

Renascence Editions

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Greene's Groats-worth of Wit

Robert Greene.

Note: this Renascence Editions text was transcribed by R.S. Bear, August 2000, from the text of the Wright edition of 1592 (S.T.C. No. 12245) and checked against that of *Elizabethan & Jacobean Pamphlets*, edited by George Saintsbury, 1892, which is the Thomas Creede edition of 1596. Any errors that have crept into the transcription are the fault of the present publisher. The text is in the public domain. Content unique to this presentation is copyright © 2000 The University of Oregon. For nonprofit and educational uses only. Send comments and corrections to the Publisher.

G R E E N S,
GROATS-VVORTH
of Wit,

bought with a
million of *Repentance*.

Describing the follie of youth, the falshoode of make-
shift flatterers, the miserie of the negligent,
and mischiefes of deceiuing
Courtezans.

Written before his death and published at his dyeing request.

Fælicem fuisse infaustum.

[image]

L O N D O N
Imprinted for William Wright.
1 5 9 2.

The printer to the gentle readers.



Haue published heere Gentlemen for your mirth and benefite *Greenes* groates worth of wit. VVith sundry of his pleasant discourses, ye haue beene before delighted: But now hath death giuen a period to his pen: onely this happened into my handes which I haue published for your pleasures: Accept it fauourably because it was his last birth and not least worth: In my poore opinion. But I will cease to praise that which is aboute my conceipt, and leaue it selfe to speake for it selfe: and so abide your learned censuring.

Yours VV. VV.

To the Gentlemen Readers.



Entlemen. The Swan sings melodiously before death, that in all his life vseth but a iarring sound. Greene though able inough to write, yet deeplier searched with sickenes than euer heeretofore, sendes you his Swanne like songe, for that he feares he shal ne[u]er againe carroll to you woonted loue layes, neuer againe discover to you youths pleasures. How euer yet sickennesse, riot, Incontinence, haue at once shown their extremitie, yet if I recouer, you shall all see, more fresh sprigs, then euer sprang from me, directing you how to liue, yet not diswading ye from loue. This is the last I haue writ, and I feare me the last I shall writ[e]. And how euer I haue beene censured for some of my former bookes, yet Gentlemen I protest, they were as I had speciall information. But passing them, I commend this to your fauourable censures, and like an Embrion without shape, I feare me will be thrust into the world. If I liue to ende it, it shall be otherwise: if not, yet will I commend it to your courtesies, that you may as well be acquainted with my repentant death, as you haue lamented my careles course of life. But as Nemo ante obitum felix, so Acta Exitus probat: Beseeching therefore to be deemed heereof as I deserue, I leaue the worke to your likinges, and leaue you to your delightes.

G R E E N E S.
G R O A T E S - V V O R T H

OF WIT.



IN an Iland bounded with the Ocean there was sometime a Cittie situated, made riche by Marchandize, and populous by long peace: the name is not mentioned in the Antiquarie, or els worne out by times Antiquitie, what it was greatly skilles not: but therein thus it happened. An old new made Gentleman herein dwelt, of no small credit, exceeding wealth, and large conscience: he had gathered from many to bestowe vpon one, for though he had two sonnes he estemed but one, that being as himselfe, brought vp to be golds bondman, was therefore held heire apparant of his ill gathered goods.

The other was a Scholler, and married to a proper Gentlewoman and therefore least regarded, for tis an old sayd saw: To learning & law, thers no greater foe than they that nothing know: yet was not the father altogether vnlettered, for he had good experience in a *Nouerint*, and by the vniuersall tearmes therein contained, had driuen many a yoong Gentleman to seeke vnknownen countries, wise he was, for he boare office in his parish and sate as formally in his foxfurd gowne, as if he had been a very vpriight dealing Burges: he was religious to, neuer without a booke at his belt, and a bolt in his mouthe, readye to shoote through his sinfull neighbor.

And Latin hee had some where learned, which though it were but little, yet was it profitable, for he had this Philosophie written in a ring, *Tu tibi cura*, which precept he curiously onserued, being in selfeloue so religious, as he held it no poynt of charitie to part with any thing, of which hee liuing might make vse.

But as all mortall things are momenta[r]ie, and no certaintie can bee founde in this vncertaine world: so *Gorinius*, (for that shall be this Usurers name) after many a gowtie pang that had pincht his exterior partes, many a curse of the people that mou[n]ted into heuens presence, was at last with his last summons, by a deadly disese arrested, wher-against when hee had long contended, and was by Phisitions giuen ouer, hee cald his two sonnes before him: and willing to performe the olde prouerbe *Qualis vita finis Ita*, he thus prepard himselfe, and admonished them. My sonnes (for so your mother said ye were) and so I assure my selfe one of you is, and of the other I will make no doubt.

You se the time is com, which I thought would neuer haue approched and we must now be seperated, I feare neuer to meete againe. This sixteene yeares daily haue I liude vexed with disease: and might I liue sixteen more, howe euer miserably, I should thinke it happye. But death is relentlesse, and will not be intreated witles: and knowes not what good my gold might do him: senseles & hath no pleasure in the delightful places I would offer him. In briefe, I thinke he hath with this foole my eldest sonne been brought vp in the vniuersitie, and therefore accounts that in riches is no vertue. But thou my son, (laying then his hand on the yongers head) haue thou another spirit: for without wealth, life is a death: what is gentry if welth be wanting, but bace seruile beggerie? Some comfort yet it is vnto me, to see how many Gallants sprunge of noble parents, haue croucht to *Gorinius* to haue sight of his gold: O gold, desired golde, admired golde! and haue lost their patrimonies to *Gorinius*, because they haue not returned by their day that adored creature! How many schollers haue written rimes in *Gorinius* praise, and receiued (after long capping and reuerence) a sixpeny reward in signe of my superficiall liberality. Breefly my yong *Lucanio* how I haue beene reuerenst thou seest, when honest men I confesse haue been set farre off: for to be rich is to bee any thing, wise, honest, worshipful, or what not. I tell thee my sonne: when I came first to this Citie my whole wardrop was onely a sute of white sheepe skins, my wealth an olde groat, my wooning, the wide world. At this instant (o grieffe to part with it) I haue in ready coine

threescore thousand pound, in plate and Jewels xv. thousand; in Bondes and specialties as much, in land nine hundred pound by the yeere: all which, *Lucanio* I bequeath to thee, onely I reserue for *Roberto* thy well red brother an olde groat, (being y^e stocke I first began with[^l]) wherewith I wish him to buy a groats-worth of wit: for he in my life hath reprood my maner of life, and therefore at my death, shall not be contaminated with corrupt gaine. Heere by the way Gentlemen must I digresse to shewe the reason of *Gorinius* present speach: *Roberto* being come from the Academie, to visit his father, there was a great feast prouided: where for table talke, *Roberto* knowing his father and most of the company to be execrable vsurers, inuayed mightely against the abhorred vice, insomuche that hee vrged teares from diuers of their eyes, and compunction in some of their hearts. Dinner being past, he comes to his father, requesting him to take no offence at his liberall speech, seeing what he had vttered was truth. Angry sonne (said he) no by my honesty (and that is som what I may say to you) but vse it still, and if thou canst perswade any of my neighbours from lending vpon vsurie I should haue the more customers: to which when *Roberto* would haue replyde hee shut himselfe into his studdy, and fell to tell ouer his mony.

This was *Robertos* offence: now returne, we to *sicke* *Gorinius*, who after he had thus vnequally distributed his goods and possessions, began to ask his sonnes how they liked his bequestes: either seemed agreed, and *Roberto* vrged him with nothing more than repentance of his [sin: Loke] to thine owne said he, fond boy, & come my *Lucanio*, let me giue thee good counsell before my death: as for you sir, your bookes are your counsellors, and therefore to them I bequeathe you. Ah *Lucanio*, my onely comfort, because I hope thou wilt as thy father be a gatherer, let me blesse thee before I dye. Multiply in welth my sonne by anie meanes thou maist, onely flye Alchymie, for therein are more deceites than her beggerlye Artistes haue words; and yet are the wretches more talkatiue then women. But my meaning is, thou shouldest not stand on conscience in causes of profite, but heape treasure vpon treasure, for the time of neede: yet seeme to be deuout, els shalt thou be held vyle: frequent holy exercises graue companie, and aboue al vse the conuersation of yoong Gentlemen, who are so wedded to prodigalitie, that once in a quarter necissitie knocks at their chamber doores: profer them kindnesse to relieue their wants, but be sure of good assurance: giue faire wordes till dayes of paiement come, & then vse my course, spare none: what though they tell of conscience (as a number will talke) looke but into the dealings of the world, and thou shalt see it is but idle words. Seest thou not many perish in the streetes, and fall to theft for neede: whom small succor would releue, then where is conscience, and why art thou bound to vse it more than other men? Seest thou not daily forgeries periuries, oppressions, rackinges of the poore, raisinges of rents, inhauncing of duties euen by them that should be al conscience, if they ment as they speake: but *Lucanio* if thou reade well this booke (and with that hee reacht him *Machaiuels* workes at large) thou shalt se, what tis to be foole-holy as to make scruple of conscience where profit presents it selfe.

Besides, thou hast an instance by the threed-bare brother heere, who willing to do no wrong, hath lost his childes right: for who woulde wish any thing to him, that knowes not how to vse it.

So much *Lucanio* for conscience: & yet I know not whats the reason, but some-what stinges mee inwardly when I speake of it. I, father, said *Roberto*, it is the worme of conscience, that vrges you at the last houre to remember your life, that eternall life may follow your repentance. Out foole (sayd this miserable father[^l],) I feele it now, it was onely a stitch. I will forwarde with my exhortation to *Lucanio*. As I said my sonne, make spoyle of yoong Gallants, by insiuating thy selfe amongst them, & be not mooued to think their Auncestors were famous, but consider thine were obscure, and that thy father was the first Gentleman of the name: *Lucanio*, thou are yet a Bachelor, and soe keepe thee till thou meete with one that is thy equall, I meane in wealth: regarde not beautie, it is but a bayte to entice thine neighbors eye: and the most faire are commonly most fond, vse not too many familiars, for few prooue

friendes, and as easie it is to weigh the wind, as to diue into the thoughts of worldlye glosers. I tell thee *Lucanio*, I haue seene foure- scoore winters besides the od seuen, yet saw I neuer him, that I esteemed as my friend but gold, that desired creature, whom I haue so deerely loued, and found so firme a frind, as nothing to me hauing it hath beene wanting. No man but may thinke deerly of a true friend, & so do I of it laying it vnder sure locks, and lodging my heart there-with.

But now (Ah my *Lucanio*) now must I leaue it, and to thee I leaue with this lessen, loue none but thy selfe, if thou wilt liue esteemd. So turning him to his studdy, where his chiefe treasure lay, he loud cryde out in the wise mans words, *O mors quam amara*, O death how bitter is thy memorie to him that hath al pleasures in this life, & so with two or three lamentable grones hee left his life: and to make short worke, was by *Lucanio* his sonne interd, as the custome is with some solemnitie: But leauing him that hath left the world to him y^t censureth of euery worldly man, passe wee to his sonnes: and se how his long laid vp store is by *Lucanio* lookyd into. The youth was of condition simple, shamfast, & flexible to any counsaile, which *Roberto* perceiuing, and pondering howe little was lefte to him, grew into an inward contempt of his fathers vnequall legacie, and determinate resolution to worke *Lucanio* al possible inurie: herevpon thus conuerting the sweetnes of his studdye to the sharpe thirst of reuenge, he (as Enuie is seldome idle) sought out fit companions to effect his vnbrotherly resolution. Neither in such a case is ill company farre to seeke, for y^e Sea hath scarce so [many] ioperdies, as populous Citties haue deceiuing Syrens, whose eies are Adamants, whose words are witchcrafts, whose doores lead downe to death. With one of these female serpents *Roberto* consorts, and they conclude what euer they compassed equally to share to their contentes. This match made, *Lucanio* was by his brother brought to the bush, where he had scarce pruned his wings but hee was fast limd, and *Roberto* had what he expected. But that wee may keepe forme, you shall heare howe it fortun'd.

Lucanio being on a time verie pensiue, his brother brake with him in these tearmes. I wonder *Lucanio* why you are disconsolate, that want not any thinge in the worlde that may worke your content. If wealth may delight a man, you are with that suffic[i]ently furnisht: if credit may procure any comfort, your word I knowe well, is as well accepted as any mans obligation: in this Citie, are faire buildings and pleasant gardens, and cause of solace: of them I am assured you haue your choyse. Consider brother you are yoong, then plod not altogether in meditating on our fathers precepts: which howsoeuer they sauored of profit, were most vnsauerly to one of your yeeres applied. You must not thinke but certaine Marchants of this Citie expect your company, sundry Gentlemen desire your familiarity, and by co[n]uersing with such, you will be accounted a Gentleman: otherwise a pesant, if ye liue thus obscurely. Besides which I had almost forgot, and then had all the rest beene nothing, you are a man by nature furnished with all exquisite proportion, worthy the loue of any courtly lady, be she neuer so amorous: you haue wealth to maintaine her, of women not little longed for: wordes to court her you shall not want, for my selfe will be your secretarie. Brieflie, why stande I to distinguish abilitie in perticularities, when in one word it may be said which no man can gainsay, *Lucanio* lacketh nothing to delight a wife, nor any thing but a wife to delight him? My yoong maister beeing thus clawd, and puft vp with his owne praise, made no longer delay, but hauing on his holidiaie hose hee trickt himselfe vp, and like a fellowe that meant good sooth, hee clapt his brother on the shoulder and said. Faith brother *Roberto*, and ye say the worde lets go seeke a wife while tis hoat, both of vs together, Ile pay well, and I dare tourne you loose to say as well as any of them all, well Ile doo my best said *Roberto* and since ye are so forwarde lets goe nowe and try your good fortune.

With this fourth they walke, and *Roberto* went directly toward the house where *Lamilia* (for so wee

call the Curtizan) kept her hospitall, which was in the suburbes of the Citie, pleasantly seated, and made more delectable by a pleasaunt garden wherein it was scituate. No soner come they within ken, but Mistris *Lamilia* like a cunning angler made readye her change of baytes that shee might effect *Lucanios* bane: and to begin she discouered from her window her beauteous enticing face, and taking a lute in her hand that shee might the rather allure, shee sung this sonnet with a delicious voyce,

Lamilias song.

*Fie fie on blind fancie,
It hinder youths ioy:
Faire virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.*

*When Loue learned first the A B C of delight,
And knew no figures, nor conceited phrase:
He simplie gaue to due desert her right,
He led not louers in darke winding wayes:
He plainly wild to loue, or flatly answerd no,
But now who lists to proue, shall find it nothing so,
Fie fie then on fancie,
It hinders youths ioy,
Faire virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.*

*For since he learnd to vse the Poets pen,
He learnd likewise with smoothing words to faine,
Witching chast eares with trothles tungs of men,
And wronged faith with falshood and disdaine.
He giues a promise now, anon he sweareth no,
Who listeth for to proue shall find his changings so:
Fie fie then on fancie,
It hinders youthes ioy,
Faire virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.*

While this painted sepulcher was shadowing her corrupting guilt, Hiena-like alluring to destruction, *Roberto* and *Lucanio* vnder her windowe kept euen pace with euery stop of her instrument, but especially my yoong Ruffler, (that before time like a bird in a cage, had beene prentise for three liues or one and twentie yeeres at lest to extreame Auarice his deceased father). O twas a world to see how he sometime simperd it, striuing to set a countenance on his new turnd face, that it might seeme of wainscot prooffe, to behold her face without blushing: anone he would stroke his bow-bent-leg, as if he ment to shoote loue arrows from his shins: then wypt his chin (for his beard was not yet growen) with a gold wrought handkercher, whence of purpose he let fall a handfull of Angels. This golden shower was no

sooner rained, but *Lamila* ceast her song, and *Roberto* (assuring himselfe the foole was caught) came to *Lucanio* (that stood now as one that had stard *Medusa* in the face) and awaked him from his amazement with these words: What in a traunce brother? whence springs these dumps? are yee amazd at this obiect? or long ye to become loues subiect? Is there not difference betweene this delectable life, and the imprisonment you haue all your life hitherto indured? If the sight and hearing of this harmonious beutie work in you effects of wonder, what will the possession of so diuine an essence, wherein beutie & Art dwell in their perfect excellence. Brother said *Lucanio* lets vse fewe words, and she be no more then a woman, I trust youle helpe me to win her? and if you doe, well, I say no more, but I am yours till death vs depart, and what is mine shal be yours, world without end Amen.

Roberto smiling at his simplenes, helpte him to gather vppe his dropt golde, and without anye more circumstance, led him to *Lamilias* house: for of such places it may be said as of hell.

Noctes atque dies patet atri iannua ditis.

So their doores are euer open to entice youth to distruction. They were no sooner entred but *Lamilia* her selfe like a second *Helen*, court like begins to salute *Roberto*, yet did her wandring eie glance often at *Lucanio*: the effect of her intertainment consisted in these tearmes, that to her simple house Signor *Roberto* was welcome, & his brother the better welcome for his sake: albeit his good report confirmde by his present demeaner were of it selfe enough to giue him deserued entertainment in any place how honourable soeuer: mutuall thankes returnd, they lead this prodigall child into a parlor garnished with goodly portratures of amiable personages: nere which an excellent consort of musike began at their entraunce to play. *Lamilia* seeing *Licanio* shamefast, tooke him by the hand, and tenderly wringing him vsed these words: Beleeue me Gentleman, I am very sorie that our rude entertainment is such, as no way may worke your content, for this I haue noted since your first entering that your countenance hath beene heauie, and the face being the glasse of the hart, assures me the same is not quiet: would ye wish any thing heere that might content you, say but the word, and assure ye of present diligence to effect your full delight. *Lucanio* being so farre in loue, as he perswaded himselfe without her grant hee could not lie, had a good meaninge to vtter his minde but wanting fit wordes, hee stode like a trewant that lackt a prompter, or a plaiier that being out of his part at his first entrance, is faine to haue the booke to speake what he should performe. Which *Roberto* perceiuing, replied thus in his behalfe: Madame the Sunnes brightness daisleth the beholders eies, the maiestie of Gods, amazeth humane men, *Tullie* Prince of Orators once fainted though his cause were good, and hee that tamed monsters stode amated at Beauties ornaments: Then blame not this yoong man though hee replied not, for he is blinded with the beutie of your sunne darkening eies, made mute with the celestiall organe of your voyce, and feare of that rich ambush of amber colored darts, whose pointes are leueld against his hart. Well Signor *Roberto* said shee, how euer you interpret their shape leuell, be sure they are not bent to doo him hurt, and but that modestie blindes vs poore maydens from vttering the inward sorrow of our mindes, perchance the cause of greefe is ours how euer men do colour, for as I am a virgin I protest, (and therewithall shee tainted her cheekes with a vermillion blush) I neuer saw Gentleman in my life in my eie so gracious as is *Lucanio* onely this is my greefe, that either I am dispised for that he scornes to speake, or els (which is my greater sorrow) I feare he cannot speake. Not speake Gentlewoman quoth *Lucanio*? that were a iest indeed, yea I thanke God I am sounde of wind and lym, only my hart is not as it was wont, but and you be as good as your word that will soone be well, and so crauing ye of more acquaintance, in token of my plaine meaning

receiue this diamond, which my old father loud deerely: and with that deliuered her a ringe wherein was a pointed diamonds of wonderfull worth. Which she accepting with a lowe conge, returnd him a silke Riband for a fauour tyed with a true loues knot, which he fastened vnder a faire Iewel on his Beuer felt.

After this *Diomedis & Glauci permutatio*, my yong master waxed crancke, and the musike continuing, was very forward in dauncing, to shew his cunning: and so desiring them to play on a horne-pipe, laid on the pauement lustely with his leaden heeles, coruetting like a steede of *Signor Roccoes* teaching, and wanted nothing but bells, to bee a hobbyhorse in a morrice. Yet was he soothed in his folly, and what euer he did, *Lamilia* counted excellent: her praise made him proude, insomuch that if he had not beene intreated, hee would rather haue died in his daunce, then left off to shew his mistris delight. At last reasonably perswaded, seeing the table furnished, he was content to cease, and settle him to his victuals, on which (hauing before labored) he fed lustily, especially of a Woodcocke pie, wherewith *Lamilia* his caruer, plentifully plied him. Full dishes hauing furnisht empty stomackes, and *Lucanio* thereby got leisure to talke, falles to discourse of his wealth, his landes, his bondes, his ability, and how himselfe with all he had, was at madame *Lamilias* disposing: desiring her afore his brother to tell him simply what shee meant. *Lamilia* replied: My sweet *Lucanio*, how I esteeme of thee mine eies does witnes, that like handmaidens, haue attended thy beautious face, euer since I firste beheld thee: yet seeing loue that lasteth gathereth by degrees his liking: let this for that suffice, if I finde thee firme, *Lamilia* wilbe faithful: if fleeting, she must of necessity be infortunate: that hauing neuer seene any whome shee could affect, she shoulde be of him iniuriously forsaken. Nay said *Lucanio*, I dare say my brother here will giue his woord for that[.] I accept your own said *Lamilia*: for with me your credit is better than your brothers. *Roberto* brake off their amorous prattle with this speech. sith either of you are of other so fond at the first sight, I doubt not but time will make your loue more firme. Yet madame *Lamilia* although my brother and you be thus forward, some crosse chaunce may come: for *Multa cadunt inter calicem supremaq; labe*. And for a warning to teach you both wit, Ile tell you an old wiues tale.

Before ye goe on with your tale (qd mistres *Lamilia*) let me giue ye a caueat by the way, which shall be figured in a fable.

Lamilias Fable.

The Foxe on a time came to visit the Gray, partly for kindered cheefly for craft, and finding the hole emptie of all other company, sauing onely one Badger enquiring the cause of his solitarinesse: hee described the sodaine death of his dam and sire with the rest of his consortes. The Foxe made a Friday face, counterfeiting sorrow: but concluding that deaths stroke was vneuitable perswaded him to seeke som fit mate wherewith to match. The badger soone agreed, so forth they went, and in their way met with a wa[n]ton ewe stragling from the fold: the Foxe bad the Badger play the tall stripling, and strout on his tiptoes: for (qd he) this ewe is lady of al these lawnds and her brother cheefe belweather of sundry flockes. To be short by the Foxes persuasion there would be a perpetuall league, betweene her harmelesse kindred and al other deuouring beastes, for that the Badger was to them all allied: seduced she yeilded: and the Foxe conducted them to the Bagers habitation. Wher drawing her aside vnder color of exhortation, puld out her throat to satisfie his greedy thirst. Here I shoulde note, a yonge whelp that viewed their walke, infourmed the shepherdes of what hapned. They followed, and trained the Foxe and Badger to the hole: the Foxe afore had craftely conuaid himselfe away: the shepherds found the Badger

rauing for the ewes murther: his lame[n]tation being helde for counterfet, was by the shepherds dog werried. The Foxe escaped: the Ewe was spoiled: and euer since, betweene the Badgers and the dogs hath continued a mortall enmitie: And now be aduised *Roberto* (qd she), goe forward with your tale, seek not by sly insinuation to turne our mirth to sorrow. Go to *Lamilia* (qd hee), you feare what I meane not, but howe euer yee take it, Ile forward with my tale.

Robertoes Tale.



IN the North partes there dwelt an olde Squier, that had a young daughter his heire; who had (as I know Madame *Lamilia* you haue had) many youthfull Gentlemen that long time sued to obtaine her loue. But she knowing her own perfections (as women are by nature proud) would not to any of them vouchsafe fauour: insomuch that they perceiuing her relentlesse, shewed themselues not altogether witlesse, but left her to her fortune, when they found her frowardnes. At last it fortun'd among other

strangers, a Farmers sonne visited her Fathers house: on whom at the first sight she was enamored, he likewise on her. Tokens of loue past betweene them, either acquainted others parentes of their choise, and they kindly gaue their consent. Short tale to make, married they were, and great solemnitie was at the wedding feast. A yong Gentleman, that had beene long a suiter to her, vexing that the Sonne of a Farmer should be so prefered, cast in his minde by what meanes (to marre their merriment) hee might steale away the Bride. Hereupon he confers with an old Beldam, called Mother *Gunby*, dwelling thereby, whose counsell hauing taken, he fell to his practise, and proceeded thus. In the after noone, when dauncers were verie busie, he takes the Bride by the hande, and after a turne or two, tels her in her eare, he had a secret to impart vnto her, appointing her in any wise in the euening to find a time to confer with him: she promist she would, and so they parted. Then goes hee to the Bridegroom, & with protestations of entire affect, protests that the great sorrow hee takes at that which hee must vtter, whereon depended his especial credit, if it were known the matter by him should be discouered. After the Bridegrooms promise of secrecie, the gentleman tels him, that a frend of his receiued that morning from the Bride a Letter, wherein shee willed him with some sixteene horse to awaite her comming at a Parke side, for that she detested him in her heart as a base countrey hynde, with whom her father compeld her to marry. The Bridegroom almost out of his wits, began to bite his lip. Nay, sayth the Gentleman, if you will by mee be aduised, you shall salue her credit, win her by kindnes, and yet preuent her wanton complot. As how said the Bridegroom? Mary thus saide the Gentleman: In the euening (for till the guests be gone she intends not to gad) get you on horsebacke, and seeme to be of the companie that attends her comming: I am appoynted to bring her from the house to the Parke, and from thence fetch a winding compasse of a mile about, but to turne vnto old Mother *Gunbyes* house, where her Louer my friend abydes: when she alights, I will conduct her to a chamber farre from his lodging; but when the lights are out, and shee expects her adulterous copesmate, your selfe (as reason is) shall proue her bedfellow, where priuately you may reprooue her, and in the morning earely returne home without trouble. As for the Gentleman my friend, I will excuse her absence to him, by saying, she mockt me with her Mayde in steade of her selfe, whome when I knew at her alighting, I disdained to bring her vnto his presence. The Bridegroom gaue his hand [it] should be so.

Now by the way you must vnderstand, this Mother *Gunby* had a daughter, who all that day sate heauily at home with a willow garland, for that the Bridegoome (if hee had dealt faithfully) should haue wedded before any other. But men (*Lamilia*) are vnconstant, mony now a dayes makes the match, or else the match is marde.

But to the matter: the Bridegoome and the Gentleman thus agreed[: h]e tooke his time, confere with the Bride, perswaded her that her husband (notwithstanding his faire shew at the marriage) had sworne to his old sweete heart, their neighbour *Gunbyes* daughter, to bee that night her bedfellow: and if she would bring her Father, his Father, and other friendes to the house at midnight, they should finde it so.

At this the young Gentlewoman inwardly vext to be by a peasant so abusde, promist if she saw likelyhood of his slipping away, that then she would doo according as he directed.

All this thus sorting, the old womans daughter was trickly attyrde ready to furnish this pageant, for her old mother prouided all things necessarie.

Well, Supper past, dauncing ended, and the guests would home, and the Bridegoome pretending to bring some friend of his home, got his horse, and to the Parke side he rode, and staide with the horsemen that attended the Gentleman.

Anone came *Marian* like mistris Bride, and mounted behind the Gentleman, away they post, fetch their compasse, & at last alight at an olde wiues house, where sodenly she is conuayd to her chamber, & the bridegoome sent to keep her company, where he had scarce deuised how to begin his exhortation: but the Father of his Bryde knockt at the chamber doore. At which being somewhat amazed, yet thinking to turne it to a ieast, sith his Wife (as he thought) was in bed with him, hee opened the doore, saying: Father, you are hartily welcome, I wonder how you found vs out heere; this deuise to remooue our selues, was with my wiues consent, that we might rest quietly without the Maides and Batchelors disturbing. But wheres your wife said the gentleman: why heere in bed saide he. I thought (quoth the other) my daughter had beene your wife, for sure I am to day shee was giuen you in marriage. You are merrely disposed, said the Bridegoome, what thinke you I haue another wife: I thinke but as you speake quoth the Gentleman, for my daughter is below, and you say your wife is in the bed. Below (said he) you are a merry man, and with that casting on a night gowne, hee went downe, where when he saw his wife, the Gentleman his Father, and a number of his friends assembled, he was so confounded, that how to behaue himselfe he knew not; onely he cryde out that he was deceiued. At this the olde woman arises, and making her selfe ignoraunt of all the whole matter, inquires the cause of that sodayne tumult. When she was tolde the new Bridegoome was founde in bed with her daughter, she exclaimed against so great an iniurie. *Marian* was called in quorum: she iustified, it was by his allurement: he being condemned by al their consents, was iudged vnworthy to haue the Gentlewoman vnto his Wife, and compeld (for escaping of punishment) to marrie *Marian*: and the young Gentleman (for his care in discovering the Farmers sonnes lewdnes) was recompensd with the Gentlewomans euer during loue.

Quoth *Lamilia*, and what of this: Nay nothing saide *Roberto*, but that I haue told you the effects of sodaine loue: yet the best is, my brother is a maidenly Batchler; and for youe selfe, you haue not beene troubled with many suiters. The fewer the better, said *Lucanio*. But brother, I con you little thanke for this tale: hereafter I pray you vse other table talke. Lets then end talk, quoth *Laimilia*, and you (signior *Lucanio*) and I will go to the Chesse. To Chesse, said he, what meane you by that: It is a game, said she, that the first daunger is but a checke, the worst, the giuing of a mate. Wel, said *Roberto*, that game yee haue beene at already then, for you checkt him first with your beauty, & gaue him your selfe for mate to him by your bounty. Thats wel taken brother, said *Lucanio*, so haue we past our game at Chesse. Wil ye play at Tables then, said she: I cannot, quoth he, for I can goe no further with my game, if I be once

taken. Will ye play then at cards. I said he, if it bee at one and thirtie. That fooles game, said she: Wele all to hazard, said *Roberto*, and brother you shall make one for an houre or two: content quoth he. So to dice they went, and fortune so fauored *Lucanio*, that while they continued square play, hee was no looser. Anone coosonage came about, and his Angels being double winged, flew cleane from before him. *Lamilia* being the winner, preparte a banquet; which finished, *Roberto* aduised his brother to departe home, and to furnish himselfe with more Crownes, least hee were outcrackt with new commers.

Lucanio loath to be outcountenanst, followed his aduise, desiring to attend his retur[n]e, which he before had determined vnrequested: For as soone as his brothers backe was turned, *Roberto* begins to reckon with *Lamilia*, to bee a sharer as well in the mony deceitfully wonne, as in the Diamond so wilfully giuen. But she, *secundum mores meretricis*, iested thus with the scholler. Why *Roberto*, are you so well read, and yet shewe your selfe so shallow witted, to deeme women so weake of conceit, that they see not into mens demerites. Suppose (to make you my stale to catch the woodcocke your brother) that my tongue ouer-running myne intent, I spake of liberall rewarde; but what I promised, theres the point; at least what I part with I will be well aduised. It may be you wil thus reason: Had not *Roberto* traind *Lucanio* vnto *Lamilias* lure, *Lucanio* had not now beene *Lamilias* pray: therefore sith by *Roberto* she possesseth the prize, *Roberto* merites an equall part. Monstrous absurd if so you reason; as wel you may reason thus: *Lamilias* dog hath kild her a deere, therefore his Mistris must make him a pastie. No poore pennillesse Poet, thou art beguilde in mee, and yet I wonder how thou couldst, thou hast beene so often beguilde. But it fareth with licentious men, as with the chased Bore in the streame, who being greatly refreshd with swimming, neuer feeleth a[n]ie smart vntill hee perish recurelesly wounded with his owne weapons. Reasonlesse *Roberto*, that hauing but a brokers place, asked a lenders reward. Faithles *Roberto*, that hast attempted to betray thy brother, irreligiously forsaken thy Wife, deseruedly beene in thy fathers eie an abiect: thinkst thou *Lamilia* so loose, to consort with one so lewd. No hypocrite, the sweete Gentleman thy brother, I will till death loue, & thee while I liue, loath. This share *Lamilai* giues thee, other getst thou none.

As *Roberto* would haue replide, *Lucanio* approcht: to whom *Lamilia* discourst the whole deceit of his brother, & neuer rested intimating malitious arguments, till *Lucanio* vtterly refusde *Roberto* for his brother, & for euer forbad him his house. And when he wold haue yeelded reasons, and formed excuse, *Lucanios* impatience (vrge by her importunate malice) forbad all reasoning with them that was reasonlesse, and so giuing him Jacke Drums intertainment, shut him out of doores: whom we will follow, & leaue *Lucanio* to the mercie of *Lamilia*. *Roberto* in an extreme extasie rent his haire, curst his destenie, blamd his trechery, but most of all exclaimd against *Lamilia*: and in her against all enticing Curtizans, in these tearms.

*What meant the Poets in inuectiue verse,
To sing Medeas shame, and Scillas pride,
Calipsoes charmes, by which so many dyde?
Onely for this their vices they rehearse,
That curious wits which in this world conuerse,
May shun the dangers and enticing shoes,
of such false Syrens, those home-breeding foes,
That from their eies their venom do disperse.
So soone kils not the Basiliske with sight,
The Vipers tooth is not so venomous,*

*The Adders tung not halfe so dangerous,
As they that beare the shadow of delight,
Who chaine blinde youths in tramels of their haire,
Till wast bring woe, and sorrow hast despaire.*

With this he laide his head on his hand, and leant his elbow on the ground sighing out sadly,
Heu patior telis vunera facta meis.

On the other side of the hedge sate one that heard his sorrow, who getting ouer, came towards him, and brake off his passion. When hee approached, hee saluted *Roberto* in this sort.

Gentleman, quoth hee (for so you seeme), I haue by chaunce heard you discourse some part of your greefe; which appeareth to be more than you will discouer, or I can conceipt. But if you vouchsafe such simple comfort as my abilitie may yeeld, assure your selfe, that I wil endeuour to doe the best, that either may procure you profit, or bring you pleasure: the rather, for that I suppose you are a scholler, and pittie it is men of learning should liue in lacke.

Roberto wondring to heare such good wordes, for that this iron age affoordes few that esteeme of vertue; returned him thankfull gratulations, and (vrgde by necessitie) vttered his present grieffe, beseeching his aduise how he might be employed. Why, easily quoth hee, and greatly to your benefite: for men of my profession gette by schollers their whole liuing. What is your profession, sayd *Roberto*? Truly, sir, saide he, I am a player. A player, quoth *Roberto*, I tooke you rather for a Gentleman of great liuing, for if by outward habit men should be censured, I tell you you would be taken for a substantiall man. So am I where I dwell (quoth the player) reputed able at my proper cost to build a Windmill. What though the world once went hard with me, when I was faine to carry my playing Fardle a footebacke; *Tempora mutantur*, I know you know the meaning of it better than I, but I thus conster it; its otherwise now; for my very share in playing apparell will not be sold for two hundred pounds. Truly (said *Roberto*) tis straunge, that you should so prosper in that vayne practise, for that it seemes to mee your voice is nothing gracious. Nay then, saide the Player, I mislike your iudgement: why, I am as famous for Delphrigus, & the King of Fairies, as euer was any of my time. The twelue labors of *Hercules* haue I terribly thundred on the Stage, and plaid three Scenes of the Deuill in the Highway to heauen. Haue ye so (saide *Roberto*?) then I pray you pardon me. Nay more (quoth the Player) I can serue to make a pretie speech, for I was a cuntry Author, passing at a Morall, for twas I that pende the Morall of mans witte, the Dialogue of Diues, and for seuen yeers space was absolute Interpreter to the puppets. But now my Almanacke is out of date:

*The people make no estimation,
Of Morrals teaching education.*

Was not this prettie for a plaine rime extempore? if ye will ye shall haue more. Nay its enough, said *Roberto*, but how meane you to vse mee? Why sir, in making Playes, said the other, for which you shall be well paid, if you will take the paines.

Roberto perceiuing no remedie, thought best to respect of his present necessitie, to trie his wit, & went with him willingly: who lodgd him at the Townes end in a house of retayle, where what happened our

Poet, you shall after heare. There, by conuersing with bad company, he grew *A malo in peius*, falling from one vice to an other: and so hauing found a vaine to finger crowns, he grew cranker than *Lucanio*, who by this time began to droope, being thus dealt with by *Lamillia*. Shee hauing bewitched him with hir enticing wiles, caused him to consume in lesse than two yeeres that infinite treasure gathered by his father with so many a poore ma[n]s curse. His lands sold, his iewels pawnd, his money wasted, he was casseerd by *Lamilia*, that had coosened him of all. Then walkt he like one of Duke *Humfreys* Squires, in a thread-bare cloake, his hose drawne out with his heeles, his shooes vnseamed, least his feete should sweate with heat: now (as witlesse as hee was) hee remembred his Fathers words, his vnkindnes to his brother, his carelesnes of himselfe. In this sorrow hee sate downe on pennillesse bench; where when *Opus* and *Vsus* told him by the chimes in his stomacke it was time to fall vnto meate, he was faine with the *Camelion* to feed vpon the aire, & make patience his best repast.

While he was at this feast, *Lamilia* came flaunting by, garnished with the iewels whereof she beguiled him, which sight serued to close his stomacke after his cold cheare. *Roberto* hearing of his brothers beggery, albeit he had little remorse of his miserable state, yet did he seeke him out, to vse him as a propertie, whereby *Lucanio* was somewhat prouided for. But being of simple nature, hee serued but for a blocke to whet *Robertoes* wit on; which the poore foole perceiuing, he forsooke all other hopes of life, and fell to be a notorious Pandar, in which detested course hee continued till death. But *Roberto*, now famozed for an Arch-plaimaking-poet, his purse like the sea sometime sweld; anon like the same sea fell to a low ebbe; yet seldom he wanted, his labors were so well esteemed. Marry this rule he kept, what euer he fingerd afore hand was the certaine meanes to vnbinde a bargaine, and being asked why he so slightly dealt with them that did him good? It becomes me, saith hee, to be contrarie to the worlde, for commonly when vulgar men receiue earnest, they doe performe, when I am paid any thing afore-hand I breake my promise. He had shift of lodgings, where in euey place his Hostesse writ vp the wofull remembrance of him, his laundresse, and his boy; for they were euer in his household, beside retainers in sundry other places. His companie were lightly the lewdest person in the land, apt for pilferie, periurie, forgerie, or any villany. Of these hee knew the casts to cog at Cards, coosin at Dice: by these he learnd the legerdemaines of nips, foystes, connicatchers, crosbyters, lifts, high Lawyers, and all the rabble of that vncleane generation of vipers: and pithily could he paint out their whole courses of craft: So cunning he was in all craftes, as nothing rested in him almost but craftines. How often the Gentlewoman his Wife labored vainely to recall him, is lamentable to note: but as one giuen ouer to all lewdnes, he communicated her sorrowfull lines among his loose truls, that iested at her bootelesse laments. If he could any way get credite on scores, he would then brag his creditors carried stones, comparing euerie round circle to a groning O, procured by a painfull burden. The shamefull ende of sundry his consorts, deseruedly punished for their amisse, wrought no compunction in his heart: of which one, brother to a Brothell he kept, was trust vnder a tree as round as a Ball.

To some of his swearing companions thus it happened: A crue of them sitting in a Tauerne carowsing, it fortun'd an honest Gentleman and his friend, to enter their roome: some of them being acquainted with him, in their domineering drunken vaine would haue no nay, but downe hee must needes sitte with them; beeing placed, no remedie there was, but he must needes keep euen compasse with their vnseemely carowsing. Which he refusing, they fell from high words to sound strokes, so that with much adoe the Gentleman sau'd his owne, and shifted from their company. Being gone one of these tiplers forsooth lackt a gold Ring, the other sware they see the Gentleman take it from his hande. Upon this the Gentleman was indited before Iudge: these honest men are deposde: whose wisdom weighing the time of the braule, gaue light to the Iury, what power wine-washing poyson had, they according vnto

conscience found the Gentleman not guiltie, and God released by that verdict the innocent.

With his accusers thus it fared: one of them for murther was worthily executed: the other neuer since prospered: the third, sitting not long after vpon a lustie horse, the beast sodenly dyde vnder him: God amend the man.

Roberto euery day acquainted with these examples, was notwithstanding nothing bettered, but rather hardened in wickednesse. At last was that place iustified, God warneth men by dreams and visions in the night, and by knowne examples in the day, but if hee returne not, hee comes vppon him with iudgement that shall bee felt. For now when the number of deceites caused *Roberto* bee hatefull almost to all men, his immeasurable drinking had made him the perfect Image of the dropsie, and the loathsome scourge of Lust tyrannized in his bones: lying in extreame pouerty, and hauing nothing to pay but chalke, which now his Host accepted not for currant, this miserable man lay comfortlesly languishing, hauing but one groat left (the iust proportion of his Fathers Legacie) which looking on, he cryd: O now it is too late, too late to buy witte with thee: and therefore will I see if I can sell to carelesse youth what I negligently forgot to buy.

Heere (Gentlemen) breake I off *Robertoes* speach; whose life in most parts agreeing with mine, found one selfe punishment as I haue doone. Heereafter suppose me the saide *Roberto*, and I will goe on with that hee promised: *Greene* will send you now his groats-worth of wit, that neuer shewed a mites-worth in his life: & though no man now bee by to doe mee good: yet ere I die I will by my repentaunce indeuour to doo all men good.

*Deceiuing world, that with alluring toyes,
Hast made my life the subiect of thy scorne:
And scornest now to lend thy fading ioyes,
To length[en] my life, whom friends haue left forlorne.
How well are they that die ere they be borne,
And neuer see thy sleights, which few men shun,
Till vnawares they helplesse are vndone.*

*Oft haue I sung of Loue, and of his fire,
But now I finde that Poet was aduizde;
Which made full feasts increasers of desire,
And prooues weake loue was with the poore despizde.
For when the life with foode is not suffizde,
What thought of loue, what motion of delight;
VVhat pleasance can proceed from such a wight?*

*VVitnesse my want, the murderer of my wit;
My rauisht sence of woonted furie reft;
VVants such conceit, as should in Poems sit,
Set downe the sorrow wherein I am left:
But therefore haue high heauens their gifts bereft:
Because so long they lent them me to vse,
And I so long their bountie did abuse.*

*O that a yeare were graunted me to liue,
And for that yeare my former wits restorde:
VWhat rules of life, what counsell would I giue?
How should my sinne with sorrow be deplorde?
But I must die of euery man abhorde.
Time loosely spent will not againe be woonne,
My time is loosely spent, and I vndone.*

O horrenda fames, how terrible are thy assaults? But *Vermis consientia*, more wou[n]ding are thy stings. Ah Gentlemen, that liue to read my broken and confused lines, looke not I should (as I was wont) delight you with vaine fantasies, but gather my follies altogether, and as yee would deale with so many parricides, cast them into the fire: call them *Telegones*, for now they kil their Father, and euery lewd line in them written, is a deep piercing wound to my heart; euery idle hour spent by any in reading them, brings a million of sorrowes to my soule. O that the teares of a miserable man (for neuer any man was yet more miserable) might wash their memorie out with my death; and that those works with mee together might bee interd. But sith they cannot, let this my last worke witnes against them with mee, how I detest them. Blacke is the remembrance of my blacke works, blacker than night, blacker than death, blacker than hell.

Learne wit by my repentance (Gentlemen) and let these fewe rules following be regarded in your liues.

1. First in all your actions set God before your eies; for the feare of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: let his word be a lanterne to your feete, and a light vnto your paths, then shall you stand as firme rocks, and not be mocked.
2. Beware of looking backe, for God will not bee mocked; of him that hath receiued much, much shall be demaunded.
3. If thou be single, and canst abstaine, turne thy eies from vanitie; for there is a kinde of women bearing the faces of Angels, but the hearts of Deuils, able to intrap the elect if it were possible.
4. If thou be married, forsake not the wife of thy youth to follow straunge flesh; for whoremongers and adulterers the Lord will iudge. The doore of a harlot leadeth downe to death, and in her lips there dwels destruction; her face is decked with odors, but shee bringeth a man to a morsell of bread and nakednes: of which myselfe am instance.
5. If thou be left rich, remember those that want, & so deale, that by thy wilfulnes thy selfe want not: Let not Tauerners and Victuallers be thy Executors; for they will bring thee to a dishonorable graue.
6. Oppresse no man, for the crie of the wronged ascendeth to the eares of the Lord; neyther delight to encrease by Usurie, least thou loose thy habitation in the euerlasting Tabernacle.
Beware of building thy house to thy neighbours hurt; for the stones will crie to the timber, We were laide together in bloud: and those that so erect houses, calling them by their names, shall lie in the graue lyke sheepe, and death shall gnaw vpon their soules.
8. If thou be poore, be also patient, and striue not to grow rich by indirect meanes; for goods so gotten shall vanish away like smoke.
9. If thou be a Father, maister, or teacher, ioyne good example with good counsaile; else little auaile precepts, where life is different.
10. If thou be a Sonne or Seruant, despise not reproofe; for though correction be bitter at the first, it

bringeth pleasure in the end.

Had I regarded the first of these rules, or beene obedient to the last: I had not now, at my last ende, beene left thus desolate. But now, though to my selfe I giue *Consilium post facta*; yet to others they may serue for timely precepts. And therefore (while life giues leaue) I will send warning to my olde consorts, which haue liued as loosely as my selfe, albeit weakenesse will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellowe Schollers about this Cittie, will I direct these few insuing lines.

*To those Gentlemen his Quondam acquaintance,
that spend their wits in making Plaies, R. G.
wisheth a better exercise, and wisdom
to preuent his extremities.*

IF wofull experience may moue you (Gentlemen) to beware, or vnheard of wretchednes intreate you to take heed; I doubt not but you will looke backe with sorrow on your time past, and indeuour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not (for with thee wil I first begin), thou famous gracer of Tragedians, that *Greene*, who hath said with thee (like the foole in his heart) There is no God, should now giue glorie vnto his greatnes: for penetrating is his power, his hand lies heauie vpon me, he hath spoken vnto mee with a voice of thunder, and I haue felt he is a God that can punish enimies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, bee so blinded, that thou shouldst giue no glory to the giuer? Is it pestilent Machiuiilian pollicy that thou hast studied? O peeuish follie! What are his rules but meere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankind. For if *Sic volo, sic iubeo*, hold in those that are able to commaund: and if it be lawfull *Fas & nefas* to do any thing that is beneficiall, onely Tyrants should possesse the earth, and they striuing to exceed in tyrannie, should each to other bee a slaughter man; till the mightiest outliuing all, one stroke were left for Death, that in one age man's life should end. The brother of this Diabolicall Atheisme is dead, and in his life had neuer the felicitie he aemed at: but as he began in craft, liued in feare, and ended in despaire. *Quàm inscrutabilia sunt Dei iudicia?* This murderer of many brethren, had his conscience seared like *Caine*: this betrayer of him that gaue his life for him, inherited the portion of Iudas: this Apostata perished as ill as Iulian: and wilt thou my friend be his Disciple? Looke vnto me, by him perswaded to that libertie, and thou shalt find it an infernall bondage. I knowe the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilfull striuing against knowne truth, exceedeth al the terrors of my soule. Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremitie; for little knowst thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

With thee I ioyne yong *Iuuenall*, that byting Satyrist, that lastlie with mee together writ a Comedie. Sweete boy, might I aduise thee, be aduisde, and get not many enemies by bitter wordes: inueigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so wel: thou hast a libertie to reprove all, and none more; for one being spoken to, all are offended, none being blamed no man is iniured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage, or tread on a worme and it will turne: then blame not Schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they reprove thy too much libertie of reproofe.

And thou no lesse deseruing than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour; driuen (as my selfe) to extreme shifts, a little haue I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oth, I would sweare by sweet *S. George*, thou art vnworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie ye be not warned: for vnto none of you (like me) sought those burres to cleaue: those Puppets (I meane) that speake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our

colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al haue beene beholding: is it not like that you, to whome they all haue beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case that I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. O that I might intreate your rare wits to be imploied in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired inuentions. I know the best husband of you all will neuer proue an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will neuer seeke you a kind nurse: yet whilest you may, seeke you better Maisters; for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subiect to the pleasure of such rude groomes.

In this I might insert two more, that both haue writ against these buckram Gentlemen: but let their owne works serue to witsse against their owne wickednesse, if they perseuere to mainteine any more such peasants. For other new-commers, I leaue them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will driue the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skills not though they make a ieast at them.

But now returne I againe to you three, knowing my miserie is to you no news: and let me hartily intreate you to bee warned by my harms. Delight not (as I haue done) in irreligious oathes; for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkennes, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equall vnto beasts. Flie lust, as the deathman of the soule, and defile not the Temple of the holy Ghost. Abhorre those Epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your eares: and when they sooth you wit htearmes of Mastership, remember *Robert Greene*, whome they haue often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember Gentlemen, your liues are like so many lighted Tapers, that are with care deliuered to all of you to maintaine: these with wind-puft wrath may be extinguisht, which drunkennes put out, which negligence let fall: for mans time is not of it selfe to short, but it is more shortned by sinne. The fire of my light is now at the last snuffe, and the want of wherwith to sustaine it, there is no substance left for life to feede on. Trust not then (I beseech yee) to such weake staies: for they are as changeable in minde, as in many attyres. Well, my hand is tired, and I am forst to leaue where I would begin; for a whole booke cannot contain their wrongs, which I am forst to knit vp in some few lines of words.

*Desirous that you should liue,
though himselfe be dying,
Robert Greene.*

Now to all men I bid farewel in like sort, with this conceited Fable of that olde Comedian *Aesope*.

AN Ant and a Grashopper walking together on a Greene, the one carelesly skipping, the other carefully prying what winters prouision was scattered in the way: the Grashopper scorning (as wantons will) this needesse thrift (as he tearmed it) reprooued him thus:

*The greedie miser thirsteth still for gaine;
His thrift is theft, his weale works others woe:*

*That foole is fond which will in caues remaine,
VWhen mongst faire sweets he may at pleasure goe.*

To this the Ant perceiuing the Grashoppers meaning, quickly repliyde:

*The thriftie husband spares what vnthrift spends,
His thrift no theft, for dangers to prouide:
Trust to thy selfe, small hope in vvant yeeld friendes,
A caue is better than the deserts wide.*

In short time these two parted, the one to his pleasure, the other to his labour. Anon Haruest grewe on, and reft from the Grashopper his woonted moysture. Then weakly skipt hee to the medowes brinks: where till fell winter he abode. But storms continually powring, hee went for succour to the Ant his olde acquaintance, to whom he had scarce discovered his estate, but the waspish little worme made this reply.

*Pack hence (quoth he) thou idle lazie worme,
My house doth harbour no vnthriftie mates:
Thou scornedst to toile, & now thou feelst the storme,
And starust for foode while I am fed with cates.
Vse no intreats, I will relentlesse rest,
For toyling labour hates an idle guest.*

The Grashopper, foodlesse, helplesse, and strengthles, got into the next brooke, and in the yeelding sand digde himselfe a pit: by which hee likewise ingrau'de this Epitaph.

*When Springs greene prime arrayd me with delight,
And euery power with youthfull vigor fild,
Gauē strength to worke what euer fancie wild:
I neuer feard the force of winters spight.*

*Whhen first I saw the sunne the day begin,
And dry the Mornings teares from hearbs and grasse;
I little thought his chearefull light would passe,
Till vgly night with darknes enterd in.
And then day lost I mournd, spring past I wayld,
But neither teares for this or that auailde.*

*Then too too late I praisd the Emmets paine,
That sought in spring a harbour gainst the heate:
And in the haruest gathered winters meat,
Preuenting famine, frosts, and stormy raine.*

*My wretched end may warne Greene springing youth,
To vse delights as toyes that will deceiue,
And scorne the world before the world them leaue:
For all worlds trust, is ruine without ruth.
Then blest are they that like the toying Ant,
Prouide in time gainst winters wofull want.*

With this the Grashopper yeelding to the weathers extremit[y], died comfortles without remedy. Like him my selfe: like me, shall al that trust to friends or times inconstancie. Now faint of my last infirmity, beseeching them that shal burie my bodie, to publish this last farewell written with my wretched hand.

Fælicem fuisse infaustum.

*A letter written to his wife, found with
this booke after his death.*

THE remembrance of the many wrongs offred thee, and thy vnreproued virtues, adde greater sorrow to my miserable state, than I can vtter or thou conceiue. Neither is it lessended by consideration of thy absence, (though shame would hardly let me beholde thy face) but exceedingly aggrauated, for that I cannot (as I ought) to thy owne selfe reconcile my selfe, that thou mightest wisse my inward woe at this instant, that haue made thee a wofull wife for so long a time. But equall heauen hath denied that comfort, giuing at my last neede like succour as I haue sought all my life: being in this extremitie as voide of helpe, as thou hast beene of hope. Reason would, that after so long wast, I should not send thee a child to bring thee greater charge: but consider he is the fruit of thy wombe, in whose face regarde not the Fathers faultes so much, as thy owne perfections. He is yet Greene, and may grow straight, if he be carefully tended: otherwise, apt enough (I feare me) to follow his Fathers folly. That I haue offended thee highly I knowe; that thou canst forget my iniuries I hardly beleue: yet perswade I my selfe, if thou saw my wretched estate thou couldst not but lament it: nay, certainly I know thou wouldst. All my wrongs muster themselues before me, euery euill at once plagues mee. For my contempt of God, I am contemned of men: for my swearing and forswearing, no man will beleue me: for my gluttony, I suffer hunger: for my drunkennes, thirst: for my adultery, vlverous sores. Thus God hath cast me downe, that I might be humbled: and punished me for example of other sinners: and altogether he suffers me in this world to perish without succor, yet trust I in the world to come to find mercie, by the merites of my Sauour to whom I commend this, and commit my soule.

*Thy repentant husband for his dis-
loyaltie, Robert Greene.*

Fælicem fuisse infaustum.

FINIS.

