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PSEUDO-SHAKSPERE'SCHE D R A M E N.

HERAUSGEGEBEN

VON

DR. NICOLAUS DELIUS.

ZWEITES HEFT:

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

ELBERFELD, 1855.

VERLAG VON R. L. FRIDERICH'S.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

EIN

S H A K S P E R E

ZUGESCHRIEBENES

D R A M A.

HERAUSGEGEBEN

VON

DR. NICOLAUS DELIUS.

ELBERFELD, 1855.

VERLAG VON R. L. FRIDERICHS.

VORREDE.

Das Drama, welches hier als das zweite in der Reihe der Pseudo-Shakspeare'schen Dramen erscheint, wurde zuerst im Jahre 1592 in London gedruckt unter folgendem Titel:

The lamentable and true Tragedie of M. Arden, of Feversham, in Kent, who was Most wickedlye murdered, by the Means of his disloyall and wanton Wyfe, who for the Loue she bare to one Mosbie, hyred two desperat Ruffins, Blackwill and Shagbag, to kill him. Wherein is shewed, The great Malice and Dissimulation of a wicked Woman, the unsatiabie desire of filthie lust, and the shamefull End of all Murderers.

Weitere Auflagen in den Jahren 1599 und 1633 bezeugen die fortdauernde Popularität dieses Schauspiels, und noch in späterer Zeit fühlte der, 1739 verstorbene, Dramatiker William Lillo sich veranlasst, dasselbe für die damalige Bühne umzuarbeiten. Die Vermuthung, dass der unbekannte Verfasser Shakspeare sein möchte, sprach zuerst ein gewisser Edward Jacob, ein Einwohner von Feversham, in der Vorrede zu dem Abdruck aus, den er 1770 von der ersten Quartausgabe von 1592

veranstaltete. Wenn die Beweisgründe, mit denen der neue Herausgeber seine Meinung zu stützen versucht, auch ziemlich schwach sind, und im Wesentlichen auf Parallelstellen des *Arden* und anderer authentischer Dramen Shakspeare's hinauslaufen, welche die Identität der Sprache darthun sollen, so war die erneuerte Herausgabe eines so selten gewordenen und dabei so bedeutenden Dramas jedenfalls sein unbestreitbares Verdienst.

Während in England aber auch nach der Erscheinung der Jacob'schen Ausgabe *Arden of Feversham* nie die gebührende Beachtung erlangt zu haben scheint, lenkte in Deutschland zuerst Tieck in seiner „Shakspeare's Vorschule“. Erster Band. 1823. (Leipzig: Brockhaus), die Aufmerksamkeit darauf hin. Er giebt in dem genannten Buche eine Uebersetzung des Schauspiels unter dem Titel: „*Arden von Feversham. Eine Tragödie.* (Von einem unbekannten Autor, vielleicht eine Jugendarbeit Shakspeare's)“, und bespricht das Drama näher in der Vorrede (S. XXI. — XXVIII.) Nachdem er die Handlung und die Charaktere entwickelt und „diese bürgerliche Tragödie in Plan, Charakter und Ausführung vortrefflich“ genannt hat, fährt er fort: „Je mehr man sich aber darin vertieft, es studirt, nicht bloss obenhin lieset, je näher tritt die Ueberzeugung, dass es dennoch kaum von einer anderen Feder, als der Shakspeare's, herrühren könne. Wenn man sich den alten König Johann vergegenwärtigt, Cromwell und den Londoner Verschwender, so findet man in diesen und in manchen anderen früheren Compositionen Ton und Sprache wieder. Am meisten aber charakterisirt den grossen Dichter jenes tiefe moralische Gefühl, welches das Gemälde so tief-sinnig und ernst beleuchtet, so dass es nicht allein durch seine Schrecken wirkt, welches auch ein gewöhnlicheres

Talent hätte hervorbringen können. Wie Schatten gestalten liegen schon manche grosse Gedanken des Macbeth hier im Dunkeln, Anklänge aus dem dritten Richard sind nicht selten, einige Töne aus andern Gedichten des Meisters. Der Kenner wird manche Uebergänge bemerken, die diesem geläufig sind, eine gewisse Art, die Gedanken zu wenden oder abzubereiten. — Doch sei es hier mit diesen Andeutungen genug, das Werk mag selber für sich sprechen. Es bleibt merkwürdig, wenn es auch ein ganz unbekannter Dichter geschaffen haben sollte.“ — So weit Tieck, dem Ulrici insofern beistimmt, als er die Möglichkeit einer Shakspeare'schen Autorschaft wenigstens einräumt, wenn er auch das Drama in ästhetischer Hinsicht weniger günstig beurtheilt.

Einer eingehenden Beurtheilung, verbunden mit einer ausführlichen Analyse, hat Charles Knight das Drama in seiner *Pictorial Edition of Shakspeare* unterzogen. Er citirt das Urtheil eines anonymen Kritikers des *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. LXXI, pag. 471., der in einer Musterung der unserm Dichter zugeschriebenen Dramen sich so äussert: *The third play „Arden of Feversham“, a domestic tragedy, would, in point of absolute merit, have done no discredit to the early manhood of Shakspeare himself; but, both in conception and execution, it is quite unlike even his earliest manner, while, on the other hand, its date cannot possibly be removed so far back as the time before which his own style had demonstrably been formed.* — Den Schluss, zu welchem Knight selbst gelangt, fasst er in folgende Worte zusammen: *Do we then think that „Arden of Feversham“ belongs to the early manhood of Shakspeare? We do not think so with any confidence; but we do think that, considering its date, it*

is a very remarkable play, and we should be at a loss to assign it to any writer whose name is associated with that early period of the drama, except to Shakspeare. — Und diesem Urtheil möchten auch wir uns anschliessen; der Fall ist offenbar ein ähnlicher, wie bei dem *Edward III.*, insofern hier wie dort die Schwierigkeit, ein Werk von solcher Reife dem jugendlichen Shakspeare zuzuschreiben, der andern Schwierigkeit zur Seite tritt, um jene Zeit einen andern Dichter namhaft zu machen, dem es sich, in gänzlicher Abwesenheit äusserer Kennzeichen, nach innern Merkmalen auch nur mit einem Grade von Wahrscheinlichkeit zuschreiben liesse. Von den bekannten Dramatikern wenigstens ist keiner, der um 1592 oder früher die Leidenschaft so wahr, so einfach und so ergreifend hätte sprechen lassen, wie der Verfasser des *Arden of Feversham*. Auch der Vers besitzt, wie Knight ausdrücklich bezeugt, eine Freiheit, die sich in keinem andern Autor jener Zeit, als nur in Shakspeare, findet.

Den Stoff seines Dramas hat der Dichter aus der von Shakspeare so vielfach benutzten Chronik Holinshed's benutzt, die im Jahre 1577, sechsundzwanzig Jahre nach Arden's Ermordung, erschienen war. Einige von Knight mitgetheilte Auszüge aus dem ausführlichen Berichte des Chronisten zeigen am deutlichsten, wie der Dichter seine Quelle benutzt hat, und wo er von ihr abgewichen ist. Letzteres ist z. B. gleich in der Exposition der Fall, wo der Chronist erzählt: *This Arden was a man of a tall and comely personage, and matched in marriage with a gentlewoman, young, tall, and well favoured of shape and countenance, who chancing to fall in familiarity with one Mosbie, a tailor by occupation, a black swart man, servant to the*

Lord North, it happened this Mosbie upon some mistaking to fall out with her; but she being desirous to be in favour with him again, sent him a pair of silver dice by one Adam Foule, dwelling at the Flower-de-luce, in Feversham. After which he resorted to her again, and oftentimes lay in Arden's house; and although (as it was said) Arden perceived right well their mutual familiarity to be much greater than their honesty, yet because he would not offend her, and so lose the benefit he hoped to gain at some of her friends' hands in bearing with her lewdness, which he might have lost if he should have fallen out with her, he was contented to wink at her filthy disorder, and both permitted and also invited Mosbie very often to lodge in his house. And thus it continued a good space before any practice was begun by them against Master Arden. She at length, inflamed in love with Mosbie, and loathing her husband, wished, and after practised, the means how to hasten his end.

Von dem „Maler“ (vgl. S. 10 — 12) sagt der Chronist: *There was a painter dwelling in Feversham, who had skill of poisons, as was reported; she therefore demanded of him whether it were true that he had such skill in feat or not? And he denied not but that he had indeed. Yea, said she, but I would have such a one made as should have most vehement and speedy operation to despatch the eater thereof. That can I do, quoth he; and forthwith made her such a one.*

Alice's, der Gattin, erster Versuch gegen Arden's Leben (vgl. S. 15) wird von Holinshed so dargestellt: *Now, Master Arden purposing that day to ride to Canterbury, his wife brought him his breakfast, which was wont to be milk and butter. He, having received a spoonful or two of the milk, misliked the taste and colour thereof,*

*

and said to his wife, Mistress Alice, what milk have you given me here? Wherewithal she tilted it over with her hand, saying, I ween nothing can please you. Then he took horse and rode towards Canterbury, and by the way fell into extreme sickness, and so escaped for that time.

Die von Alice angeworbenen Mordgesellen Greene, Bradshaw und Black Will führt der Chronist uns folgendermassen vor: *After this his wife fell in acquaintance with one Greene, of Feversham, servant to Sir Anthony Ager, from which Greene Master Arden had wrested a piece of ground on the back side of the Abbey of Feversham, and there had great blows and great threats passed betwixt them about that matter. Therefore she, knowing that Greene hated her husband, began to practise with him how to make him away; and concluded that, if he could get any that would kill him, he should have ten pounds for a reward.*

This Greene, having doings for his master Sir Anthony Ager, had occasion to go up to London, where his master then lay, and, having some charge up with him, desired one Bradshaw, a goldsmith of Feversham, that was his neighbour, to accompany him to Gravesend, and he would content him for his pains. This Bradshaw, being a very honest man, was content, and rode with him. And when they came to Rainhamdown they chanced to see three or four servingmen that were coming from Leeds; and therewith Bradshaw espied, coming up the hill from Rochester, one Black Will, a terrible cruel ruffian, with a sword and a buckler, and another with a great staff on his neck. Then said Bradshaw to Greene, We are happy that there cometh some company from Leeds, for here cometh up against us as murdering a

knave as any is in England; if it were not for them we might chance hardly escape without loss of our money and lives. Yea, thought Greene (as he after confessed), such a one is for my purpose; and therefore asked, Which is he? Yonder is he, quoth Bradshaw, the same that hath the sword and buckler; his name is Black Will. How know you that? said Greene. Bradshaw answered, I knew him at Boulogne, where we both served; he was a soldier, and I was Sir Richard Cavendish's man; and there he committed many robberies and heinous murders on such as travelled betwixt Boulogne and France. By this time the other company of servingmen came to them, and they, going altogether, met with Black Will and his fellow. The servingmen knew Black Will, and, saluting him, demanded of him whither he went? He answered, By his blood (for his use was to swear almost at every word), I know not, nor care not; but set up my staff, and even as it falleth I go. If thou, quoth they, will go back again to Gravesend, we will give thee thy supper. By his blood, said he, I care not; I am content; have with you: and so he returned again with them. Then Black Will took acquaintance of Bradshaw, saying, Fellow Bradshaw, how dost thou? Bradshaw, unwilling to renew acquaintance, or to have ought to do with so shameless a ruffian, said, Why, do ye know me? Yea, that I do, quoth he; did not we serve in Boulogne together? But ye must pardon me, quoth Bradshaw, for I have forgotten you. Then Greene talked with Black Will, and said, When ye have supped, come to mine host's house at such a sign, and I will give you the sack and sugar. By his blood, said he, I thank you; I will come and take it, I warrant you. According to his promise he came, and there they made good cheer. Then Black

Will and Greene went and talked apart from Bradshaw, and there concluded together, that if he would kill Master Arden he should have ten pounds for his labour. Then he answered, By his wounds, that I will if I may know him. Marry, to-morrow in Paul's I will show him thee, said Greene. Then they left their talk, and Greene bad him go home to his host's house. Then Greene wrote a letter to Mistress Arden, and among other things put in these words, — We have got a man for our purpose; we may thank my brother Bradshaw. Now Bradshaw, not knowing anything of this, took the letter of him, and in the morning departed home again, and delivered the letter to Mistress Arden, and Greene and Black Will went up to London at the tide.

Auch die folgenden missglückten Anschläge gegen Arden hat der Dichter aus der Chronik entlehnt, bis endlich der gelingende Mordplan (vgl. A. 5, Sc. 1.) folgendermassen erzählt wird: *They conveyed Black Will into Master Arden's house, putting him into a closet at the end of his parlour. Before this they had sent out of the house all the servants, those excepted which were privy to the devised murder. Then went Mosbie to the door, and there stood in a nightgown of silk girded about him, and this was betwixt six and seven of the clock at night. Master Arden, having been at a neighbour's house of his, named Dumpkin, and having cleared certain reckonings betwixt them, came home, and, finding Mosbie standing at the door, asked him if it were supper-time? I think not (quoth Mosbie), it is not yet ready. Then let us go and play a game at the tables in the mean season, said Master Arden. And so they went straight into the parlour: and as they came by through the hall, his wife was walking there, and Master Arden said, How now,*

Mistress Alice? But she made small answer to him. In the mean time one chained the wicket-door of the entry. When they came into the parlour, Mosbie sat down on the bench, having his face toward the place where Black Will stood. Then Michael, Master Arden's man, stood at his master's back, holding a candle in his hand, to shadow Black Will, that Arden might by no means perceive him coming forth. In their play Mosbie said thus (which seemed to be the watchword for Black Will's coming forth), Now may I take you, sir, if I will. Take me? quoth Master Arden; which way? With that Black Will stepped forth,¹ and cast a towel about his neck, so to stop his breath and strangle him. Then Mosbie, having at his girdle a pressing iron of fourteen pounds weight, struck him on the head with the same, so that he fell down, and gave a great groan, insomuch that they thought he had been killed.

Diese Auszüge genügen, um zu zeigen, wie der Dichter seinen Zweck, die getreue Darstellung des Factischen mit künstlerischer Entwicklung der Handlung und der Charaktere zu verbinden, verfolgt und erreicht hat.

Der hier erscheinenden Ausgabe liegt der von Edward Jacob im Jahre 1770 veranstaltete Wiederabdruck der ersten Quartausgabe von 1592 zu Grunde, welche beide bereits im Jahre 1817, als Tieck England besuchte, schon so selten waren, dass er weder des einen noch der andern habhaft werden konnte, und sich mit einer Abschrift der ersten Quarto auf dem Britischen Museum begnügen musste, um danach die Uebersetzung des *Arden* in seiner „Vorschule Shakspeare's“ besorgen zu lassen. Da Jacob's Ausgabe die alte Orthographie und Interpunction, wie überhaupt alle Eigenheiten und

Verkehrtheiten des Originals buchstäblich wiedergiebt, so war zunächst die jetzige Orthographie und Interpunction herzustellen, und eine Correctur der offenbaren Fehler der alten Ausgabe vorzunehmen, die sehr mangelhafte Versabtheilung zu verbessern, und manche Stellen, welche irrig als Verse gedruckt waren, in die Prosa aufzulösen, welche der Dichter augenscheinlich beabsichtigt hatte. Andere Verse dagegen mussten als solche ohne Remedur ihrer metrischen Gebrechen stehen bleiben, da es einerseits zweifelhaft war, ob der Dichter nicht selbst in solchen, nicht pathetischen, sondern dem Gesprächston mehr anheimfallenden Scenen sich derlei Licenz verstattet habe, und da andererseits die Durchführung eines regelrechten Blankverses, mit Hülfe von willkürlichen Einschiebseln und beliebigen Auslassungen, den überlieferten Text zu sehr beeinträchtigt haben würde.

Abweichungen von diesem Texte, welche über blosse Veränderungen der Orthographie, Interpunction und Versabtheilung hinausgehn, sind folgende:

S. 14. *By my faith! sir, you say true.* — Die Q. hat *By faith my sir you say true.*

S. 17. *This powder was too gross and palpable.* — Für *palpable* hat die Q. *populous.*

S. 30. *'T is nothing but some bawbling paltry fray.* — Die Q. *babbling paltry fray.*

S. 35. *And crop dishonour as dishonour buds.* — Die Q. hat *cooch* für *crop.*

S. 36. *As Hydra's head, that flourish'd by decay.* — Die Q. hat *perish'd* für *flourish'd.*

S. 38. *Upon the threshold leading to the stairs.* — Die Q. hat *leaning* für *leading*.

S. 42. *An ill-thew'd forester had remov'd the toil.* — Die Q. hat *foster* für *forester*.

S. 44. *Each gentle stirry gale doth shake my bed.* — Die Q. hat *starry* für *stirry*.

S. 45. *For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up.* — Die Q. hat *erre* für *ear*.

Ibid. *And for his pains I 'll hive him up a while.* — Die Q. hat *heave* für *hive*.

S. 46. *Such deep-fet airs like to a cannon's burst.* — Die Q. hat *Such deep pathaires*. Vielleicht steckt in dem räthselhaften *pathaires* aber *fires* und es wäre etwa zu vermuthen *deep-put fires*.

S. 57. *Of a great fever.* — Die Q. hat *feare* für *fever*.

S. 61. *No, nor such a fool as will rather be hock'd.* — Die Q. hat *hought* für *hock'd*, und demnach weiterhin *hough monday* für *hock monday*.

S. 70. *I would have crammed angels in thy fist.* — Die Q. hat *I would cramme in angels etc.*

S. 83. *But whether she would or no, I got me up.* — Die Q. hat *goe* für *got* und in der folgenden Zeile *spur'd* für *spurn'd*.

Schliesslich noch die Bemerkung, dass die in dem Drama vorkommenden Bühnenweisungen aus der alten Ausgabe entlehnt sind, die Eintheilung in Acte und Scenen jedoch, von der sich in der alten Ausgabe nichts findet, mit Benutzung der von Tieck in seiner Uebersetzung vorgenommenen, eingefügt ist.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

A TRAGEDY.

Persons represented.

Mr. ARDEN, of Feversham.

FRANCKLIN, his friend.

MOSBIE.

CLARKE, a Painter.

ADAM FOWL, 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.

SCENE, Feversham, London, and there between.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

(*Enter ARDEN and FRANCKLIN.*)

Fran. 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-patent from his majesty,
All the lands of the abbey of Feversham.
Here are the deeds
Seal'd and subscrib'd with his name and the king's:
Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

Ard. Francklin, 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 o'er my head and cover'd me.
Love-letters pass'd '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?

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

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

Fran. Why, what is he?

Ard. 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.

Fran. No nobleman will countenance such a peasant.

Ard. 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 back'd,
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 dissever'd joints and sinews torn,
Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,
Smear'd in the channels of his lustful blood.

Fran. Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me
To ease thy grief and save her chastity:
Entreat her fair; sweet words are fittest engines
To raze the flint walls of a woman's breast:
In any case be not too jealous,
Nor make a 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.

Ard. Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,
And call her forth, and presently take leave:
Ho, 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 ris so soon.

Ard. Sweet love, thou know'st that we two, Ovid-like,
Have often chid the morn, when 't ganto peep,
And often wish'd 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 kill'd my heart:
I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

Alice. 'T is like I was asleep, when I nam'd him,
For being awake, he comes not in my thoughts.

Ard. 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?

Fran. Arden, forbear to urge her over-far.

Ard. Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream,
Let it suffice I know thou lov'st me well.

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

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

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

Ard. 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?

Arđ. No longer there, till my affairs be done.

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

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

Arđ. I cannot long be from thee, gentle Alice;
Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field,
Francklin 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 FRANCKLIN.]

Alice. Ere noon he means to take horse and away:
Sweet news is this! Oh, 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 's now from home.

Adam. He whom ye 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 knowledge of his being here.

Alice. But tell me, is he angry or displeas'd?

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

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

Adam. Nay, an you be so impatient, I 'll be gone.

Alice. Stay, Adam, thou wert wont to be my friend,
Ask Mosbie, how I have incurr'd his wrath,
Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,
With which we play'd for kisses many a time;
And when I lost, I wan, 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
Hinders our meetings when we would confer.
But if I live, that block shall be remov'd,
And Mosbie, thou that com'st 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.
How now, Michael, whither are you going?

Mich. 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.

Mich. 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.

Mich. I understand, the painter here hard by
Hath made report that he and Su is sure.

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

Mich. But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart,
With a verse or two stol'n 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 rime 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.

Mich. Why, then I say that I will kill my master,
Or any thing that you will have me do.

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

Mich. Why, say, I should be took, I 'll ne'er confess,
That you know any thing, and Susan, being a maid,
May beg me from the gallows of the shrieve.

Alice. Trust not to that, Michael.

Mich. 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 Bocton is mine own.

Who would not venture upon house and land,
When he may have it for a rightdown 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.

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

Alice. A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.
'T is yet but early day's, thou need'st not fear.

Mos. Where is your husband?

Alice. 'T is now high water, and he is at the quay.

Mos. There let him be: henceforward know me not.

Alice. Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?

Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?

Have I for this given thee so many favours,
Incurr'd 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 match'd already with a gentleman,
Whose servant thou mayst be? — and so farewell.

Mos. Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see
That which I ever fear'd, 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 liv'd in hope.

Alice. What need'st thou try me, whom thou never
found'st false?

Mos. 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 reconcil'd,
And that, I know, will be mine overthrow.

Mos. 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 Francklin will to London straight.

Mos. To London? Alice, if thou 'lt be rul'd by me,
We 'll make him sure enough for coming there.

Alice. Ah, 'would we could.

Mos. I happen'd 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.

Mos. Ay, but we 'll have it cover'd 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.

Mos. Fear not: we will 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.

Mos. I pray thee, leave 't to my discretion.
Ho, Clarke!

Here enters CLARKE.

O, you are an honest man of your word, you serv'd me
well.

Cla. 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
Makes 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. 'T is pity but he should, he 'll use her well.

Mos. Clarke, here 's my hand, my sister shall be thine.

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

Alice. Ah, that thou couldst be secret!

Mos. Fear him not; leave, I have talk'd sufficient.

Cla. 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.

Mos. Enough, sweet Alice, thy kind words make me
melt. —

Your trick of poison'd 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.

Cla. 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.

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

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

Here enter ARDEN, and FRANCKLIN.

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

[*Exit CLARKE.*

Mos. Master Arden, being at London yesternight,

The abbey lands whereof you are now possess'd,
Were offer'd 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?

Ard. 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-patent from his majesty.
But I must have a mandate for my wife;
They say you seek to rob me of her love:—
Villain, what mak'st thou in her company?
She 's no companion for so base a groom.

Mos. Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee. —
But rather than I pocket up this wrong —

Fran. What will you do, sir?

Mos. Revenge it on the proudest of you both!

(*Then ARDEN draws forth MOSBIE'S sword.*)

Ard. 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, 't is to you I speak,
The next time that I take thee near my house,
Instead of legs, I 'll make thee crawl on stumps.

Mos. Ah, Master Arden, you have injur'd me.
I do appeal to God, and to the world.

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

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

And therefore will I sojourn here a while,
Until our enemies have talk'd their fill.
And then, I hope, they 'll cease, and at last confess,
How causeless they have injur'd her and me.

Ard. 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.

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

Mos. I cannot eat, but I 'll sit for company.

Ard. Sirrah, Michael, see our horse be ready.

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

Ard. 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 poison'd you.

I cannot speak, or cast aside my eye,

But he imagines I have stepp'd awry.

Here 's he that you cast in my teeth so oft:

Now will I be convinc'd, 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?

Mos. You wrong yourself and me, to cast these doubts;
Your loving husband is not jealous.

Ard. Why, gentle Mistress Alice,
Can't I be ill, but you 'll accuse yourself?
Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate,
I 'll take a little to prevent the worst.

Fran. 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?

Ard. Be patient, sweet love, I mistrust not thee.

Alice. God will revenge it, Arden, if thou doest;
For never woman lov'd her husband better than I do thee.

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

Fran. Come, leave this dallying, and let 's away.

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

Ard. 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.

Ard. 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 Francklin, seeing you take him hence,
In hope you 'll hasten him home, I 'll give you this.

(And then she kisses him.)

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

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

Ard. 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?

Mos. Ay, Alice, and 't was cunningly perform'd.
But what a villain is this painter, Clarke!

Alice. Was 't 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 palpable.

Mos. But had he eaten but three spoonfulls more,
Then had he died, and our love continued.

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

Mos. It is impossible, 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 are wind,
And wind is mutable: Then I conclude,
'T is childishness to stand upon an oath.

Mos. Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet, by your leave,
I will keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

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

1**

Here enters GREENE.

Mos. Alice, what 's he that comes yonder, know'st thou him?

Alice. Mosbie, be gone, I hope 't is one that comes To put in practice our intended drifts.

[*Exit MOSBIE.*

Gre. Mistress Arden, you are well met.
I am sorry that your husband is from home,
Whenas my purpos'd 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.

Gre. I heard your husband hath the grant, of late,
Confirm'd by letters-patent from the king,
Of all the lands of the abbey of Feversham,
Generally entituled; 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.

Gre. Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak,
For I am touch'd. Your husband doth me wrong,
To wring from me the little land I have.
My living is my life, 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 taken my lands, I 'll value life
As careless as he is careful for to get.
And tell him this from me, I 'll be reveng'd,
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, 't is not my fault: But wonder not
Though he be hard to others, when to me;
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am us'd.

Gre. 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 is 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, weary with his trugs at home,
Then rides he straight to London; there, forsooth,
He revels it among such filthy ones,
As counsel 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.

Gre. Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me,
So fair a creature should be so abus'd.

Why, who 'd have thought the civil sir so sullen?
He looks so smoothly: Fye upon him, churl;
An if he lives a day he lives too long.
But frolick, 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?

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

Alice. Then, Master Greene, be counselled by me,
Endanger 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 entitled as they were before.

Gre. Will you keep promise with me?

Alice. Or count me false and perjur'd, whilst I live.

Gre. Then here 's my hand, I 'll have him so dispatch'd;
I 'll up to London straight, I 'll thither post,
And never rest till I have compass'd 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 contriv'd.

Here enter MOSBIE, and CLARKE.

Mos. How now, Alice, what 's the news?

Alice. Such as will content thee well, sweet heart.

Mos. Well, let them pass a while, and tell me, Alice,
How have you dealt and temper'd 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.

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

[*Exit CLARKE.*]

Mos. 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.

Mos. Let 's hear them then, that I may laugh for
company.

Alice. This morning Master Greene, Dick Greene, I
mean,
From whom my husband had the abbey lands,
Came hither railing, for to know the truth,
Whether my husband had the lands by grant.
I told him all, whereat he storm'd amain,
And swore he would cry quittance with the churl,
And if he did deny his interest,
Stab him, whatever 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 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 agreed, and he is ridden straight
To London, to bring his death about.

Mos. But call you this good news?

Alice. Ay, sweet heart, be they not?

Mos. 'T were 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, 't is the way
To make it open unto Arden's self,
And bring thyself and me to ruin both:
Forewarn'd, forearm'd; who threatens his enemy,
Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

Alice. I did it for the best.

Mos. Well, seeing 't is done, cheerly let it pass.
You know this Greene, is he not religious,
A man, I guess, of great devotion?

Alice. He is.

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

Here enter CLARKE, and SUSAN.

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

Cla. You did.

Mos. And what, will 't be a match?

Cla. A match, ay, 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.

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

Sus. It resteth in your grant, some words are pass'd,
And haply we be grown unto a match,
If you be willing that it shall be so.

Mos. 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.

Cla. What is it, Master Mosbie?

Mos. I do remember once, in secret talk,
You told me how you could compound by art,
A crucifix empoison'd:
That whoso look'd upon it should wax blind,
And with the scent be stifled; that ere long,
He should be poison'd that did view it well.
I would have you make me such a crucifix,
And then I 'll grant my sister shall be yours.

Cla. Though I am loath, because it toucheth life,
Yet rather ore 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 empoison'd,
And no ways prejudice yourself withal?

Mos. Well question'd, Alice. Clarke, how answer
you that?

Cla. Very easily: I 'll tell you straight,
How I do work of these empoison'd 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.

Mos. 'T is very well; but against when shall I have it?

Cla. Within these ten days.

Mos. 'T will 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,
As well may be the master of the house.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T II.

SCENE I.

Here enter GREENE and BRADSHAW.

Brad. See you them that come yonder, Master Greene?

Gre. Ay, very well, do you know them?

Here enter BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG.

Brad. 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 Bulloine he and I were fellow-soldiers,
Where he play'd such pranks,
As all the camp fear'd him for his villainy:
I warrant you, he bears so bad a mind,
That for a crown he 'll murder any man.

Gre. The fitter is he for my purpose, marry.

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

Brad. O Will, times are chang'd, 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 Bulloine,
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 courtesy to the earth:

„One snatch, good corporal,“
When I stole the half ox from John the vittler,
And domineer'd with it amongst good fellows.
In one night.

Brad. 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 Brad-
shaw, 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.

Brad. To London, Will, about a piece of service,
Wherein haply thou may'st pleasure me.

Will. What is it?

Brad. 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 'sise.
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?

Brad. A lean-fac'd writhen knave,
Hawk-nos'd, and very hollow-ey'd,
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows;
Long hair down to his shoulders curled,
His chin was bare, but on his upper lip
A mustachio, which he wound about his ear.

Will. What apparel had he?

Brad. A watchet satin doublet all so torn,
The inner side did bear the greatest show;
A pair of threadbare velvet hose, seam-rent,
A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off,
'T was bad, but yet it serv'd to hide the plate.

Will. Sirrah, Shakebag, canst thou remember, since
we troll'd the bowl at Sittingburn, where I broke the
tapster's head of the Lion with a cudgel stick?

Brad. 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 the plate?

Brad. Who, I pray thee, good Will?

Will. Why, 't was one Jack Fitten; he 's now in
Newgate for stealing a horse, and shall be arraign'd the
next 'sise.

Brad. Why then, let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten
forth;

For I 'll back and tell him who robb'd him of his plate;
This cheers my heart. — Master Greene, I 'lt leave you,
For I must to the isle of Sheppy with speed.

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

Brad. 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, gentlemen, shall we have
your company to London?

Gre. 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.

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

Gre. Well, this it is: Arden of Feversham
Hath highly wrong'd me about the abbey land,
That no revenge but death will serve the turn:
Will you two kill him? here are 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.

Shak. Where is he?

Gre. He is now at London, in Aldersgate street.

Shak. He 's dead as if he had been condemn'd by an act of parliament, if once Black Will and I swear his death.

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

Will. My fingers itch 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 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 hansel the match withal. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Here enters MICHAEL.

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

*Here enter ARDEN and FRANCKLIN, and hear
MICHAEL read this letter.*

My duty remember'd, Mrs. 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 gall'd horse's back. Thus

*hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather
impestrate mercy of your meek hands, I end*

Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.

Ard. Why, you paltry knave,

Stand you here loit'ring, knowing my affairs,
What haste my business craves to send to Kent?

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

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

(Then he gives him the letter.)

See, Master Francklin, here is 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 enter GREENE, WILL, and SHAKEBAG.

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull?
'T is Mosbie's sister: come I once at home,
I 'll rouse her from remaining in my house.
Now, Master Francklin, let 's go walk in Paul's,
Come, but a turn or two, and then away. [*Exeunt.*]

Gre. The first is Arden, and that is his man,
The other is Francklin, Arden's dearest friend.

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

Gre. Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case,
But stand close, and take your 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.]

Shak. 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.

Shak. 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 A Prentice.

Pren. 'T is 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, draw, I am almost kill'd.

Pren. We 'll tame you, I warrant.

Will. Zounds, I am tame enough already.

Here enter ARDEN, FRANCKLIN, and MICHAEL.

Ard. What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

Fran. 'T is nothing but some bawbling paltry fray, Devis'd to pick men's pockets in the throng.

Ard. Is 't nothing else? Come, Francklin, let us away.
[*Exeunt.*]

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

Pren. 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.

Gre. I had a glimpse of him and his companion. — Why, sirs, Arden 's as well as I; I met him and Francklin going merrily to the ordinary again. What, dare you not do it?

Will. Yes, sir, we dare do it, but were my consent to give, 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.

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

Will. Why, thou see'st it is broke, doest thou not?

Shak. 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 escap'd us, and pass'd by unthought on;
But forbearance is no acquittance,
Another time we 'll do it, I warrant thee.

Gre. I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,
And let 's 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 would'st thou charm me to effect this deed,
Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee.
Say, thou see'st Mōsbie kneeling at my knees,
Off'ring me service for my high attempt:
And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,
Come, with a lowly courtesy to the earth,
Saying, „Take this, but for thy quartering;“

„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 glu'd with summer's parching heat,
Ne'er long'd so much to see a running brook,
As I to finish Arden's tragedy.
See'st 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.

Gre. Why, that's well said, but what says Shakebag?

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

Gre. So should it fare with men of firm resolve.
And now, sirs, seeing this accident
Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success,
Let us bethink us on 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?

Mich. My master hath new supp'd,
And I am going to prepare his chamber.

Gre. Where supp'd Master Arden?

Mich. 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 knock'd.

Mich. Nay, an you be offended, I 'll be gone.

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

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

Gre. Because I think, you love your mistress better.

Mich. So think not I, but say, i' faith, what, if I should?

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

Mich. Why, have I two or three, what 's that to thee?

Will. You deal too mildly with the peasant; thus it is:
'T is 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 foster'd in the coast of Kent.
How comes it then that such a knave as you
Dare swear a matter of such consequence?

Gre. Ah, Will!

Will. Tush, give me leave, there is no more but this:
Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all;
And hadst thou, or shouldst thou utter it,
We have devis'd a complot 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,
Mark'd 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.

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

Gre. So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,
And thou disburden'd of the oath thou mad'st.

Mich. Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,
Sith you have urg'd me so apparently,
That I have vow'd 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 you please.
Now it were good we parted company;
What I have promised I will perform.

Will. Should you deceive us, 't would go wrong
with you.

Mich. I will accomplish all I have reveal'd.

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

[*Exeunt* WILL, GREENE, and SHAKEBAG.]

Manet MICHAEL.

Mich. 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 to eat him up.
Ah! harmless Arden, how hast thou misdones,
That thus thy gentle life is levell'd 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 fraudulent smile,
As unsuspected, to the slaughter-house.
So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress;
So have I promis'd 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 resolv'd, and Arden needs must die.

[*Exit* MICHAEL.]

A C T III.

SCENE I.

Here enter ARDEN, *and* FRANCKLIN.

Arđ. No, Francklin, 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 crop 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 reclaim'd.
Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,
And reprehension makes her vice to grow,
As Hydra's head, that flourish'd by decay.
Her faults, methinks, are painted in my face,
For every searching eye to over-read,
And Mosbie's name, a scandal unto mine,
Is deeply trenched in my blushing brow.
Ah! Francklin, Francklin, when I think on this,
My heart's grief rends my other powers,
Worse than the conflict at the hour of death.

Fran. 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.

Ard. My house is irksome, there I cannot rest.

Fran. Then stay' with me in London, go not home.

Ard. 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, Francklin, here it lies,
That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

Here enters MICHAEL.

Fran. Forget your griefs awhile, here comes your
man.

Ard. What a clock is 't, sirrah?

Mich. Almost ten.

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

[*Exeunt* ARDEN, and MICHAEL.]

Manet FRANCKLIN.

Fran. I pray you, go before, I 'll follow you. —
Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy!
What pity-moving words, what deep-fetch'd sighs,
What grievous groans, and overlading woes,
Accompany this gentle gentleman!
Now will he shake his care-oppressed head,
Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth,
Asham'd to gaze upon the open world;
Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,
Looking that ways for a 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.

Mich. My master would desire you come to bed.

Fran. Is he himself already in his bed?

[*Exit* FRANCKLIN.]

Manet MICHAEL.

Mich. He is, and fain would have the light away. —
Conflicting thoughts, encamped in my breast,
Awake me with the echo of their strokes;
And I, a judge to censure either side,
Can give to neither wished victory.
My master's kindness pleads to me for life,

With just demand, and I must grant it him.
My mistress she hath forc'd 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-fac'd fellow, pitiless Black Will,
And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,
(Two rougher ruffians never liv'd in Kent,)
Have sworn my death if I infringe my vow: —
A dreadful thing to be consider'd of.
Methinks I see them with their bolster'd 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
Gape 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 Francklin, help,
Call up the neighbours, or we are but dead.

Here enter FRANCKLIN, and ARDEN.

Fran. What dismal outcry calls me from my rest?

Ard. What hath occasion'd such a fearful cry?

Speak, Michael, hath any injur'd thee?

Mich. Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleep,
Upon the threshold leading 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.

Ard. So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard,
What, are the doors fast lock'd, and all things safe?

Mich. I cannot tell, I think I lock'd the doors.

Ard. I like not this, but I 'll go see myself. —
Ne'er trust me, but the doors were all unlock'd.
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 Francklin, let us go to bed.

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

SCENE II.

Here enter WILL, GREENE, and SHAKEBAG.

Shak. Black night hath hid the pleasure of the day
And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth,
And with the black fold of her cloudy rob,
Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,
In which sweet silence such as we triumph.
The lazy minutes linger on their time,
As loath 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.

Gre. 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 scarce go:
This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

Shak. How now, Will, become a precisian?
Nay, then let us go sleep, when bugs and fears
Shall kill our courages with their fancies' work.

Will. Why, Shakebag, thou mistak'st me much,
And wrong'st me too in telling me of fear.
Wer't not a serious thing we go about,
It should be slipp'd, till I had fought with thee,
To let thee know I am no coward, I.
I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

Shak. Why, thy speech bewray'd an inly kind of fear,
And savour'd 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.

Shak. This is the door; but soft, methinks 't is shut.
The villain Michael hath deceived us.

Will. Soft, let me see, Shakebag, — 't is shut, indeed.
Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

Shak. It will not be: the white-liver'd peasant
Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

Will. And he shall buy his merriment as dear,
As ever coystril 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.

Shak. And let me never draw a sword again,
Nor prosper in the twilight, cock-shut 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 his villainy.

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

Shak. He were a villain, an he would not swear.
'T would make a peasant swear among his boys,
That ne'er durst say before but yea and no,
To be thus flouted of a coystril.

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-ear'd cur,
And then let me alone to handle him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Here enter ARDEN, FRANCKLIN, and MICHAEL.

Ard. 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 Francklin, you shall go with me.
This night I dreamed, that, being in a park,
A toil was pitch'd to over-throw the deer,
And I, upon a little rising hill,
Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach.
Even there, methought, a gentle slumber took me,

And summon'd all my parts to sweet repose.
But in the pleasure of this golden rest,
An ill-thew'd forester had remov'd the toil,
And rounded me with that beguiling home,
Which late, methought, was pitch'd to cast the deer.
With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,
And at the noise, another herd-man came
With falchon drawn, and bent it at my breast,
Crying aloud: „Thou art the game we seek!“
With this I wak'd, 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, Francklin, when I did awake,
I stood in doubt whether I wak'd or no:
Such great impression took this fond surprize;
God grant this vision deem'd me any good.

Fran. 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, procur'd your dream.

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

Fran. To such as note their nightly fantasies,
Some one in twenty may incur belief;
But use it not, 't is but a mockery.

Ard. Come, Master Francklin, 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 Francklin, shall it not be so?

Fran. At your good pleasure, sir,
I 'll bear you company.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*Here enter MICHAEL at one door; GREENE, WILL, and
SHAKEBAG, at another door.*

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

Gre. First let 's hear what he can say.

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

Mich. For God's sake, sirs, let me excuse myself,
For here I swear by heaven, and earth, and all,
I did perform the outmost of my task,
And left the doors unbolted and unlock'd.
But see the chance: Francklin and my master
Were very late conferring in the porch,
And Francklin left his napkin where he sate,
With certain gold knit in it, as he said.
Being in bed, he did bethink himself,
And, coming down, he found the door unshut;
He lock'd 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, 't is better now than e'er it was.

Gre. But, Michael, is it true?

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

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

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

Mich. Why, I 'll agree to any thing you 'll have me.
So you will accept of my company. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Here enter MOSBIE.

Mos. Disturbed thoughts drive me from company,
And dry 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 stuff'd 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 day-light fresh to me:
But since I climb'd 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 hedg'd 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 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 make 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:
'T is 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 within my breast,
Till by the force thereof my part consume.
Ah, Mosbie!

Mos. Such deep-fet airs like to a cannon's burst,
Discharg'd against a ruinated wall,
Break my relenting heart in thousand pieces.
Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore,
Thou know'st it well; and 't is 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.

Mos. How mean you that?

Alice. Thou know'st how dearly Arden loved me.

Mos. And then?

Alice. And then — conceal the rest, for 't is too bad,
Lest that my words be carried with the wind,
And publish'd in the world to both our shames.
I pray thee, Mosbie, let our spring-time wither,
Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.
Forget, I pray thee, what hath pass'd betwixt us,
For now I blush, and tremble at the thoughts.

Mos. What, are you chang'd?

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, 't is thou hast rifled me of that,
And made me slanderous to all my kin:
Even in my forehead is thy name engraven —
A mean artificer; — that low-born name!
I was bewitch'd! — Woe worth the hapless hour,
And all the causes that enchanted me!

Mos. Nay, if thou 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:
Foreslow'd advantages, and spurn'd 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 weigh'd down all thy wealth,
Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee.
This certain good I lost for changing bad,
And wrapp'd my credit in thy company.
I was bewitch'd, — that is no theme of thine,
And thou, unhallowed, hast enchanted me.
But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,
And put another sight upon these eyes,
That show'd my heart a raven for a dove.
Thou art not fair, I view'd thee not till now;
Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not.
And now the rain hath beaten off thy guilt,
Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.
It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,
But mads me that I ever 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 believ'd.
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'erwhelm'd?
Wilt thou not hear? what malice stops thine ears?
Why speak'st 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 my good turns with this little fault,
And I deserve not Mosbie's muddy looks.
A fence of trouble is not thicken'd, still;
Be clear again, I 'll ne'er more trouble thee.

Mos. O no, I am a base artificer;
My wings are feather'd for a lowly flight.
Mosbie? fye! no, not for a thousand pound,
Make love to you? why, 't is 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,
And weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns.
So, whatsoe'er my Mosbie's father was,
Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

Mos. 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.

Mos. Soft, Alice, for here comes somebody.

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

Brad. 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 bear,
'T is almost supper time, thou shalt stay with us.

[Exit BRADSHAW.]

Then she reads the letter.

„We have miss'd of our purpose at London, but
shall perform it by the way. We thank our neigh-
bour Bradshaw. Yours, Richard Greene.“

How likes my love the tenour of this letter?

Mos. Well, were his date completed and expired.

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

Mos. Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI.

Here enter GREENE, WILL, and SHAKEBAG.

Shak. 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.

Shak. Ay, haply thou hast pick'd 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
Than 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 Bulloine,
And thou canst brag of nothing that thou hast done.

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

[*Then they fight.*]

Gre. I pray you, sirs, listen to Aesop'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.

Shak. 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.*]

Gre. 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.

Shak. Why, that thou shalt see, if he comes this way.

Gre. 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 enter ARDEN, FRANCKLIN, *and* MICHAEL.

Mich. 'T were best that I went back to Rochester;
The horse halts downright, it were not good,
He travell'd in such pain to Feversham;
Removing of a shoe may haply help it.

Ard. Well, get you back to Rochester; but, sirrah, see
Ye overtake us ere we come to Rainham Down,
For it will be very late ere we get home.

Mich. [*Aside.*] Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will
and Shakebag,
That thou shalt never go further than that Down,
And therefore have I prick'd the horse on purpose,
Because I would not view the massacre.

[*Exit* MICHAEL.]

Ard. Come, Master Francklin, onward with your tale.

Fran. I assure you, Sir, you task me much,
A heavy blood is gather'd 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.

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

Fran. Do you remember where my tale did leave?

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

Fran. She being reprehended for the fact,
Witness produc'd that took her with the deed,
Her glove brought in which there she left behind,
And many other assured arguments,
Her husband ask'd her, whether it were not so?

Ard. Her answer then? I wonder how she look'd,
Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths,
And at the instant so approv'd upon her.

Fran. 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-stain'd face;
Then hemm'd she out, to clear her voice should seem,
And with a majesty address'd herself
To encounter all their accusations.

Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more:
This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.

Ard. 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.

Shak. Stand close, Will; I hear them coming.

Here enter Lord CHEINY with his men.

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

L. Ch. Is it so near night as it seems?

Or will this black-fac'd evening have a shower? —

What, Master Arden? you are well met,

I have long'd this fortnight's day to speak with you;

You are a stranger, man, in the isle of Sheppy.

Ard. Your honour's always bound to do you service.

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

Ard. My man 's coming after,

But here 's my honest friend that came along with me.

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

Fran. Ay, my good Lord, and highly bound to you.

L. Ch. You and your friend, come home and sup
with me.

Ard. 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. Ch. 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.

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

L. Ch. One of you stay my horse at the top of the hill. —
What, Black Will, for whose purse wait you?

Thou wilt be hang'd in Kent, when all is done.

Will. Not hang'd, God save your honour,
I am your beadsman, bound to pray for you.

L. Ch. I think thou ne'er saidst prayer in all thy life. —
One of you give him a crown, —

And, sirrah, leave this kind of life.

If thou be'st 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 mile together.

[*Exeunt.*]

Manent 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 levell'd at his heart.
I would his crown were molten down his throat.

Shak. Arden, thou hast wond'rous 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.

Gre. What, is he down? Is he dispatch'd?

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

Gre. The devil he is! Why, sirs, how escap'd he?

Shak. When we were ready to shoot,
Comes Mylord Cheiny to prevent his death.

Gre. The Lord of heaven hath preserved him.

Will. Preserv'd? a fig! the Lord Cheiny hath pre-
serv'd him,

And bids him to a feast to his house at Shurland.

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.

Gre. Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden;
O, how she 'll chafe when she hears of this!

Shak. 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 plot the news to cut him off to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

*Here enter ARDEN and his Wife, FRANCKLIN, and
MICHAEL.*

Ard. See, how the hours, guardians of heaven's gate,
Have by their toil remov'd the darksome clouds,
That Sol may well discern the trampled pace,
Wherein he wont to guide his golden car:
The season fits, come, Francklin, let 's away.

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

Ard. 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 Mylord Cheiny;
For so his honour late commanded me.

Alice. Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses;
Home is a wild-cat to a wand'ring wit.
The time hath been, — 'would, God, it were no past —
That honours, title, nor a Lord's command,
Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.
But my deserts or your deserves decay,
Or both; yet if true love may seem desert,
I merit still to have thy company.

Fran. 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.

Ard. 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 stol'n; therefore I 'll stay behind.

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

Alice. No, no, not now.

Ard. 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.

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

[*Exit ALICE.*]

Fran. Come, Michael; are our horses ready?

Mich. 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 mistress' nag.

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

Ard. Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the isle
of Sheppy,
To Mylord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.

[*Exeunt ARDEN, and FRANCKLIN.*]

Manet MICHAEL.

Mich. 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 a long home.

Here enters The Painter.

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

Cla. How now, Michael, how doth my mistress,
And all at home?

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

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

Mich. All 's well but Susan, she is sick.

Cla. Sick, of what disease?

Mich. Of a great fever.

Cla. A fear, of what?

Mich. A great fever.

Cla. A fever? God forbid!

Mich. Yes, 'faith, and of a lordane too, as big as yourself.

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

Mich. I' faith, to keep her from the painter.

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

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

Cla. What mean you by that?

Mich. Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining of wenches' petticoats, and we servingmen put horns to them, to make them become sheep.

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

Mich. What, with a dagger made of a pencil? 'Faith, 't is too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win Susan.

Cla. 'Would, Susan's love lay upon this stroke.

[*Then he breaks MICHAEL's head.*]

Here enter MOSBIE, GREENE, and ALICE.

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

Cla. 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 liv'd 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's 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.

Mos. 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 touch'd, 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.

Gre. Mosbie, leave protestations now,
And let 's bethink us what we have to do;
Black Will and Shakebag I have plac'd in the broom,
Close watching Arden's coming; let 's to them,
And see what they have done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Here enter ARDEN and FRANKLIN.

Ard. O ferryman, where art thou?

Here enters The Ferryman.

Fer. Here, here! go before to the boat,
And I will follow you.

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

Fer. Fie! what a mist is here!

Ard. This mist, my friend, is mystical,
Like to a good companion's smoky brain,
That was half drown'd with new ale over night.

Fer. 'T were pity but his scull were opened,
To make more chimney room.

Fran. Friend, what is thy opinion of this mist?

Fer. I think 't is like to a curs'd 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.

Ard. Speak'st thou this of thine own experience?

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

Fran. By the moon? how? I pray thee.

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

Ard. Yes, I pray thee, good ferryman.

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

Fran. Another moon?

Fer. Ay, and it hath influences, and eclipses.

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

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

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

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

Fer. Nay, by my troth, Sir, but flat knavery.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Here enter WILL at one door, and SHAKEBAG at another.

Shak. Oh Will, where art thou?

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

Shak. I pray thee, speak still, that we may meet by
the sound,
Or 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?

Shak. 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 pass'd?

Will. Why, didst thou hear any?

Shak. Ay, that I did.

Will. My life for thine, it was Arden and his companion, and then all our labour 's lost.

Shak. Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may haply loose 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.*]

Shak. Help, Will, help! I am almost drown'd.

Here enters The Ferryman.

Fer. Who 's that, that calls for help?

Will. 'T was none here, 't was thou thyself.

Fer. I came to help him that call'd 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 company hath pass'd your ferry this morning?

Fer. None but a couple of gentlemen, that went to dine at Mylord Cheiny's.

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

Fer. Why, Sir, will you have any letters carried to them?

Will. No, Sir, get you gone.

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

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

Fer. Why, Sir, this is no hock monday, you are deceiv'd. What 's his name, I pray you, Sir?

Shak. His name is Black Will.

Fer. I hope to see him one day hang'd upon a hill.
[Exit Ferryman.]

Shak. See, how the sun hath clear'd the foggy mist, Now we have miss'd the mark of our intent.

Here enter GREENE, MOSBIE, and ALICE.

Mos. 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 discern'd? Yet did we hear their horses as they pass'd.

Gre. Have they escap'd you then, and pass'd the ferry?

Shak. 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 toil'd in all my life,
In following so slight a task as this.

Mos. How cam'st thou so beray'd?

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.

Gre. 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 SHAK.]

Mos. 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.

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

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Here enter DICK REEDE, and A Sailor.

Sail. 'Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end.
His conscience is too liberal, and he too niggardly,
To part from anything may do thee good.

Reede. He is coming from Shurland 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,
I 'll curse the carle, and see what that will do.

Here enter FRANCKLIN, ARDEN, and MICHAEL.

See where he comes, to further my intent. —
Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea,
My coming to you was about the plot of ground,
Which wrongfully you detain from me:
Although the rent of it be very small,
Yet will it help my wife and children,
Which here I leave in Feversham, God knows,
Needy and bare: for Christ's sake, let them have it.

Ard. Francklin, hear'st 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 doest,
I 'll lay thee up so close a twelvemonth'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 detain'st for me,
(I speak it in an agony of spirit)
Be ruinous and fatal unto thee!

Either there be butcher'd 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 cursed days!

Fran. 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.*]

Ard. It is the railing'st 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.

Fran. I think so, Master Arden.

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

Fran. Happy the change, that alters for the best!
But see in any case you make no speech

Of the cheer we had at Mylord Cheiny's,
Although most bounteous and liberal;
For that will make her think herself more wrong'd,
In that we did not carry her along,
For sure she griev'd that she was left behind.

Ard. Come, Francklin, let us strain to mend our pace,
And take her unawares playing the cook.

Here enter ALICE and MOSBIE.

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

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

Ard. Who 's that? Mosbie? what! so familiar?
Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,
Untwine those arms.

Alice. Ay, with a sugar'd kiss let them untwine.

Ard. Ah, Mosbie, perjurd beast, bear this and all!

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

Fran. O monstrous! Nay, then 't is time to draw.

Alice. Help, help! they murder my husband.

Here enter WILL, and SHAKEBAG.

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

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

[Exeunt MOSBIE, WILL, and SHAKEBAG.]

Alice. Ah, Arden! what folly blinded thee?
Ah, jealous harebrain'd man, what hast thou done?
When we, to welcome thy intended sport,
Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,
Thou drew'st thy sword, enrag'd with jealousy,
And hurt'st thy friend, whose thoughts were free from harm;
All for a worthless kiss, and joining arms,

Both done but merrily to try thy patience.
Aye me unhappy, that devis'd the jest,
Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood!

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

Alice. Couldst thou not see us friendly smile on this,
When we join'd arms, and when I kiss'd his cheek?
Hast thou not lately found me over-kind?
Didst thou not hear me cry: „they murder thee!“
Call'd I not help, to set my husband free?
No, ears and all were witch'd; ah me accurs'd,
To link in liking with a frantick 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 think'st me light;
If sad, thou sayst the sullens trouble me;
If well attired, thou think'st I will be gadding;
If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye.
Thus am I still, and shall be while I die,
Poor wench, abus'd by thy misgovernment.

Ard. But is 't for truth, that neither thou nor he
Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour?

Alice. The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts.

Ard. 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, hadst thou lov'd me as thou doest pretend,
Thou wouldst have mark'd the speeches of thy friend,
Who, going wounded from the place, he said:
His skin was pierc'd only through my device;
And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault,

Thou wouldst have followed him, and seen him dress'd,
And cried him mercy, whom thou hast misdona.
Ne'er shall my heart be eas'd till this be done.

Ard. Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy
will,

Whate'er it be; for that I injur'd thee
And wrong'd my friend, shame scourgeth my offence.
Come thou thyself and go along with me,
And be a mediator 'twixt us two.

Fran. Why, Master Arden, know you what you do?
Will you follow him that hath dishonour'd you?

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

Fran. Why, Mosbie taunted your husband with the
horn!

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

Fran. Suppose, 't is true, yet is it dangerous
To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.

Alice. A fault confess'd is more than half amends.
But men of such ill spirit as yourself,
Work crosses and debates 'twixt man and wife.

Ard. I pray thee, gentle Francklin, hold thy peace;
I know my wife counsels me for the best.
I 'll seek out Mosbie, where his wound is dress'd,
And salve this hapless quarrel if I may.

[*Exeunt* ARDEN, and ALICE.

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

[*Exit* FRANCKLIN.

A C T V.

SCENE I.

Here enter WILL, SHAKEBAG, and GREENE.

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

Gre. I think we shall never do it. Let us give it over.

Shak. Nay, zounds! we 'll kill him, though we be hang'd at his door for our labour.

Will. Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived in Lõndon these 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 crack'd as many blades, as thou hast done nuts.

Gre. 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 alehouse men would stand every morning with a quart pot in their hands, saying: „Will it please your worship drink?“ He that had not done so, had been sure to have had his sign pull'd 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 enter ALICE, and MICHAEL.

Gre. Hence, Will, here comes Mistress Arden.

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

Mich. Why, I saw them when they both shook hands,
When Mosbie bled, he even wept for sorrow,
And rail'd on Francklin 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, Francklin, 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 shalt thou and Susan be made sure.

Mich. 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, an 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 miss'd you of your purpose yesternight?

Gre. 'T was 'long of Shakebag that unlucky villain.

Shak. Thou doest me wrong, I did as much as any.

Will. Nay then, Mistress Alice, I 'll tell you how it was.
When he should have lock'd with both his hilts,

He in a bravery flourish'd o'er his head;
With that comes Francklin 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 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, 't is 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 amaz'd, I could not strike.

Alice. Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,
For every drop of his detested blood,
I would have crammed angels in thy fist,
And kiss'd thee too, and hugg'd 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 impossible: But here comes he
That will, I hope, invent some surer means.
Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

Mos. 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 letst 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 walk'd about the chamber,
And twice or thrice I thought to have murder'd him.

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

Alice. Why, how long shall he live?

Mos. '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 as a villain.

Gre. And rather than you shall want, I 'll help
myself.

Mos. You, Master Greene, shall single Francklin 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?

Mos. Why —

Black Will and Shakebag lock'd within the counting-house,
Shall, at a certain watchword given, rush forth.

Will. What shall the watchword be?

Mos. „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 'lt keep the key thyself.

Mos. 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 murder'd, may suppose,
Some slave or other kill'd 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.

Shak. 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, 't is we must do the deed.
When this door opens next, look for his death.

Alice. Ah, 'would he now were here, that it might open!
I shall no more be clos'd in Arden's arms,
That, like the snakes of black Tisiphone,
Sting me with their embracing. 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 kiss'd 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.

Mich. Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

Alice. Who comes with him?

Mich. Nobody but Mosbie.

Alice. That 's well, Michael, fetch in the tables, and,
when thou hast done, stand before the counting-house door.

Mich. Why so?

Alice. Black Will is lock'd within, to do the deed.

Mich. What! shall he die to-night?

Alice. Ay, Michael.

Mich. But shall not Susan know it?

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

Mich. That 's brave. I 'll go fetch the tables.

Alice. But, Michael, heark to me a word or two:
When my husband is come in, lock the street door;
He shall be murder'd, or ere the guests come in.

[Exit MICHAEL.]

Here enter ARDEN, and MOSBIE.

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home?
Although I wish'd you to be reconcil'd,
'T was 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.

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

Ard. 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 purchas'd me ill friends,
And therefore will I ne'er frequent it more.

Mos. Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble!

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

Alice. I pray you, be not angry or displeas'd;
I 'll bid him welcome, seeing you 'll have it so. —
You are welcome, Master Mosbie, will you sit down?

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

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

Mos. Pardon me, Master Arden, I' ll away.

Ard. No, good Master Mosbie.

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

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

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

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

Mich. Nay, that 's a lie, for I have lock'd the doors.

Ard. 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.

Ard. Why, Alice! how can I do too much for him,
Whose life I have endanger'd without cause.

Alice. 'T is true, and seeing 't was 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 purchas'd me ill friends,
And I for you, God knows, have undeserv'd
Been ill spoken of in every place.
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.

Mos. 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.

Ard. 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.

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

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

Alice. It will, by then you have play'd a game at tables.

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

Mos. Three games for a French crown, sir, an
please you.

Ard. Content.

Then they play at the tables.

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.

Mich. To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

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

Ard. Marry, sir, there 's two for failing.

Mos. Ah, Master Arden, now I can take you!

Then Will pulls him down with a towel.

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

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

Mos. There 's for the pressing-iron you told me of.

Shak. And there 's for the ten pound in my sleeve.

Alice. What, groanst thou? nay, then give me the
weapon!

Take this for hind'ring Mosbie's love and mine.

Mich. O, mistress!

Will. Ah! that villain will betray us all.

Mos. Tush! fear him not, he will be secret.

Mich. Why, doest thou think I will betray myself?

Shak. In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,

The widow Chambley, 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 the blood.

Susan. [*Washing.*] The blood cleaves to the ground
and will not out.

Alice. But with my nailes I 'll scrape away the blood; —
The more I strive the more the blood appears.

Susan. What is the reason, mistress, can you tell?

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

Here enters MOSBIE.

Mos. 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.

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

Alice. 'T was thou that made me murder him.

Mos. What of that?

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

Mos. Keep thou it close, and 't is impossible.

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

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

Here enter ADAM FOWL, and BRADSHAW.

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

Mos. Because her husband is abroad so late,
A couple of ruffians threat'ned 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.

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

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

Gre. I saw him walking behind the abbey even now.

Here enters FRANCKLIN.

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

Fran. 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.

Mich. Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?

Or, an thou say'st the word, let us sit down too.

Susan. Peace, we have other matters now in hand.
I fear me, Michael, all will be bewray'd.

Mich. Tush! so it be known that I shall marry thee
in the morning, I care not though I be hang'd ere night.
But to prevent the worst, I 'll buy some ratsbane.

Susan. Why, Michael! wilt thou poison thyself?

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

Susan. Tush! Michael, fear not her, she's wife enough.

Mos. Sirrah, Michael, give us a cup of beer: —
Mistress Arden, here 's to your husband.

Alice. My husband?

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

Alice. Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came o'er
my heart;

My husband's being forth torments my mind.

I know something 's amiss, he is not well,

Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

Mos. She will undo us through her foolishness.

Gre. Fear not, Mistress Arden, he is well enough.

Alice. Tell not me; I know he is not well,
He was not wont for to stay thus late.

Good Master Francklin, 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.

Fran. I like not this, I pray God, all be well.

I 'll seek him out, and find him if I can.

[*Exeunt* FRANCK., MOSBIE, and GREENE.]

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

Mich. Leave that to my charge, let me alone. —

'T is very late, Master Bradshaw,
And there are many false knaves abroad,
And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

Brad. 'Faith, friend Michael, and thou say'st 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, smear'd 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 enter MOSBIE, and GREENE.

Mos. 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.

Gre. Well it behoves us to be circumspect.

Mos. Ay, for Francklin thinks that we have mur-
der'd him.

Alice. Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.

We 'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

Here enters MICHAEL.

Mich. 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.

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

Alice. Out at the backdoor, over the pile of wood,
And for one night lie at the Flow-de-Luce.

Mos. That is the next way to betray myself.

Gre. Alas! Mistress Arden, the watch will take me
here,

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.)

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

Gre. 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 enter The Mayor, and The Watch.

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

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

Alice. You are deceiv'd; 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. (*Aside*) I am glad it is no worse.

Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such?

Mayor. We are inform'd 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 FRANCKLIN.

Master Francklin, what mean you come so sad?

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

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

Fran. I know not, but behind the abbey,

There he lies murder'd in most piteous case.

Mayor. But, Master Francklin, are you sure 't is he?

Fran. I am too sure; would God, I were deceiv'd!

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

Fran. Ay, so they shall; come you along with us.

Alice. Wherefore?

Fran. Know you this handtowel and this knife?

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

Mich. 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?

Fran. I fear me, he was murder'd 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 murder'd 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.

Mich. Ay, truly.

Fran. 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 Francklin! God and Heaven can tell,
I loved him more than all the world beside.

But bring me to him, let me see his body.

Fran. 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. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Here enters SHAKEBAG solus.

Sha. The widow Chambley in her husband's days
I kept; and now he 's dead, she 's 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 follow'd me, I spurn'd 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* SHAKEBAG.]

SCENE III.

Here enter The Mayor, MOSBIE, ALICE, FRANCKLIN,
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 it 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 shouldst 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?

Fran. 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.

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

Fran. Those ruffians shall not 'scape; I will to London,
And get the council's warrant to apprehend them.

SCENE IV.

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 aboard some hoy,
And so to Flushing; there is no staying here.
At Sittingburn the watch was like to take me,
And, had not I with my buckler cover'd my head,
And ran 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 robb'd him and his man once at Gadshill.
Farewell, England! I 'll to Flushing now. *[Exit.*

SCENE V.

*Here enter The Mayor, MOSBIE, ALICE, MICHAEL,
SUSAN, and BRADSHAW.*

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

Brad. Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,
And I am by the law condemn'd 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 knew'st 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.

Mos. 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 villanies.
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.

Mos. For thee I mourn more than for myself;
Let it suffice I cannot save thee now.

Mich. An if your brother, and my mistress,
Had not promis'd me you in marriage,
I had never given consent to this foul deed.

Mayor. Leave to accuse eachother 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, as her sentence is, she must be burnt;
Michael and Bradshaw in Feversham
Must suffer death.

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

Mos. Fie upon women! this shall be my song;
But bear me hence, for I have liv'd too long.

Susan. Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my
hope.

Mich. 'Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

Brad. My blood be on his head who gave the sentence.

Mayor. To speedy execution with them all! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Here enters FRANKLIN.

Fran. 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 pass'd
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.
Black Will was burnt in Flushing at a stake,
Greene was hang'd at Ospring in Kent,
The painter fled, and how he died we know not.
But this above the rest is to be noted:
Arden lay murder'd in that plot of ground,
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 filed 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 glozing stuff.

THE END.

