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Transcriber's Note

Endnotes have been moved to the end of the scene to which they apply.
The following note preceded the printed endnotes:

"In the Quartos there are no divisions of acts and scenes.

A, B, C = 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quartos."

Italic text is marked by _underscores_, and bold text by ~swung dashes~.

[Illustration]

THE TEMPLE DRAMATISTS

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

[Illustration]

The text of this edition is nearly that of the first Quarto, the copy of which in the Dyce Library at South Kensington has been carefully collated. I have not noted minute variations. The German editors, Warnke and Proescholt, give the various readings of the three Quartos and of later editions.

[Illustration: _Feversham Abbey._]

ARDEN OF
FEVERSHAM

_Edited with a Preface, Notes
and Glossary by_

REV. RONALD BAYNE
M.A.

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‘Considering the various and marvellous gifts displayed for the first time on our stage by the great poet, the great dramatist, the strong and subtle searcher of hearts, the just and merciful judge and painter of human passions, who gave this tragedy to the new-born literature of our drama ... I cannot but finally take heart to say, even in the absence of all external or traditional testimony, that it seems to me not pardonable merely or permissible, but simply logical and reasonable, to set down this poem, a young man’s work on the face of it, as the possible work of no man’s youthful hand but Shakespeare’s.’

Mr. A. C. SWINBURNE.

PREFACE

~Early Editions.~ On 3rd April, 1592, '_The Tragedie of Arden of Feversham and Blackwall_'[A] was entered on the Stationers' Registers to Edward White. In the same year appeared, '_The lamentable and true Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent. Who was most wickedlye murdered, by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the love she bare to one Mosbie, hyred two desperat ruffins, Blackwill and Shakbag, to kill him. Wherin is shewed the great mallice and discimulation of a wicked woman, the unsatiable desire of filthie lust and the shamefull end of all murderers. Imprinted at London for Edward White, dwelling at the lyttle North dore of Paules Church at the signe of the Gun._ 1592.' A second Quarto, with the same title, was printed in 1599. A third, '_by Eliz. Allde dwelling neere Christs Church_,' appeared in 1633. The second and third Quartos are founded textually upon the first, and their variations are of no value. The text of the first Quarto is unusually good even when prose and verse are mixed together, although the printer has apparently no scientific knowledge of the nature of metre.

[Footnote A: A misprint for _Blackwill_.]

~Place of the Play in the Elizabethan Drama.~ _Arden of Faversham_ is the finest extant specimen of a kind of play which has been classified as Domestic Tragedy. A picturesque or sensational murder in the sixteenth century was given to the public first in popular ballads or pamphlets, and afterwards, if sufficiently notable, in the more serious Chronicle. From the popular pamphlet, or from the Chronicle, or from both together, it found its way on to the stage. Four of these 'murder-plays' have come down to us, and the titles of many others. They form a minor section of the Chronicle plays or Histories. They did not attain any very striking literary development, owing perhaps to the necessary bondage of the poet to his facts. _Arden of Faversham_ is a remarkable instance of the possibilities of this class of play, but it is to be noted that the poet used the narrative of a Chronicler who wrote twenty-seven years after the date of the murder. _A Warning for Fair Women_ and Yarington's _Two Tragedies in One_ are both inferior to _Arden_, though influenced by it. The fourth 'murder-play'--_The Yorkshire Tragedy_--is distinct from the other three in style and method. Several famous dramatists produced 'domestic' tragedies, but none have survived. _A Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother_, in which Ford and Webster collaborated, must have been a notable piece of work.

~Source of the Play.~ On Sunday, 15th February 1550-1, Thomas Ardern of Faversham, gentleman, 'was heynously murdered in his own parlour, about seven of the clock in the night, by one Thomas Morsby, a taylor of London, late servant to sir Edward North, knight, chancellor

of the augmentations, father-in-law unto Alice Ardern, wife of the said Thomas Ardern.' Thomas Ardern was Mayor of Faversham in 1548, and his murder made such a stir that in 1577 the first edition of Holinshed's _Chronicle_ devotes five pages (pp. 1703-8) to an elaborate account of it. The chronicler begins thus:--'About this time there was at Faversham in Kent a Gentleman named Arden most cruelly murthered and slain by the procurement of his own wife. The which murder for the horribleness thereof, although otherwise it may seem to be but a private matter, and therefore as it were impertinent to this History, I have thought good to set it forth somewhat at large, having the instructions delivered to me by them that have used some diligence to gather the true understanding of the circumstances.' Our first quotation was from the _Wardmote Book of Faversham_, and proves that Holinshed's narrative is not minutely accurate. The _Wardmote Book_ gives a curt account of the actual murder on the Sunday evening with the names and fate of the culprits. It tells us nothing of the previous failures of these culprits which give to Holinshed's tale such a terrible and dramatic interest. We need not speculate on Holinshed's sources. No doubt there were many contemporary pamphlets and ballads which recounted the murder. We know only of _The Complaint ... of Mistress Arden of Feversham_, preserved among the _Roxburghe Ballads_, and reprinted by Evans and in Miss De Vaynes' _Kentish Garland_. But this is dated by Mr. Bullen about 1633, when the third Quarto of the play appeared, and was probably occasioned by that re-issue. The important point to bear in mind is the excellence of Holinshed's narrative. To praise it adequately we must say that it is worthy of the fine play founded upon it, which probably had no other source. The play agrees always with Holinshed when Holinshed differs from the _Wardmote Book_. When the play differs from Holinshed it differs also from the _Wardmote Book_. To the dramatic instinct of the poet we must ascribe his suppression of the fact that Arden winked at his wife's infidelity. Holinshed and the _Wardmote Book_ both explicitly assert this. Franklin, Arden's friend, is also an invention of the dramatist.

~Author of the Play.~ The three Quartos are all anonymous. We know of no other edition till 1770, when Edward Jacob, a Faversham antiquary, edited the first Quarto, and boldly claimed the play for Shakespeare. Ludwig Tieck published in 1823 an excellent German translation, accompanied by a discriminating statement of the case for the Shakesperean authorship. Delius, editing the play in 1855, agreed with Tieck, and was followed by the French translator, François Victor Hugo, and more recently by Professor Mézières. Owing to the supposed Shakespearean authorship there have been at least three translations into German, one into French, and one into Dutch. In England opinion has been more divided. Henry Tyrrell,[B] Charles Knight, and Mr. Swinburne[C] have supported the Shakespearean authorship. Professor Ward[D] and J. A. Symonds incline to reject it. Professor Saintsbury

considers that ‘the only possible hypothesis on which it could be admitted as Shakespeare’s would be that of an early experiment thrown off while he was seeking his way in a direction where he found no thoroughfare.’[E] Mr. Bullen, who edited a careful reprint of the first Quarto in 1887, suspects ‘that _Arden_ in its present state has been retouched here and there by the master’s hand.’ The latest German editors, Warnke and Proescholt (1888), ‘are of opinion that Shakespeare had nothing to do with _Arden of Faversham_.’

[Footnote B: _Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare._]

[Footnote C: _Study of Shakespeare._]

[Footnote D: _History of English Dramatic Literature._]

[Footnote E: _History of Elizabethan Literature._]

~The Question of Shakespeare’s Authorship.~ The only reason for ascribing the play to Shakespeare is its merit. It seems incredible that a drama so mature in its art should have been written in 1592 by a writer otherwise unknown to us. In three directions the art of the writer is mature. First, the character of the base coward Mosbie, and of the ‘bourgeois Clytemnestra,’ Alice Arden, are drawn with an insight, delicacy, and sustained power new to English literature in 1592, and not excelled till Shakespeare excelled them. The picture of Arden, as a man fascinated and bewitched by his wife and by his fate, might match that of Mosbie and Alice if the artist had not blurred his conception by the introduction of the jarring motives of avarice and sacrilege. But the poet’s aim is clear; it is his own, and it almost succeeds. Second, the picturesque ferocity and grim humour of Black Will and Shakebag are described with a firmness and ease and restraint of style which critics have not sufficiently noted. I can compare it only with the Jack Cade scenes of the _Contention_ (and _2 Henry VI._). The prose of our poet is excellent. His humour has a clearly defined character and style of its own. The character of Michael, so admired by Mr. Swinburne, is as subtle and well-sustained as Mosbie’s or Alice Arden’s, and it exhibits our poet’s special humorous gift. This gift, excellent as it is, seems to me very definitely not Shakespearean. But thirdly, the terrifying use of signs and omens and of an almost Shakespearean irony--_e.g._ Arden’s words, ‘I am almost stifled with this fog!’--combine to produce as the play proceeds an impressive sense of ‘the slow unerring tread of assassination, balked but persevering, marching like a fate to its accomplishment.’ But the special excellencies of the play are all against Shakespeare having written it by 1592. As Mr. Bullen insists, the weak point in Mr. Swinburne’s criticism is the phrase ‘a young man’s work.’ This play is not ‘a young man’s work.’ The copiousness of the young man Shakespeare’s work is

the exact contrary of the deliberate anxious effort which marks the style of _Arden of Faversham_ except in the prose scenes. In none of Shakespeare's plays can it be perceived that the poet has taken such pains as the poet of _Arden_ takes. Unless Shakespeare wrote this play as soon as he reached London, and then for a year or two wrote nothing else, it is impossible to fit it into his work. And if he wrote the play as soon as he reached London and then took up the studies which resulted in _Venus and Adonis_ and _Lucrece_, would he have written _Love's Labour's Lost_ and _Comedy of Errors_ on his way back to work like _Arden_? If Shakespeare wrote _Arden_ it is the most interesting fact in his literary development. To suggest that Shakespeare revised the play is to shirk the question. Its excellence is in its warp and woof, not in its ornaments.

~Literature.~ Mr. Bullen's _Introduction_ is the best monograph on the play. Warnke and Proescholt's _Introduction_ should be consulted, but lacks the distinction of style and the critical insight of Mr. Bullen's essay. Excellent analyses and criticisms of the play are in Charles Knight's _Doubtful Plays_ ('Pictorial Shakespere'); J. A. Symonds' _Shakspere's Predecessors_; Alfred Mézières' _Prédécesseurs et Contemporains de Shakspeare_. Mr. Fleay in his _Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama_ (1891) has suggested Kyd as the author of _Arden_.

[Illustration]

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THOMAS ARDEN, Gentleman, of Feversham
FRANKLIN, his Friend
MOSBIE
CLARKE, a Painter
ADAM FOWLE, Landlord of the Flower-de-Luce
BRADSHAW, a Goldsmith
MICHAEL, Arden's Servant
GREENE
RICHARD REEDE, a Sailor
BLACK WILL } Murderers
SHAKEBAG }
A PRENTICE
A FERRYMAN

LORD CHEINY, and his Men
MAYOR OF FEVERSHAM, and Watch

ALICE, Arden’s Wife
SUSAN, Mosbie’s Sister

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

ACT I

A Room in Arden’s House.

Enter Arden and Franklin.

Franklin. Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more!
My gracious Lord, the Duke of Somerset,
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,
By letters patents from his Majesty,
All the lands of the Abbey of Feversham.
Here are the deeds, [_He hands them._
Sealed and subscribed with his name and the king’s:
Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

Arden. Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life;
And but for thee how odious were this life,
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes!
Which makes me wish that for this veil of heaven
The earth hung over my head and covered me.
Love-letters pass ’twixt Mosbie and my wife,
And they have privy meetings in the town:
Nay, on his finger did I spy the ring
Which at our marriage-day the priest put on.
Can any grief be half so great as this?

Franklin. Comfort thyself, sweet friend; it is not strange
That women will be false and wavering.

Arden. Ay, but to dote on such a one as he
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.

Franklin. Why, what is he?

Arden. A botcher, and no better at the first;
Who, by base brokage getting some small stock,
Crept into service of a nobleman,
And by his servile flattery and fawning
Is now become the steward of his house,
And bravely jets it in his silken gown.

Franklin. No nobleman will countenance such a peasant.

Arden. Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.
But through his favour let him not grow proud;
For were he by the Lord Protector backed,
He should not make me to be pointed at.
I am by birth a gentleman of blood,
And that injurious ribald, that attempts
To violate my dear wife’s chastity
(For dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)
Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile
See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,
Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,
Smeared in the channels of his lustful blood.

Franklin. Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me
To ease thy grief and save her chastity:
Intreat her fair; sweet words are fittest engines
To race the flint walls of a woman’s breast.
In any case be not too jealous,
Nor make no question of her love to thee;
But, as securely, presently take horse,
And lie with me at London all this term;
For women, when they may, will not,
But, being kept back, straight grow outrageous.

Arden. Though this abhors from reason, yet I’ll try it,
And call her forth and presently take leave.
How! Alice!

Here enters Alice.

Alice. Husband, what mean you to get up so early?
Summer-nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.
Had I been wake, you had not risen so soon.

Arden. Sweet love, thou knowest that we two, Ovid-like,
Have often chid the morning when it ’gan to peep,
And often wished that dark night’s purblind steeds
Would pull her by the purple mantle back,
And cast her in the ocean to her love.

But this night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart:
I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

Alice. ’Tis like I was asleep when I named him,
For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

Arden. Ay, but you started up and suddenly,
Instead of him, caught me about the neck.

Alice. Instead of him? why, who was there but you?
And where but one is, how can I mistake?

Franklin. Arden, leave to urge her over-far.

Arden. Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream;
Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.

Alice. Now I remember whereupon it came:
Had we no talk of Mosbie yesternight?

Franklin. Mistress Alice, I heard you name him once or twice.

Alice. And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.

Arden. I know it did, and therefore let it pass.
I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

Alice. But tell me, do you mean to stay there long?

Arden. No longer there till my affairs be done.

Franklin. He will not stay above a month at most.

Alice. A month? ay me! Sweet Arden, come again
Within a day or two, or else I die.

Arden. I cannot long be from thee, gentle Alice.
Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field,
Franklin and I will down unto the quay;
For I have certain goods there to unload.
Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice;
For yet ere noon we’ll take horse and away.

[_Exeunt Arden and Franklin._

Alice. Ere noon he means to take horse and away!
Sweet news is this. O that some airy spirit
Would in the shape and likeness of a horse

Gallop with Arden ’cross the Ocean,
And throw him from his back into the waves!
Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart:
And he usurps it, having nought but this,
That I am tied to him by marriage.
Love is a God, and marriage is but words;
And therefore Mosbie’s title is the best.
Tush! whether it be or no, he shall be mine,
In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

Here enters Adam of the Flower-de-luce.

And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-luce;
I hope he brings me tidings of my love.
--How now, Adam, what is the news with you?
Be not afraid; my husband is now from home.

Adam. He whom you wot of, Mosbie, Mistress Alice,
Is come to town, and sends you word by me
In any case you may not visit him.

Alice. Not visit him?

Adam. No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

Alice. But tell me, is he angry or displeased?

Adam. It should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

Alice. Were he as mad as raving Hercules,
I’ll see him, I; and were thy house of force,
These hands of mine should race it to the ground,
Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

Adam. Nay, and you be so impatient, I’ll be gone.

Alice. Stay, Adam, stay; thou wert wont to be my friend.
Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath;
Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,
With which we played for kisses many a time,
And when I lost, I won, and so did he;--
Such winning and such losing Jove send me!
And bid him, if his love do not decline,
To come this morning but along my door,
And as a stranger but salute me there:
This may he do without suspect or fear.

Adam. I’ll tell him what you say, and so farewell.

[_Exit Adam._

Alice. Do, and one day I’ll make amends for all.--
I know he loves me well, but dares not come,
Because my husband is so jealous,
And these my narrow-prying neighbours blab,
Hinder our meetings when we would confer.
But, if I live, that block shall be removed,
And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth,
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men,
Nor Arden’s looks; as surely shall he die
As I abhor him and love only thee.

Here enters Michael.

How now, Michael, whither are you going?

Michael. To fetch my master’s nag.
I hope you’ll think on me.

Alice. Ay; but, Michael, see you keep your oath,
And be as secret as you are resolute.

Michael. I’ll see he shall not live above a week.

Alice. On that condition, Michael, here’s my hand:
None shall have Mosbie’s sister but thyself.

Michael. I understand the painter here hard by
Hath made report that he and Sue is sure.

Alice. There’s no such matter, Michael; believe it not.

Michael. But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart,
With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth,
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.
Well, let her keep it! I shall find a fellow
That can both write and read and make rhyme too.
And if I do--well, I say no more:
I’ll send from London such a taunting letter
As she shall eat the heart he sent with salt
And fling the dagger at the painter’s head.

Alice. What needs all this? I say that Susan’s thine.

Michael. Why, then I say that I will kill my master,
Or anything that you will have me do.

Alice. But, Michael, see you do it cunningly.

Michael. Why, say I should be took, I'll ne'er confess
That you know anything; and Susan, being a maid,
May beg me from the gallows of the sheriff.

Alice. Trust not to that, Michael.

Michael. You cannot tell me, I have seen it, I.
But, mistress, tell her, whether I live or die,
I'll make her more worth than twenty painters can;
For I will rid mine elder brother away,
And then the farm of Bolton is mine own.
Who would not venture upon house and land,
When he may have it for a right down blow?

Here enters Mosbie.

Alice. Yonder comes Mosbie. Michael, get thee gone,
And let not him nor any know thy drifts.

[_Exit Michael._

Mosbie, my love!

Mosbie. Away, I say, and talk not to me now.

Alice. A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.
'Tis yet but early days, thou needst not fear.

Mosbie. Where is your husband?

Alice. 'Tis now high water, and he is at the quay.

Mosbie. There let him be; henceforward know me not.

Alice. Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?
Is this the fruit thy reconcilement buds?
Have I for this given thee so many favours,
Incurred my husband's hate, and, out alas!
Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake?
And dost thou say 'henceforward know me not'?
Remember, when I lock'd thee in my closet,
What were thy words and mine; did we not both
Decree to murder Arden in the night?
The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,
Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,

’Fore I was tangled with thy ’ticing speech,
Arden to me was dearer than my soul,--
And shall be still: base peasant, get thee gone,
And boast not of thy conquest over me,
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery!
For what hast thou to countenance my love,
Being descended of a noble house,
And matched already with a gentleman
Whose servant thou may’st be!--and so farewell.

Mosbie. Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see
That which I ever feared, and find too true:
A woman’s love is as the lightning-flame,
Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.
To try thy constancy have I been strange;
Would I had never tried, but lived in hope!

Alice. What need’st thou try me whom thou ne’er found false?

Mosbie. Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

Alice. So lists the sailor to the mermaid’s song,
So looks the traveller to the basilisk:
I am content for to be reconciled,
And that, I know, will be mine overthrow.

Mosbie. Thine overthrow? first let the world dissolve.

Alice. Nay, Mosbie, let me still enjoy thy love,
And happen what will, I am resolute.
My saving husband hoards up bags of gold
To make our children rich, and now is he
Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,
And he and Franklin will to London straight.

Mosbie. To London, Alice? if thou’lt be ruled by me,
We’ll make him sure enough for coming there.

Alice. Ah, would we could!

Mosbie. I happened on a painter yesternight,
The only cunning man of Christendom;
For he can temper poison with his oil,
That whoso looks upon the work he draws
Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,
Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.
Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,
That Arden may, by gazing on it, perish.

Alice. Ay, but Mosbie, that is dangerous,
For thou, or I, or any other else,
Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

Mosbie. Ay, but we’ll have it covered with a cloth
And hung up in the study for himself.

Alice. It may not be, for when the picture’s drawn,
Arden, I know, will come and show it me.

Mosbie. Fear not; we’ll have that shall serve the turn.
This is the painter’s house; I’ll call him forth.

Alice. But Mosbie, I’ll have no such picture, I.

Mosbie. I pray thee leave it to my discretion.
How! Clarke!

Here enters Clarke.

Oh, you are an honest man of your word! you served me well.

Clarke. Why, sir, I’ll do it for you at any time,
Provided, as you have given your word,
I may have Susan Mosbie to my wife.
For, as sharp-witted poets, whose sweet verse
Make heavenly gods break off their nectar draughts
And lay their ears down to the lowly earth,
Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,
So we that are the poets’ favourites
Must have a love: ay, Love is the painter’s muse,
That makes him frame a speaking countenance,
A weeping eye that witnesses heart’s grief.
Then tell me, Master Mosbie, shall I have her?

Alice. ’Tis pity but he should; he’ll use her well.

Mosbie. Clarke, here’s my hand: my sister shall be thine.

Clarke. Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,
You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

Alice. Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

Mosbie. Fear him not; leave; I have talked sufficient

Clarke. You know not me that ask such questions.

Let it suffice I know you love him well,
And fain would have your husband made away:
Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind,
That rather than you'll live with him you hate,
You'll venture life, and die with him you love.
The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

Alice. Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed
But Mosbie's love. Might I without control
Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die:
But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

Mosbie. Enough, sweet Alice; thy kind words makes me melt.
Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike;
Some other poison would do better far.

Alice. Ay, such as might be put into his broth,
And yet in taste not to be found at all.

Clarke. I know your mind, and here I have it for you.
Put but a dram of this into his drink,
Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,
And he shall die within an hour after.

Alice. As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, next day
Thou and Susan shall be married.

Mosbie. And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of, Clarke.

Clarke. Yonder's your husband. Mosbie, I'll be gone.

Here enters Arden and Franklin.

Alice. In good time see where my husband comes.
Master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself.

[_Exit Clarke._

Mosbie. Master Arden, being at London yesternight,
The Abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,
Were offered me on some occasion
By Greene, one of Sir Antony Ager's men:
I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours?
Hath any other interest herein?

Arden. Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon.
Alice, make ready my breakfast, I must hence.

[_Exit Alice._

As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine
By letters patents from his Majesty.
But I must have a mandate for my wife;
They say you seek to rob me of her love:
Villain, what makes thou in her company?
She’s no companion for so base a groom.

Mosbie. Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee;
But rather than I pocket up this wrong----

Franklin. What will you do, sir?

Mosbie. Revenge it on the proudest of you both.

[_Then Arden draws forth Mosbie’s sword._

Arden. So, sirrah; you may not wear a sword,
The statute makes against artificers;
I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,
Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron,
For this shall go with me; and mark my words,
You goodman botcher, ’tis to you I speak:
The next time that I take thee near my house,
Instead of legs I’ll make thee crawl on stumps.

Mosbie. Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me:
I do appeal to God and to the world.

Franklin. Why, canst thou deny thou wert a botcher once?

Mosbie. Measure me what I am, not what I was.

Arden. Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,
A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant?

Mosbie. Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited
The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll’n heart,
Hear me but speak: as I intend to live
With God and his elected saints in heaven,
I never meant more to solicit her;
And that she knows, and all the world shall see.
I loved her once;--sweet Arden, pardon me,
I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart!
But time hath quenched these over-raging coals;
And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house,
’Tis for my sister’s sake, her waiting-maid,

And not for hers. Mayest thou enjoy her long:
Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me,
If I dishonour her or injure thee.

Arden. Mosbie, with these thy protestations
The deadly hatred of my heart’s appeased,
And thou and I’ll be friends, if this prove true.
As for the base terms I gave thee late,
Forget them, Mosbie: I had cause to speak,
When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent
Make common table-talk of her and thee.

Mosbie. Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues?

Franklin. Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,
Upon whose general bruit all honour hangs,
Forbear his house.

Arden. Forbear it! nay, rather frequent it more:
The world shall see that I distrust her not.
To warn him on the sudden from my house
Were to confirm the rumour that is grown.

Mosbie. By my faith, sir, you say true,
And therefore will I sojourn here a while,
Until our enemies have talked their fill;
And then, I hope, they’ll cease, and at last confess
How causeless they have injured her and me.

Arden. And I will lie at London all this term
To let them see how light I weigh their words.

Here enters Alice.

Alice. Husband, sit down; your breakfast will be cold.

Arden. Come, Master Mosbie, will you sit with us?

Mosbie. I cannot eat, but I’ll sit for company.

Arden. Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.

Alice. Husband, why pause ye? why eat you not?

Arden. I am not well; there’s something in this broth
That is not wholesome: didst thou make it, Alice?

Alice. I did, and that’s the cause it likes not you.

[_Then she throws down the broth on the ground._

There’s nothing that I do can please your taste;
You were best to say I would have poisoned you.
I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,
But he imagines I have stepped awry.
Here’s he that you cast in my teeth so oft:
Now will I be convinced or purge myself.
I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,
Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosbie, thou:
What favour hast thou had more than a kiss
At coming or departing from the town?

Mosbie. You wrong yourself and me to cast these doubts:
Your loving husband is not jealous.

Arden. Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill
But you’ll accuse yourself?
Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate;
I’ll take a little to prevent the worst.

Franklin. Do so, and let us presently take horse;
My life for yours, ye shall do well enough.

Alice. Give me a spoon, I’ll eat of it myself;
Would it were full of poison to the brim,
Then should my cares and troubles have an end.
Was ever silly woman so tormented?

Arden. Be patient, sweet love; I mistrust not thee.

Alice. God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost;
For never woman loved her husband better
Than I do thee.

Arden. I know it, sweet Alice; cease to complain,
Lest that in tears I answer thee again.

Franklin. Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

Alice. Forbear to wound me with that bitter word;
Arden shall go to London in my arms.

Arden. Loth am I to depart, yet I must go.

Alice. Wilt thou to London, then, and leave me here?
Ah, if thou love me, gentle Arden, stay.

Yet, if thy business be of great import
Go, if thou wilt, I'll bear it as I may;
But write from London to me every week,
Nay, every day, and stay no longer there
Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.

Arden. I'll write unto thee every other tide,
And so farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.

Alice. Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so;
And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,
In hope you'll hasten him home, I'll give you this.

[_And then she kisseth him._

Franklin. And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine.
Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

Mosbie. I hope he is not jealous of me now.

Arden. No, Mosbie, no; hereafter think of me
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

[_Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and Michael._

Alice. I am glad he is gone; he was about to stay,
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

Mosbie. Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.
But what a villain is that painter Clarke!

Alice. Was it not a goodly poison that he gave?
Why, he's as well now as he was before.
It should have been some fine confection
That might have given the broth some dainty taste:
This powder was too gross and populous.

Mosbie. But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,
Then had he died and our love continued.

Alice. Why, so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he live.

Mosbie. It is unpossible, for I have sworn
Never hereafter to solicit thee,
Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

Alice. Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee.
What? shall an oath make thee forsake my love?

As if I have not sworn as much myself
And given my hand unto him in the church!
Tush, Mosbie; oaths are words, and words is wind,
And wind is mutable: then, I conclude,
’Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

Mosbie. Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet by your leave
I’ll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

Alice. Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short;
For if thou beest as resolute as I,
We’ll have him murdered as he walks the streets.
In London many alehouse ruffians keep,
Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.
They shall be soundly fee’d to pay him home.

Here enters Greene.

Mosbie. Alice, what’s he that comes yonder? knowest thou him?

Alice. Mosbie, be gone: I hope ’tis one that comes
To put in practice our intended drifts.

[_Exit Mosbie_

Greene. Mistress Arden, you are well met.
I am sorry that your husband is from home,
Whenas my purposed journey was to him:
Yet all my labour is not spent in vain,
For I suppose that you can full discourse
And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

Alice. What is it, Master Greene? If that I may
Or can with safety, I will answer you.

Greene. I heard your husband hath the grant of late,
Confirmed by letters patents from the king,
Of all the lands of the Abbey of Feversham,
Generally intitled, so that all former grants
Are cut off; whereof I myself had one;
But now my interest by that is void.
This is all, Mistress Arden; is it true or no?

Alice. True, Master Greene; the lands are his in state,
And whatsoever leases were before
Are void for term of Master Arden’s life;
He hath the grant under the Chancery seal.

Greene. Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak,
For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong
To wring me from the little land I have.
My living is my life, and only that
Resteth remainder of my portion.
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain;
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,
So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.
But, seeing he hath ta'en my lands, I'll value life
As careless as he is careful for to get:
And tell him this from me, I'll be revenged,
And so as he shall wish the Abbey lands
Had rested still within their former state.

Alice. Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,
And woe is me that any man should want!
God knows 'tis not my fault; but wonder not
Though he be hard to others, when to me,--
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used.

Greene. Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl
Use you unkindly? respects he not your birth,
Your honourable friends, nor what you brought?
Why, all Kent knows your parentage and what you are.

Alice. Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,
I never live good day with him alone:
When he's at home, then have I froward looks,
Hard words and blows to mend the match withal;
And though I might content as good a man,
Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls;
And when he's weary with his trugs at home,
Then rides he straight to London; there, forsooth,
He revels it among such filthy ones
As counsels him to make away his wife.
Thus live I daily in continual fear,
In sorrow; so despairing of redress
As every day I wish with hearty prayer
That he or I were taken forth the world.

Greene. Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me
So fair a creature should be so abused.
Why, who would have thought the civil sir so sullen?
He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him, churl!
And if he live a day, he lives too long.
But frolic, woman! I shall be the man
Shall set you free from all this discontent;

And if the churl deny my interest
And will not yield my lease into my hand,
I’ll pay him home, whatever hap to me.

Alice. But speak you as you think?

Greene. Ay, God’s my witness, I mean plain dealing,
For I had rather die than lose my land.

Alice. Then, Master Greene, be counsellèd by me:
Indanger not yourself for such a churl,
But hire some cutter for to cut him short,
And here’s ten pound to wager them withal;
When he is dead, you shall have twenty more,
And the lands whereof my husband is possess’d
Shall be intitled as they were before.

Greene. Will you keep promise with me?

Alice. Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.

Greene. Then here’s my hand, I’ll have him so dispatched.
I’ll up to London straight, I’ll thither post,
And never rest till I have compassed it.
Till then farewell.

Alice. Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.

[_Exit Greene._

And whosoever doth attempt the deed,
A happy hand I wish, and so farewell.--
All this goes well: Mosbie, I long for thee
To let thee know all that I have contrived.

Here enters Mosbie and Clarke.

Mosbie. How, now, Alice, what’s the news?

Alice. Such as will content thee well, sweetheart.

Mosbie. Well, let them pass a while, and tell me, Alice,
How have you dealt and tempered with my sister?
What, will she have my neighbour Clarke, or no?

Alice. What, Master Mosbie! let him woo himself!
Think you that maids look not for fair words?
Go to her, Clarke; she’s all alone within;

Michael my man is clean out of her books.

Clarke. I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in;
And if fair Susan and I can make a gree,
You shall command me to the uttermost,
As far as either goods or life may stretch.

[_Exit Clarke._

Mosbie. Now, Alice, let’s hear thy news.

Alice. They be so good that I must laugh for joy,
Before I can begin to tell my tale.

Mosbie. Let’s hear them, that I may laugh for company.

Alice. This morning, Master Greene, Dick Greene I mean,
From whom my husband had the Abbey land,
Came hither, railing, for to know the truth
Whether my husband had the lands by grant.
I told him all, whereat he stormed amain
And swore he would cry quittance with the churl,
And, if he did deny his interest,
Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.
Whenas I saw his choler thus to rise,
I whetted on the gentleman with words;
And, to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew
To composition for my husband’s death.
I gave him ten pound for to hire knaves,
By some device to make away the churl;
When he is dead, he should have twenty more
And repossess his former lands again.
On this we ’greed, and he is ridden straight
To London, for to bring his death about.

Mosbie. But call you this good news?

Alice. Ay, sweetheart, be they not?

Mosbie. ’Twere cheerful news to hear the churl were dead;
But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill
You would be so forgetful of our state
To make recount of it to every groom.
What! to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,
Chiefly in case of murder, why, ’tis the way
To make it open unto Arden’s self
And bring thyself and me to ruin both.
Forewarned, forearmed; who threats his enemy,

Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

Alice. I did it for the best.

Mosbie. Well, seeing ’tis done, cheerly let it pass.
You know this Greene; is he not religious?
A man, I guess, of great devotion?

Alice. He is.

Mosbie. Then, sweet Alice, let it pass: I have a drift
Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

Here enters Clarke and Susan.

Alice. How now, Clarke? have you found me false?
Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

Clarke. You did.

Mosbie. And what? wilt be a match?

Clarke. A match, i’ faith, sir: ay, the day is mine.
The painter lays his colours to the life,
His pencil draws no shadows in his love.
Susan is mine.

Alice. You make her blush.

Mosbie. What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man?

Susan. It resteth in your grant; some words are past,
And haply we be grown unto a match,
If you be willing that it shall be so.

Mosbie. Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant:
You see my sister’s yet at my dispose,
But, so you’ll grant me one thing I shall ask,
I am content my sister shall be yours.

Clarke. What is it, Master Mosbie?

Mosbie. I do remember once in secret talk
You told me how you could compound by art
A crucifix impoisoned,
That whoso look upon it should wax blind
And with the scent be stifled, that ere long
He should die poisoned that did view it well.

I would have you make me such a crucifix.
And then I’ll grant my sister shall be yours.

Clarke. Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,
Yet, rather or I’ll leave sweet Susan’s love,
I’ll do it, and with all the haste I may.
But for whom is it?

Alice. Leave that to us. Why, Clarke, is it possible
That you should paint and draw it out yourself,
The colours being baleful and impoisoned,
And no ways prejudice yourself withal?

Mosbie. Well questioned, Alice; Clarke, how answer you that?

Clarke. Very easily: I’ll tell you straight
How I do work of these impoisoned drugs.
I fasten on my spectacles so close
As nothing can any way offend my sight;
Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,
So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,
And softly as another work I paint.

Mosbie. ’Tis very well; but against when shall I have it?

Clarke. Within this ten days.

Mosbie. ’Twill serve the turn.
Now, Alice, let’s in and see what cheer you keep.
I hope, now Master Arden is from home,
You’ll give me leave to play your husband’s part.

Alice. Mosbie, you know, who’s master of my heart,
He well may be the master of the house.

[_Exeunt._

I. i. 4. _Patents_; the plural is always used in A, cf. _Richard II._ II. i. 202; II. iii. 130.

I. i. 14. Contrast Holinshed:--‘He, _i.e._ Arden, was contented to wink at her filthy disorder,’ and _Wardmote Book_:--‘All which things the said Ardern did well know and wilfully did permit and suffer the same.’ He was afraid to offend Lord North, ‘father-in-law unto Alice Ardern,’ whose servant Mosbie had been. This North was the father of the translator of Plutarch.

I. i. 15. _Pass_; so Bullen for _past_, A, B, C.

I. i. 25. _Botcher_, is not ‘butcher,’ but a mender of old clothes.

I. i. 48. _Jealous_: spelt _jelyouse_, and pronounced so throughout the play.

I. i. 60. The reference is to Ovid’s _Elegy_, ‘Ad Auroram ne properet.’--_Amor._ i. 13.

I. i. 61. Most editions reject _often_. If we retain it the line is an Alexandrine. Cf. i. 153, 167, 238, 479; III. v. 73, etc.

I. i. 105. _Flower-de-luce._ ‘An inn, formerly situated in Abbey Street, nearly opposite Arden’s house.’ C. E. Donne, _An Essay on the Tragedy of Arden of Faversham_, 1873.

I. i. 117. _thy house of force_, _i.e._ ‘fortified house.’

I. i. 135. _narrow_: so all editors; but the _marrow-prying_ of A may be correct. _Blab_ is either a verb with _and_ omitted after it, or a noun, the subject of _hinder_.

I. i. 154. An allusion to verses or inscriptions on tapestry hangings.

I. i. 159. Cf. ‘I’ll write to him a very taunting letter.’--_As You Like It_, III. v. 134.

I. i. 167. ‘It was popularly supposed that a virgin might save a criminal from the gallows by offering to marry him.--See note to my edition of Marston, III. 190-1.’--Bullen.

I. i. 172. Perhaps _worth_ should be omitted.

I. i. 174. _Bolton_ is ‘Boughton, looking down on Canterbury.’--Donne.

I. i. 247. The name ‘Clarke’ is apparently our author’s invention, like the name and character of Franklin. The painter’s name was William Blackburn.

I. i. 266. _Leave_; Tyrrell reads _love_.

I. i. 278. _makes_: this singular with a plural subject is frequent in our play; cf. _Enters_ in the stage directions with a plural, and I. 151, 437, 502; II. i. 1; III. i. 43 and 83; V. 38, etc. Consult Mr. Verity’s note on _Edward II._, I. iv. 362, Temple Dramatists.

I. i. 312. The statute in question was 37 Edward III. c. 9.

I. i. 314. ‘The making of Spanish needles was first taught in England by Elias Crowse a Germane about the eight yeere of Queene Elizabeth, and in Queen Marie’s time there was a Negro made fine Spanish needles in Cheapeside, but would never teach his art to any.’ Quoted by Bullen from _Stowe_, edition 1631, p. 1038.

I. i. 314. ‘Then Mosby having at his girdle a pressing iron of 14 pound weight stroke him on the head with the same so that he fell down and gave a great groan.’--Holinshed. Cf V. i. 241.

I. i. 323. _Velvet drudge_: an allusion to Mosbie’s tailoring.

I. i. 426. _Populous_: ‘perhaps used in the sense of _thick_, _compact_.’--Bullen. Webster quotes this passage and explains, ‘suitable to common people: hence common, inferior, vulgar.’ Delius proposes _palpable_.

I. i. 466. _His in state_, _i.e._ ‘his legally.’

I. i. 472. Cf. ‘To wring the widow from her customed right.’--2 _Henry VI._, V. i. 188.

I. i. 537. Tyrrell begins Act II. here.

I. i. 546. ‘The gentleman is not in your books.’--_Much Ado_, I. i. 79.

I. i. 548. _make a gree_, come to an agreement. _Agree_ was used adverbially for _at gree_.

ACT II

SCENE I

Country between Feversham and London.

Enter Greene and Bradshaw.

Bradshaw. See you them that comes yonder, Master Greene?

Greene. Ay, very well: do you know them?

Here enters Black Will and Shakebag.

Bradshaw. The one I know not, but he seems a knave
Chiefly for bearing the other company;
For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,
Lives not again upon the earth.
Black Will is his name. I tell you, Master Greene,
At Boulogne he and I were fellow-soldiers,
Where he played such pranks
As all the camp feared him for his villainy
I warrant you he bears so bad a mind
That for a crown he'll murder any man.

Greene. The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

Will. How now, fellow Bradshaw? Whither away so early?

Bradshaw. O Will, times are changed: no fellows now,
Though we were once together in the field;
Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.

Will. Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I fellow-soldiers
at Boulogne, where I was a corporal, and
thou but a base mercenary groom? No fellows
now! because you are a goldsmith and have a little
plate in your shop! You were glad to call me
'fellow Will,' and with a curtsey to the earth, 'One
snatch, good corporal,' when I stole the half ox
from John the victualer, and domineer'd with it
amongst good fellows in one night.

Bradshaw. Ay, Will, those days are past with me.

Will. Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that
same honourable mind still. Good neighbour Bradshaw,
you are too proud to be my fellow; but were
it not that I see more company coming down the
hill, I would be fellows with you once more, and
share crowns with you too. But let that pass, and
tell me whither you go.

Bradshaw. To London, Will, about a piece of service,
Wherein haply thou mayest pleasure me.

Will. What is it?

Bradshaw. Of late Lord Cheiny lost some plate,
Which one did bring and sold it at my shop,
Saying he served Sir Antony Cooke.
A search was made, the plate was found with me,

And I am bound to answer at the ’size.
Now, Lord Cheiny solemnly vows, if law
Will serve him, he’ll hang me for his plate.
Now I am going to London upon hope
To find the fellow. Now, Will, I know
Thou art acquainted with such companions.

Will. What manner of man was he?

Bradshaw. A lean-faced writhen knave,
Hawk-nosed and very hollow-eyed,
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows;
Long hair down his shoulders curled;
His chin was bare, but on his upper lip
A mutchado, which he wound about his ear.

Will. What apparel had he?

Bradshaw. A watchet satin doublet all-to torn,
The inner side did bear the greater show;
A pair of thread-bare velvet hose, seam rent,
A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off;
’Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.

Will. Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember since we
trolled the bowl at Sittingburgh, where I broke the
tapster’s head of the Lion with a cudgel-stick?

Shakebag. Ay, very well, Will.

Will. Why, it was with the money that the plate was
sold for. Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him
that can tell thee who sold thy plate?

Bradshaw. Who, I pray thee, good Will?

Will. Why, ’twas one Jack Fitten. He’s now in Newgate
for stealing a horse, and shall be arraigned the next ’size.

Bradshaw. Why, then let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten forth,
For I’ll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate.
This cheers my heart; Master Greene, I’ll leave you,
For I must to the Isle of Sheppy with speed.

Greene. Before you go, let me intreat you
To carry this letter to Mistress Arden of Feversham
And humbly recommend me to herself.

Bradshaw. That will I, Master Greene, and so farewell.
Here, Will, there’s a crown for thy good news.

[_Exit Bradshaw._

Will. Farewell, Bradshaw; I’ll drink no water for thy sake whilst this lasts.--Now, gentleman, shall we have your company to London?

Greene. Nay, stay, sirs:
A little more I needs must use your help,
And in a matter of great consequence,
Wherein if you’ll be secret and profound,
I’ll give you twenty angels for your pains.

Will. How? twenty angels? give my fellow George Shakebag and me twenty angels? And if thou’lt have thy own father slain, that thou may’st inherit his land, we’ll kill him.

Shakebag. Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy kin.

Greene. Well, this it is: Arden of Feversham
Hath highly wronged me about the Abbey land,
That no revenge but death will serve the turn.
Will you two kill him? here’s the angels down,
And I will lay the platform of his death.

Will. Plat me no platforms; give me the money, and I’ll stab him as he stands pissing against a wall, but I’ll kill him.

Shakebag. Where is he?

Greene. He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.

Shakebag. He’s dead as if he had been condemned by an Act of Parliament, if once Black Will and I swear his death.

Greene. Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,
Ye shall have twenty more.

Will. My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that I might be set a work thus through the year, and that murder would grow to an occupation, that a

man might follow without danger of law:--zounds, I
warrant I should be warden of the company! Come,
let us be going, and we'll bait at Rochester, where
I'll give thee a gallon of sack to handsel the match
withal.

[_Exeunt._

II. i. 51. Mr. Bullen says that such a line as this 'might have come straight out of _Tamburlaine_.' He goes on, 'but in no other part of the play can we find a trace of Marlowe's influence.' Cf.--

'He sent a shaggy tottered staring slave,
That when he speaks draws out his grisly beard,
And winds it twice or thrice about his ear;
Whose face has been a grindstone for men's swords.'

Jew of Malta, IV. v. 6.

and Shakespeare's--

'They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain ...
A needy hollow-ey'd, sharp-looking wretch,
A living dead man.'

Com. of Errors, V. i. 237.

II. i. 56. _all to torn_; 'entirely torn.' _To_ in the sense of 'asunder' was commonly emphasised by _all_. Cf. 'Her wings ... were all to ruffled.'--_Comus_, 380.

II. i. 58. _seam rent_: torn at the seams; 'Seam rent fellows,'--Ben Jonson.

II. i. 101. Imitated in Yarington's _Two Tragedies_ (iii. 2):--

'Grace me no graces, I respect no grace,
But with a grace to give a graceless stab.'

II. i. 114. I have inserted _follow_.

SCENE II

London. A Street near St. Paul's.

Enter Michael.

Michael. I have gotten such a letter as will touch the
painter: And thus it is:

_Here enters Arden and Franklin and hears Michael
read this letter._

‘My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God
you be in good health, as I Michael was at the
making hereof. This is to certify you that as the
turtle true, when she hath lost her mate, sitteth
alone, so I, mourning for your absence, do walk
up and down Paul’s till one day I fell asleep and
lost my master’s pantofles. Ah, Mistress Susan,
abolish that paltry painter, cut him off by the
shins with a frowning look of your crabbed countenance,
and think upon Michael, who, drunk with
the dregs of your favour, will cleave as fast to your
love as a plaster of pitch to a galled horse-back.
Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or
rather impetrate mercy of your meek hands, I end.

‘Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.’

Arden. Why, you paltry knave,
Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,
What haste my business craves to send to Kent?

Franklin. Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,
Knowing your master hath no more but you,
And do ye slack his business for your own?

Arden. Where is the letter, sirrah? let me see it.

[_Then he gives him the letter._

See, Master Franklin, here’s proper stuff:
Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,
A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth;
Sirrah, let me hear no more of this,
Nor for thy life once write to her a word.

Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull?
’Tis Mosbie’s sister: come I once at home,
I’ll rouse her from remaining in my house.
Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul’s;
Come but a turn or two, and then away.

[_Exeunt._

Greene. The first is Arden, and that’s his man,
The other is Franklin, Arden’s dearest friend.

Will. Zounds, I’ll kill them all three.

Greene. Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case;
But stand close, and take you fittest standing,
And at his coming forth speed him:
To the Nag’s Head, there is this coward’s haunt.
But now I’ll leave you till the deed be done.

[_Exit Greene._

Shakebag. If he be not paid his own, ne’er trust Shakebag.

Will. Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I’ll run him through, and then to the Blackfriars, and there take water and away.

Shakebag. Why, that’s the best; but see thou miss him not.

Will. How can I miss him, when I think on the forty angels I must have more?

Here enters Prentice.

Prentice. ’Tis very late; I were best shut up my stall, for here will be old filching, when the press comes forth of Paul’s.

[_Then lets he down his window, and it breaks Black Will’s head._

Will. Zounds, draw, Shakebag, I am almost killed.

Prentice. We’ll tame you, I warrant.

Will. Zounds, I am tame enough already.

Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

Arden. What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

Franklin. ’Tis nothing but some brabling paltry fray,
Devised to pick men’s pockets in the throng.

Arden. Is’t nothing else? come, Franklin, let’s away.

[_Exeunt._

Will. What ’mends shall I have for my broken head?

Prentice. Marry, this ’mends, that if you get you not away all the sooner, you shall be well beaten and sent to the Counter. [_Exit Prentice._

Will. Well, I’ll be gone, but look to your signs, for I’ll pull them down all. Shakebag, my broken head grieves me not so much as by this means Arden hath escaped.

Here enters Greene.

I had a glimpse of him and his companion.

Greene. Why, sirs, Arden’s as well as I; I met him and Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. What, dare you not do it?

Will. Yes, sir, we dare do it; but, were my consent to give again, we would not do it under ten pound more. I value every drop of my blood at a French crown. I have had ten pound to steal a dog, and we have no more here to kill a man; but that a bargain is a bargain, and so forth, you should do it yourself.

Greene. I pray thee, how came thy head broke?

Will. Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not?

Shakebag. Standing against a stall, watching Arden’s coming, a boy let down his shop-window and broke his head; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the tumult Arden escaped us and passed by unthought on. But forbearance is no acquittance; another time we’ll do it, I warrant thee.

Greene. I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,
And let us bethink us on some other place
Where Arden may be met with handsomely.
Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn
To kill the villain; think upon thine oath.

Will. Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths!

But wouldst thou charm me to effect this deed,
Tell me of gold, my resolution’s fee;
Say thou seest Mosbie kneeling at my knees,
Offering me service for my high attempt,
And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,
Comes with a lowly curtsey to the earth,
Saying ‘Take this but for thy quarterage,
Such yearly tribute will I answer thee.’
Why, this would steel soft-mettled cowardice,
With which Black Will was never tainted yet.
I tell thee, Greene, the forlorn traveller,
Whose lips are glued with summer’s parching heat,
Ne’er longed so much to see a running brook
As I to finish Arden’s tragedy.
Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?
From hence ne’er will I wash this bloody stain,
Till Arden’s heart be panting in my hand.

Greene. Why, that’s well said; but what saith Shakebag?

Shakebag. I cannot paint my valour out with words:
But, give me place and opportunity,
Such mercy as the starven lioness,
When she is dry sucked of her eager young,
Shows to the prey that next encounters her,
On Arden so much pity would I take.

Greene. So should it fare with men of firm resolve.
And now, sirs, seeing that this accident
Of meeting him in Paul’s hath no success,
Let us bethink us of some other place
Whose earth may swallow up this Arden’s blood.

Here enters Michael.

See, yonder comes his man: and wot you what?
The foolish knave’s in love with Mosbie’s sister,
And for her sake, whose love he cannot get
Unless Mosbie solicit his suit,
The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.
We’ll question him, for he may stead us much,--
How now, Michael, whither are you going?

Michael. My master hath new supped,
And I am going to prepare his chamber.

Greene. Where supped Master Arden?

Michael. At the Nag’s Head, at the eighteen pence
ordinary. How now, Master Shakebag? what,
Black Will! God’s dear lady, how chance your
face is so bloody?

Will. Go to, sirrah, there is a chance in it; this sauciness
in you will make you be knocked.

Michael. Nay, an you be offended, I’ll be gone.

Greene. Stay, Michael, you may not escape us so.
Michael, I know you love your master well.

Michael. Why, so I do; but wherefore urge you that?

Greene. Because I think you love your mistress better.

Michael. So think not I; but say, i’ faith, what, if I should?

Shakebag. Come to the purpose, Michael; we hear
You have a pretty love in Feversham.

Michael. Why, have I two or three, what’s that to thee!

Will. You deal too mildly with the peasant. Thus it is:
’Tis known to us that you love Mosbie’s sister;
We know besides that you have ta’en your oath
To further Mosbie to your mistress’ bed,
And kill your master for his sister’s sake.
Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself
Was never fostered in the coast of Kent:
How comes it then that such a knave as you
Dare swear a matter of such consequence?

Greene. Ah, Will----

Will. Tush, give me leave, there’s no more but this:
Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all;
And hadst thou or should’st thou utter it,
We have devised a complat under hand,
Whatever shall betide to any of us,
To send thee roundly to the devil of hell.
And therefore thus: I am the very man,
Marked in my birth-hour by the destinies,
To give an end to Arden’s life on earth;
Thou but a member but to whet the knife
Whose edge must search the closet of his breast:
Thy office is but to appoint the place,

And train thy master to his tragedy;
Mine to perform it when occasion serves.
Then be not nice, but here devise with us
How and what way we may conclude his death.

Shakebag. So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy friend,
And by his friendship gain his sister’s love.

Greene. So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,
And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.

Michael. Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,
Sith you have urged me so apparently,
That I have vowed my master Arden’s death;
And he whose kindly love and liberal hand
Doth challenge nought but good deserts of me,
I will deliver over to your hands.
This night come to his house at Aldersgate:
The doors I’ll leave unlock’d against you come.
No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,
Over the threshold to the inner court,
But on your left hand shall you see the stairs
That leads directly to my master’s chamber:
There take him and dispose him as ye please.
Now it were good we parted company;
What I have promised, I will perform.

Will. Should you deceive us, ’twould go wrong with you.

Michael. I will accomplish all I have revealed.

Will. Come, let’s go drink: choler makes me as dry as a dog.

[_Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakebag._
Manet Michael.

Michael. Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down,
Whilst through the thicket of an arbour brake
The hunger-bitten wolf o’erpries his haunt
And takes advantage for to eat him up.
Ah, harmless Arden, how hast thou misdone,
That thus thy gentle life is levelled at?
The many good turns that thou hast done to me.
Now must I quittance with betraying thee.
I that should take the weapon in my hand
And buckler thee from ill-intending foes,
Do lead thee with a wicked fraudful smile,
As unsuspected, to the slaughter-house.

So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress,
So have I promised to the slaughtermen;
And should I not deal currently with them,
Their lawless rage would take revenge on me.
Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once:
Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,
I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.

[_Exit Michael._

II. ii. 3. Michael’s letter is a curious effort at euphuism which calls to mind ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost.’ Note the fabulous natural history, the alliteration, and the alliterative proverb.

II. ii. 51. _old filching_ = ‘rare filching.’ Cf. ‘Yonder’s old coil at hand.’--_Much Ado_, V. ii. 98.

II. ii. 63. The Counter was a London prison.

ACT III

SCENE I

A Room in Franklin’s House, at Aldersgate.

Enter Arden and Franklin.

Arden. No, Franklin, no: if fear or stormy threats,
If love of me or care of womanhood,
If fear of God or common speech of men,
Who mangle credit with their wounding words,
And couch dishonour as dishonour buds,
Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts,
No question then but she would turn the leaf
And sorrow for her dissolution;
But she is rooted in her wickedness,
Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed;
Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,
And reprehension makes her vice to grow
As Hydra’s head that plenished by decay.
Her faults, methink, are painted in my face,
For every searching eye to overread;
And Mosbie’s name, a scandal unto mine,
Is deeply trenchèd in my blushing brow.
Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,

My heart’s grief rends my other powers
Worse than the conflict at the hour of death.

Franklin. Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament:
She will amend, and so your griefs will cease;
Or else she’ll die, and so your sorrows end.
If neither of these two do haply fall,
Yet let your comfort be that others bear
Your woes, twice doubled all, with patience.

Arden. My house is irksome; there I cannot rest.

Franklin. Then stay with me in London; go not home.

Arden. Then that base Mosbie doth usurp my room
And makes his triumph of my being thence.
At home or not at home, where’er I be,
Here, here it lies, ah Franklin, here it lies
That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

Here enters Michael.

Franklin. Forget your griefs a while; here comes your man.

Arden. What a-clock is’t, sirrah?

Michael. Almost ten.

Arden. See, see, how runs away the weary time!
Come, Master Franklin, shall we go to bed?

[_Exeunt Arden and Michael._
Manet Franklin.

Franklin. I pray you, go before: I’ll follow you.
--Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy!
What pity-moving words, what deep-fetched sighs,
What grievous groans and overlading woes
Accompanies this gentle gentleman!
Now will he shake his care-oppressèd head,
Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth,
Ashamed to gaze upon the open world;
Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,
Looking that ways for redress of wrong:
Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief
And tells a story with his careful tongue;
Then comes his wife’s dishonour in his thoughts
And in the middle cutteth off his tale,

Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.
So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,
Was never any lived and bare it so.

Here enters Michael.

Michael. My master would desire you come to bed.

Franklin. Is he himself already in his bed?

[_Exit Franklin. Manet Michael._

Michael. He is, and fain would have the light away.
--Conflicting thoughts, encampèd in my breast,
Awake me with the echo of their strokes,
And I, a judge to censure either side,
Can give to neither wishèd victory.
My master's kindness pleads to me for life
With just demand, and I must grant it him:
My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,
For Susan's sake, the which I may not break,
For that is nearer than a master's love:
That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,
And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,
--Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent,--
Have sworn my death, if I infringe my vow,
A dreadful thing to be considered of.
Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair
Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,
And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,
Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths,
Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,
Art mangled by their ireful instruments.
Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,
And pitiless Black Will cries: 'Stab the slave!
The peasant will detect the tragedy!'
The wrinkles in his foul death-threat'ning face
Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.
My death to him is but a merriment,
And he will murder me to make him sport.
He comes, he comes! ah. Master Franklin, help!
Call on the neighbours, or we are but dead!

Here enters Franklin and Arden.

Franklin. What dismal outcry calls me from my rest?

Arden. What hath occasioned such a fearful cry?

Speak, Michael: hath any injured thee?

Michael. Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleep,
Upon the threshold leaning to the stairs,
I had a fearful dream that troubled me,
And in my slumber thought I was beset
With murderer thieves that came to rifle me.
My trembling joints witness my inward fear:
I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

Arden. So great a cry for nothing I ne’er heard.
What? are the doors fast locked and all things safe?

Michael. I cannot tell; I think I locked the doors.

Arden. I like not this, but I’ll go see myself.--
Ne’er trust me but the doors were all unlocked:
This negligence not half contenteth me.
Get you to bed, and if you love my favour,
Let me have no more such pranks as these.
Come, Master Franklin, let us go to bed.

Franklin. Ay, by my faith; the air is very cold.
Michael, farewell; I pray thee dream no more.

[_Exeunt._

III. i. 5. _Couch dishonour as dishonour buds._ Warnke explains _Couch_ = ‘spread,’ comparing ‘couch-grass’; but there is no authority for this use. Is the word used in its surgical sense? The line would then = ‘Cut the bud of dishonour so that it bursts into flower.’ The surgical sense occurs in Holland’s _Pliny_, 1601.

III. i. 13. _plenished_ is Warnke’s reading for the Quartos’ _perisht_. Delius and Bullen read _flourished_.

III. i. 19. Cf. ‘Sorrow and grief have vanquished all my powers.’--2 _Henry VI._, II. i. 83.

III. i. 45. For this use of _sullen_ cf. ‘Why are thine eyes fixed to the sullen earth?’--2 _Henry VI._, I. ii. 5, and Sonnet XXIX. 13.

SCENE II

Outside Franklin’s house.

Here enters Will, Greene, and Shakebag.

Shakebag. Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,
And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth,
And with the black fold of her cloudy robe
Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,
In which sweet silence such as we triumph.
The lazy minutes linger on their time,
As loth to give due audit to the hour,
Till in the watch our purpose be complete
And Arden sent to everlasting night.
Greene, get you gone, and linger here about,
And at some hour hence come to us again,
Where we will give you instance of his death.

Greene. Speed to my wish, whose will so e’er says no;
And so I’ll leave you for an hour or two.

[_Exit Greene._

Will. I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing were done:
I am so heavy that I can scarce go;
This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

Shakebag. How now, Will? become a precisian?
Nay, then let’s go sleep, when bugs and fears
Shall kill our courages with their fancy’s work.

Will. Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much,
And wrongs me too in telling me of fear.
Were’t not a serious thing we go about,
It should be slipt till I had fought with thee,
To let thee know I am no coward, I.
I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

Shakebag. Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly kind of fear,
And savoured of a weak relenting spirit.
Go forward now in that we have begun,
And afterwards attempt me when thou darest.

Will. And if I do not, heaven cut me off!
But let that pass, and show me to this house,
Where thou shalt see I’ll do as much as Shakebag.

Shakebag. This is the door; but soft, methinks ’tis shut.
The villain Michael hath deceived us.

Will. Soft, let me see, Shakebag; ’tis shut indeed.
Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

Shakebag. It will not be; the white-livered peasant
Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

Will. And he shall buy his merriment as dear
As ever coistril bought so little sport:
Ne’er let this sword assist me when I need,
But rust and canker after I have sworn,
If I, the next time that I meet the hind,
Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.

Shakebag. And let me never draw a sword again,
Nor prosper in the twilight, cockshut light,
When I would fleece the wealthy passenger,
But lie and languish in a loathsome den,
Hated and spit at by the goers-by,
And in that death may die unpitied,
If I, the next time that I meet the slave,
Cut not the nose from off the coward’s face
And trample on it for this villainy.

Will. Come, let’s go seek out Greene; I know he’ll swear.

Shakebag. He were a villain, an he would not swear.
’Twould make a peasant swear among his boys,
That ne’er durst say before but ‘yea’ and ‘no,’
To be thus flouted of a coistril.

Will. Shakebag, let’s seek out Greene, and in the morning
At the alehouse butting Arden’s house
Watch the out-coming of that prick-eared cur,
And then let me alone to handle him. [_Exeunt._

III. ii. 47. A _cockshut_ was a large net used to catch woodcocks after sunset. Cf. ‘Cockshut time.’--_Richard III._, V. iii. 70.

SCENE III

Room in Franklin’s house as before.

Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

Arden. Sirrah, get you back to Billingsgate
And learn what time the tide will serve our turn;
Come to us in Paul’s. First go make the bed,
And afterwards go hearken for the flood.

[_Exit Michael._

Come, Master Franklin, you shall go with me.
This night I dreamt that, being in a park,
A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer,
And I upon a little rising hill
Stood whistly watching for the herd’s approach.
Even there, methoughts, a gentle slumber took me,
And summoned all my parts to sweet repose;
But in the pleasure of this golden rest
An ill-thewed foster had removed the toil,
And rounded me with that beguiling home
Which late, methought, was pitched to cast the deer.
With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,
And at the noise another herdman came,
With falchion drawn, and bent it at my breast,
Crying aloud, ‘Thou art the game we seek!’
With this I woke and trembled every joint,
Like one obscured in a little bush,
That sees a lion foraging about,
And, when the dreadful forest-king is gone,
He pries about with timorous suspect
Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,
And will not think his person dangerless,
But quakes and shivers, though the cause be gone:
So, trust me, Franklin, when I did awake,
I stood in doubt whether I waked or no:
Such great impression took this fond surprise.
God grant this vision bedeem me any good.

Franklin. This fantasy doth rise from Michael’s fear,
Who being awaked with the noise he made,
His troubled senses yet could take no rest;
And this, I warrant you, procured your dream.

Arden. It may be so, God frame it to the best:
But oftentimes my dreams presage too true.

Franklin. To such as note their nightly fantasies,
Some one in twenty may incur belief;
But use it not, ’tis but a mockery.

Arden. Come, Master Franklin; we’ll now walk in Paul’s
And dine together at the ordinary,
And by my man’s direction draw to the quay,
And with the tide go down to Feversham.
Say, Master Franklin, shall it not be so?

Franklin. At your good pleasure, sir; I’ll bear you company. [_Exeunt._

III. iii. 14. _rounded me_ = brought me round.

III. iii. 40. _use_: Warnke quotes _Macbeth_, III. ii. 10, ‘Using those thoughts which should indeed have died.’

III. iii. 44. _with the tide_, _i.e._ by boat on the Thames. Holinshed makes Greene and Black Will go to London, from Gravesend apparently, ‘at the tide.’

SCENE IV

Aldersgate.

Here enters Michael at one door.

Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag at another door.

Will. Draw, Shakebag, for here’s that villain Michael.

Greene. First, Will, let’s hear what he can say.

Will. Speak, milksop slave, and never after speak.

Michael. For God’s sake, sirs, let me excuse myself:
For here I swear, by heaven and earth and all,
I did perform the utmost of my task,
And left the doors unbolted and unlocked.
But see the chance: Franklin and my master
Were very late conferring in the porch,
And Franklin left his napkin where he sat
With certain gold knit in it, as he said.
Being in bed, he did bethink himself,
And coming down he found the doors unshut:
He locked the gates, and brought away the keys,
For which offence my master rated me.
But now I am going to see what flood it is,
For with the tide my master will away;
Where you may front him well on Rainham Down,
A place well-fitting such a stratagem.

Will. Your excuse hath somewhat mollified my choler.
Why now, Greene, ’tis better now nor e’er it was.

Greene. But, Michael, is this true?

Michael. As true as I report it to be true.

Shakebag. Then, Michael, this shall be your penance,
To feast us all at the Salutation,
Where we will plat our purpose thoroughly.

Greene. And, Michael, you shall bear no news of this tide,
Because they two may be in Rainham Down
Before your master.

Michael. Why, I'll agree to anything you'll have me,
So you will except of my company. [_Exeunt._

III. iv. 18. 'The country near Rainham seems in the sixteenth century to have been so open as to have entitled it to the appellation of a Down.'--Donne. The spot had a bad reputation.

III. iv. 25. The Salutation is an inn mentioned in _Bartholomew Fair_.

III. iv. 31. _Except_ is probably the printer's spelling of _accept_.

SCENE V

Arden's House at Feversham.

Here enters Mosbie.

Mosbie. Disturbèd thoughts drives me from company
And dries my marrow with their watchfulness;
Continual trouble of my moody brain
Feebles my body by excess of drink,
And nips me as the bitter north-east wind
Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.
Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,
That tables not with foul suspicion;
And he but pines amongst his delicates,
Whose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent.
My golden time was when I had no gold;
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure;
My daily toil begat me night's repose,
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.
But since I climbed the top-bough of the tree
And sought to build my nest among the clouds,
Each gentle stirry gale doth shake my bed,
And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.

But whither doth contemplation carry me?
The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells,
Is hedged behind me that I cannot back,
But needs must on, although to danger's gate.
Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree;
For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up
To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.
And for his pains I'll hive him up a while,
And after smother him to have his wax:
Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.
Then is there Michael and the painter too,
Chief actors to Arden's overthrow;
Who when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,
They will insult upon me for my meed,
Or fright me by detecting of his end.
I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone
To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,
And then am I sole ruler of mine own.
Yet Mistress Arden lives; but she's myself,
And holy Church rites makes us two but one.
But what for that? I may not trust you, Alice:
You have supplanted Arden for my sake,
And will extirpen me to plant another.
'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,
And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.

Here enters Alice.

But here she comes, and I must flatter her.
--How now, Alice? what, sad and passionate?
Make me partaker of thy pensiveness:
Fire divided burns with lesser force.

Alice. But I will dam that fire in my breast
Till by the force thereof my part consume.
Ah, Mosbie!

Mosbie. Such deep pathaires, like to a cannon's burst
Discharged against a ruinated wall,
Breaks my relenting heart in thousand pieces.
Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore;
Thou know'st it well, and 'tis thy policy
To forge distressful looks to wound a breast
Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.
It is not love that loves to anger love.

Alice. It is not love that loves to murder love.

Mosbie. How mean you that?

Alice. Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

Mosbie. And then?

Alice. And then--conceal the rest, for ’tis too bad,
Lest that my words be carried with the wind,
And published in the world to both our shames.
I pray thee, Mosbie, let our springtime wither;
Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.
Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwixt us,
For how I blush and tremble at the thoughts!

Mosbie. What? are you changed?

Alice. Ay, to my former happy life again,
From title of an odious strumpet’s name
To honest Arden’s wife, not Arden’s honest wife.
Ha, Mosbie! ’tis thou has rifled me of that
And made me slanderous to all my kin;
Even in my forehead is thy name ingraven,
A mean artificer, that low-born name.
I was bewitched: woe worth the hapless hour
And all the causes that enchanted me!

Mosbie. Nay, if you ban, let me breathe curses forth,
And if you stand so nicely at your fame,
Let me repent the credit I have lost.
I have neglected matters of import
That would have stated me above thy state,
Forslowed advantages, and spurned at time:
Ay, Fortune’s right hand Mosbie hath forsook
To take a wanton giglot by the left.
I left the marriage of an honest maid,
Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy wealth,
Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee:
This certain good I lost for changing bad,
And wrapt my credit in thy company.
I was bewitched,--that is no theme of thine,
And thou unhallowed has enchanted me.
But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,
And put another sight upon these eyes
That showed my heart a raven for a dove.
Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now;
Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not;
And now the rain hath beaten off thy gilt,
Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.

It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,
But mads me that ever I thought thee fair.
Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds;
I am too good to be thy favourite.

Alice. Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,
Which often hath been told me by my friends,
That Mosbie loves me not but for my wealth,
Which too incredulous I ne’er believed.
Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two;
I’ll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.
Look on me, Mosbie, or I’ll kill myself:
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.
If thou cry war, there is no peace for me;
I will do penance for offending thee,
And burn this prayer-book, where I here use
The holy word that had converted me.
See, Mosbie, I will tear away the leaves,
And all the leaves, and in this golden cover
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;
And thereon will I chiefly meditate,
And hold no other sect but such devotion.
Wilt thou not look? is all thy love o’erwhelmed?
Wilt thou not hear? what malice stops thine ears?
Why speaks thou not? what silence ties thy tongue?
Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,
And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,
And spoke as smoothly as an orator,
When I have bid thee hear or see or speak,
And art thou sensible in none of these?
Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault,
And I deserve not Mosbie’s muddy looks.
A fence of trouble is not thickened still:
Be clear again, I’ll ne’er more trouble thee.

Mosbie. O no, I am a base artificer:
My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.
Mosbie? fie! no, not for a thousand pound.
Make love to you? why, ’tis unpardonable;
We beggars must not breathe where gentles are.

Alice. Sweet Mosbie is as gentle as a king,
And I too blind to judge him otherwise.
Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands,
Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns;
So, whatsoe’er my Mosbie’s father was,
Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

Mosbie. Ah, how you women can insinuate,
And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue!
I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,
Provided I'll be tempted so no more.

Here enters Bradshaw.

Alice. Then with thy lips seal up this new-made match.

Mosbie. Soft, Alice, here comes somebody.

Alice. How now, Bradshaw, what's the news with you?

Bradshaw. I have little news, but here's a letter
That Master Greene importuned me to give you.

Alice. Go in, Bradshaw; call for a cup of beer;
'Tis almost supper-time, thou shalt stay with us.

[_Exit Bradshaw._

Then she reads the letter.

'We have missed of our purpose at London, but shall
perform it by the way. We thank our neighbour
Bradshaw.--Yours, Richard Greene.'
How likes my love the tenor of this letter?

Mosbie. Well, were his date completed and expired.

Alice. Ah, would it were! Then comes my happy hour:
Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.
Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

Mosbie. Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee. [_Exeunt._

III. v. 4. _drink_: perhaps we ought to read _think_.

III. v. 17. _stirry_: this is meant by the _starry_ of the Quartos.

III. v. 26. _hive_: Delius's correction of _heave_, A, B, C.

III. v. 51. _deep pathaires_: Delius conjectures _deep fet airs_; but Mr. Gollancz has probably solved the crux of the play by his suggestion,--'"Pathaire," I take to be some special form of "petarre," _i.e._ "petard," probably used in the metaphorical sense of passionate outburst.'--(Lamb's _Specimens_, I. i. 297.) The use may be quite literal; for the form cf. Powell's _Tom of All Trades_,

p. 163, ‘An Enginere for making of Patars.’

III. v. 58. Quoted by Bullen as of ‘genuine Shakesperean flavour.’ He adds III. v. 112-130.

III. v. 116. Mr. Bullen puts a comma at _use_.

III. v. 131. _Thy_: several editors read _my_; but the sense is ‘the good turns I have done you.’

III. v. 133. Warnke explains ‘the quarrel has not yet thickened to so impenetrable a fence as to separate us for ever.’ Perhaps we should read ‘is not thick-set ill.’

III. v. 157. An inconsistency. Cf. II. i. 75. Holinshed quotes from the letter, ‘We have got a man for our purpose, we may thank my brother Bradshaw.’ The _Wardmote Book_ says nothing of Bradshaw’s innocence.

SCENE VI

Country near Rochester.

Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.

Shakebag. Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness!
Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire?

Will. Then ask me if my nose be on my face,
Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.
Zounds, here’s a coil!
You were best swear me on the interrogatories
How many pistols I have took in hand,
Or whether I love the smell of gunpowder,
Or dare abide the noise the dag will make,
Or will not wink at flashing of the fire.
I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,
That I have took more purses in this down
Than e’er thou handledst pistols in thy life.

Shakebag. Ay, haply thou has picked more in a throng:
But, should I brag what booties I have took,
I think the overplus that’s more than thine
Would mount to a greater sum of money
Then either thou or all thy kin are worth.
Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad
That carry a muscado in their tongue,

And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

Will. O Greene, intolerable!
It is not for mine honour to bear this.
Why, Shakebag, I did serve the king at Boulogne,
And thou canst brag of nothing that thou hast done.

Shakebag. Why, so can Jack of Feversham,
That sounded for a fillip on the nose,
When he that gave it him holloed in his ear,
And he supposed a cannon-bullet hit him.

Then they fight.

Greene. I pray you, sirs, list to Æsop's talk:
Whilst two stout dogs were striving for a bone,
There comes a cur and stole it from them both;
So, while you stand striving on these terms of manhood,
Arden escapes us, and deceives us all.

Shakebag. Why, he begun.

Will. And thou shalt find I'll end;
I do but slip it until better time:
But, if I do forget----

[_Then he kneels down and holds up
his hands to heaven._

Greene. Well, take your fittest standings, and once more
Lime well your twigs to catch this wary bird.
I'll leave you, and at your dag's discharge
Make towards, like the longing water-dog
That coucheth till the fowling-piece be off,
Then seizeth on the prey with eager mood.
Ah, might I see him stretching forth his limbs,
As I have seen them beat their wings ere now!

Shakebag. Why, that thou shalt see, if he come this way.

Greene. Yes, that he doth, Shakebag, I warrant thee:
But brawl not when I am gone in any case.
But, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes,
And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour.

[_Exit Greene._

Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

Michael. ’Twere best that I went back to Rochester:
The horse halts downright; it were not good
He travelled in such pain to Feversham;
Removing of a shoe may haply help it.

Arden. Well, get you back to Rochester; but, sirrah, see
Ye o’ertake us ere we come to Rainham Down,
For ’t will be very late ere we get home.

Michael. Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will and Shakebag,
That thou shalt never go further than that down;
And therefore have I pricked the horse on purpose,
Because I would not view the massacre.

[_Exit Michael._

Arden. Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

Franklin. I do assure you, sir, you task me much:
A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,
And on the sudden is my wind so short
As hindereth the passage of my speech;
So fierce a qualm yet ne’er assailed me.

Arden. Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly:
The annoyance of the dust or else some meat
You ate at dinner cannot brook with you.
I have been often so, and soon amended.

Franklin. Do you remember where my tale did leave?

Arden. Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.

Franklin. She being reprehended for the fact,
Witness produced that took her with the deed,
Her glove brought in which there she left behind,
And many other assured arguments,
Her husband asked her whether it were not so.

Arden. Her answer then? I wonder how she looked,
Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths,
And at the instant so approved upon her.

Franklin. First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,
Watching the drops that fell amain from thence;
Then softly draws she forth her handkercher,
And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face;

Them hemmed she out, to clear her voice should seem,
And with a majesty addressed herself
To encounter all their accusations.--
Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more;
This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.

Arden. Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down:
Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way;
I would you were in state to tell it out.

Shakebag. Stand close, Will, I hear them coming.

Here enters Lord Cheiny with his men.

Will. Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.

L. Cheiny. Is it so near night as it seems,
Or will this black-faced evening have a shower?
--What, Master Arden? you are well met,
I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with you:
You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppy.

Arden. Your honour's always! bound to do you service.

L. Cheiny. Come you from London, and ne'er a man with you?

Arden. My man's coming after, but here's
My honest friend that came along with me.

L. Cheiny. My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.

Franklin. Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.

L. Cheiny. You and your friend come home and sup with me.

Arden. I beseech your honour pardon me;
I have made a promise to a gentleman,
My honest friend, to meet him at my house;
The occasion is great, or else would I wait on you.

L. Cheiny. Will you come to-morrow and dine with me,
And bring your honest friend along with you?
I have divers matters to talk with you about.

Arden. To-morrow we'll wait upon your honour.

L. Cheiny. One of you stay my horse at the top of the hill.
--What! Black Will? for whose purse wait you?

Thou wilt be hanged in Kent, when all is done.

Will. Not hanged, God save your honour;
I am your bedesman, bound to pray for you.

L. Cheiny. I think thou ne’er said’st prayer in all thy life.--
One of you give him a crown:--
And, sirrah, leave this kind of life;
If thou beest tainted for a penny-matter,
And come in question, surely thou wilt truss.
--Come, Master Arden, let us be going;
Your way and mine lies four miles together.

[_Exeunt. Manet Black Will and Shakebag._

Will. The devil break all your necks at four miles’ end!
Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger!
His lordship chops me in,
Even when my dag was levelled at his heart.
I would his crown were molten down his throat.

Shakebag. Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.
Did ever man escape as thou hast done?
Well, I’ll discharge my pistol at the sky,
For by this bullet Arden might not die.

Here enters Greene.

Greene. What, is he down? is he dispatched?

Shakebag. Ay, in health towards Feversham, to shame us all.

Greene. The devil he is! why, sirs, how escaped he?

Shakebag. When we were ready to shoot,
Comes my Lord Cheiny to prevent his death.

Greene. The Lord of Heaven hath preserved him.

Will. Preserved a fig! The Lord Cheiny hath preserved him,
And bids him to a feast to his house at Shorlow.
But by the way once more I’ll meet with him,
And, if all the Cheinies in the world say no,
I’ll have a bullet in his breast to-morrow.
Therefore come, Greene, and let us to Feversham.

Greene. Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden:
O, how she’ll chafe when she hears of this!

Shakebag. Why, I’ll warrant you she’ll think we dare
not do it.

Will. Why, then let us go, and tell her all the matter,
And plat the news to cut him off to-morrow.

[_Exeunt._

III. vi. 144. _Shorlow_ should be Shurland in Sheppey.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Arden’s House at Feversham.

Here enters Arden and his wife, Franklin, and Michael

Arden. See how the hours, the gardant of heaven’s gate,
Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds,
That Sol may well discern the trampled path
Wherein he wont to guide his golden car;
The season fits; come, Franklin, let’s away.

Alice. I thought you did pretend some special hunt,
That made you thus cut short the time of rest.

Arden. It was no chase that made me rise so early,
But, as I told thee yesternight, to go
To the Isle of Sheppy, there to dine with my Lord Cheiny;
For so his honour late commanded me.

Alice. Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses;
Home is a wild cat to a wandering wit.
The time hath been,--would God it were not past,--
That honour’s title nor a lord’s command
Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.
But my deserts or your desires decay,
Or both; yet if true love may seem desert,
I merit still to have thy company.

Franklin. Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with us;
I am sure his honour will welcome her
And us the more for bringing her along.

Arden. Content; sirrah, saddle your mistress’ nag.

Alice. No, begged favour merits little thanks;
If I should go, our house would run away,
Or else be stolen; therefore I’ll stay behind.

Arden. Nay, see how mistaking you are! I pray thee, go.

Alice. No, no, not now.

Arden. Then let me leave thee satisfied in this,
That time nor place nor persons alter me,
But that I hold thee dearer than my life.

Alice. That will be seen by your quick return.

Arden. And that shall be ere night, and if I live.
Farewell, sweet Alice, we mind to sup with thee.

[_Exit Alice._

Franklin. Come, Michael, are our horses ready?

Michael. Ay, your horse are ready, but I am not ready,
for I have lost my purse, with six and thirty
shillings in it, with taking up of my master’s nag.

Franklin. Why, I pray you, let us go before,
Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse.

Arden. Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the Isle of Sheppy
To my Lord Cheiny’s, where we mean to dine.

[_Exeunt Arden and Franklin. Manet Michael._

Michael. So, fair weather after you, for before you lies
Black Will and Shakebag in the broom close, too
close for you: they’ll be your ferrymen to long
home.

Here enters the Painter.

But who is this? the painter, my corrival, that
would needs win Mistress Susan.

Clarke. How now, Michael? how doth my mistress and all at home?

Michael. Who? Susan Mosbie? she is your mistress, too?

Clarke. Ay, how doth she and all the rest?

Michael. All’s well but Susan; she is sick.

Clarke. Sick? Of what disease?

Michael. Of a great fever.

Clarke. A fear of what?

Michael. A great fever.

Clarke. A fever? God forbid!

Michael. Yes, faith, and of a lordaine, too, as big as yourself.

Clarke. O, Michael, the spleen prickles you. Go to,
you carry an eye over Mistress Susan.

Michael. I’ faith, to keep her from the painter.

Clarke. Why more from a painter than from a serving
creature like yourself?

Michael. Because you painters make but a painting
table of a pretty wench, and spoil her beauty with
blotting.

Clarke. What mean you by that?

Michael. Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining
of wenches’ petticoats, and we serving-men put
horns to them to make them become sheep.

Clarke. Such another word will cost you a cuff or a
knock.

Michael. What, with a dagger made of a pencil? Faith,
’tis too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win
Susan.

Clarke. Would Susan’s love lay upon this stroke.

[_Then he breaks Michael’s head._

Here enters Mosbie, Greene, and Alice.

Alice. I'll lay my life, this is for Susan's love.
Stayed you behind your master to this end?
Have you no other time to brable in
But now when serious matters are in hand?--
Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised?

Clarke. Ay, here it is; the very touch is death.

Alice. Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,
Will catch Master Arden,
And make him wise in death that lived a fool.
Why should he thrust his sickle in our corn,
Or what hath he to do with thee, my love,
Or govern me that am to rule myself?
Forsooth, for credit sake, I must leave thee!
Nay, he must leave to live that we may love,
May live, may love; for what is life but love?
And love shall last as long as life remains,
And life shall end before my love depart.

Mosbie. Why, what is love without true constancy?
Like to a pillar built of many stones,
Yet neither with good mortar well compact
Nor with cement to fasten it in the joints,
But that it shakes with every blast of wind,
And, being touched, straight falls unto the earth,
And buries all his haughty pride in dust.
No, let our love be rocks of adamant,
Which time nor place nor tempest can asunder.

Greene. Mosbie, leave protestations now,
And let us bethink us what we have to do.
Black Will and Shakebag I have placed i' the broom,
Close watching Arden's coming; let's to them
And see what they have done. [_Exeunt._

IV. i. 1. _gardant_: A, B read _gardeant_, modern editors _guardians_.

IV. i. 3. _path_: so Warnke for _pace_ of A, B, C; but _pace_ in the sense of 'path' is not impossible.

IV. i. 17. _desires_: so Warnke for _deserves_, A, B, C.

IV. i. 44. 'A certain broom-close betwixt Feversham and the Ferry.'--Holinshed.

IV. i. 45. Cf. _Ecclesiastes_, vii. 5.

IV. i. 96. _nor with cement_: Delius _for nor semell_, A, B.

SCENE II

The Kentish Coast opposite the Isle of Sheppy.

Here enters Arden and Franklin.

Arden. Oh, ferryman, where art thou?

Here enters the Ferryman.

Ferryman. Here, here, go before to the boat, and I will follow you.

Arden. We have great haste; I pray thee, come away.

Ferryman. Fie, what a mist is here!

Arden. This mist, my friend, is mystical,
Like to a good companion’s smoky brain,
That was half drowned with new ale overnight.

Ferryman. ’Twere pity but his skull were opened to make more chimney room.

Franklin. Friend, what’s thy opinion of this mist?

Ferryman. I think ’tis like to a curst wife in a little house, that never leaves her husband till she have driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes; then looks he as if his house were a-fire, or some of his friends dead.

Arden. Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

Ferryman. Perhaps, ay; perhaps, no: For my wife is as other women are, that is to say, governed by the moon.

Franklin. By the moon? how, I pray thee?

Ferryman. Nay, thereby lies a bargain, and you shall not have it fresh and fasting.

Arden. Yes, I pray thee, good ferryman.

Ferryman. Then for this once; let it be midsummer moon, but yet my wife has another moon.

Franklin. Another moon?

Ferryman. Ay, and it hath influences and eclipses.

Arden. Why, then, by this reckoning you sometimes play the man in the moon?

Ferryman. Ay, but you had not best to meddle with that moon, lest I scratch you by the face with my bramble-bush.

Arden. I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's away.

Franklin. And, sirrah, as we go, let us have some more of your bold yeomanry.

Ferryman. Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery.

[_Exeunt._

IV. ii. 5. This mist is not in Holinshed. It is our poet's invention.

IV. ii. 30. Cf. _Midsummer Night's Dream_, V. i. 237, etc.

SCENE III

Another place on the coast.

Here enters Will at one door, and Shakebag at another.

Shakebag. Oh, Will, where art thou?

Will. Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth, where I cannot see my way for smoke.

Shakebag. I pray thee speak still that we may meet by the sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other, unless my feet see better than my eyes.

Will. Didst thou ever see better weather to run away with another man's wife, or play with a wench at

pot-finger?

Shakebag. No; this were a fine world for chandlers, if this weather would last; for then a man should never dine nor sup without candle-light. But, sirrah Will, what horses are those that passed?

Will. Why, didst thou hear any?

Shakebag. Ay, that I did.

Will. My life for thine, ’twas Arden, and his companion, and then all our labour’s lost.

Shakebag. Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may haply lose their way as we have done, and then we may chance meet with them.

Will. Come, let us go on like a couple of blind pilgrims.

[_Then Shakebag falls into a ditch._

Shakebag. Help, Will, help, I am almost drowned.

Here enters the Ferryman.

Ferryman. Who’s that that calls for help?

Will. ’Twas none here, ’twas thou thyself.

Ferryman. I came to help him that called for help. Why, how now? who is this that’s in the ditch? You are well enough served to go without a guide such weather as this.

Will. Sirrah, what companies hath passed your ferry this morning?

Ferryman. None but a couple of gentlemen, that went to dine at my Lord Cheiny’s.

Will. Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much?

Ferryman. Why, sir, will you have any letters carried to them?

Will. No, sir; get you gone.

Ferryman. Did you ever see such a mist as this?

Will. No, nor such a fool as will rather be hought than
get his way.

Ferryman. Why, sir, this is no Hough-Monday; you
are deceived.--What’s his name, I pray you, sir?

Shakebag. His name is Black Will.

Ferryman. I hope to see him one day hanged upon a
hill. [_Exit Ferryman._

Shakebag. See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,
Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

Here enters Greene, Mosbie, and Alice.

Mosbie. Black Will and Shakebag, what make you here?
What, is the deed done? is Arden dead?

Will. What could a blinded man perform in arms?
Saw you not how till now the sky was dark,
That neither horse nor man could be discerned?
Yet did we hear their horses as they passed.

Greene. Have they escaped you, then, and passed the ferry?

Shakebag. Ay, for a while; but here we two will stay,
And at their coming back meet with them once more.
Zounds, I was ne’er so toiled in all my life
In following so slight a task as this.

Mosbie. How cam’st thou so berayed?

Will. With making false footing in the dark;
He needs would follow them without a guide.

Alice. Here’s to pay for a fire and good cheer:
Get you to Feversham to the Flower-de-luce,
And rest yourselves until some other time.

Greene. Let me alone; it most concerns my state.

Will. Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn,
In case we fall into a second fog.

[_Exeunt Greene, Will, and Shakebag._

Mosbie. These knaves will never do it, let us give it over.

Alice. First tell me how you like my new device:
Soon, when my husband is returning back,
You and I both marching arm in arm,
Like loving friends, we'll meet him on the way,
And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.
When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,
I'll call those cutters forth your tenement,
Who, in a manner to take up the fray,
Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

Mosbie. A fine device! why, this deserves a kiss.

[_Exeunt._

IV. iii. 40. Hock Monday followed the second Sunday after Easter. See Brand's _Popular Antiquities_.

IV. iii. 68. Our poet blackens Mosbie for the same reason that he whitewashes Arden, _e.g._: 'Master Arden both then and at other times had been greatly provoked by Mosbie to fight with him, but he would not.' 'Mosby at the first would not agree to that cowardly murdering of him.'--Holinshed.

SCENE IV

The open country.

Here enters Dick Reede and a Sailor.

Sailor. Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end:
His conscience is too liberal, and he too niggardly
To part from any thing may do thee good.

Reede. He is coming from Shorlow as I understand;
Here I'll intercept him, for at his house
He never will vouchsafe to speak with me.
If prayers and fair entreaties will not serve,
Or make no battery in his flinty breast,

Here enters Franklin, Arden, and Michael.

I'll curse the carle, and see what that will do.
See where he comes to further my intent!--
Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea;

My coming to you was about the plat
Of ground which wrongfully you detain from me.
Although the rent of it be very small,
Yet it will help my wife and children,
Which here I leave in Feversham, God knows,
Needy and bare: for Christ’s sake, let them have it!

Arden. Franklin, hearest thou this fellow speak?
That which he craves I dearly bought of him,
Although the rent of it was ever mine.--
Sirrah, you that ask these questions,
If with thy clamorous impeaching tongue
Thou rail on me, as I have heard thou dost,
I’ll lay thee up so close a twelve-month’s day,
As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon.
Look to it, for, as surely as I live,
I’ll banish pity if thou use me thus.

Reede. What, wilt thou do me wrong and threat me too,
Nay, then, I’ll tempt thee, Arden, do thy worst.
God, I beseech thee, show some miracle
On thee or thine, in plaguing thee for this.
That plot of ground which thou detains from me,
I speak it in an agony of spirit,
Be ruinous and fatal unto thee!
Either there be butchered by thy dearest friends,
Or else be brought for men to wonder at,
Or thou or thine miscarry in that place,
Or there run mad and end thy cursèd days!

Franklin. Fie, bitter knave, bridle thine envious tongue;
For curses are like arrows shot upright,
Which falling down light on the shooter’s head.

Reede. Light where they will! Were I upon the sea,
As oft I have in many a bitter storm,
And saw a dreadful southern flaw at hand,
The pilot quaking at the doubtful storm,
And all the sailors praying on their knees,
Even in that fearful time would I fall down,
And ask of God, whate’er betide of me,
Vengeance on Arden or some misevent
To show the world what wrong the carle hath done.
This charge I’ll leave with my distressful wife,
My children shall be taught such prayers as these;
And thus I go, but leave my curse with thee.

[_Exeunt Reede and Sailor._

Arden. It is the railingest knave in Christendom,
And oftentimes the villain will be mad;
It greatly matters not what he says,
But I assure you I ne’er did him wrong.

Franklin. I think so, Master Arden.

Arden. Now that our horses are gone home before,
My wife may haply meet me on the way.
For God knows she is grown passing kind of late,
And greatly changed from
The old humour of her wonted frowardness,
And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

Franklin. Happy the change that alters for the best!
But see in any case you make no speech
Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny’s,
Although most bounteous and liberal,
For that will make her think herself more wronged,
In that we did not carry her along;
For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

Arden. Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace,
And take her unawares playing the cook;

Here enters Alice and Mosbie.

For I believe she’ll strive to mend our cheer.

Franklin. Why, there’s no better creatures in the world,
Than women are when they are in good humours.

Arden. Who is that? Mosbie? what, so familiar?
Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,
Untwine those arms.

Alice. Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine.

Arden. Ah, Mosbie! perjured beast! bear this and all!

Mosbie. And yet no horned beast; the horns are thine.

Franklin. O monstrous! Nay, then it is time to draw.

Alice. Help, help! they murder my husband.

Here enters Will and Shakebag.

Shakebag. Zounds, who injures Master Mosbie? Help, Will! I am hurt.

Mosbie. I may thank you, Mistress Arden, for this wound.

[_Exeunt Mosbie, Will, and Shakebag._

Alice. Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?
Ah, jealous harebrained man, what hast thou done!
When we, to welcome thee with intended sport,
Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,
Thou drew’st thy sword, enraged with jealousy,
And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from harm:
All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,
Both done but merrily to try thy patience.
And me unhappy that devised the jest,
Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood!

Franklin. Marry, God defend me from such a jest!

Alice. Could’st thou not see us friendly smile on thee,
When we joined arms, and when I kissed his cheek?
Hast thou not lately found me over-kind?
Did’st thou not hear me cry ‘they murder thee’?
Called I not help to set my husband free?
No, ears and all were witched; ah me accursed
To link in liking with a frantic man!
Henceforth I’ll be thy slave, no more thy wife,
For with that name I never shall content thee.
If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light;
If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me;
If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding;
If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye:
Thus am I still, and shall be while I die.
Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment!

Arden. But is it for truth that neither thou nor he
Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour?

Alice. The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts

Arden. Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this fault!
Forget but this and never see the like.
Impose me penance, and I will perform it,
For in thy discontent I find a death,--
A death tormenting more than death itself.

Alice. Nay, had’st thou loved me as thou dost pretend,

Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy friend,
Who going wounded from the place, he said
His skin was pierced only through my device;
And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault,
Thou would’st have followed him, and seen him dressed,
And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdone:
Ne’er shall my heart be eased till this be done.

Arden. Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy will,
Whate’er it be. For that I injured thee,
And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my offence;
Come thou thyself, and go along with me,
And be a mediator ’twixt us two.

Franklin. Why, Master Arden! know you what you do?
Will you follow him that hath dishonoured you?

Alice. Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal?

Franklin. Why, Mosbie taunted your husband with the horn.

Alice. Ay, after he had reviled him
By the injurious name of perjured beast:
He knew no wrong could spite a jealous man
More than the hateful naming of the horn.

Franklin. Suppose ’tis true; yet is it dangerous
To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.

Alice. A fault confessed is more than half amends;
But men of such ill spirit as yourself
Work crosses and debates ’twixt man and wife.

Arden. I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace:
I know my wife counsels me for the best.
I’ll seek out Mosbie where his wound is dressed,
And salve this hapless quarrel if I may.

[_Exeunt Arden and Alice._

Franklin. He whom the devil drives must go perforce.
Poor gentleman, how soon he is bewitched!
And yet, because his wife is the instrument,
His friends must not be lavish in their speech.

[_Exit Franklin._

IV. iv. 88. _harebrain_, A, B, C.

IV. iv. 89. _welcome thee with intended_; so Warnke for _welcome thy intended_, A, B, C.

ACT V

SCENE I

A Street in Feversham.

Here enters Will, Shakebag, and Greene.

Will. Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a man?

Greene. I think we shall never do it; let us give it over.

Shakebag. Nay, Zounds! we'll kill him, though we be hanged at his door for our labour.

Will. Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived in London this twelve years, where I have made some go upon wooden legs for taking the wall on me; divers with silver noses for saying 'There goes Black Will!' I have cracked as many blades as thou hast nuts.

Greene. O monstrous lie!

Will. Faith, in a manner I have. The bawdy-houses have paid me tribute; there durst not a whore set up, unless she have agreed with me first for opening her shop-windows. For a cross word of a tapster I have pierced one barrel after another with my dagger, and held him by the ears till all his beer hath run out. In Thames Street a brewer's cart was like to have run over me: I made no more ado, but went to the clerk and cut all the notches of his tallies and beat them about his head. I and my company have taken the constable from his watch, and carried him about the fields on a coltstaff. I have broken a sergeant's head with his own mace, and bailed whom I list with my sword and buckler. All the tenpenny-alehouses-men would stand every morning with a quart-pot in their hand, saying, 'Will it please your worship drink?' He that had not done so, had been sure to have had his sign

pulled down and his lattice borne away the next
night. To conclude, what have I not done? yet
cannot do this; doubtless, he is preserved by
miracle.

Here enters Alice and Michael.

Greene. Hence, Will! here comes Mistress Arden.

Alice. Ah, gentle Michael, art thou sure they’re friends?

Michael. Why, I saw them when they both shook hands.
When Mosbie bled, he even wept for sorrow,
And railed on Franklin that was cause of all.
No sooner came the surgeon in at doors,
But my master took to his purse and gave him money,
And, to conclude, sent me to bring you word
That Mosbie, Franklin, Bradshaw, Adam Fowle,
With divers of his neighbours and his friends,
Will come and sup with you at our house this night.

Alice. Ah, gentle Michael, run thou back again,
And, when my husband walks into the fair,
Bid Mosbie steal from him and come to me;
And this night shall thou and Susan be made sure.

Michael. I’ll go tell him.

Alice. And as thou goest, tell John cook of our guests,
And bid him lay it on, spare for no cost.

[_Exit Michael._

Will. Nay, and there be such cheer, we will bid ourselves.--
Mistress Arden, Dick Greene and I do mean to sup with you.

Alice. And welcome shall you be. Ah, gentlemen,
How missed you of your purpose yesternight?

Greene. ’Twas ’long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain.

Shakebag. Thou dost me wrong; I did as much as any.

Will. Nay then, Mistress Arden, I’ll tell you how it was:
When he should have locked with both his hilts,
He in a bravery flourished o’er his head;
With that comes Franklin at him lustily,
And hurts the slave; with that he slinks away.

Now his way had been to have come hand and feet,
one and two round, at his costard; he like a fool
bears his sword-point half a yard out of danger.
I lie here for my life; if the devil come, and he
have no more strength than I have fence, he shall
never beat me from this ward, I'll stand to it; a
buckler in a skilful hand is as good as a castle;
nay, 'tis better than a sconce, for I have tried it.
Mosbie, perceiving this, began to faint:
With that comes Arden with his arming sword,
And thrust him through the shoulder in a trice.

Alice. Ay, but I wonder why you both stood still.

Will. Faith, I was so amazed, I could not strike.

Alice. Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,
For every drop of his detested blood
I would have crammed in angels in thy fist,
And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms.

Will. Patient yourself, we cannot help it now.
Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.

Here enters Mosbie.

Alice. It is unpossible; but here comes he
That will, I hope, invent some surer means.
Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

Mosbie. Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour.

Alice. Ah, say not so; for when I saw thee hurt,
I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall,
And run at Arden; for I have sworn
That these mine eyes, offended with his sight,
Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.
This night I rose and walked about the chamber,
And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered him.

Mosbie. What, in the night? then had we been undone.

Alice. Why, how long shall he live?

Mosbie. Faith, Alice, no longer than this night.--
Black Will and Shakebag, will you two perform

The complot that I have laid?

Will. Ay, or else think me a villain.

Greene. And rather than you shall want, I’ll help myself.

Mosbie. You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth,
And hold him with a long tale of strange news,
That he may not come home till supper-time.
I’ll fetch Master Arden home, and we like friends
Will play a game or two at tables here.

Alice. But what of all this? how shall he be slain?

Mosbie. Why, Black Will and Shakebag locked within the counting-house
Shall at a certain watchword given rush forth.

Will. What shall the watchword be?

Mosbie. ‘Now I take you’; that shall be the word:
But come not forth before in any case.

Will. I warrant you. But who shall lock me in?

Alice. That will I do; thou’st keep the key thyself.

Mosbie. Come, Master Greene, go you along with me.
See all things ready, Alice, against we come.

Alice. Take no care for that; send you him home.

[_Exeunt Mosbie and Greene._

And if he e’er go forth again, blame me.
Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair;
Next unto Mosbie do I honour thee;
Instead of fair words and large promises
My hands shall play you golden harmony:
How like you this? say, will you do it, sirs?

Will. Ay, and that bravely, too. Mark my device:
Place Mosbie, being a stranger, in a chair,
And let your husband sit upon a stool,
That I may come behind him cunningly,
And with a towel pull him to the ground,
Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve;
That done, bear him behind the Abbey,
That those that find him murdered may suppose

Some slave or other killed him for his gold.

Alice. A fine device! you shall have twenty pound,
And, when he is dead, you shall have forty more,
And, lest you might be suspected staying here,
Michael shall saddle you two lusty geldings;
Ride whither you will, to Scotland, or to Wales,
I'll see you shall not lack, where'er you be.

Will. Such words would make one kill a thousand men!
Give me the key: which is the counting-house?

Alice. Here would I stay and still encourage you;
But that I know how resolute you are.

Shakebag. Tush, you are too faint-hearted; we must do it.

Alice. But Mosbie will be there, whose very looks
Will add unwonted courage to my thought,
And make me the first that shall adventure on him.

Will. Tush, get you gone; 'tis we must do the deed.
When this door opens next, look for his death.

[_Exeunt Will and Shakebag._

Alice. Ah, would he now were here that it might open!
I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,
That like the snakes of black Tisiphone
Sting me with their embracings! Mosbie's arms
Shall compass me, and, were I made a star,
I would have none other spheres but those.
There is no nectar but in Mosbie's lips!
Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me
Would grow love-sick, and from her watery bower
Fling down Endymion and snatch him up:
Then blame not me that slay a silly man
Not half so lovely as Endymion.

Here enters Michael.

Michael. Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

Alice. Who comes with him?

Michael. Nobody but Mosbie.

Alice. That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables, and

when thou hast done, stand before the counting-house door.

Michael. Why so?

Alice. Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

Michael. What? shall he die to-night?

Alice. Ay, Michael.

Michael. But shall not Susan know it?

Alice. Yes, for she’ll be as secret as ourselves.

Michael. That’s brave. I’ll go fetch the tables.

Alice. But, Michael, hark to me a word or two:
When my husband is come in, lock the street-door;
He shall be murdered, or the guests come in.

[_Exit Michael._

Here enters Arden and Mosbie.

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home?
Although I wished you to be reconciled,
’Twas more for fear of you than love of him.
Black Will and Greene are his companions,
And they are cutters, and may cut you short:
Therefore I thought it good to make you friends.
But wherefore do you bring him hither now?
You have given me my supper with his sight.

Mosbie. Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

Arden. No, good Master Mosbie; women will be prating.
Alice, bid him welcome; he and I are friends.

Alice. You may enforce me to it, if you will;
But I had rather die than bid him welcome.
His company hath purchased me ill friends,
And therefore will I ne’er frequent it more.

Mosbie.--Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble!

Arden. Now he is here, you will not serve me so.

Alice. I pray you be not angry or displeased;

I’ll bid him welcome, seeing you’ll have it so.
You are welcome, Master Mosbie; will you sit down?

Mosbie. I know I am welcome to your loving husband;
But for yourself, you speak not from your heart.

Alice. And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.

Mosbie. Pardon me, Master Arden; I’ll away.

Arden. No, good Master Mosbie.

Alice. We shall have guests enough, though you go hence.

Mosbie. I pray you, Master Arden, let me go.

Arden. I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.

Alice. The doors are open, sir, you may be gone.

Michael.--Nay, that’s a lie, for I have locked the doors.

Arden. Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine, I’ll make them friends.
And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout,
You shall begin! frown not, I’ll have it so.

Alice. I pray you meddle with that you have to do.

Arden. Why, Alice! how can I do too much for him
Whose life I have endangered without cause?

Alice. ’Tis true; and, seeing ’twas partly through my means,
I am content to drink to him for this once.
Here, Master Mosbie! and I pray you, henceforth
Be you as strange to me as I to you.
Your company hath purchased me ill friends,
And I for you, God knows, have undeserved
Been ill spoken of in every place;
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.

Mosbie. I’ll see your husband in despite of you.
Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven,
Thou ne’er shalt see me more after this night,
I’ll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.

Arden. Tush, I’ll have no such vows made in my house.

Alice. Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear;

And, on that condition, Mosbie, pledge me here.

Mosbie. Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.

Arden. Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?

Alice. It will by then you have played a game at tables.

Arden. Come, Master Mosbie, what shall we play for?

Mosbie. Three games for a French crown, sir, and please you.

Arden. Content.

[_Then they play at the tables. Enter Will and Shakebag._

Will.--Can he not take him yet? what a spite is that?

Alice.--Not yet, Will; take heed he see thee not.

Will.--I fear he will spy me as I am coming.

Michael.--To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

Mosbie. One ace, or else I lose the game.

Arden. Marry, sir, there’s two for failing.

Mosbie. Ah, Master Arden, ‘now I can take you.’

[_Then Will pulls him down with a towel._

Arden. Mosbie! Michael! Alice! what will you do?

Will. Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else.

Mosbie. There’s for the pressing iron you told me of. [_Stabs him._

Shakebag. And there’s for the ten pound in my sleeve. [_Stabs him._

Alice. What! groans thou? nay, then give me the weapon!
Take this for hindering Mosbie’s love and mine. [_She stabs him._

Michael. O, mistress!

Will. Ah, that villain will betray us all.

Mosbie. Tush, fear him not; he will be secret.

Michael. Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?

Shakebag. In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,
The widow Chambly; I'll to her house now,
And if she will not give me harborough,
I'll make booty of the quean even to her smock.

Will. Shift for yourselves; we two will leave you now.

Alice. First lay the body in the counting-house.

[_Then they lay the body in the Counting-house._

Will. We have our gold; Mistress Alice, adieu;
Mosbie, farewell, and Michael, farewell too. [_Exeunt._

Enter Susan.

Susan. Mistress, the guests are at the doors.
Hearken, they knock: what, shall I let them in?

Alice. Mosbie, go thou and bear them company. [_Exit Mosbie._
And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.

Susan. The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.

Alice. But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood;--
The more I strive, the more the blood appears!

Susan. What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell?

Alice. Because I blush not at my husband's death.

Here enters Mosbie.

Mosbie. How now? what's the matter? is all well?

Alice. Ay, well, if Arden were alive again.
In vain we strive, for here his blood remains.

Mosbie. Why, strew rushes on it, can you not?
This wench doth nothing: fall unto the work.

Alice. 'Twas thou that made me murder him.

Mosbie. What of that?

Alice. Nay, nothing, Mosbie, so it be not known.

Mosbie. Keep thou it close, and ’tis unpossible.

Alice. Ah, but I cannot! was he not slain by me?
My husband’s death torments me at the heart.

Mosbie. It shall not long torment thee, gentle Alice;
I am thy husband, think no more of him.

Here enters Adam Fowle and Bradshaw.

Bradshaw. How now, Mistress Arden? what ail you weep?

Mosbie. Because her husband is abroad so late.
A couple of ruffians threatened him yesternight,
And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.

Adam. Is’t nothing else? tush, he’ll be here anon.

Here enters Greene.

Greene. Now, Mistress Arden, lack you any guests?

Alice. Ah, Master Greene, did you see my husband lately?

Greene. I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.

Here enters Franklin.

Alice. I do not like this being out so late.--
Master Franklin, where did you leave my husband?

Franklin. Believe me I saw him not since morning.
Fear you not, he’ll come anon; meantime
You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

Alice. Ay, so they shall; Master Bradshaw, sit you there;
I pray you, be content, I’ll have my will.
Master Mosbie, sit you in my husband’s seat.

Michael.--Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?
Or, an thou sayest the word, let us sit down too.

Susan.--Peace, we have other matters now in hand.
I fear me, Michael, all will be bewrayed.

Michael.--Tush, so it be known that I shall marry thee

in the morning, I care not though I be hanged ere
night. But to prevent the worst, I'll buy some ratsbane.

Susan.--Why, Michael, wilt thou poison thyself?

Michael.--No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll tell.

Susan.--Tush, Michael; fear not her, she's wise enough.

Mosbie. Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer.--
Mistress Arden, here's to your husband.

Alice. My husband!

Franklin. What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly?

Alice. Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came o'er my heart;
My husband being forth torments my mind.
I know something's amiss, he is not well;
Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

Mosbie.--She will undo us through her foolishness.

Greene. Fear not, Mistress Arden, he's well enough.

Alice. Tell not me; I know he is not well:
He was not wont for to stay thus late.
Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,
And if you find him, send him home to me,
And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.

Franklin.--I like not this; I pray God all be well.
I'll seek him out, and find him if I can.

[_Exeunt Franklin, Mosbie, and Greene._

Alice.--Michael, how shall I do to rid the rest away?

Michael.--Leave that to my charge, let me alone.
'Tis very late, Master Bradshaw,
And there are many false knaves abroad,
And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

Bradshaw. Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.
Therefore I pray thee light's forth and lend's a link.

[_Exeunt Bradshaw, Adam, and Michael._

Alice. Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay;
You know I do not love to be alone.
--Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come:
But wherefore should he come? Here is nought but fear;
Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

Susan. Alas. I counsel! fear frights away my wits.

[_Then they open the counting-house door,
and look upon Arden._

Alice. See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies,
Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

Susan. My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

Alice. Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,
And let our salt tears be his obsequies.

Here enters Mosbie and Greene.

Mosbie. How now, Alice, whither will you bear him?

Alice. Sweet Mosbie, art thou come? Then weep that will:
I have my wish in that I joy thy sight.

Greene. Well, it behoves us to be circumspect.

Mosbie. Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered him.

Alice. Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.
We’ll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

Here enters Michael.

Michael. O mistress, the Mayor and all the watch
Are coming towards our house with glaives and bills.

Alice. Make the door fast; let them not come in.

Mosbie. Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape?

Alice. Out at the back-door, over the pile of wood,
And for one night lie at the Flower-de-luce.

Mosbie. That is the next way to betray myself.

Greene. Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me hers,

And cause suspicion, where else would be none.

Alice. Why, take that way that Master Mosbie doth;
But first convey the body to the fields.

[_Then they bear the body into the fields._

Mosbie. Until to-morrow, sweet Alice, now farewell:
And see you confess nothing in any case.

Greene. Be resolute, Mistress Alice, betray us not,
But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

[_Exeunt Mosbie and Greene._

Alice. Now, let the judge and juries do their worst:
My house is clear, and now I fear them not.

Susan. As we went, it snowed all the way,
Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied.

Alice. Peace, fool, the snow will cover them again.

Susan. But it had done before we came back again.

Alice. Hark, hark, they knock! go, Michael, let them in.

Here enters the Mayor and the Watch.

How now, Master Mayor, have you brought my husband home?

Mayor. I saw him come into your house an hour ago.

Alice. You are deceived; it was a Londoner.

Mayor. Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called Black Will?

Alice. I know none such: what mean these questions?

Mayor. I have the Council’s warrant to apprehend him.

Alice.--I am glad it is no worse.
Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such?

Mayor. We are informed that here he is;
And therefore pardon us, for we must search.

Alice. Ay, search, and spare you not, through every room:

Were my husband at home, you would not offer this.

Here enters Franklin.

Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad?

Franklin. Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.

Alice. Ah, by whom? Master Franklin, can you tell?

Franklin. I know not; but behind the Abbey
There he lies murdered in most piteous case.

Mayor. But, Master Franklin, are you sure ’tis he?

Franklin. I am too sure; would God I were deceived.

Alice. Find out the murderers, let them be known.

Franklin. Ay, so they shall: come you along with us.

Alice. Wherefore?

Franklin. Know you this hand-towel and this knife?

Susan.--Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence
Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.

Michael.--I was so afraid I knew not what I did:
I thought I had thrown them both into the well.

Alice. It is the pig’s blood we had to supper.
But wherefore stay you? find out the murderers.

Mayor. I fear me you’ll prove one of them yourself.

Alice. I one of them? what mean such questions?

Franklin. I fear me he was murdered in this house
And carried to the fields; for from that place
Backwards and forwards may you see
The print of many feet within the snow.
And look about this chamber where we are,
And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;
For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,
Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

Mayor. Look in the place where he was wont to sit.

See, see! his blood! it is too manifest.

Alice. It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.

Michael. Ay, truly.

Franklin. It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed.
But if I live, thou and thy ’complices
Which have conspired and wrought his death shall rue it.

Alice. Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell
I loved him more than all the world beside.
But bring me to him, let me see his body.

Franklin. Bring that villain and Mosbie’s sister too;
And one of you go to the Flower-de-luce,
And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him too.

[_Exeunt._

V. i. 58. _Hilts_ is common for ‘hilt,’ _e.g._ in Malory and Shakespeare; ‘_both his hilts_’ is apparently an extension of this use. _Locked_ I take to mean ‘crossed or clashed swords,’ with his adversary.

V. i. 105. _game or two at tables_: a sort of backgammon.

V. i. 155. Cf. the concluding lines of Ovid’s _Elegy_, already alluded to, i. 60.

V. i. 338. ‘Cecily Pounders did help to bear the dead corpse out into a meadow there, commonly called the Amery Croft.’--_Wardmote Book._

SCENE II

An obscure street in London.

Here enters Shakebag solus.

Shakebag. The widow Chambly in her husband’s days I kept;
And now he’s dead, she is grown so stout
She will not know her old companions.
I came thither, thinking to have had harbour
As I was wont,
And she was ready to thrust me out at doors;
But whether she would or no, I got me up,

And as she followed me, I spurned her down the stairs,
And broke her neck, and cut her tapster’s throat,
And now I am going to fling them in the Thames.
I have the gold; what care I though it be known!
I’ll cross the water and take sanctuary.

[_Exit._

SCENE III

Arden’s House at Feversham.

_Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Franklin,
Michael, and Susan._

Mayor. See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies;
Confess this foul fault and be penitent.

Alice. Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say?
The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds;
This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth
Speaks as it falls, and asks me why I did it.
Forgive me, Arden: I repent me now,
And, would my death save thine, thou should’st not die.
Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love,
And frown not on me when we meet in heaven:
In heaven I’ll love thee, though on earth I did not.

Mayor. Say, Mosbie, what made thee murder him?

Franklin. Study not for an answer; look not down:
His purse and girdle found at thy bed’s head
Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed;
It bootless is to swear thou didst it not.

Mosbie. I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffians both,
And they and I have done this murderous deed.
But wherefore stay we? Come and bear me hence.

Franklin. Those ruffians shall not escape; I will up to London,
And get the Council’s warrant to apprehend them.

[_Exeunt._

SCENE IV

The Kentish Coast.

Here enters Will.

Will. Shakebag, I hear, hath taken sanctuary,
But I am so pursued with hues and cries
For petty robberies that I have done,
That I can come unto no sanctuary.
Therefore must I in some oyster-boat
At last be fain to go on board some hoy,
And so to Flushing. There is no staying here.
At Sittingburgh the watch was like to take me,
And had not I with my buckler covered my head,
And run full blank at all adventures,
I am sure I had ne’er gone further than that place;
For the constable had twenty warrants to apprehend me,
Besides that, I robbed him and his man once at Gadshill.
Farewell, England; I’ll to Flushing now.

[_Exit Will._

V. iv. 5. Faversham was famous for its oysters.

SCENE V

Justice-room at Feversham.

Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Michael, Susan, and Bradshaw.

Mayor. Come, make haste and bring away the prisoners.

Bradshaw. Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,
And I am by the law condemned to die
About a letter I brought from Master Greene.
I pray you, Mistress Arden, speak the truth:
Was I ever privy to your intent or no.

Alice. What should I say? You brought me such a letter,
But I dare swear thou knewest not the contents.
Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,
And let me meditate upon my saviour Christ,
Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

Mosbie. How long shall I live in this hell of grief?
Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

Alice. Ah, but for thee I had never been a strumpet.
What cannot oaths and protestations do,
When men have opportunity to woo?
I was too young to sound thy villainies,
But now I find it and repent too late.

Susan. Ah, gentle brother, wherefore should I die?
I knew not of it till the deed was done.

Mosbie. For thee I mourn more than for myself;
But let it suffice, I cannot save thee now.

Michael. And if your brother and my mistress
Had not promised me you in marriage,
I had ne’er given consent to this foul deed.

Mayor. Leave to accuse each other now,
And listen to the sentence I shall give.
Bear Mosbie and his sister to London straight,
Where they in Smithfield must be executed;
Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury,
Where her sentence is she must be burnt;
Michael and Bradshaw in Feversham must suffer death.

Alice. Let my death make amends for all my sins.

Mosbie. Fie upon women! this shall be my song;
But bear me hence, for I have lived too long.

Susan. Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope.

Michael. Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

Bradshaw. My blood be on his head that gave the sentence.

Mayor. To speedy execution with them all! [_Exeunt._

V. v. 30. ‘For the charges of brenning Mistress Arden and execution of George Bradshaw, XLIII S.’--_Canterbury Records._

SCENE VI

Here enters Franklin.

Franklin. Thus have you seen the truth of Arden’s death.
As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,
The one took sanctuary, and, being sent for out,

Was murdered in Southwark as he passed
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.
Black Will was burned in Flushing on a stage;
Greene was hanged at Osbridge in Kent;
The painter fled and how he died we know not.
But this above the rest is to be noted:
Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground 10
Which he by force and violence held from Reede;
And in the grass his body's print was seen
Two years and more after the deed was done.
Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked tragedy,
Wherein no filèd points are foisted in
To make it gracious to the ear or eye;
For simple truth is gracious enough,
And needs no other points of glosing stuff. [_Exit._

V. vi. 2. By the _Wardmote Book_, 'George Loosebagg, _i.e._ Shakebag, escaped at that time.' John Green, who like Mosbie was a tailor, was taken in July in Cornwall and brought to Faversham and hanged in chains within the liberties. Susan, in the play, combines the characters of Cecily Pounder, Mosbie's sister, and of Elizabeth Stafford, the maid-servant. Morsby and his sister were hanged in Smithfield; Michael Saunderson was 'drawn and hanged in chains' in Faversham, where Elizabeth was burnt. By the _Wardmote Book_ Alice Arden did not stab her husband.

GLOSSARY

ABHORS FROM, differs entirely from; I. 54; an uncommon use. Dr. Murray quotes _Fox, A. and M._; II. 357, 'It did nothing at all abhor from nature.'

ANGEL, the coin of that name; II. i. 89, etc.

ARMING SWORD, a large two-handed sword, V. i. 72.

BASILISK, a fabulous serpent supposed to kill by its look, a cockatrice; I. 215. Cf. 'Would they were basilisks to strike thee dead.'--_Richard III._, III. ii. 151.

BEDEEM, forbode, 'doom me to'; III. iii. 31; not quoted by Dr. Murray.

BEDESMAN, one who says prayers for another, 'humble servant'; III. vi. 120.

BERAYED, befouled; IV. iii. 58. Cf. ‘Was ever man so rayed.’--_Shrew_, IV. i. 3.

BEWRAYED, betrayed; III. ii. 27.

BLAB, talk; I. 135. Used both as a noun and a verb.

BLOCK, obstacle; I. 137.

BODKIN, a tailor’s awl; I. 313.

BOLSTERED, matted with blood; III. i. 73. Cf. ‘Blood-bolstered Banquo.’--_Macbeth_, IV. i. 123.

BOTCHER, a jobbing tailor; I. 25, 316. Cf. Huloet, ‘A tailor, bodger, botcher, mender or patcher of old garments.’

BRABLE, quarrel; IV. i. 77.

BROKAGE, petty dealing; here especially dealing in old clothes; I. 26.

BUGS, hobgoblins: III. ii. 19.

CAUSELESS, adv., without cause, I. 358.

CHOPS ME IN, interrupts suddenly; III. vi. 130; ‘me’ is a dative; chop is used in the sense of doing quickly. Cf. _Richard III._, I. iv. 160, ‘Then we will chop him in the malmsey butt.’

COIL, trouble; III. vi. 5.

COISTRIL, a paltry young fellow; III. ii. 41, 58. Cf. _Twelfth Night_, I. iii. 43, ‘A coward and a coistril.’

COPESMATE, market-mate, companion; III. v. 104. Cf. _Lucrece_, 925, ‘Misshapen Time, copesmate of ugly Night.’

COLTSTAFF, a staff used by two persons for carrying ‘cowls,’ _i.e._ tubs; V. i. 22. Cf. _Merry Wives_, III. iii. 156, ‘Where’s the cowlstaff?’

COSTARD, head; V. i. 63; literally a large ribbed apple. Frequent in Shakespeare.

CROWN, crown-piece; III. vi. 132.

CURST, shrewish; IV. ii. 12.

CUTTER, bully, cutthroat; I. 522; IV. iii. 74, etc. Cf. Harrison’s _England_, II. 16, ‘Some desperate cutters we have.’

DAG, pistol; III. vi. 9, 131. The derivation is not known.

DALLYING, delaying, trifling; I. 397.

DISPOSE, disposal; I. 606. Common in Shakespeare.

DISTRESSFUL, miserable: III. v. 56; IV. iv. 51. Cf. _Henry V._, IV. i. 287, ‘Crammed with distressful bread.’

DRIFTS, plots; I. 178, 450, etc.

EAR, plough; III. v. 24.

ESCHEW, avoid; I. 347.

FLAW, gust of wind; IV. iv. 44.

FORSLOWED, delayed; III. v. 85. Cf. 3 _Henry VI._, II. iii. 56, ‘Forslow no longer.’

FOSTER, forester; III. iii. 13.

FROLIC, used as an exclamation = ‘cheer up’; I. 512. Cf. Kyd’s _Jeronimo_, I. i. 1.

GIGLOT, a wanton woman, III. v. 87; connected with ‘giggle.’

GLAIVES, swords; V. i. 348.

GLOSING, wordy; V. vi. 18.

HANDSEL, confirm, seal; II. i. 117.

HARBOROUGH, old form of harbour; V. i. 251.

HORNSBY, cuckold; IV. iii. 76.

HOUGHT, hocked or hamstrung; IV. iii. 38.

IMPETRATE, get by asking; II. ii. 16.

JETS, struts; I. 30. Cf. _Cymbeline_, III. iii. 4, ‘Giants may jet through.’

LAY IT ON, fall to work; V. i. 50. Cf. _Winter’s Tale_, IV. iii. 43, ‘My father hath made her mistress of the feast and she lays it on.’

LEAVE, cease; III. vi. 72, etc.

LORDAINE, clown, IV. i. 58.

MISEVENT, mishap; IV. iv. 49.

MISTAKING, misunderstanding; IV. i. 27.

MITHRIDATE, antidote; I. 383. Called after the famous King of Pontus, who made himself poison-proof. Greene uses the word.

MUSCADO, musket; III. vi. 20.

MUTCHADO, moustache; II. i. 54.

PANTOFLES, slippers; II. ii. 9.

PASSIONATE, sorrowful; III. v. 45. Cf. _John II._, 544, ‘She is sad and passionate.’

PLANCHERS, planks; I. 42. ‘Planched’ is found in _Measure for Measure_, IV. i. 3.

PLATFORM, scheme; II. i. 100. Cf. 1 _Henry VI._, II. i. 77.

PRECISIAN, puritan; III. ii. 18.

Prick-eared, III. ii. 62; cf. _Henry V._, II. i. 44, ‘Prick-eared cur of Iceland.’

QUALM, fit of nausea; III. vi. 67; V. i. 309.

QUARTERAGE, quarterly payment; II. ii. 98.

RACE, raze down; I. 47, 118.

RELIGIOUS, devout; I. 587.

SCONCE, small fort; V. i. 70.

SECURELY, without misgiving; I. 50.

SLIPSHOE, slipper; V. i. 406.

STANDINGS, place of vantage, ambush; III. vi. 38.

STOUT, proud, overbearing; V. i. 206, ii. 2. Cf. ‘I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings.’--_Twelfth Night_, II. v. 185, and 2 _Henry VI._, I. i. 187.

SULLENS, moroseness; IV. iv. 108. Cf. _Richard II._, II. i. 139: ‘Let them die that age and sullens have.’

SURE, betrothed; I. 151. Cf. _Merry Wives_, V. v. 237.

SUSPECT, suspicion; I. i. 130. Cf. Sonnet LXX. ‘The ornament of beauty is suspect.’

TICING, enticing; I. 197.

TRUG, a drab; I. 499. Greene uses the word.

TRULL, worthless woman; I. 498.

TRUSS, tie up for hanging; III. vi. 125; here = ‘get yourself trussed.’

WATCHET, pale blue; II. i. 56.

WAGER, give a wage to; I. 523. Shakespeare uses ‘wage’ in this sense, _Coriolanus_, V. vi. 40.

WHISTLY, silently; III. iii. 9.

YEOMANRY, homespun wit; IV. ii. 37.

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Transcriber's Note

The following apparent printing errors have been corrected:

p. 4 "the field." changed to "the field,"

p. 6 "of men." changed to "of men,"

p. 10 "it me" changed to "it me."

p. 19 "true or no" changed to "true or no?"

p. 23 "neighhour" changed to "neighbour"

p. 30 line-number 90 changed to 93

p. 36 "heat." changed to "heat,"

p. 49 "dream" changed to "dream."

p. 69 "is death" changed to "is death."

p. 75 "my state," changed to "my state."

p. 97 "bills" changed to "bills."

p. 99 "knew now" changed to "knew not"

p. 102 "did not" changed to "did not."

p. 104 "a a letter" changed to "a letter"

p. 107 "_Merry Wives_, iII" changed to "_Merry Wives_, III"

p. 110 "adevrbially" changed to "adverbially"

p. 111 (note to II. i. 58) "‘Seam rent fellows," changed to "‘Seam rent fellows,’"

p. 111 (note to III. i. 5) "sense" changed to "sense?"

Other inconsistent punctuation has been retained as printed, as have inconsistent spellings.

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