lord of Suffolk, as you love us.
Butler, post you to London with all speed;
Command the Mayor and shrieves, on their allegiance,
The city gates be presently shut up
And guarded with a strong sufficient watch,
And not a man be suffered to pass
Without a special warrant from our self.

Command the Postern by the Tower be kept,
And proclamation, on the pain of death,
That not a citizen stir from his doors,
Except such as the Mayor and Shrieves shall choose
For their own guard and safety of their persons.
Butler, away; have care unto my charge.

BUTLER.
I go, my Sovereign.

KING.
Butler!

BUTLER.
My Lord.

KING.
Go down by Greenwich, and command a boat
At the Friar’s bridge attend my coming down.

BUTLER.
I will, my Lord.

[Exit.]

KING.
It’s time, I think, to look unto rebellion,
When Acton doth expect unto his aid
No less than fifty thousand Londoners.
Well, I’ll to Westminster in this disguise,
To hear what news is stirring in these brawls.

[Enter sir John and Doll.]

SIR JOHN.
Stand, true-man! says a thief.

KING.
Stand, thief! says a true man. How if a thief?

SIR JOHN.
Stand, thief, too.

KING.
Then, thief or true-man, I see I must stand. I see,
how soever the world wags, the trade of thieving yet
will never down. What art thou?

SIR JOHN.
A good fellow.

KING.
So am I too. I see thou dost know me.

SIR JOHN.
If thou be a good fellow, play the good fellow’s part:
deliver thy purse without more ado.

KING.
I have no money.

SIR JOHN.
I must make you find some before we part. If you have
no money, you shall have war: as many sound dry blows
as your skin can carry.

KING.
Is that the plain truth?

SIR JOHN.
Sirra, no more ado; come, come, give me the money you
have. Dispatch, I cannot stand all day.

KING.
Well, if thou wilt needs have it, there tis: just the proverb,
one thief robs another. Where the devil are all my old
thieves, that were wont to keep this walk? Falstaff, the
villain, is so fat, he cannot get on’s horse, but me thinks
Poines and Peto should be stirring here about.

SIR JOHN.
How much is there on’t, of thy word?

KING.
A hundred pound in Angels, on my word.
The time has been I would have done as much
For thee, if thou hadst past this way, as I have now.

SIR JOHN.
Sirra, what art thou? thou seem’st a gentleman.

KING.
I am no less; yet a poor one now, for thou hast all my money.

SIR JOHN.
>From whence cam’st thou?

KING.
>From the court at Eltham.

SIR JOHN.
Art thou one of the King’s servants?

KING.
Yes, that I am, and one of his chamber.

SIR JOHN.
I am glad thou art no worse; thou mayest the better spare thy money: & thinkst thou thou mightst get a poor thief his pardon, if he should have need.

KING.
Yes, that I can.

SIR JOHN.
Wilt thou do so much for me, when I shall have occasion?

KING.
Yes, faith will I, so it be for no murther.

SIR JOHN.
Nay, I am a pitiful thief; all the hurt I do a man, I take but his purse; I’ll kill no man.

KING.
Then, of my word, I’ll do it.

SIR JOHN.
Give me thy hand of the same.

KING.
There tis.

SIR JOHN.
Me thinks the King should be good to thieves, because he has been a thief himself, though I think now he be turned true-man.

KING.
Faith, I have heard indeed he has had an ill name that way in his youth; but how canst thou tell he has been a thief?

SIR JOHN.
How? Because he once robbed me before I fell to the trade my self; when that foul villainous guts, that led him to all

that rogery, was in’s company there, that Falstaff.

KING.
[Aside.] Well, if he did rob thee then, thou art but even with him now, I’ll be sworn.—Thou knowest not the king now, I think, if thou sawest him?

SIR JOHN.
Not I, yfaith.

KING.
[Aside.] So it should seem.

SIR JOHN.
Well, if old King Henry had lived, this King that is now had made thieving the best trade in England.

KING.
Why so?

SIR JOHN.
Because he was the chief warden of our company. It’s pity that e’er he should have been a King; he was so brave a thief. But, sirra, wilt remember my pardon if need be?

KING.
Yes, faith, will I.

SIR JOHN.
Wilt thou? well then, because thou shalt go safe—for thou mayest hap (being so early) be met with again before thou come to Southwark—if any man, when he should bid thee good morrow, bid thee stand, say thou but Sir John, and he will let thee pass.

KING.
Is that the word? well, then, let me alone.

SIR JOHN.
Nay, sirra, because I think indeed I shall have some occasion to use thee, & as thou comest oft this way, I may light on thee another time not knowing thee, here! I’ll break this Angel. Take thou half of it; this is a token betwixt thee and me.

KING.
God have mercy; farewell.

[Exit.]

SIR JOHN.
O my fine golden slaves! here’s for thee, wench, yfaith. Now, Doll, we will revel in our bower! this is a tithe pig of my vicarage. God have mercy, neighbour Shooters hill; you paid your tithe honestly. Well, I hear there is a company of rebels up against the King, got together in Ficket field near Holborne, and as it is thought here in Kent, the King will be there to night in’s own person; well, I’ll to the King’s camp, and it shall go hard, but, if there be any doings, I’ll make some good boot amongst them.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I. A field near London. King Henry’s camp.

[Enter King Henry, Suffolk, Huntington, and two with lights.]

KING.
My lords of Suffolk and of Huntington,
Who scouts it now? or who stands Sentinels?
What men of worth? what Lords do walk the round?

SUFFOLK.
May it please your Highness—

KING.
Peace, no more of that.
The King’s asleep; wake not his majesty
With terms nor titles; he’s at rest in bed.
Kings do not use to watch themselves; they sleep,
And let rebellion and conspiracy
Revel and havoc in the common wealth.—
Is London looked unto?

HUNTINGTON.
It is, my Lord:
Your noble Uncle Exeter is there,
Your brother Gloucester and my Lord of Warwick,
Who, with the mayor and the Aldermen,
Do guard the gates, and keep good rule within;
The Earl of Cambridge and sir Thomas Gray
Do walk the Round; Lord Scroop and Butler scout.
So, though it please your majesty to jest,
Were you in bed, well might you take your rest.

KING.
I thank ye, Lords, but you do know of old,
That I have been a perfect night-walker.
London, you say, is safely looked unto—
Alas, poor rebels, there your aid must fail—
And the Lord Cobham, sir John Old-castle,
He’s quiet in Kent. Acton, ye are deceived;
Reckon again, you count without your host;
To morrow you shall give account to us.
Til when, my friends, this long cold winter’s night
How can we spend? King Harry is a sleep
And all his Lords, these garments tell us so;
All friends at football, fellows all in field,
Harry, and Dick, and George. Bring us a drum;
Give us square dice, we’ll keep this court of guard
For all good fellows companies that come.
Where’s that mad priest ye told me was in Arms,
To fight, as well as pray, if need required?

SUFFOLK.
He’s in the Camp, and if he know of this,
I undertake he would not be long hence.

KING.
Trip, Dick; trip, George.

[They trip.]

HUNTINGTON.
I must have the dice.
What do we play at?

[They play at dice.]

SUFFOLK.
Passage, if ye please.

HUNTINGTON.
Set round then; so, at all.

KING.
George, you are out.
Give me the dice. I pass for twenty pound.
Here’s to our lucky passage into France.

HUNTINGTON.
Harry, you pass indeed, for you sweep all.

SUFFOLK.
A sign king Harry shall sweep all in France.

[Enter Sir John.]

SIR JOHN.
Edge ye, good fellows; take a fresh gamester in.

KING.
Master Parson? We play nothing but gold.

SIR JOHN.
And, fellow, I tell thee that the priest hath gold. Gold? sblood, ye are but beggarly soldiers to me. I think I have more gold than all you three.

HUNTINGTON.
It may be so, but we believe it not.

KING.
Set, priest, set. I pass for all that gold.

SIR JOHN.
Ye pass, indeed.

KING.
Priest, hast thou any more?

SIR JOHN.
Zounds, what a question’s that?
I tell thee I have more than all you three.
At these ten Angels!

KING.
I wonder how thou comest by all this gold;
How many benefices hast thou, priest?

SIR JOHN.
Yfaith, but one. Dost wonder how I come by gold? I wonder rather how poor soldiers should have gold; for I’ll tell thee, good fellow: we have every day tithes, offerings, christenings, weddings, burials; and you poor snakes come seldom to a booty. I’ll speak a proud word: I have but one parsonage, Wrotham; tis better than the Bishopric of Rochester. There’s ne’er a hill, heath, nor down in all Kent, but tis in my parish: Barham down, Chobham down, Gad’s Hill, Wrotham hill, Black heath,

Cock’s heath, Birchen wood, all pay me tithe. Gold,
quoth a? ye pass not for that.

SUFFOLK.
Harry, ye are out; now, parson, shake the dice.

SIR JOHN.
Set, set; I’ll cover ye at all. A plague on’t, I am out: the
devil, and dice, and a wench, who will trust them?

SUFFOLK.
Sayest thou so, priest? Set fair; at all for once.

KING.
Out, sir; pay all.

SIR JOHN.
Sblood, pay me angel gold.
I’ll none of your cracked French crowns nor pistolets.
Pay me fair angel gold, as I pay you.

KING.
No cracked French crowns? I hope to see more cracked
French crowns ere long.

SIR JOHN.
Thou meanest of French men’s crowns, when the King is
in France.

HUNTINGTON.
Set round, at all.

SIR JOHN.
Pay all: this is some luck.

KING.
Give me the dice, tis I must shred the priest:
At all, sir John.

SIR JOHN.
The devil and all is yours. At that! Sdeath, what casting
is this?

SUFFOLK.
Well thrown, Harry, yfaith.

KING.
I’ll cast better yet.

SIR JOHN.
Then I’ll be hanged. Sirra, hast thou not given thy soul to
the devil for casting?

KING.
I pass for all.

SIR JOHN.
Thou passest all that e’er I played withal.
Sirra, dost thou not cog, nor foist, nor slur?

KING.
Set, parson, set; the dice die in my hand:
When parson, when? what, can ye find no more?
Already dry? wast you bragged of your store?

SIR JOHN.
All’s gone but that.

HUNTINGTON.
What? half a broken angel?

SIR JOHN.
Why sir, tis gold.

KING.
Yea, and I’ll cover it.

SIR JOHN.
The devil do ye good on’t, I am blind, ye have blown me up.

KING.
Nay, tarry, priest; ye shall not leave us yet.
Do not these pieces fit each other well?

SIR JOHN.
What if they do?

KING.
Thereby begins a tale:
There was a thief, in face much like Sir John—
But twas not he, that thief was all in green—
Met me last day at Black Heath, near the park,
With him a woman. I was all alone
And weaponless, my boy had all my tools,
And was before providing me a boat.

Short tale to make, sir John—the thief, I mean—
Took a just hundreth pound in gold from me.
I stormed at it, and swore to be revenged
If e’er we met. He, like a lusty thief,
Brake with his teeth this Angel just in two
To be a token at our meeting next,
Provided I should charge no Officer
To apprehend him, but at weapon’s point
Recover that and what he had beside.
Well met, sir John; betake ye to your tools
By torch light, for, master parson, you are he
That had my gold.

SIR JOHN.
Zounds, I won ’t in play, in fair square play, of the keeper of Eltham park; and that I will maintain with this poor whinyard, be you two honest men to stand and look upon’s, and let’s alone, and take neither part.

KING.
Agreed! I charge ye do not budget a foot.
Sir John, have at ye.

SIR JOHN.
Soldier, ware your sconce.

[Here, as they are ready to strike, enter Butler and draws his weapon and steps betwixt them.]

BUTLER.
Hold, villains, hold! my Lords, what do you mean,
To see a traitor draw against the King?

SIR JOHN.
The King! God’s will, I am in a proper pickle.

KING.
Butler, what news? why dost thou trouble us?

BUTLER.
Please it your Highness, it is break of day,
And as I scouted near to Islington,
The gray eyed morning gave me glimmering
Of armed men coming down Highgate hill,
Who by their course are coasting hitherward.

KING.
Let us withdraw, my Lords. Prepare our troops

To charge the rebels, if there be such cause.

For this lewd priest, this devilish hypocrite,
That is a thief, a gamester, and what not,
Let him be hanged up for example sake.

SIR JOHN.
Not so my gracious sovereign. I confess that I am a frail man, flesh and blood as other are: but, set my imperfections aside, by this light, ye have not a taller man, nor a truer subject to the Crown and State, than Sir John of Wrotham.

KING.
Will a true subject rob his King?

SIR JOHN.
Alas, twas ignorance and want, my gracious liege.

KING.
Twas want of grace. Why, you should be as salt
To season others with good document,
Your lives as lamps to give the people light,
As shepherds, not as wolves to spoil the flock.
Go hang him, Butler.

BUTLER.
Didst thou not rob me?

SIR JOHN.
I must confess I saw some of your gold. But, my dread Lord, I am in no humor for death; therefore, save my life. God will that sinners live; do not you cause me die. Once in their lives the best may go astray, and if the world say true, your self (my liege) have been a thief.

KING.
I confess I have,
But I repent and have reclaimed my self.

SIR JOHN.
So will I do, if you will give me time.

KING.
Wilt thou? My lords, will you be his sureties?

HUNTINGTON.
That when he robs again, he shall be hanged.

SIR JOHN.
I ask no more.

KING.
And we will grant thee that.
Live and repent, and prove an honest man,
Which when I hear, and safe return from France,
I'll give thee living: till then take thy gold;
But spend it better than at cards or wine,
For better virtues fit that coat of thine.

SIR JOHN.
Vivat Rex & curat lex! My liege, if ye have cause
of battle, ye shall see Sir John of Wrotham bestir
himself in your quarrel.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE II. A field of Battle near London.

[After an alarum enter Harry, Suffolk, Huntington,
Sir John, bringing forth Acton, Beverley, and Murley
prisoners.]

KING.
Bring in those traitors, whose aspiring minds
Thought to have triumpht in our overthrow.
But now ye see, base villains, what success
Attends ill actions wrongfully attempted.
Sir Roger Acton, thou retainst the name
Of knight, and shouldst be more discreetly tempered,
Than join with peasants: gentry is divine,
But thou hast made it more than popular.

ACTON.
Pardon, my Lord; my conscience urged me to it.

KING.
Thy conscience? then thy conscience is corrupt,
For in thy conscience thou art bound to us,
And in thy conscience thou shouldst love thy country;
Else what's the difference twixt a Christian
And the uncivil manners of the Turk?

BEVERLEY.

We meant no hurt unto your majesty,
But reformation of Religion.

KING.
Reform Religion? was it that ye sought?
I pray who gave you that authority?
Belike, then, we do hold the scepter up
And sit within the throne but for a cipher.
Time was, good subjects would make known their grief
And pray amendment, not enforce the same,
Unless their King were tyrant, which I hope
You cannot justly say that Harry is.
What is that other?

SUFFOLK.
A malt-man, my Lord,
And dwelling in Dunstable as he says.

KING.
Sirra, what made you leave your barley broth,
To come in armour thus against your King?

MURLEY.
Fie, paltry, paltry; to and fro, in and out upon occasion; what a world’s this! Knight-hood (my liege) twas knight-hood brought me hither. They told me I had wealth enough to make my wife a lady.

KING.
And so you brought those horses which we saw,
Trapped all in costly furniture, and meant
To wear these spurs when you were knighted once?

MURLEY.
In and out upon occasion, I did.

KING.
In and out upon occasion, therefore,
You shall be handed, and in the stead of wearing
These spurs upon your heels, about your neck
They shall bewray your folly to the world.

SIR JOHN.
In and out upon occasion, that goes hard.

MURLEY.
Fie, paltry, paltry, to and fro; good my liege, a pardon. I am sorry for my fault.

KING.
That comes too late: but tell me, went there none
Beside sir Roger Acton, upon whom
You did depend to be your governour?

MURLEY.
None, none, my Lord, but sir John Old-castle.

KING.
Bears he part in this conspiracy?

[Enter Bishop.]

ACTON.
We looked, my Lord, that he would meet us here.

KING.
But did he promise you that he would come?

ACTON.
Such letters we received forth of Kent.

BISHOP.
Where is my Lord the King?—Health to your grace.
Examining, my Lord, some of these caitive rebels,
It is a general voice amongst them all,
That they had never come unto this place,
But to have met their valiant general,
The good Lord Cobham, as they title him:
Whereby, my Lord, your grace may now perceive,
His treason is apparent, which before
He sought to colour by his flattery.

KING.
Now, by my royalty, I would have sworn
But for his conscience, which I bear withal,
There had not lived a more true hearted subject.

BISHOP.
It is but counterfeit, my gracious lord,
And therefore, may it please your majesty
To set your hand unto this precept here,
By which we’ll cause him forthwith to appear,
And answer this by order of the law.

KING.
Bishop, not only that, but take commission

To search, attach, imprison, and condemn
This most notorious traitor as you please.

BISHOP.
It shall be done, my Lord, without delay.—
So now I hold, Lord Cobham, in my hand,
That which shall finish thy disdained life.

KING.
I think the iron age begins but now,
(Which learned poets have so often taught)
Wherein there is no credit to be given,
To either words, or looks, or solemn oaths.
For if there were, how often hath he sworn,
How gently tuned the music of his tongue,
And with what amiable face beheld he me,
When all, God knows, was but hypocricy.

[Enter Cobham.]

COBHAM.
Long life and prosperous reign unto my lord.

KING.
Ah, villain, canst thou wish prosperity,
Whose heart includeth naught but treachery?
I do arrest thee here my self, false knight,
Of treason capital against the state.

COBHAM.
Of treason, mighty prince? your grace mistakes.
I hope it is but in the way of mirth.

KING.
Thy neck shall feel it is in earnest shortly.
Darst thou intrude into our presence, knowing
How heinously thou hast offended us?
But this is thy accustomed deceit;
Now thou perceivest thy purpose is in vain,
With some excuse or other thou wilt come,
To clear thy self of this rebellion.

COBHAM.
Rebellion, good my Lord? I know of none.

KING.
If you deny it, here is evidence.

See you these men? you never counseled,
Nor offered them assistance in their wars?

COBHAM.
Speak, sirs. Not one but all; I crave no favour.
Have ever I been conversant with you,
Or written letters to encourage you,
Or kindled but the least or smallest part
Of this your late unnatural rebellion?
Speak, for I dare the uttermost you can.

MURLEY.
In and out upon occasion, I know you not.

KING.
No? didst not say that sir John Old-castle
Was one with whom you purposed to have met?

MURLEY.
True, I did say so, but in what respect?
Because I heard it was reported so.

KING.
Was there no other argument but that?

ACTON.
To clear my conscience ere I die, my lord,
I must confess, we have no other ground
But only Rumor, to accuse this lord,
Which now I see was merely fabulous.

KING.
The more pernitious you to taint him then,
Whom you knew not was faulty, yea or no.

COBHAM.
Let this, my Lord, which I present your grace,
Speak for my loyalty: read these articles,
And then give sentence of my life or death.

KING.
Earl Cambridge, Scroop, and Gray corrupted
With bribes from Charles of France, either to win
My Crown from me, or secretly contrive
My death by treason? Is this possible?

COBHAM.
There is the platform, and their hands, my lord,

Each severally subscribed to the same.

KING.
Oh never heard of, base ingratitude!
Even those I hug within my bosom most
Are readiest evermore to sting my heart.
Pardon me, Cobham, I have done thee wrong;
Hereafter I will live to make amends.
Is, then, their time of meeting no near hand?
We’ll meet with them, but little for their ease,
If God permit. Go, take these rebels hence;
Let them have martial law: but as for thee,
Friend to thy king and country, still be free.

[Exeunt.]

MURLEY.
Be it more or less, what a world is this?
Would I had continued still of the order of knaves,
And never sought knighthood, since it costs so dear.
Sir Roger, I may thank you for all.

ACTON.
Now tis too late to have it remedied,
I prithee, Murley, do not urge me with it.

HUNTINGTON.
Will you away, and make no more to do?

MURLEY.
Fie, paltry, paltry! to and fro, as occasion serves;
If you be so hasty, take my place.

HUNTINGTON.
No, good sir knight, you shall begin in your hand.

MURLEY.
I could be glad to give my betters place.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE III. Kent. Court before lord Cobham’s house.

[Enter Bishop, lord Warden, Cromer the Shrieve, Lady Cob, and attendants.]

BISHOP.
I tell ye, Lady, it’s not possible
But you should know where he conveys himself,
And you have hid him in some secret place.

LADY COBHAM.
My Lord, believe me, as I have a soul,
I know not where my lord my husband is.

BISHOP.
Go to, go to, ye are an heretic,
And will be forced by torture to confess,
If fair means will not serve to make ye tell.

LADY COBHAM.
My husband is a noble gentleman,
And need not hide himself for any fact
That ere I heard of; therefore wrong him not.

BISHOP.
Your husband is a dangerous schismatic,
Traitor to God, the King, and common wealth:
And therefore, master Croamer, shrieve of Kent,
I charge you take her to your custody,
And seize the goods of Sir John Old-castle
To the King’s use. Let her go in no more,
To fetch so much as her apparel out.
There is your warrant from his majesty.

LORD WARDEN.
Good my Lord Bishop, pacify your wrath
Against the Lady.

BISHOP.
Then let her confess
Where Old-castle her husband is concealed.

LORD WARDEN.
I dare engage mine honor and my life,
Poor gentlewoman, she is ignorant
And innocent of all his practises,
If any evil by him be practised.

BISHOP.
If, my Lord Warden? nay, then I charge you,
That all the cinque Ports, whereof you are chief,

Be laid forthwith, that he escape us not.
Shew him his highness’ warrant, Master Shrieve.

LORD WARDEN.
I am sorry for the noble gentleman—

[Enter Old-castle and Harpoole.]

BISHOP.
Peace, he comes here; now do your office.

COBHAM.
Harpoole, what business have we here in hand?
What makes the Bishop and the Sheriff here?
I fear my coming home is dangerous,
I would I had not made such haste to Cobham.

HARPOOLE.
Be of good cheer, my Lord: if they be foes, we’ll scramble shrewdly with them: if they be friends, they are welcome. One of them (my Lord Warden) is your friend; but me thinks my lady weeps; I like not that.

CROAMER.
Sir John Old-castle, Lord Cobham, in the King’s majesty’s name, I arrest ye of high treason.

COBHAM.
Treason, Master Croamer?

HARPOOLE.
Treason, Master Shrieve? sblood, what treason?

COBHAM.
Harpoole, I charge thee, stir not, but be quiet still.
Do ye arrest me, Master Shrieve, for treason?

BISHOP.
Yea, of high treason, traitor, heretic.

COBHAM.
Defiance in his face that calls me so.
I am as true a loyal gentleman
Unto his highness as my proudest enemy.
The King shall witness my late faithful service,
For safety of his sacred majesty.

BISHOP.
What thou art the king’s hand shall testify:
Shewt him, Lord Warden.

COBHAM.
Jesu defend me!
Is’t possible your cunning could so temper
The princely disposition of his mind,
To sign the damage of a loyal subject?
Well, the best is, it bears an antedate,
Procured by my absence, and your malice,
But I, since that, have shewd my self as true
As any churchman that dare challenge me.
Let me be brought before his majesty;
If he acquit me not, then do your worst.

BISHOP.
We are not bound to do king offices
For any traitor, schismatic, nor heretic.
The king’s hand is our warrant for our work,
Who is departed on his way for France,
And at Southhampton doth repose this night.

HARPOOLE.
O that it were the blessed will of God, that thou
and I were within twenty mile of it, on Salisbury
plan! I would lose my head if ever thou broughtst
thy head hither again.

[Aside.]

COBHAM.
My Lord Warden o’ the cinque Ports, & my Lord of
Rochester, ye are joint Commissioners: favor me so much,
On my expence to bring me to the king.

BISHOP.
What, to Southhampton?

COBHAM.
Thither, my good Lord,
And if he do not clear me of all guilt,
And all suspicion of conspiracy,
Pawning his princely warrant for my truth:
I ask no favour, but extremest torture.
Bring me, or send me to him, good my Lord:
Good my Lord Warden, Master Shrieve, entreat.

[Here the Lord Warden, and Croamer uncover
the Bishop, and secretly whispers with him.]

Come hither, lady—nay, sweet wife, forbear
To heap one sorrow on another’s neck:
Tis grief enough falsely to be accused,
And not permitted to acquit my self;
Do not thou with thy kind respective tears,
Torment thy husband’s heart that bleeds for thee,
But be of comfort. God hath help in store
For those that put assured trust in him.
Dear wife, if they commit me to the Tower,
Come up to London to your sister’s house:
That being near me, you may comfort me.
One solace find I settled in my soul,
That I am free from treason’s very thought:
Only my conscience for the Gospel’s sake
Is cause of all the troubles I sustain.

LADY COBHAM.
O my dear Lord, what shall betide of us?
You to the Tower, and I turned out of doors,
Our substance seized unto his highness’ use,
Even to the garments longing to our backs.

HARPOOLE.
Patience, good madame, things at worst will mend,
And if they do not, yet our lives may end.

BISHOP.
Urge it no more, for if an Angel spake,
I swear by sweet saint Peter’s blessed keys,
First goes he to the Tower, then to the stake.

CROAMER.
But by your leave, this warrant doth not stretch
To imprison her.

BISHOP.
No, turn her out of doors,

[Lord Warden and Old-castle whisper.]

Even as she is, and lead him to the Tower,
With guard enough for fear of rescuing.

LADY COBHAM.
O, God requite thee, thou blood-thirsty man.

COBHAM.
May it not be, my Lord of Rochester?
Wherein have I incurred your hate so far,
That my appeal unto the King’s denied?

BISHOP.
No hate of mine, but power of holy church,
Forbids all favor to false heretics.

COBHAM.
Your private malice, more than public power,
Strikes most at me, but with my life it ends.

HARPOOLE.
O that I had the Bishop in that fear,

[Aside.]

That once I had his Sumner by our selves!

CROAMER.
My Lord, yet grant one suit unto us all,
That this same ancient serving man may wait
Upon my lord his master in the Tower.

BISHOP.
This old iniquity, this heretic?
That, in contempt of our church discipline,
Compelled my Sumner to devour his process!
Old Ruffian past-grace, upstart schismatic,
Had not the King prayed us to pardon ye,
Ye had fried for it, ye grizzled heretic.

HARPOOLE.
Sblood, my lord Bishop, ye do me wrong. I am
neither heretic nor puritan, but of the old church:
I’ll swear, drink ale, kiss a wench, go to mass, eat
fish all Lent, and fast Fridays with cakes and wine,
fruit and spicery, shrive me of my old sins afore
Easter, and begin new afore whitsontide.

CROAMER.
A merry, mad, conceited knave, my lord.

HARPOOLE.
That knave was simply put upon the Bishop.

BISHOP.
Well, God forgive him and I pardon him.
Let him attend his master in the Tower,
For I in charity wish his soul no hurt.

COBHAM.
God bless my soul from such cold charity!

BISHOP.
Too th’ Tower with him, and when my leisure serves,
I will examine him of Articles.
Look, my lord Warden, as you have in charge,
The Shrive perform his office.

LORD WARDEN.
Yes, my lord.

[Enter the Sumner with books.]

BISHOP.
What bringst thou there? what, books of heresy?

SUMNER.
Yea, my lord, here’s not a latin book, no, not so much as our lady’s Psalter. Here’s the Bible, the testament, the Psalms in meter, the sickman’s salve, the treasure of gladness, and all in English, not so much but the Almanac’s English.

BISHOP.
Away with them, to the fire with them, Clun!
Now fie upon these upstart heretics.
All English! burn them, burn them quickly, Clun!

HARPOOLE.
But do not, Sumner, as you’ll answer it, for I have there English books, my lord, that I’ll not part with for your Bishopric: Bevis of Hampton, Owlglass, the Friar and the Boy, Eleanor Rumming, Robin hood, and other such godly stories, which if ye burn, by this flesh, I’ll make ye drink their ashes in Saint Marget’s ale.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV. The entrance of the Tower.

[Enter Bishop of Rochester with his men in livery coats.]

FIRST SERVANT.
Is it your honor’s pleasure we shall stay,
Or come back in the afternoon to fetch you?

BISHOP.
Now you have brought me here into the Tower,
You may go back unto the Porters Lodge,
And send for drink or such things as you want,
Where if I have occasion to employ you,
I’ll send some officer to call you to me.
Into the city go not, I command you:
Perhaps I may have present need to use you.

SECOND SERVANT.
We will attend your worship here without.

BISHOP.
Do so, I pray you.

THIRD SERVANT.
Come, we may have a quart of wine at the Rose at
Barking, I warrant you, and come back an hour before
he be ready to go.

FIRST SERVANT.
We must hie us then.

THIRD SERVANT.
Let’s away.

[Exeunt.]

BISHOP.
Ho, Master Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT.
Who calls there?

BISHOP.
A friend of yours.

LIEUTENANT.
My lord of Rochester! your honor’s welcome.

BISHOP.
Sir, here’s my warrant from the Counsel,

For conference with sir John Old-castle,
Upon some matter of great consequence.

LIEUTENANT.
Ho, sir John!

HARPOOLE.
Who calls there?

LIEUTENANT.
Harpoole, tell Sir John, that my lord of Rochester
Comes from the counsel to confer with him.

HARPOOLE.
I will, sir.

LIEUTENANT.
I think you may as safe without suspicion,
As any man in England, as I hear,
For it was you most labored his commitment.

BISHOP.
I did, sir, and nothing repent it, I assure you.

[Enter sir John Old-castle and Harpoole.]

Master Leiftenant, I pray you give us leave,
I must confer here with sir John a little.

LIEUTENANT.
With all my heart, my lord.

HARPOOLE.
[Aside.] My lord, be ruled by me: take this occasion
while tis offered, and on my life your lordship shall
escape.

COBHAM.
No more, I say; peace, lest he should suspect it.

BISHOP.
Sir John, I am come unto you from the lords of his
highness’ most honorable counsel, to know if yet you
do recant your errors, conforming you unto the holy
church.

COBHAM.

My lord of Rochester, on good advise,
I see my error, but yet, understand me,
I mean not error in the faith I hold,
But error in submitting to your pleasure;
Therefore, your lordship, without more to do,
Must be a means to help me to escape.

BISHOP.
What means, thou heretic?
Darst thou but lift thy hand against my calling?

COBHAM.
No, not to hurt you for a thousand pound.

HARPOOLE.
Nothing but to borrow your upper garments a little; not a word more, for if you do, you die: peace, for waking the children. There; put them on; dispatch, my lord. The window that goes out into the leads is sure enough, I told you that before: there, make you ready; I'll convey him after, and bind him surely in the inner room.

[Carries the bishop into the Tower, and returns.]

COBHAM.
This is well begun; God send us happy speed,
Hard shift you see men make in time of need, Harpoole.

[Puts on the bishop's cloak.]

HARPOOLE.
Here my Lord; come, come away.

[Enter serving men again.]

FIRST SERVANT.
I marvel that my lord should stay so long.

SECOND SERVANT.
He hath sent to seek us, I dare lay my life.

THIRD SERVANT.
We come in good time; see, where he is coming.

HARPOOLE.
I beseech you, good my lord of Rochester, be favourable

to my lord and master.

COBHAM.
The inner rooms be very hot and close,
I do not like this air here in the Tower.

HARPOOLE.
His case is hard my lord.—You shall safely get out of the Tower; but I will down upon them, in which time get you away.

COBHAM.
Fellow, thou troublest me.

HARPOOLE.
Hear me, my Lord!—Hard under Islington wait you my coming; I will bring my Lady, ready with horses to convey you hence.

COBHAM.
Fellow, go back again unto thy Lord and counsel him.

HARPOOLE.
Nay, my good lord of Rochester, I’ll bring you to Saint Albans through the woods, I warrant you.

COBHAM.
Villain, away.

HARPOOLE.
Nay, since I am past the Tower’s liberty, thou part’st not so.

[He draws.]

COBHAM.
Clubs, clubs, clubs!

FIRST SERVANT.
Murther, murther, murther!

SECOND SERVANT.
Down with him!

[They fight.]

THIRD SERVANT.
A villain traitor!

HARPOOLE.
You cowardly rogues!

[Sir John escapes.]

[Enter Lieutenant and his men.]

LIEUTENANT.
Who is so bold as dare to draw a sword,
So near unto the entrance of the Tower?

FIRST SERVANT.
This ruffian, servant to sir John Old-castle,
Was like to have slain my Lord.

LIEUTENANT.
Lay hold on him.

HARPOOLE.
Stand off, if you love your puddings.

[Rochester calls within.]

BISHOP.
Help, help, help! Master Lieutenant, help!

LIEUTENANT.
Who’s that within? some treason in the Tower
Upon my life. Look in; who’s that which calls?

[Enter Rochester bound.]

LIEUTENANT.
Without your cloak, my lord of Rochester?

HARPOOLE.
There, now it works, then let me speed, for now
Is the fittest time for me to scape away.

[Exit.]

LIEUTENANT.
Why do you look so ghastly and affrighted?

BISHOP.
Old-castle, that traitor, and his man,
When you had left me to confer with him,
Took, bound, and stript me, as you see,

And left me lying in his inner chamber,
And so departed, and I—

LIEUTENANT.
And you? ne’er say that the Lord Cobham’s man
Did here set upon you like to murther you.

FIRST SERVANT.
And so he did.

BISHOP.
It was upon his master then he did,
That in the brawl the traitor might escape.

LIEUTENANT.
Where is this Harpoole?

SECOND SERVANT.
Here he was even now.

LIEUTENANT.
Where? can you tell?

SECOND SERVANT.
They are both escaped.

LIEUTENANT.
Since it so happens that he is escaped,
I am glad you are a witness of the same,
It might have else been laid unto my charge,
That I had been consenting to the fact.

BISHOP.
Come, search shall be made for him with expedition,
The havens laid that he shall not escape,
And hue and cry continue through England,
To find this damned, dangerous heretic.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I. A room in lord Cobham’s house in Kent.

[Enter Cambridge, Scroop, and Gray, as in a chamber, and set down at a table, consulting about their treason: King Harry and Suffolk listening at the door.]

CAMBRIDGE.
In mine opinion, Scroop hath well advised,
Poison will be the only aptest mean,
And fittest for our purpose to dispatch him.

GRAY.
But yet there may be doubt in their delivery.
Harry is wise; therefore, Earl of Cambridge,
I judge that way not so convenient.

SCROOP.
What think ye then of this? I am his bedfellow,
And unsuspected nightly sleep with him.
What if I venture in those silent hours,
When sleep hath sealed up all mortal eyes,
To murder him in bed? how like ye that?

CAMBRIDGE.
Herein consists no safety for your self,
And, you disclosed, what shall become of us?
But this day (as ye know) he will aboard—
The winds so fair—and set away for France.
If, as he goes, or entering in the ship,
It might be done, then it were excellent.

GRAY.
Why any of these, or, if you will, I’ll cause
A present sitting of the Counsel, wherein
I will pretend some matter of such weight
As needs must have his royal company,
And so dispatch him in the Counsel chamber.

CAMBRIDGE.
Tush, yet I hear not any thing to purpose.
I wonder that lord Cobham stays so long;
His counsel in this case would much avail us.

[They rise from the table, and the King steps in
to them, with his Lords.]

SCROOP.
What, shall we rise thus, and determine nothing?

KING.
That were a shame indeed; no, sit again,
And you shall have my counsel in this case.
If you can find no way to kill this King,

Then you shall see how I can further ye:
Scroop’s way of poison was indifferent,
But yet, being bed-fellow unto the King,
And unsuspected sleeping in his bosom,
In mine opinion, that’s the likelier way,
For such false friends are able to do much,
And silent night is Treason’s fittest friend.
Now, Cambridge, in his setting hence for France,
Or by the way, or as he goes abroad,
To do the deed, what was indifferent too,
Yet somewhat doubtful, might I speak my mind.
For many reasons needless now to urge.
Mary, Lord Gray came something near the point:
To have the King at counsel, and there murder him,
As Caesar was, amongst his dearest friends:
None like to that, if all were of his mind.
Tell me, oh tell me, you, bright honor’s stains,
For which of all my kindnesses to you,
Are ye become thus traitors to your king,
And France must have the spoil of harry’s life?

ALL.
Oh pardon us, dread lord.

[All kneeling.]

KING.
How, pardon ye? that were a sin indeed.
Drag them to death, which justly they deserve,

[They lead them away.]

And France shall dearly buy this villainy,
So soon as we set footing on her breast.
God have the praise for our deliverance;
And next, our thanks, Lord Cobham, is to thee,
True perfect mirror of nobility.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE II. A high road near St. Albans.

[Enter Priest and Doll.]

SIR JOHN.
Come, Doll, come; be merry, wench.
Farewell, Kent, we are not fond for thee.

Be lusty, my lass, come, for Lancashire,
We must nip the Boung for these crowns.

DOLL.
Why, is all the gold spent already that you had the other day?

SIR JOHN.
Gone, Doll, gone; flown, spent, vanished: the devil, drink and the dice has devoured all.

DOLL.
You might have left me in Kent, that you might, until you had been better provided, I could have stayed at Cobham.

SIR JOHN.
No, Doll, no, I’ll none of that; Kent’s too hot, Doll, Kent’s too hot. The weathercock of Wrotham will crow no longer: we have pluckt him, he has lost his feathers; I have pruned him bare, left him thrice; is moulted, is moulted, wench.

DOLL.
Faith, sir John, I might have gone to service again; old master Harpoole told me he would provide me a mistress.

SIR JOHN.
Peace, Doll, peace. Come, mad wench, I’ll make thee an honest woman; we’ll into Lancashire to our friends: the troth is, I’ll marry thee. We want but a little money to buy us a horse, and to spend by the way; the next sheep that comes shall lose his fleece, we’ll have these crowns, wench, I warrant thee.

[Enter the Irish man with his master slain.]

Stay, who comes here? some Irish villain, me thinks, that has slain a man, and draws him out of the way to rifle him. Stand close, Doll, we’ll see the end.

[The Irish man falls to rifle his master.]

IRISHMAN.
Alas, poe mester, Sir Rishard Lee, be saint Patrick is rob and cut thy trote for dee shaine, and dy money, and dee gold ring be me truly: is love thee well, but now dow

be kill, thee bee shitten kanave.

SIR JOHN.
Stand, sirra; what art thou?

IRISHMAN.
Be saint Patrick, mester, is pore Irisman, is a leufter.

SIR JOHN.
Sirra, sirra, you are a damned rogue; you have killed a man here, and rifled him of all that he has. Sblood, you rogue, deliver, or I'll not leave you so much as an Irish hair above your shoulders, you whoreson Irish dog. Sirra, untruss presently; come, off and dispatch, or by this cross I'll fetch your head off as clean as a bark.

IRISHMAN.
Wee's me, saint Patrick! Ise kill me mester for chain and his ring, and nows be rob of all: mee's undoo.

[Priest robs him.]

SIR JOHN.
Avant, you rascal! Go, sirra, be walking. Come, Doll, the devil laughs, when one thief robs another: come, mad wench, we'll to saint Albans, and revel in our bower; hey, my brave girl.

DOLL.
O thou art old sir John when all's done, yfaith.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE III. St. Albans. The entrance of a carrier's inn.

[Enter the host of the Bell with the Irish man.]

IRISHMAN.
Be me tro, mester, is pore Irisman, is want ludging, is have no money, is starve and cold: good mester, give her some meat; is famise and tie.

HOST.
Yfaith, my fellow, I have no lodging, but what I keep for my guess, that I may not disappoint: as for meat thou shalt have such as there is, & if thou wilt lie in the barn, there's fair straw, and room enough.

IRISHMAN.
Is thank my mester hartily, de straw is good bed for me.

HOST.
Ho, Robin!

ROBIN.
Who calls?

HOST.
Shew this poor Irishman into the barn; go, sirra.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter carrier and Kate.]

CLUB.
Ho, who’s within here? who looks to the horses?
God’s hat! here’s fine work: the hens in the manger,
and the hogs in the litter. A bots found you all; here’s
a house well looked to, yvaith.

KATE.
Mas, goffe Club, I’se very cawd.

CLUB.
Get in, Kate, get in to fire and warm thee. Ho! John
Hostler.

[Enter Hostler.]

HOSTLER.
What, gaffer Club? welcome to saint Albans. How does
all our friends in Lancashire?

CLUB.
Well, God have mercy, John; how does Tom; where’s he?

HOSTLER.
O, Tom is gone from hence; he’s at the three horse-loves
at Stony-stratford. How does old Dick Dunne?

CLUB.
God’s hat, old Dunne has been moyerd in a slough in
Brickhill-lane, a plague found it; yonder is such
abomination weather as never was seen.

HOSTLER.
God’s hat, thief, have one half peck of peas and oats more for that: as I am John Ostler, he has been ever as good a jade as ever travelled.

CLUB.
Faith, well said, old Jack; thou art the old lad still.

HOSTLER.
Come, Gaffer Club, unload, unload, and get to supper, and I’ll rub dun the while. Come.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE IV. The same. A room in the carrier’s inn.

[Enter the host, sir John Old-castle, and Harpoole.]

HOST.
Sir, you are welcome to this house, to such as here is with all my heart, but, by the mass, I fear your lodging will be the worst. I have but two beds, and they are both in a chamber, and the carrier and his daughter lies in the one, and you and your wife must lie in the other.

COBHAM.
In faith, sir, for my self I do not greatly pass.
My wife is weary, and would be at rest,
For we have travelled very far today;
We must be content with such as you have.

HOST.
But I cannot tell how to do with your man.

HARPOOLE.
What, hast thou never an empty room in thy house for me?

HOST.
Not a bed, by my troth: there came a poor Irish man, and I lodged him in the barn, where he has fair straw, though he have nothing else.

HARPOOLE.
Well, mine host, I pray thee help me to a pair of fair sheets, and I’ll go lodge with him.

HOST.

By the mass, that thou shalt; a good pair of hempen
sheets, were never lain in: Come.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE V. The same. A street.

[Enter Constable, Mayor, and Watch.]

MAYOR.
What? have you searched the town?

CONSTABLE.
All the town, sir; we have not left a house
unsearched that uses to lodge.

MAYOR.
Surely, my lord of Rochester was then deceived,
Or ill informed of sir John Old-castle,
Or if he came this way he’s past the town.
He could not else have scaped you in the search.

CONSTABLE.
The privy watch hath been abroad all night,
And not a stranger lodgeth in the town
But he is known; only a lusty priest
We found in bed with a pretty wench,
That says she is his wife—yonder at the sheeres;
But we have charged the host with his forth coming
Tomorrow morning.

MAYOR.
What think you best to do?

CONSTABLE.
Faith, master mayor, here’s a few straggling houses
beyond the bridge, and a little Inn where carriers use
to lodge, though I think sure he would ne’er lodge
there: but we’ll go search, & the rather, because there
came notice to the town the last night of an Irish man,
that had done a murder, whom we are to make search for.

MAYOR.
Come, I pray you, and be circumspect.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE VI. The same. Before the Carrier’s Inn.
Enter Watch.

FIRST WATCH.
First beset the house, before you begin the search.

SECOND WATCH.
Content; every man take a several place.

[Here is heard a great noise within. Keep, keep,
strike him down there, down with him]]

[Enter Constable with the Irish man in Harpoole’s
apparel.]

CONSTABLE.
Come, you villainous heretic, confess where your
master is.

IRISHMAN.
Vat mester?

MAYOR.
Vat mester, you counterfeit rebel? this shall not serve
your turn.

IRISHMAN.
Be sent Patrick I ha no mester.

CONSTABLE.
Where’s the lord Cobham, sir John Old-castle, that
lately is escaped out of the Tower?

IRISHMAN.
Vat lort Cobham?

MAYOR.
You counterfeit, this shall not serve you; we’ll torture
you, we’ll make you to confess where that arch-heretic,
Lord Cobham, is: come, bind him fast.

IRISHMAN.
Ahone, ahone, ahone, a Cree!

CONSTABLE.
Ahone, you crafty rascal!

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE VII. The same. The yard of the Inn.

[Lord Cobham comes out in his gown stealing.]

COBHAM.
Harpoole, Harpoole, I hear a marvelous noise about the house: God warrant us, I fear we are pursued: what, Harpoole.

HARPOOLE.
[Within.] Who calls there?

COBHAM.
Tis I; dost thou not hear a noise about the house?

HARPOOLE.
Yes, mary, do I:—zwounds, I can not find my hose; this Irish rascal that was lodged with me all night hath stolen my apparel, and has left me nothing but a lowsy mantle, and a pair of brogues. Get up, get up, and if the carrier and his wench be asleep, change you with them as he hath done with me, and see if we can escape.

[Exit lord Cobham.]

[A hoise again heard about the house, a pretty while; then enter the Constable, meeting Harpoole in the Irish man’s apparel.]

CONSTABLE.
Stand close, here comes the Irish man that did the murther; by all tokens, this is he.

MAYOR.
And perceiving the house beset, would get away. Stand, sirra.

HARPOOLE.
What are thou that bidst me stand?

CONSTABLE.
I am the Officer, and am come to search for an Irish

man, such a villain as thy self, that hast murthered a man this last night by the high way.

HARPOOLE.
Sblood, Constable, art thou mad? am I an Irish man?

MAYOR.
Sirra, we’ll find you an Irish man before we part: lay hold upon him.

CONSTABLE.
Make him fast. O thou bloody rogue!

[Enter Lord Cobham and his lady in the carrier and wenches apparel.]

COBHAM.
What, will these Ostlers sleep all day?
Good morrow, good morrow. Come, wench, come.
Saddle! saddle! Now afore God too fair days, ha?

CONSTABLE.
Who comes there?

MAYOR.
Oh, tis Lancashire carrier; let him pass.

COBHAM.
What, will no body open the gates here?
Come, let’s int stable to look to our capons.

[Exeunt Cobham and his Lady.]

[The carrier calling.]

CLUB.
[Calling.] Host! why ostler! zwooks, here’s such a bomination company of boys. A pox of this pigsty at the house end: it fills all the house full of fleas. Ostler! ostler!

[Enter Ostler.]

OSTLER.
Who calls there? what would you have?

CLUB.
Zwooks, do you rob your guests? do you lodge rogues

and slaves, and scoundrels, ha? they ha stolen our clothes here: why, ostler!

OSTLER.
A murrein choke you, what a bawlin you keep.

[Enter Host.]

HOST.
How now, what would the carrier have? look up there.

OSTLER.
They say that the man and woman that lay by them have stolen their clothes.

HOST.
What, are the strange folks up yet that come in yester night?

CONSTABLE.
What, mine host, up so early?

HOST.
What, master Mayor, and master Constable!

MAYOR.
We are come to seek for some suspected persons,
And such as here we found, have apprehended.

[Enter the Carrier and Kate in lord Cobham and ladies apparel.]

CONSTABLE.
Who comes here?

CLUB.
Who comes here? a plague found ome! you bawl, quoth a! ods hat, I'll forzwear your house: you lodged a fellow and his wife by that ha run away with our parrel, and left us such gew-gaws here!—Come Kate, come to me, thowse dizeard, yfaith.

MAYOR.
Mine host, know you this man?

HOST.
Yes, master Mayor, I'll give my word for him. Why, neighbor Club, how comes this gear about?

KATE.

Now, a fowl ont, I can not make this gew-gaw stand on my head: now the lads and the lasses won flout me too too—

CONSTABLE.
How came this man and woman thus attired?

HOST.
Here came a man and woman hither this last night, which I did take for substantial people, and lodged all in one chamber by these folks, me thinks, have been so bold to change apparel, and gone away this morning ere they rose.

MAYOR.
That was that villain traitor, Old-castle, that thus escaped us: make out hue and cry yet after him, keep fast that traitorous rebel, his servant, there: farewell, mine host.

CARRIER.
Come, Kate Owdham, thou and Ise trimly dizard.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE VIII. A wood near St. Albans.

[Enter sir John Old-castle, and his Lady disguised.]

COBHAM.
Come, Madam, happily escaped; here let us sit.
This place is far remote from any path,
And here awhile our weary limbs may rest,
To take refreshing, free from the pursuit
Of envious Rochester.

LADY COBHAM.
But where, my Lord,
Shall we find rest for our disquiet minds?
There dwell untamed thoughts that hardly stop,
To such abasement of disdained rags.
We were not wont to travel thus by night,
Especially on foot.

COBHAM.
No matter, love;
Extremities admit no better choice,
And were it not for thee, say froward time
Imposed a greater task, I would esteem it
As lightly as the wind that blows upon us;

But in thy sufference I am doubly tasked.
Thou wast not wont to have the earth thy stool,
Nor the moist dewy grass thy pillow, nor
Thy chamber to be the wide horizon.

LADY COBHAM.
How can it seem a trouble, having you
A partner with me in the worst I feel?
No, gentle Lord, your presence would give ease
To death it self, should he now seize upon me.
Behold what my foresight hath underta’en

[Here’s bread and cheese & a bottle.]

For fear we faint; they are but homely cates,
Yet sauced with hunger, they may seem as sweet
As greater dainties we were wont to taste.

COBHAM.
Praise be to him whose plenty sends both this
And all things else our mortal bodies need;
Nor scorn we this poor feeding, nor the state
We now are in, for what is it on earth,
Nay, under heaven, continues at a stay?
Ebbs not the sea, when it hath overflown?
Follows not darkness when the day is gone?
And see we not sometime the eye of heaven
Dimmed with overflying clouds: there’s not that work
Of careful nature, or of cunning art,
(How strong, how beauteous, or how rich it be)
But falls in time to ruin. Here, gentle Madame,
In this one draught I wash my sorrow down.

[Drinks.]

LADY COBHAM.
And I, encouraged with your cheerful speech,
Will do the like.

COBHAM.
Pray God poor Harpoole come.
If he should fall into the Bishop’s hands,
Or not remember where we bade him meet us,
It were the thing of all things else, that now
Could breed revolt in this new peace of mind.

LADY COBHAM.
Fear not, my Lord, he’s witty to devise,

And strong to execute a present shift.

COBHAM.
That power be still his guide hath guided us!
My drowsy eyes wax heavy: early rising,
Together with the travel we have had,
Make me that I could gladly take a nap,
Were I persuaded we might be secure.

LADY COBHAM.
Let that depend on me: whilst you do sleep,
I'll watch that no misfortune happen us.
Lay then your head upon my lap, sweet Lord,
And boldly take your rest.

COBHAM.
I shall, dear wife,
Be too much trouble to thee.

LADY COBHAM.
Urge not that;
My duty binds me, and your love commands.
I would I had the skill with tuned voice
To draw on sleep with some sweet melody,
But imperfection, and unaptness too,
Are both repugnant: fear insert the one,
The other nature hath denied me use.
But what talk I of means to purchase that,
Is freely happened? sleep with gentle hand
Hath shut his eye-lids. Oh victorious labour,
How soon thy power can charm the bodies sense?
And now thou likewise climbst unto my brain,
Making my heavy temples stoop to thee.
Great God of heaven from danger keep us free.

[Both sleep.]

[Enter sir Richard Lee, and his men.]

LEE.
A murder closely done, and in my ground?
Search carefully, if any where it were,
This obscure thicket is the likeliest place.

SERVANT.
Sir, I have found the body stiff with cold,
And mangled cruelly with many wounds.

LEE.
Look if thou knowest him, turn his body up.—
Alack, it is my son, my son and heir,
Whom two years since I sent to Ireland,
To practice there the discipline of war,
And coming home (for so he wrote to me)
Some savage heart, some bloody devilish hand,
Either in hate, or thirsting for his coin,
Hath here sluiced out his blood. Unhappy hour,
Accursed place, but most inconstant fate,
That hadst reserved him from the bullet’s fire,
And suffered him to scape the wood-karn’s fury,
Didst here ordain the treasure of his life,
(Even here within the arms of tender peace,
And where security gave greatest hope)
To be consumed by treason’s wasteful hand!
And what is most afflicting to my soul,
That this his death and murther should be wrought
Without the knowledge by whose means twas done.

SECOND SERVANT.
Not so, sir; I have found the authors of it.
See where they sit, and in their bloody fists,
The fatal instruments of death and sin.

LEE.
Just judgement of that power, whose gracious eye,
Loathing the sight of such a heinous fact,
Dazzled their senses with benumbing sleep,
Till their unhallowed treachery were known!
Awake, ye monsters; murderers, awake;
Tremble for horror; blush, you cannot choose,
Beholding this inhumane deed of yours.

COBHAM.
What mean you, sir, to trouble weary souls,
And interrupt us of our quiet sleep?

LEE.
Oh devilish! can you boast unto your selves
Of quiet sleep, having within your hearts
The guilt of murder waking, that with cries
Deafs the loud thunder, and solicits heaven
With more than Mandrake’s shrieks for your offence?

LADY COBHAM.
What murder? you upbraid us wrongfully.

LEE.
Can you deny the fact? see you not here
The body of my son by you mis-done?
Look on his wounds, look on his purple hue:
Do we not find you where the deed was done?
Were not your knives fast closed in your hands?
Is not this cloth an argument beside,
Thus stained and spotted with his innocent blood?
These speaking characters, were nothing else
To plead against ye, would convict you both.
Bring them away, bereavers of my joy.
At Hartford, where the Sizes now are kept,
Their lives shall answer for my son’s lost life.

COBHAM.
As we are innocent, so may we speed.

LEE.
As I am wronged, so may the law proceed.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE IX. St. Albans.

[Enter bishop of Rochester, constable of St. Albans, with sir John of Wrotham, Doll his wench, and the Irishman in Harpoole’s apparel.]

BISHOP.
What intricate confusion have we here?
Not two hours since we apprehended one,
In habit Irish, but in speech not so:
And now you bring another, that in speech
Is altogether Irish, but in habit
Seems to be English: yea and more than so,
The servant of that heretic Lord Cobham.

IRISHMAN.
Fait, me be no servant of the lord Cobham,
Me be Mack Chane of Vister.

BISHOP.
Otherwise called Harpoole of Kent; go to, sir,
You cannot blind us with your broken Irish.

SIR JOHN.

Trust me, my Lord Bishop, whether Irish,
Or English, Harpoole or not Harpoole, that
I leave to be decided by the trial:
But sure I am this man by face and speech
Is he that murdered young sir Richard Lee—
I met him presently upon the fact—
And that he slew his master for that gold;
Those jewels, and that chain I took from him.

BISHOP.
Well, our affairs do call us back to London,
So that we cannot prosecute the cause,
As we desire to do; therefore we leave
The charge with you, to see they be conveyed
To Hartford Sise: both this counterfeit
And you, sir John of Wrotham, and your wench,
For you are culpable as well as they,
Though not for murder, yet for felony.
But since you are the means to bring to light
This graceless murder, you shall bear with you
Our letters to the Judges of the bench,
To be your friends in what they lawful may.

BISHOP.
So, away with them.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE X. Hertford. A Hall of Justice.

[Enter Gaoler and his man, bringing forth Old-castle.]

GAOLER.
Bring forth the prisoners, see the court prepared;
The Justices are coming to the bench.
So, let him stand; away, and fetch the rest.

[Exeunt.]

COBHAM.
Oh, give me patience to endure this scourge,
Thou that art fountain of that virtuous stream,
And though contempt, false witness, and reproach
Hang on these iron gyves, to press my life
As low as earth, yet strengthen me with faith,
That I may mount in spirit above the clouds.

[Enter Gaoler, bringing in Lady Old-castle and Harpoole.]

Here comes my lady: sorrow, tis for her
Thy wound is grievous; else I scoff at thee.
What, and poor Harpoole! art thou ith bryars too?

HARPOOLE.
Ifaith, my Lord, I am in, get out how I can.

LADY COBHAM.
Say, gentle Lord, for now we are alone,
And may confer, shall we confess in brief,
Of whence, and what we are, and so prevent
The accusation is commenced against us?

COBHAM.
What will that help us? being known, sweet love,
We shall for heresy be put to death,
For so they term the religion we profess.
No, if it be ordained we must die,
And at this instant, this our comfort be,
That of the guilt imposed, our souls are free.

HARPOOLE.
Yea, yea, my lord, Harpoole is so resolved.
I wreak of death the less, in that I die
Not by the sentence of that envious priest
The Bishop of Rochester: oh, were it he,
Or by his means that I should suffer here,
It would be double torment to my soul.

LADY COBHAM.
Well, be it then according as heaven please.

[Enter lord Judge, two Justices, Mayor of Saint Albans, lord Powesse and his lady, and old sir Richard Lee: the Judge and Justices take their places.]

JUDGE.
Now, Master Mayor, what gentleman is that,
You bring with you before us and the bench?

MAYOR.
The Lord Powis, if it like your honor,
And this his Lady, travelling toward Wales,
Who, for they lodged last night within my house,

And my Lord Bishop did lay search for such,
Were very willing to come on with me,
Lest for their sakes suspicion me might wrong.

JUDGE.
We cry your honor mercy, good my Lord,
Wilt please ye take your place. Madame, your ladyship
May here or where you will repose your self,
Until this business now in hand be past.

LADY POWIS.
I will withdraw into some other room,
So that your Lordship and the rest be pleased.

JUDGE.
With all our hearts: attend the Lady there.

LORD POWIS.
Wife, I have eyed yond prisoners all this while,
And my conceit doth tell me, tis our friend,
The noble Cobham, and his virtuous Lady.

LADY POWIS.
I think no less: are they suspected, trow ye,
For doing of this murder?

LORD POWIS.
What is means
I cannot tell, but we shall know anon.
Mean space as you pass by them, ask the question,
But do it secretly, you be not seen,
And make some sign that I may know your mind.

LADY POWIS.
My Lord Cobham? madam?

[As she passeth over the stage by them.]

COBHAM.
No Cobham now, nor madam, as you love us,
But John of Lancashire, and Ione his wife.

LADY POWIS.
Oh tell, what is it that our love can do,
To pleasure you? for we are bound to you.

COBHAM.
Nothing but this, that you conceal our names;

So, gentle lady, pass for being spied.

LADY POWIS.
My heart I leave, to bear part of your grief.

[Exit.]

JUDGE.
Call the prisoners to the bar. Sir Richard Lee,
What evidence can you bring against these people,
To prove them guilty of the murder done?

LEE.
This bloody towel and these naked knives,
Beside we found them sitting by the place,
Where the dead body lay, within a bush.

JUDGE.
What answer you why law should not proceed,
According to the evidence given in,
To tax ye with the penalty of death?

COBHAM.
That we are free from murder’s very thoughts,
And know not how the gentleman was slain.

FIRST JUSTICE.
How came this linen cloth so bloody then?

LADY COBHAM.
My husband hot with travelling, my lord,
His nose gushed out a bleeding, that was it.

SECOND JUSTICE.
But wherefore were your sharp edged knives
unsheathed?

LADY COBHAM.
To cut such simple victual as we had.

JUDGE.
Say we admit this answer to those articles,
What made ye in so private a dark nook,
So far remote from any common path,
As was the thick where the dead corpse was thrown?

COBHAM.

Journeying, my lord, from London from the term,
Down into Lancashire where we do dwell,
And what with age and travel being faint,
We gladly sought a place where we might rest,
Free from resort of other passengers,
And so we strayed into that secret corner.

JUDGE.
These are but ambages to drive of time,
And linger Justice from her purposed end.
But who are these?

[Enter the Constable, bringing in the Irishman, sir John of Wrotham, and Doll.]

CONSTABLE.
Stay Judgement, and release those innocents,
For here is he, whose hand hath done the deed,
For which they stand indicted at the bar,—
This savage villain, this rude Irish slave.
His tongue already hath confessed the fact,
And here is witness to confirm as much.

SIR JOHN.
Yes, my good Lords, no sooner had he slain
His loving master for the wealth he had,
But I upon the instant met with him,
And what he purchased with the loss of blood:
With strokes I presently bereaved him of;
Some of the which is spent, the rest remaining
I willingly surrender to the hands
Of old sir Richard Lee, as being his.
Beside, my Lord Judge, I greet your honor
With letters from my Lord of Rochester.

[Delivers a letter.]

LEE.
Is this the wolf whose thirsty throat did drink
My dear son’s blood? art thou the snake
He cherished, yet with envious piercing sting
Assailed him mortally? foul stigmatic,
Thou venom of the country where thou livedst,
And pestilence of this: were it not that law
Stands ready to revenge thy cruelty,
Traitor to God, thy master, and to me,
These hands should be thy executioner.

JUDGE.
Patience, sir Richard Lee, you shall have justice,
And he the guerdon of his base desert.
The fact is odious; therefore, take him hence,
And being hanged until the wretch be dead,
His body after shall be handed in chains
Near to the place where he did act the murder.

IRISHMAN.
Prethee, Lord shudge, let me have mine own
clothes, my strouces there, and let me be hanged
in a with after my cuntry—the Irish—fashion.

[Exit.]

JUDGE.
Go to; away with him. And now, sir John,
Although by you this murther came to light,
And therein you have well deserved, yet upright law,
So will not have you be excused and quit,
For you did rob the Irishman, by which
You stand attainted here of felony.
Beside, you have been lewd, and many years
Led a lascivious, unbeseeming life.

SIR JOHN.
Oh but, my Lord, he repents, sir John repents,
and he will mend.

JUDGE.
In hope thereof, together with the favour,
My Lord of Rochester entreats for you,
We are content you shall be proved.

SIR JOHN.
I thank you good Lordship.

JUDGE.
These other falsely here accused, and brought
In peril wrongfully, we in like sort
Do set at liberty, paying their fees.

LORD POWIS.
That office, if it please ye, I will do,
For countries sake, because I know them well.
They are my neighbours, therefore of my cost
Their charges shall be paid.

LEE.
And for amends,
Touching the wrong unwittingly I have done,
There are a few crowns more for them to drink.

[Gives them a purse.]

JUDGE.
Your kindness merits praise, sir Richard Lee:
So let us hence.

[Exeunt all but Lord Powis and Old-castle.]

LORD POWIS.
But Powis still must stay.
There yet remains a part of that true love
He owes his noble friend unsatisfied,
And unperformed, which first of all doth bind me
To gratulate your lordship’s safe delivery,
And then entreat, that since unlooked for thus
We here are met, your honor would vouchsafe,
To ride with me to Wales, where to my power,
(Though not to quittance those great benefits,
I have received of you) yet both my house,
My purse, my servants, and what else I have,
Are all at your command. Deny me not;
I know the Bishop’s hate pursues ye so,
As there’s no safety in abiding here.

COBHAM.
Tis true, my Lord, and God forgive him for it.

LORD POWIS.
Then, let us hence: you shall be straight provided
Of lusty geldings, and once entered Wales,
Well may the Bishop hunt, but, spite his face,
He never more shall have the game in chase.

[Exeunt.]

FINIS.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE ***

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