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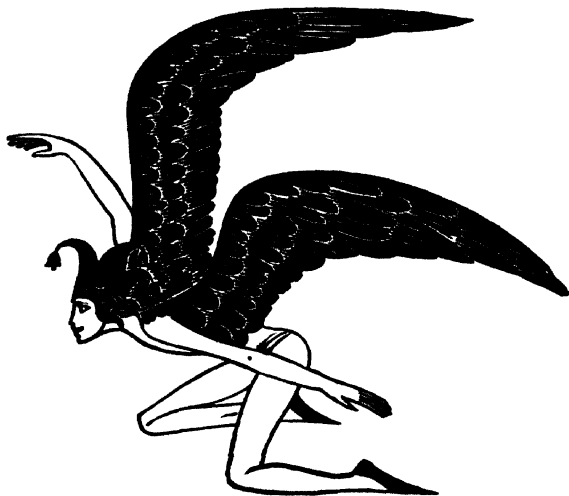
THE NEW TEMPLE SHAKESPEARE



Edited by M. R. Ridley, M.A.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by William Shakespeare



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Editor's General Note

The Text. The editor has kept before him the aim of presenting to the modern reader the nearest possible approximation to what Shakespeare actually wrote. The text is therefore conservative, and is based on the earliest reliable printed text. But to avoid distraction (*a*) the spelling is modernised, and (*b*) a limited number of universally accepted emendations is admitted without comment. Where a Quarto text exists as well as the First Folio the passages which occur only in the Quarto are enclosed in square brackets [] and those which occur only in the Folio in brace brackets { }.

Scene Division. The rapid continuity of the Elizabethan curtainless production is lost by the 'traditional' scene divisions. Where there is an essential difference of place these scene divisions are retained. Where on the other hand the change of place is insignificant the scene division is indicated only by a space on the page. For ease of reference, however, the 'traditional' division is retained at the head of the page and in line numbering.

Notes. Passages on which there are notes are indicated by a † in the margin.

Punctuation adheres more closely than has been usual to the 'Elizabethan' punctuation of the early texts. It is often therefore more indicative of the way in which the lines were to be delivered than of their syntactical construction.

Glossaries are arranged on a somewhat novel principle, not alphabetically, but in the order in which the words or phrases occur. The editor is much indebted to Mr J. N. Bryson for his collaboration in the preparation of the glossaries.

Preface

The Text. The play appeared first in Quarto in 1600, with the following title-page: Much adoe about / Nothing. / *As it hath been sundrie times publikely* / acted by the right honourable, the Lord / Chamberlaine his seruants. / *Written by William Shakespears.* / LONDON / Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise, and / William Aspley. / 1600. The text is a good one, and was almost certainly printed from the author's autograph, which had been used as the prompt book in the theatre. The First Folio text of the play was, again almost certainly, printed from a copy of Q which had in its turn been used as a prompt book, and in which a certain number of alterations and corrections had been made. As a result the only basis for a modern text is Q. Of some 140 variants noted by the New Cambridge editors 17 (of which 9 are obvious corrections and 8 merely normalisations of spelling) are usually accepted. The New Cambridge editors' comment is: "An editor who admits F readings into his text, beyond the seventeen obvious corrections noted above, does so at his peril." I am not clear why poor F should be singled out for avoidance by editors who cheerfully admit readings of F 2, of later editors, and of their own. I would prefer to say that any editor who deserts Q for any other text does so at his peril.

Date of Composition. The *terminus ad quem* is clearly 1600, and if it is taken as certain that Kempe had left the Chamberlain's company and been replaced by Armin in 1599 we can put the date back a year (see note on IV. ii. S.D.). The play is not mentioned by Meres (in 1598) unless it is the mysterious *Love's Labours Won*,

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which does not seem particularly probable. On the face of it then, we may take 1598-99 as the probable date. The New Cambridge editors have advanced an elaborate theory of a revision about that time of an earlier play perhaps by Shakespeare himself. They conclude, amongst other things, that the revision was a *prose* revision, that the old play had concerned itself mainly with the Hero-Claudio plot (which is mainly in verse) and that the elaboration of the Beatrice-Benedick plot belongs to the revision. They marshal their evidence, as always, most effectively, and the examination of it is, also as always, of the greatest interest. But the detailed examination of it has for the general reader, who wants (I hope) his play rather than problems about it, only the rather dubious value of calling his attention to various awkwardnesses and dislocations in the text as presented to him. And further, to be in the least fair, an examination of the evidence must cover the whole ground at length. I will only say that the evidence from stage-directions seems to me inconclusive, since some of it would be as consistent with cutting as with revision. *E.g.* there appears in the stage-directions a character *Innogen*, Leonato's wife, who says nothing. The hypothesis is that she was in the old play, but cut out of the dialogue, and left in the stage-directions. But I think it at least possible that she was in the play as written in 1598, but cut for purposes of presentation (one may notice that the play has already an inconvenient number of female characters, with Beatrice, Hero, Margaret and Ursula, which must have taxed the boy-actor strength of the company). The evidence from shifts of style, whether from verse to prose or (more important) from verse in the earlier manner to verse in a later manner, seems to me more convincing; but I am not clear that a dramatist may not revert to an earlier manner for portions of his work where he feels it

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suitable. But any reader who is interested in the problem must be referred to the New Cambridge edition, and draw his own conclusions. A few detailed points will be found in the notes to this edition.

Source. Probably Bandello, through the medium of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (1582), and perhaps *Orlando Furioso* (book V) or *The Faerie Queene* (II. iv.). Bandello has a King Pedro, and a Messer Lionato, the heroine's father.

Duration of Action. If we omit consideration of one or two unimportant inconsistencies the action will go well, as Daniel showed, into four continuous days.

Criticism. This most sparkling of Shakespeare's comedies is to be enjoyed rather than criticised. Two points may perhaps be made. The first is that for the modern reader the one blot on the play is the character of Claudio. He is an even poorer creature than Bassanio, if that is possible. He is no doubt in love with Hero so far as it is in him to love anyone but himself; but he is also a fortune-hunter, as his *Hath Leonato any son, my lord?* betrays. And hard though his brutality to Hero is to forgive, it is far easier to forgive than the flippancy with which he finds it natural to behave after her supposed death. The second point is the characters of Dogberry and Verges; they are deservedly famous comic characters, but it is easy to miss their particular effectiveness. In all his best comedies Shakespeare is a past-master in the art of contrasting different types of the comic; and in this play, where the scintillating and sometimes hard brilliance of the wit of Beatrice and

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Benedick becomes after a time almost exhausting, like a Meredith conversation, and even a trifle humiliating, since we feel that even in our best moments we could never rise to those heights, the delicious foolishness of the two old men is a welcome relief, and a restorative to our self-conceit. And there are few things in Shakespeare more characteristic of him than that the revelation of the plot is not due to any of the clever people but to these two honest old fools and the watch in the ordinary way of business.

Hazlitt.—This admirable comedy used to be frequently acted till of late years. Mr Garrick's Benedick was one of his most celebrated characters; and Mrs Jordan, we have understood, played Beatrice very delightfully. The serious part is still the most prominent here, as in other instances that we have noticed. Hero is the principal figure in the piece, and leaves an indelible impression on the mind of her beauty, her tenderness, and the hard trial of her love. The passage in which Claudio first makes a confession of his affection towards her conveys as pleasing an image of the entrance of love into a youthful bosom as can well be imagined.

The principal comic characters, Benedick and Beatrice, are both essences in their kind. His character as a woman-hater is admirably supported, and his conversion to matrimony is no less happily effected by the pretended story of Beatrice's love for him. It is hard to say which of the two scenes is the best, that of the trick which is thus practised on Benedick, or that in which Beatrice is prevailed on to take pity on him by overhearing her cousin and her maid declare (which they do on purpose) that he is dying of love for her.

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These were happy materials for Shakespear to work on, and he has made a happy use of them. Perhaps that middle point of comedy was never more nicely hit in which the ludicrous blends with the tender, and our follies, turning round against themselves in support of our affections, retain nothing but their humanity.

Dogberry and Verges in this play are inimitable specimens of quaint blundering and misprisions of meaning; and are a standing record of that formal gravity of pretension and total want of common understanding, which Shakespear no doubt copied from real life, and which in the course of two hundred years appear to have ascended from the lowest to the highest offices in the state.

Swinburne.—If it is proverbially impossible to determine by selection the greatest work of Shakespear, it is easy enough to decide on the date and the name of his most perfect comic masterpiece. For absolute power of composition, for faultless balance and blameless rectitude of design, there is unquestionably no creation of his hand that will bear comparison with *Much Ado About Nothing*. The ultimate marriage of Hero and Claudio, on which I have already remarked as in itself a doubtfully desirable consummation, makes no flaw in the dramatic perfection of a piece which could not otherwise have been wound up at all. This was its one inevitable conclusion, if the action were not to come to a tragic end; and a tragic end would here have been as painfully and as grossly out of place as is any but a tragic end to the action of *Measure for Measure*. As for Beatrice, she is as perfect a lady, though of a far different age and breeding, as C lim ne or Milla-mant; and a decidedly more perfect woman than could properly

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or permissibly have trod the stage of Congreve or Molière. She would have disarranged all the dramatic proprieties and harmonies of the one great school of pure comedy. The good fierce outbreak of her high true heart in two swift words—"Kill Claudio"—would have fluttered the dovescotes of fashionable drama to some purpose. But Alceste would have taken her to his own.¹

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DON PEDRO, *prince of Arragon.*
DON JOHN, *his bastard brother.*
CLAUDIO, *a young lord of Florence.*
BENEDICK, *a young lord of Padua.*
LEONATO, *governor of Messina.*
ANTONIO, *his brother.*
BALTHASAR, *attendant on Don Pedro.*
CONRADE, } *followers of Don John.*
BORACHIO, }
FRIAR FRANCIS.
DOGBERRY, *a constable.*
VERGES, *a headborough.*
A SEXTON.
A BOY.

HERO, *daughter to Leonato.*
BEATRICE, *niece to Leonato.*
MARGARET, } *gentlewomen attending on Hero.*
URSULA, }

Messengers, Watch, Attendants, &c.

SCENE: *Messina.*

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Act First

SCENE I

An orchard

*Enter Leonato, Hero, and Beatrice, with a
Messenger*

Leo. I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mes. He is very near by this : he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leo. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

Mes. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leo. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

10

Mes. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro : he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion ; he hath indeed better bettered

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expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leo. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mes. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him, even so much, that joy 20 could not show itself modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leo. Did he break out into tears ?

Mes. In great measure.

Leo. A kind overflow of kindness : there are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping !

Bea. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no ?

Mes. I know none of that name, lady, there was none 30 such in the army of any sort.

Leo. What is he that you ask for, niece ?

Her. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mes. O, he 's returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Bea. He set up his bills here in Messina, and challenged † Cupid at the flight, and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars ? But how many

hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all 40
of his killing.

Leo. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much,
but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mes. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Bea. You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it :
he is a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent
stomach.

Mes. And a good soldier too, lady.

Bea. And a good soldier to a lady, but what is he to a 50
lord?

Mes. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stuffed with all
honourable virtues.

Bea. It is so, indeed, he is no less than a stuffed man :
but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal.

Leo. You must not, sir, mistake my niece ; there is a
kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and
her : they never meet but there's a skirmish of
wit between them.

Bea. Alas ! he gets nothing by that ; in our last conflict, 60
four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the
whole man governed with one, so that if he have
wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it
for a difference between himself and his horse, for
it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a

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reasonable creature. Who is his companion now ?
He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mes. Is't possible ?

Bea. Very easily possible ; he wears his faith but as the
fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next
block.

70

Mes. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Bea. No ; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I
pray you, who is his companion ? Is there no young
squarer now that will make a voyage with him to
the devil ?

Mes. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Bea. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease ; he
is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker
runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio !
if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a 80
thousand pound ere a' be cured.

Mes. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Bea. Do, good friend.

Leo. You will never run mad, niece.

Bea. No, not till a hot January.

Mes. Don Pedro is approached.

*Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio, Benedick,
and Balthasar*

D.P. Good Signior Leonato, are you come to meet your

trouble? the fashion of the world is to avoid cost,
and you encounter it.

Leo. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of 90
your Grace: for trouble being gone, comfort
should remain; but when you depart from me,
sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

D.P. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think
this is your daughter.

Leo. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Ben. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leo. Signior Benedick, no, for then were you a child. †

D.P. You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this
what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers 100
herself. Be happy, lady, for you are like an
honourable father.

Ben. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not
have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as
like him as she is.

Bea. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior
Benedick, nobody marks you.

Ben. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Bea. Is it possible disdain should die, while she hath
such meet food to feed it, as Signior Benedick? 110
Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come
in her presence.

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Ben. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted : and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Bea. A dear happiness to women, they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that ; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, 120
than a man swear he loves me.

Ben. God keep your ladyship still in that mind ! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Bea. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Ben. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Bea. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Ben. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's 130
name ; I have done.

Bea. You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old.

D.P. That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio and Signior Bencdick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion

may detain us longer. I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leo. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. 140
(*to Don John*) Let me bid you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the prince your brother : I owe you all duty.

D.J. I thank you : I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leo. Please it your Grace lead on ?

D.P. Your hand, Leonato, we will go together.

Exeunt all except Benedick and Claudio

Cl. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato ?

Ben. I noted her not, but I looked on her. 150

Cl. Is she not a modest young lady ?

Ben. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgement ? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex ?

Cl. No, I pray thee speak in sober judgement.

Ben. Why, i' faith, methinks she 's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise : only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, 160 and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

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Cl. Thou thinkest I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

Ben. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Cl. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Ben. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a † rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take 170 you, to go in the song?

Cl. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Ben. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Cl. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife. 180

Ben. Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? † Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away † Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter Don Pedro

D.P. What secret hath held you here, that you followed
not to Leonato's ?

Ben. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

D.P. I charge thee on thy allegiance. 190

Ben. You hear, Count Claudio : I can be secret as a
dumb man ; I would have you think so ; but, (on
my allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance) he
is in love. With who ? now that is your Grace's
part. Mark how short his answer is ;—With Hero,
Leonato's short daughter.

Cl. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Ben. Like the old tale, my lord : ' it is not so, nor 'twas
not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.'

Cl. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it 200
should be otherwise.

D.P. Amen, if you love her, for the lady is very well
worthy.

Cl. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

D.P. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Cl. And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Ben. And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke
mine.

Cl. That I love her, I feel.

D.P. That she is worthy, I know. 210

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Ben. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me : I will die in it at the stake.

D.P. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Cl. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Ben. That a woman conceived me, I thank her ; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks : but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none ; and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer) I will live a bachelor. †

D.P. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Ben. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love : prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid. 230

D.P. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Ben. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me ; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder and called Adam.

D.P. Well, as time shall try :

‘ In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.’ 240

Ben. The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull’s horns, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write ‘ Here is good horse to hire,’ let them signify under my sign ‘ Here you may see Benedick the married man.’

Cl. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

D.P. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly. 250

Ben. I look for an earthquake too, then.

D.P. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the †
meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato’s, commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper, for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Ben. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassy ; and so I commit you—

Cl. To the tuition of God : From my house, if I had it,—

D.P. The sixth of July : Your loving friend, Benedick. †

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Ben. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience: and so I leave you. *Exit* 261

Cl. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

D.P. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Cl. Hath Leonato any son, my lord? 270

D.P. No child but Hero, she's his only heir;
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Cl. O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars. 280

D.P. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,

And I will break with her, and with her father,
 And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end
 That thou began'st to twist so fine a story ?

Cl. How sweetly you do minister to love,
 That know love's grief by his complexion !
 But lest my liking might too sudden seem, 290
 I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

D.P. What need the bridge much broader than the flood ?
 The fairest grant is the necessity.

Look, what will serve is fit : 'tis once, thou lovest,
 And I will fit thee with the remedy.

I know we shall have revelling to-night :
 I will assume thy part in some disguise,

And tell fair Hero I am Claudio ;

And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,

And take her hearing prisoner with the force 300

And strong encounter of my amorous tale :

Then after to her father will I break,

And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.

In practice let us put it presently. *Exeunt*

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SCENE II

A room in Leonato's house

Enter Leonato and Antonio, meeting

Leo. How now, brother! Where is my cousin, your son? hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange news, that you yet dreamt not of.

Leo. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them, but they have a good cover; they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine: the prince discovered to Claudio that he 10
loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leo. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow: I will send for him, and question him yourself.

Leo. No, no, we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if 20

peradventure this be true. Go you and tell her of it. (*enter Antonio's son and a musician.*) Cousin, you † know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy, friend, go you with me, and I will use your skill. Good cousin, have a care this busy time. *Exeunt*

SCENE III

*The same**Enter Don John and Conrade*

Con. What the good-year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

D.J. There is no measure-in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

D.J. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

Con. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

D.J. I wonder that thou (being as thou sayest thou art born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide 10 what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am

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drowsy, and tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment ; you have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself : it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest. 20

D.J. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any : in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, † and enfranchised with a clog ; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, † 30 I would bite ; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking : in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent ?

D.J. I make all use of it, for I use it only.

Who comes here ?

Enter Borachio

What news, Borachio ?

Bor. I came yonder from a great supper: the prince
your brother is royally entertained by Leonato, and
I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage. 40

D.J. Will it serve for any model to build mischief
on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to
unquietness?

Bor. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

D.J. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bor. Even he.

D.J. A proper squire! And who, and who? which
way looks he?

Bor. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

D.J. A very forward March-chick! How came you to 50
this?

Bor. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking
a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio,
hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt me behind †
the arras, and there heard it agreed upon, that the
prince should woo Hero for himself, and having
obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

D.J. Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to
my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the
glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him any way, 60
I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and
will assist me?

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Con. To the death, my lord.

D.J. Let us to the great supper : their cheer is the greater
that I am subdued. Would the cook were o' my
mind ! Shall we go prove what 's to be done ?

Bor. We'll wait upon your lordship. *Exeunt*

Act Second

SCENE I

A hall in Leonato's house

*Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, †
Ursula, and others*

Leo. Was not Count John here at supper ?

Ant. I saw him not.

Bea. How tartly that gentleman looks ! I never can see
him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Her. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Bea. He were an excellent man that were made just in
the midway between him and Benedick : the one is
too like an image and says nothing, and the other
too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leo. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count 10
John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in
Signior Benedick's face,—

Bea. With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money
enough in his purse, such a man would win any
woman in the world, if a' could get her good-will.

Leo. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a
husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith, she's too curst.

Bea. Too curst is more than curst : I shall lessen God's
sending that way ; for it is said, ' God sends a curst 20
cow short horns ; ' but to a cow too curst he sends
none.

Leo. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

Bea. Just, if he send me no husband ; for the which
blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning
and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband
with a beard on his face : I had rather lie in the
woollen.

Leo. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Bea. What should I do with him ? dress him in my 30
apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman ?
He that hath a beard is more than a youth ; and he
that hath no beard is less than a man : and he that
is more than a youth is not for me ; and he that is

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

less than a man, I am not for him : therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the berrord, and † lead his apes into hell.

Leo. Well, then, go you into hell ?

Bea. No, but to the gate, and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say 40
'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven, here's no place for you maids : ' so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens ; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. (to Hero) Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

Bea. Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy, and say, 'Father, as it please you.' But yet for all that, 50
cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, 'Father, as it please mc.'

Leo. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Bea. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust ? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl ? No, uncle, I'll none : Adam's sons are my brethren, and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leo. Daughter, remember what I told you, if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer. 60

Bea. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time : if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero : wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque pace : the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig (and full as fantastical) ; the wedding, mannerly-modest (as a measure) full of state and ancientry ; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave. 70

Leo. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Bea. I have a good eye, uncle, I can see a church by daylight.

Leo. The revellers are entering, brother, make good room. *All put on their masks*

*Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Don John,
Borachio, and others, masked* †

D.P. Lady, will you walk about with your friend ?

Her. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away. 80

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

D.P. With me in your company ?

Her. I may say so when I please.

D.P. And when please you to say so ?

Her. When I like your favour, for God defend the lute
should be like the case !

D.P. My visor is Philemon's roof, within the house is †
Jove.

Her. Why, then, your visor should be thatch'd.

D.P. Speak low, if you speak love.

Drawing her aside

Bor. Well, I would you did like me.

90

Mar. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many
ill qualities.

Bor. Which is one ?

Mar. I say my prayers aloud.

Bor. I love you the better, the hearers may cry, Amen.

Mar. God match me with a good dancer !

Bor. Amen.

Mar. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance
is done ! Answer, clerk.

Bor. No more words, the clerk is answered.

100

Urs. I know you well enough, you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the wagging of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down, you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? can virtue hide itself? Go to, 110
mum, you are he; graces will appear, and there's an end.

Bea. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Ben. No, you shall pardon me.

Bea. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Ben. Not now.

Bea. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales':—well, this was †
Signior Benedick that said so.

Ben. What's he? 120

Bea. I am sure you know him well enough.

Ben. Not I, believe me.

Bea. Did he never make you laugh?

Ben. I pray you, what is he?

Bea. Why, he is the prince's jester, a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders, none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet : I would 130
he had boarded me.

Ben. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you
say.

Bea. Do, do, he'll but break a comparison or two on me,
which, peradventure not marked, or not laughed at,
strikes him into melancholy, and then there's a
partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper
that night. (*Music.*) We must follow the leaders.

Ben. In every good thing.

Bea. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the 140
next turning.

*Dance. Then exeunt all except Don John,
Borachio, and Claudio*

D.J. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath with-
drawn her father to break with him about it. The
ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bor. And that is Claudio, I know him by his bearing.

D.J. Are not you Signior Benedick ?

Cl. You know me well, I am he.

D.J. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love ;
he is enamoured on Hero ; I pray you dissuade him
from her : she is no equal for his birth, you may do 150
the part of an honest man in it.

Cl. How know you he loves her ?

D.J. I heard him swear his affection.

Bor. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to-night.

D.J. Come, let us to the banquet. *Exeunt Don John and Bor.*

Cl. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
 But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
 'Tis certain so, the prince woos for himself ;
 Friendship is constant in all other things, 160
 Save in the office and affairs of love :
 Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues ;
 Let every eye negotiate for itself,
 And trust no agent ; for beauty is a witch,
 Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
 This is an accident of hourly proof,
 Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero !

Re-enter Benedick

Ben. Count Claudio ?

Cl. Yea, the same.

Ben. Come, will you go with me ? 170

Cl. Whither ?

Ben. Even to the next willow, about your own business, county. What fashion will you wear the garland of ? about your neck, like an usurer's chain ? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf ? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Cl. I wish him joy of her.

Ben. Why, that's spoken like an honest drovier, so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus ?

180

Cl. I pray you leave me.

Ben. Ho ! now you strike like the blind man ; 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you 'll beat the post.

Cl. If it will not be, I 'll leave you. *Exit*

Ben. Alas, poor hurt fowl ! now will he creep into sedges. But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me ! 'The prince's fool ! Ha, it may be I go under that title because I am merry. Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong ; I am not so reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of Beatrice, † that puts the world into her person, and so gives me 191 out. Well, I 'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter Don Pedro ; after him Leonato and Hero †

D.P. Now, signior, where 's the count ? did you see him ?

Ben. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame ; I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren : I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had got the good will of this young lady, and I offered him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken,

or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be 200
whipped.

D.P. To be whipped, what 's his fault ?

Ben. The flat transgression of a school-boy, who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D.P. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression ? The transgression is in the stealer.

Ben. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too, for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed 210
on you, who, as I take it, have stolen his bird's nest.

D.P. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Ben. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

D.P. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you : the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

Ben. O, she misused me past t'ie endurance of a block I an oak but with one green leaf on it would have 220
answered her ; my very v, sor began to assume life, and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw, huddling jest upon

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

jest, with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north star. I would not marry 230 her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her, you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary; and people † sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation 240 follows her.

D.P. Look, here she comes.

Re-enter Claudio and Beatrice

Ben. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the great †

Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the
Pigmies; rather than hold three words' conference 250
with this harpy. You have no employment for me?

D.P. None, but to desire your good company.

Ben. O God, sir, here 's a dish I love not, I cannot endure
my Lady Tongue. *Exit*

D.P. Come, lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior
Benedick.

Bea. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gave him †
use for it, a double heart for his single one; marry,
once before he won it of me with false dice, there-
fore your Grace may well say I have lost it. 260

D.P. You have put him down, lady, you have put him
down.

Bea. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I
should prove the mother of fools. I have brought
Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek. †

D.P. Why, how now, count, wherefore are you sad?

Cl. Not sad, my lord.

D.P. How then? sick?

Cl. Neither, my lord.

Bea. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor 270
well; but civil count, civil as an orange, and some-
thing of that jealous complexion.

D.P. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true, though,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have woo'd in thy name, and fair Hero is won, I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained : name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy !

Leo. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes : his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it. 280

Bea. Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

Cl. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy : I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours : I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Bea. Speak, cousin ; or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

D.P. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Bea. Yea, my lord, I thank it ; poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart. 290

Cl. And so she doth, cousin.

Bea. Good Lord, for alliance ! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt ; I may sit in a corner, and cry heigh-ho for a husband !

D.P. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Bea. I would rather have one of your father's getting.

Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come 300 by them?

D.P. Will you have me, lady?

Bea. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days, your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your Grace, pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

D.P. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you, for, out o' question, you were born in a merry hour.

Bea. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried, but then there 310 was a star danced, and under that was I born. Cousins, God give you joy!

Leo. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Bea. I cry you mercy, uncle. By your Grace's pardon. *Exit*

D.P. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leo. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad, but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, † she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing. 320

D.P. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leo. O, by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

D.P. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leo. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

D.P. County Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Cl. To-morrow, my lord: time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

Leo. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a 330
just seven-night, and a time too brief, too, to have all things answer my mind.

D.P. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I 340
shall give you direction.

Leo. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Cl. And I, my lord.

D.P. And you too, gentle Hero?

Her. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

D.P. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that

I know. Thus far can I praise him ; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed 350 honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick, and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit, and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

Exeunt

SCENE II

The same

Enter Don John and Borachio

D.J. It is so, the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bor. Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

D.J. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me : I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage ?

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bor. Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

10

D.J. Show me briefly how.

Bor. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

D.J. I remember.

Bor. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

D.J. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bor. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother, spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio—whose estimation do you mightily hold up—to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

20

D.J. What proof shall I make of that?

Bor. Proof enough, to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

D.J. Only to despise them I will endeavour any thing.

30

Bor. Go then, find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone, tell them that you know that Hero loves me, intend a kind of zeal both

to the prince and Claudio (as in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozened with the semblance of a maid) that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial : offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me 40
call Margaret Hero ; hear Margaret term me †
Claudio ; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

D.J. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice : be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats. 50

Bor. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

D.J. I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

Exeunt

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

SCENE III

Leonato's orchard

Enter Benedick

Ben. Boy!

Enter Boy

Boy. Signior?

Ben. In my chamber-window lies a book, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir. *Exit Boy*

Ben. I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again. I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walked ten mile a-foot to see a good armour, and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose (like an honest man and a soldier) and now is he turned orthography, his words are a very fantastical banquet, 10

just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes ? I cannot tell ; I think not : I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster, but I 'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well ; another is wise, yet I am well ; another virtuous, yet I am well : but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that 's certain ; wise, or I 'll none ; virtuous, or 30 I 'll never cheapen her ; fair, or I 'll never look on her ; mild, or come not near me ; noble, or not I for an angel ; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha ! the prince and Monsieur Love ! I will hide me in the arbour. *Withdraws*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato

D.P. Come, shall we hear this music ?

Cl. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is,
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony !

D.P. See you where Benedick hath hid himself ? 40

Cl. O, very well, my lord : the music ended,
We 'll fit the kid-fox with a pennyworth. †

Enter Balthasar with Music

D.P. Come, Balthasar, we 'll hear that song again.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bal. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

D.P. It is the witness still of excellency
To put a strange face on his own perfection.
I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.

Bal. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit 50
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos,
Yet will he swear he loves.

D.P. Nay, pray thee come ;
Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Bal. Note this before my notes,
There's not a note of mine that's worth the
noting.

D.P. Why, these are very crochets that he speaks ;
Note, notes, forsooth, and nothing. *Air* †

Ben. Now, divine air ! now is his soul ravished ! Is it
not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out
of men's bodies ? Well, a horn for my money, 60
when all's done.

THE SONG

Bal. Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,

One foot in sea and one on shore,
 To one thing constant never :
 Then sigh not so, but let them go,
 And be you blithe and bonny,
 Converting all your sounds of woe
 Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moc, 70
 Of dumps so dull and heavy ;
 The fraud of men was ever so,
 Since summer first was leavy :
 Then sigh not so, &c.

D.P. By my troth, a good song.

Bal. And an ill singer, my lord.

D.P. Ha, no, no, faith, thou singest well enough for a shift.

Ben. An he had been a dog that should have howled thus,
 they would have hanged him, and I pray God his
 bad voice bode no mischief. I had as lief have 80
 heard the night-raven, come what plague could
 have come after it.

D.P. Yea, marry, dost thou hear, Balthasar ? I pray thee
 get us some excellent music ; for to-morrow night †
 we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-
 window.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bal. The best I can, my lord.

D.P. Do so: farewell. (*exit Balthasar.*) Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick? 90

Cl. O, ay, stalk on, stalk on, the fowl sits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leo. No, nor I neither, but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Ben. Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

Leo. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it, but that she loves him with an enraged affection; it is past the infinite of thought. 100

D.P. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Cl. Faith, like enough.

Leo. O God, counterfeit? There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

D.P. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Cl. Bait the hook well, this fish will bite.

Leo. What effects, my lord? She will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Cl. She did, indeed. 110

D.P. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me, I would

have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leo. I would have sworn it had, my lord, especially against Benedick.

Ben. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it : knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Cl. He hath ta'en the infection, hold it up.

D.P. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick ? 120

Leo. No, and swears she never will, that's her torment.

Cl. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter says : ' Shall I,' says she, ' that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him ? '

Leo. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him, for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper : my daughter tells us all.

Cl. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of. 130

Leo. O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet ?

Cl. That.

Leo. O, she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence ; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

write, to one that she knew would flout her ; ‘ I measure him,’ says she, ‘ by my own spirit, for I should flout him, if he writ to me, yea, though I love him, I should.’

140

Cl. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses ; ‘ O sweet Benedick ! God give me patience !’

Leo. She doth indeed, my daughter says so : and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometime afeard she will do a desperate outrage to herself ; it is very true.

D.P. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Cl. To what end ? He would make but a sport of it, 150 and torment the poor lady worse.

D.P. An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She’s an excellent sweet lady ; and (out of all suspicion) she is virtuous.

Cl. And she is exceeding wise.

D.P. In every thing but in loving Benedick.

Leo. O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle, and her guardian.

160

D.P. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me ; I

would have daffed all other respects, and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

Leo. Were it good, think you ?

Cl. Hero thinks surely she will die, for she says she will die, if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

170

D.P. She doth well : if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he 'll scorn it, for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirit.

Cl. He is a very proper man.

D.P. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Cl. Before God ! and in my mind, very wise.

D.P. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Cl. And I take him to be valiant.

D.P. As Hector, I assure you ; and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

180

Leo. If he do fear God, a' must necessarily keep peace : if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

D.P. And so will he do, for the man doth fear God,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece ; shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love ?

Cl. Never tell him, my lord, let her wear it out with good counsel. 190

Leo. Nay, that 's impossible, she may wear her heart out first.

D.P. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter : let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

Leo. My lord, will you walk ? dinner is ready. †

Cl. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation. 200

D.P. Let there be the same net spread for her and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter ; that 's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb-show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

Exeunt Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato

Ben. (*coming forward*) This can be no trick, the conference was sadly borne ; they have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady : it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me ? why, it 210

must be requited. I hear how I am censured, they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair,—'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous,—'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me,—by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great 220 argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were 230 married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice

Bea. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Ben. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Bea. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me : if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Ben. You take pleasure then in the message ?

Bea. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's 240
point, and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior, fare you well. *Exit*

Ben. Ha ! ' Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner ; ' there 's a double meaning in that. ' I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me ; ' that 's as much as to say, ' Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. ' If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain, if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture.

Exit

Act Third

SCENE I

*Leonato's orchard**Enter Hero, Margaret, and Ursula*

Her. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour,
 There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
 Proposing with the prince and Claudio :
 Whisper her ear, and tell her I and Ursley
 Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
 Is all of her ; say that thou overheard'st us,
 And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
 Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,
 Forbid the sun to enter ; like favourites,
 Made proud by princes, that advance their pride 10
 Against that power that bred it : there will she hide
 her,

To listen our propose. This is thy office,
 Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Mar. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. *Exit*

Her. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
 As we do trace this alley up and down,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Our talk must only be of Benedick ;
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit :
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay.

20

Enter Beatrice, behind

Now begin ;
For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.
Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait :
So angle we for Beatrice, who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture.
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.
Her. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.

30

Approaching the bower

No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.
Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely ?

Her. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam ?

Her. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it, 40
 But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
 To wish him wrestle with affection,
 And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urs. Why did you so ? Doth not the gentleman †
 Deserve as full as fortunate a bed
 As ever Beatrice shall couch upon ?

Her. O god of love ! I know he doth deserve
 As much as may be yielded to a man :
 But Nature never fram'd a woman's heart
 Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice ; 50
 Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
 Misprising what they look on, and her wit
 Values itself so highly, that to her
 All matter else seems weak : she cannot love,
 Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
 She is so self-endeared.

Urs. Sure, I think so,
 And therefore certainly it were not good
 She knew his love, lest she 'll make sport at it.

Her. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man, 60
 How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
 But she would spell him backward : if fair-fac'd,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

She would swear the gentleman should be her sister ;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,
Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
If low, an agate very vilely cut ;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

70

Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Her. No, not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable,
But who dare tell her so ? If I should speak,
She would mock me into air, O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit !
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

80

Urs. Yet tell her of it, hear what she will say.

Her. No, rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I 'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with : one doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong !
 She cannot be so much without true judgement,
 Having so swift and excellent a wit
 As she is prized to have, as to refuse 90
 So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Her. He is the only man of Italy,
 Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you be not angry with me, madam,
 Speaking my fancy : Signior Benedick,
 For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,
 Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Her. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.
 When are you married, madam ? 100

Her. Why, every day to-morrow. Come, go in :
 I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
 Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Urs. She's lim'd, I warrant you, we have caught her,
 madam.

Her. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps :
 Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

Exeunt Hero and Ursula

Bea. (coming forward) What fire is in mine ears ? Can this
 be true ?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much ?

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu !
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on ; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand :
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band ;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly.

110

Exit

SCENE II

A room in Leonato's house

*Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and
Leonato*

D.P. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Cl. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D.P. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company, for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth : he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the

10

little hangman dare not shoot at him ; he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

Ben. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leo. So say I, methinks you are sadder.

Cl. I hope he be in love.

D.P. Hang him, truant ! there 's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love ; if he be sad, he wants money.

Ben. I have the toothache.

20

D.P. Draw it.

Ben. Hang it !

Cl. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D.P. What ? sigh for the toothache ?

Leo. Where is but a humour or a worm.

†

Ben. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Cl. Yet say I, he is in love.

D.P. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow ; [or in the shape of two countries at once, as, a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet.] Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

30

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Cl. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs ; a' brushes his hat o' mornings, what should that bode ?

D.P. Hath any man seen him at the barber's ?

Cl. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his check hath already stuffed tennis-balls. 40

Leo. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D.P. Nay, a' rubs himself with civet, can you smell him out by that ?

Cl. That 's as much as to say, the sweet youth 's in love.

D.P. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Cl. And when was he wont to wash his face ?

D.P. Yea, or to paint himself ? for the which, I hear what they say of him. 50

Cl. Nay, but his jesting spirit ; which is now crept into a lute-string, and now governed by stops.

D.P. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him : conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Cl. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D.P. That would I know too : I warrant, one that knows him not.

Cl. Yes, and his ill conditions, and, in despite of all, dies for him. 60

D.P. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Ben. Yet is this no charm for the toothache. Old signior, walk aside with me, I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

Exeunt Benedick and Leonato

D.P. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Cl. 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don John

D.J. My lord and brother, God save you !

70

D.P. Good den, brother.

D.J. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D.P. In private ?

D.J. If it please you ; yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

D.P. What 's the matter ?

†

D.J. (to Claudio) Means your lordship to be married to-morrow ?

D.P. You know he does.

D.J. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

80

Cl. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

D.J. You may think I love you not : let that appear here-

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

after, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother (I think he holds you well, and in dearness of heart) hath help to effect your ensuing marriage : surely suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed.

D.P. Why, what 's the matter ?

D.J. I came hither to tell you ; and, circumstances shortened (for she has been too long a talking of) the lady is disloyal. 90

Cl. Who, Hero ?

D.J. Even she, Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero ?

Cl. Disloyal ?

D.J. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness ; I could say she were worse ; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it : wonder not till further warrant : go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day : if you love her then, to-morrow wed her ; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind. 100

Cl. May this be so ?

D.P. I will not think it.

D.J. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know : if you will follow me, I will show you

enough, and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Cl. If I see anything to-night why I should not marry 110
her to-morrow, in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D.P. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

D.J. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses : bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D.P. O day untowardly turned !

Cl. O mischief strangely thwarting !

D.J. O plague right well prevented ! so will you say, 120
when you have seen the sequel. *Exeunt*

SCENE III

A street

Enter Dogberry and Verges with the Watch

Dog. Are you good men and true ?

Ver. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dog. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Ver. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dog. First, who think you the most desertless man to be a constable ?

1. *W.* Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal, for they can write and read. 10

Dog. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath blessed you with a good name : to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

2. *W.* Both which, master constable,—

Dog. You have : I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it, and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. 20
You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch ; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge : you shall comprehend all vagrom men ; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

2. *W.* How if a' will not stand ?

Dog. Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go, and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Ver. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of 30
the prince's subjects.

Dog. True, and they are to meddle with none but the
prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in
the streets ; for for the watch to babble and to talk
is most tolerable and not to be endured.

2. *W.* We will rather sleep than talk, we know what
belongs to a watch.

Dog. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet
watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should 40
offend : only, have a care that your bills be not
stolen. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses,
and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

2. *W.* How if they will not ?

Dog. Why, then, let them alone till they are sober : if
they make you not then the better answer, you may
say, they are not the men you took them for.

2. *W.* Well, sir.

Dog. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue
of your office, to be no true man ; and, for such
kind of men, the less you meddle or make with 50
them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2. *W.* If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands
on him ?

Dog. Truly, by your office, you may ; but I think they

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

that touch pitch will be defiled : the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Ver. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dog. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him. 60

Ver. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

2. *W.* How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us ?

Dog. Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying ; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it bacs will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Ver. 'Tis very true.

Dog. This is the end of the charge :—you, constable, are to present the prince's own person ; if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him. 70

Ver. Nay, by 'r lady, that I think a' cannot.

Dog. Five shillings to one on 't, with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him : marry, not without the prince be willing, for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Ver. By 'r lady, I think it be so.

Dog. Ha, ah, ha ! Well, masters, good night, an there 80
 be any matter of weight chances, call up me, keep
 your fellows' counsels, and your own, and good
 night. Come, neighbour.

2. *W.* Well, masters, we hear our charge, let us go sit here
 upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dog. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you
 watch about Signior Leonato's door, for the wedding
 being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night.
 Adieu : be vigilant, I beseech you.

Exeunt Dogberry and Verges

Enter Borachio and Conrade

Bor. What, Conrade ?

90

2. *W.* (*aside*) Peace ! stir not.

Bor. Conrade, I say !

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bor. Mass, and my elbow itched, I thought there would
 a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward
 with thy tale.

Bor. Stand thee close, then, under this pent-house, for it
 drizzles rain ; and I will, like a true drunkard,
 utter all to thee.

100

2. *W.* (*aside*) Some treason, masters, yet stand close.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bor. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear ?

Bor. Thou shouldst rather ask, if it were possible any villany should be so rich ; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bor. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest 110 that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bor. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bor. Tush ! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is ?

2. *W.* (*aside*) I know that Deformed ; a' has been a vile † thief this seven year ; a' goes up and down like a gentleman : I remember his name. 120

Bor. Didst thou not hear somebody ?

Con. No, 'twas the vane on the house.

Bor. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is, how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty ? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the

reechy painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club? 130

Con. All this I see, and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou has shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bor. Not so, neither, but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night: I tell this tale vilely, I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio and my master, 140 planted, and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bor. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret, and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged, 150 swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

2. *W.* We charge you, in the prince's name, stand!

1. *W.* Call up the right master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

2. *W.* And one Deformed is one of them: I know him; a' wears a lock.

160

Con. Masters, masters,—

1. *W.* You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters,—

2. *W.* Never speak: we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

Bor. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you.

Exeunt 170

SCENE IV

*Hero's apartment**Enter Hero, Margaret, and Ursula*

†

Her. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Her. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well.

Exit

Mar. Troth, I think your other rebato were better.

Her. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Mar. By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Her. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this. 10

Mar. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so. †

Her. O, that exceeds, they say.

Mar. By my troth's but a night-gown in respect of yours, —cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel: but for a † 20

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

fine, quaint, graceful and excellent fashion, yours
is worth ten on 't.

Her. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding
heavy.

Mar. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Her. Fie upon thee ! art not ashamed ?

Mar. Of what, lady ? of speaking honourably ? Is not
marriage honourable in a beggar ? Is not your lord
honourable without marriage ? I think you would
have me say, ' saving your reverence, a husband : ' 30
an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll
offend nobody : is there any harm in ' the heavier
for a husband ' ? None, I think, an it be the right
husband, and the right wife, otherwise 'tis light, and
not heavy : ask my Lady Beatrice else ; here she
comes.

Enter Beatrice

Her. Good morrow, coz.

Bea. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Her. Why, how now ? do you speak in the sick tune ?

Bea. I am out of all other tune, methinks. 40

Mar. Clap 's into ' Light o' love ; ' (that goes without a
burden) : do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Bea. Ye light o' love, with your heels ! then, if your

husband have stables enough, you 'll see he shall †
lack no barns.

Mar. O illegitimate construction ! I scorn that with my
heels.

Bea. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin ; 'tis time you were
ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill : heigh-ho !

Mar. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband ? 50

Bea. For the letter that begins them all, H. †

Mar. Well, an you be not turned Turk, there 's no more
sailing by the star.

Bea. What means the fool, trow ?

Mar. Nothing I, but God send every one their heart's
desire !

Her. These gloves the count sent me, they are an excellent
perfume.

Bea. I am stuffed, cousin, I cannot smell.

Mar. A maid, and stuffed ? there 's goodly catching of 60
cold.

Bea. O, God help me ! God help me ! how long have
you professed apprehension ?

Mar. Ever since you left it ! Doth not my wit become
me rarely ?

Bea. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your
cap. By my troth, I am sick.

Mar. Get you some of this distilled *Carduus Benedictus*,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

and lay it to your heart, it is the only thing for a qualm.

70

Her. There thou prickest her with a thistle.

Bea. Benedictus ! why Benedictus ? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

Mar. Moral ? no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning ; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love : nay, by 'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list, nor I list not to think what I can, nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man ; he swore he would never marry, and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging ; and how you may be converted, I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

80

Bea. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps ?

Mar. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter Ursula

Urs. Madam, withdraw : the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

90

Her. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula.
Exeunt

SCENE V

Another room in Leonato's house

Enter Leonato, with Dogberry and Verges

Leo. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dog. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leo. Brief, I pray you, for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dog. Marry, this it is, sir.

Ver. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leo. What is it, my good friends?

Dog. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter : an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were ; but, in faith, honest 10
 as the skin between his brows.

Ver. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man, and no honestier than I.

Dog. Comparisons are odorous : palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leo. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

poor duke's officers, but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

20

Leo. All thy tediousness on me, ah ?

Dog. Yea, an 't were a thousand pound more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city ; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Ver. And so am I.

Leo. I would fain know what you have to say.

Ver. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

30

Dog. A good old man, sir, he will be talking, as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out, God help us ! it is a world to see. Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges, well, God 's a good man, an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to be worshipped, all men are not alike, alas, good neighbour !

Leo. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dog. Gifts that God gives.

40

Leo. I must leave you.

Dog. One word, sir, our watch, sir, have indeed compre-

hended two aspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leo. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me : I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dog. It shall be suffigance.

Leo. Drink some wine ere you go : fare you well.

Enter a Messenger

Mes. My lord, they stay for you, to give your daughter to her husband. 50

Leo. I'll wait upon them : I am ready.

Exeunt Leonato and Messenger

Dog. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal, † bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol : we are now to examination these men.

Ver. And we must do it wisely.

Dog. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you ; here 's that shall drive some of them to a noncome, only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol. *Exeunt*

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Act Fourth

SCENE I

A church

*Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis,
Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, and attendants*

Leo. Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Fri. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

Cl. No.

Leo. To be married to her: friar, you come to marry her.

Fri. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

Her. I do.

Fri. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it. 10

Cl. Know you any, Hero?

Her. None, my lord.

Fri. Know you any, count?

Leo. I dare make his answer, none.

Cl. O, what men dare do ! what men may do ! what men daily do, not knowing what they do !

Ben. How now, interjections ? Why, then, some be of laughing, as, ah, ha, he ! 20

Cl. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave :
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter ?

Leo. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Cl. And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift ?

D.P. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Cl. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again :
Give not this rotten orange to your friend ; 30
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold how like a maid she blushes here !
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal !
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue ? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows ? But she is none :
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed ;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty. 40

Leo. What do you mean, my lord ?

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

- Cl.* Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.
- Leo.* Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity,—
- Cl.* I know what you would say : if I have known her,
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin :
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large, 50
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.
- Her.* And seem'd I ever otherwise to you ?
- Cl.* Out on the seeming ! I will write against it :
You seem'd to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown ;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.
- Her.* Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide ? 60
- Leo.* Sweet prince, why speak not you ?
- D.P.* What should I speak ?
I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.
- Leo.* Are these things spoken, or do I but dream ?

D.J. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Ben. This looks not like a nuptial.

†

Her. True, O God!

Cl. Leonato, stand I here?

Is this the prince? is this the prince's brother?

Is this face Hero's? are our eyes our own?

Leo. All this is so, but what of this, my lord?

70

Cl. Let me but move one question to your daughter,

And, by that fatherly and kindly power

That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leo. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Her. O, God defend me! how am I beset!

What kind of catechising call you this?

Cl. To make you answer truly to your name.

Her. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name

With any just reproach?

Cl. Marry, that can Hero;

Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.

80

What man was he talk'd with you yesternight,

Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?

Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Her. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

D.P. Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,

I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,

Myself, my brother, and this grieved count

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window,
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

90

D.J. Fie, fie ! they are not to be nam'd, my lord,
Not to be spoke of ;
There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Cl. O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart !
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair, farewell,
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity !
For thee I 'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

100

Leo. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me ?

Hero swoons

Bea. Why, how now, cousin ! wherefore sink you down ?

D.J. Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.

110

Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio

Ben. How doth the lady ?

Bea. Dead, I think. Help, uncle !
Hero ! why, Hero ! Uncle ! Signior Benedick ! Friar !

Leo. O Fate ! take not away thy heavy hand.
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.

Bea. How now, cousin Hero ?

Fri. Have comfort, lady.

Leo. Dost thou look up ?

Fri. Yea, wherefore should she not ?

Leo. Wherefore ! Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her ? Could she here deny 120
The story that is printed in her blood ?
Do not live, Hero, do not ope thine eyes :
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one ?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame ?
O, one too much by thee ! Why had I one ?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes ?
Why had I not with charitable hand 130
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus and mir'd with infamy,
I might have said, ' No part of it is mine ;

A thousand blushing apparitions
 To start into her face ; a thousand innocent shames
 In angel whiteness beat away those blushes ; 160
 And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
 To burn the errors that these princes hold
 Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool ;
 Trust not my reading nor my observations,
 Which with experimental seal doth warrant
 The tenour of my book ; trust not my age,
 My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
 If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here,
 Under some biting error.

Leo. Friar, it cannot be.
 Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left 170
 Is that she will not add to her damnation
 A sin of perjury ; she not denies it :
 Why seek'st thou, then, to cover with excuse
 That which appears in proper nakedness ?
Fri. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of ?
Her. They know that do accuse me, I know none :
 If I know more of any man alive
 Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
 Let all my sins lack mercy ! O my father,
 Prove you that any man with me convers'd 180
 At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death !

Fri. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Ben. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

Leo. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her ; if they wrong her honour, 190
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awak'd in such a kind,
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means, and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

Fri. Pause awhile,
And let my counsel sway you in this case :
Your daughter here the princes left for dead :
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed ;
Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument

200

Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

Leo. What shall become of this ? what will this do ?

Fri. Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf †
Change slander to remorse ; that is some good : 210
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd
Of every hearer : for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us 220
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio :
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving-delicate and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed ; then shall he mourn,
If ever love had interest in his liver, 230

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

And wish he had not so accused her,
No, though he thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy :
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
As best befits her wounded reputation, 240
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Ben. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you,
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leo. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Fri. 'Tis well consented : presently away ; 250
For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.
Come, lady, die to live : this wedding-day
Perhaps is but prolong'd : have patience and en-
dure. *Exeunt all but Benedick and Beatrice*

Ben. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while ?

Bea. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Ben. I will not desire that.

Bea. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Ben. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Bea. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that
would right her !

260

Ben. Is there any way to show such friendship ?

Bea. A very even way, but no such friend.

Ben. May a man do it ?

Bea. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Ben. I do love nothing in the world so well as you : is not
that strange ?

Bea. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as
possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you :
but believe me not ; and yet I lie not ; I confess
nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my
cousin. 270

Ben. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Bea. Do not swear, and eat it.

Ben. I will swear by it that you love me, and I will make
him eat it that says I love not you.

Bea. Will you not eat your word ?

Ben. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest
I love thee.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bea. Why, then, God forgive me !

Ben. What offence, sweet Beatrice ? 280

Bea. You have stayed me in a happy hour : I was about to protest I loved you.

Ben. And do it with all thy heart.

Bea. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Ben. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Bea. Kill Claudio.

Ben. Ha ! not for the wide world.

Bea. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Ben. Tarry, sweet Beatrice. 290

Bea. I am gone, though I am here : there is no love in you : nay, I pray you, let me go.

Ben. Beatrice,—

Bea. In faith, I will go.

Ben. We 'll be friends first.

Bea. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Ben. Is Claudio thine enemy ?

Bea. Is 'a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman ? 300
O that I were a man ! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,

—O God, that I were a man ! I would eat his heart
in the market-place.

Ben. Hear me, Beatrice,—

Bea. Talk with a man out at a window ! A proper saying !

Ben. Nay, but, Beatrice,—

Bea. Sweet Hero ! She is wronged, she is slandered, she
is undone. 310

Ben. Beat—

Bea. Princes and counties ! Surely, a princely testimony,
a goodly count, Count Cornetto ; a sweet gallant,
surely ! O that I were a man for his sake ! or that
I had any friend would be a man for my sake ! But
manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into com-
plement, and men are only turned into tongue, and
trim ones too : he is now as valiant as Hercules that
only tells a lie, and swears it. I cannot be a man with
wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving. 320

Ben. Tarry, good Beatrice, by this hand, I love thee.

Bea. Use it for my love some other way than swearing
by it.

Ben. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath
wronged Hero ?

Bea. Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soul.

Ben. Enough, I am engaged ; I will challenge him, I will
kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your 330 cousin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell.

Exeunt

SCENE II

A prison

*Enter Dogberry, Verges, and Sexton, in gowns; and the †
Watch, with Conrade and Borachio*

Dog. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Ver. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

Sex. Which be the malefactors?

Dog. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Ver. Nay, that's certain, we have the exhibition to examine.

Sex. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dog. Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend? 10

Bor. Borachio.

Dog. Pray, write down, Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dog. Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

Con. }
Bor. } Yea, sir, we hope.

Dog. Write down, that they hope they serve God : and write God first, for God defend but God should go before such villains ! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, 20 and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves ?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dog. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you, but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah ; a word in your ear, sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bor. Sir, I say to you we are none.

Dog. Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none ? 30

Sex. Master Constable, you go not the way to examine, you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dog. Yea, marry, that 's the efastest way. Let the watch † come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

I. This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dog. Write down, Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bor. Master Constable,—

40

Dog. Pray thee, fellow, peace : I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sex. What heard you him say else ?

2. *W.* Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dog. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Ver. Yea, by mass, that it is.

Sex. What else, fellow ?

1. *W.* And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her. 50

Dog. O villain ! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sex. What else ?

Wat. This is all.

Sex. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away ; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's : I will go before and show him their examination. 60

Exit

Dog. Come, let them be opinioned.

Ver. Let them be in the hands—

Con. Off, coxcomb !

Dog. God 's my life, where 's the sexton ? let him write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them ! Thou naughty varlet !

Con. Away ! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dog. Dost thou not suspect my place ? dost thou not suspect my years ? O that he were here to write me down an ass ! But, masters, remember that I am an ass ; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass !

70

†

81

Exeunt

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Act Fifth

SCENE I

Before Leonato's house

Enter Leonato and Antonio

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leo. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve : give not me counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience ; 10
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form :
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
Bid sorrow wag, cry ' hem ! ' when he should groan, †

Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
 With candle-wasters ; bring him yet to me,
 And I of him will gather patience.

But there is no such man, for, brother, men 20
 Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
 Which they themselves not feel, but, tasting it,
 Their counsel turns to passion, which before
 Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
 Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
 Charm ache with air, and agony with words :
 No, no ; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
 To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
 But no man's virtue nor sufficiency,
 To be so moral when he shall endure 30
 The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel :
 My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leo. I pray thee, peace. I will be flesh and blood,
 For there was never yet philosopher
 That could endure the toothache patiently,
 However they have writ the style of gods,
 And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself ;
 Make those that do offend you suffer too. 40

Leo. There thou speak'st reason : nay, I will do so.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

My soul doth tell me Hero is belied,
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Ant. Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio

D.P. Good den, good den.

Cl. Good day to both of you.

Leo. Hear you, my lords,—

D.P. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leo. Some haste, my lord ! well, fare you well, my lord :
Are you so hasty now ? well, all is one.

D.P. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

50

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Cl. Who wrongs him ?

Leo. Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou :—
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword ;
I fear thee not.

Cl. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear :
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leo. Tush, tush, man, never flee and jest at me ;
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,

60

Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
 Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me,
 That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
 And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
 Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
 I say thou hast belied mine innocent child ;
 Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
 And she lies buried with her ancestors ;
 O, in a tomb where never scandal slept, 70
 Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany !

Cl. My villany ?

Leo. Thine, Claudio, thine, I say.

D.P. You say not right, old man.

Leo. My lord, my lord,

I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,
 Despite his nice fence, and his active practice,
 His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

Cl. Away ! I will not have to do with you.

Leo. Canst thou so daff me ? Thou hast kill'd my child.
 If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed, 80
 But that 's no matter, let him kill one first ;
 Win me and wear me ; let him answer me.
 Come, follow me, boy ; come, sir boy, come, follow
 me :

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence ;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leo. Brother,—

Ant. Content yourself. God knows I loved my niece ;
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue :
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops !

90

Leo. Brother Antony,—

Ant. Hold you content. What, man ! I know them,
yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,—
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave, and slander,
Go anticly, and show outward hidcousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst ;
And this is all.

Leo. But, brother Antony,—

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter : 100

Do not you meddle ; let me deal in this.

D.P. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience. †

My heart is sorry for your daughter's death :
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leo. My lord, my lord,—

D.P. I will not hear you.

Leo. No? Come, brother; away! I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

Exeunt Leonato and Antonio

D.P. See, see, here comes the man we went to seek. 110

Enter Benedick

Cl. Now, signior, what news?

Ben. Good day, my lord.

D.P. Welcome, signior: you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Cl. We had like to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.

D.P. Leonato and his brother. What thinkest thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Ben. In a false quarrel there is no true valour; I came to seek you both. 120

Cl. We have been up and down to seek thee, for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

Ben. It is in my scabbard, shall I draw it?

D.P. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Cl. Never any did so, though very many have been

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels ; draw, to pleasure us.

D.P. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou sick, or angry ? 130

Cl. What, courage, man ! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Ben. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me ; I pray you choose another subject.

Cl. Nay, then, give him another staff, this last was broke † cross.

D.P. By this light, he changes more and more, I think he be angry indeed. 140

Cl. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Ben. Shall I speak a word in your ear ?

Cl. God bless me from a challenge !

Ben. (*aside to Claudio*) You are a villain, I jest not, I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Cl. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer. 150

D.P. What, a feast, a feast ?

Cl. I' faith, I thank him ; he hath bid me to a calf's-head

and a capon ; the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too ?

Ben. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

D.P. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said, thou hadst a fine wit : ' True,' said she, ' a fine little one.' ' No,' said I, ' a great wit : ' ' Right,' says she, ' a great gross one.' ' Nay,' said I, ' a good wit : ' ' Just,' said she, ' it hurts nobody.' ' Nay,' said I, ' the gentleman is wise : ' ' Certain,' said she, ' a wise gentleman.' ' Nay,' † said I, ' he hath the tongues : ' ' That I believe,' said she, ' for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning ; there's a double tongue ; there's two tongues.' Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape thy particular virtues : yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy. 160 170

Cl. For the which she wept heartily, and said she cared not.

D.P. Yea, that she did, but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly : the old man's daughter told us all.

Cl. All, all ; and, moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

D.P. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head ?

Cl. Yea, and text underneath, ' Here dwells Benedick 180
the married man ' ?

Ben. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour : you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you, I must discontinue your company, your brother the bastard is fled from Messina, you have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet, and till then peace be with him. *Exit* 190

D.P. He is in earnest.

Cl. In most profound earnest ; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D.P. And hath challenged thee.

Cl. Most sincerely.

D.P. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his † doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit !

Cl. He is then a giant to an ape : but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

D.P. But, soft you, let me be : pluck up, my heart, and 200
be sad. Did he not say, my brother was fled ?

Enter Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch, with Conrade and Borachio

Dog. Come, you, sir : if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance : nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

D.P. How now, two of my brother's men bound ?
Borachio one !

Cl. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

D.P. Officers, what offence have these men done ?

Dog. Marry, sir, they have committed false report, more- **210**
over, they have spoken untruths, secondarily, they are slanders, sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady, thirdly, they have verified unjust things, and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

D.P. First, I ask thee what they have done, thirdly, I ask thee what 's their offence, sixth and lastly, why they are committed, and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Cl. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division, and, by my troth, there 's one meaning well suited. **220**

D.P. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer ? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood : what 's your offence ?

Bor. Sweet prince, let me go no farther to mine answer :

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes : what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgraced her when you should marry her ; my villany they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation ; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain. 230

*D.P.*Runs not this speech like iron through your blood ?

Cl. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it. 240

*D.P.*But did my brother set thee on to this ?

Bor. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

*D.P.*He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery :
And fled he is upon this villany.

Cl. Sweet Hero ! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dog. Come, bring away the plaintiffs : by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter : and, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass. 250

Ver. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Re-enter Leonato and Antonio, with the Sexton

Leo. Which is the villain ? let me see his eyes,
That, when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him : which of these is he ?

Bor. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leo. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child ?

Bor. Yea, even I alone.

Leo. No, not so, villain, thou beliest thyself,
Here stand a pair of honourable men, 260
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death :
Record it with your high and worthy deeds,
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Cl. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak ; choose your revenge yourself,
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin : yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

D.P. By my soul, nor I : 270
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he 'll enjoin me to.

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Leo. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live ;
That were impossible : but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died, and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones, sing it to-night :
To-morrow morning come you to my house, 280
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew : my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us :
Give her the right you should have given her
 cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Cl. O noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me !
I do embrace your offer and dispose †
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leo. To-morrow, then, I will expect your coming ; 290
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bor. No, by my soul, she was not ;

Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me ;
 But always hath been just and virtuous
 In any thing that I do know by her.

Dog. Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass : I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment. And also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed, they say he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath used so long and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake : pray you, examine him upon that point. 300 †

Leo. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dog. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth, and I praise God for you. 310

Leo. There's for my pains.

Dog. God save the foundation !

Leo. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dog. I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship ! I wish your worship well, God restore you to health ! I humbly give you leave to depart, and if a merry

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meeting may be wished, God prohibit it! Come, 320
neighbour. *Exeunt Dogberry and Verges*

Leo. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords: we look for you to-morrow.

D.P. We will not fail.

Cl. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

Leo. (to the Watch) Bring you these fellows on.

We'll talk with Margaret,

How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

Exeunt, severally

Enter Benedick and Margaret, meeting

Ben. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Mar. Will you, then, write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Ben. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living † shall come over it, for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Mar. To have no man come over me! why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Ben. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches. 10

Mar. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Ben. A most manly wit, Margaret, it will not hurt a woman: and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice: I give thee the bucklers.

Mar. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Ben. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids. 20

Mar. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.

Ben. And therefore will come. *Exit Margaret*

(sings) The god of love,
 That sits above,

 And knows me, and knows me,
 How pitiful I deserve,—

I mean in singing; but in loving, Leander the good †
swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars,
and a whole book full of these quondam carpet- 30
mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even
road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly
turned over and over as my poor self in love.
Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried: I

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can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby,' an innocent rhyme ; for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rhyme ; for 'school,' 'fool,' a babbling rhyme ; very ominous endings : no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter Beatrice

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee ? 40

Bea. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Ben. O, stay but till then !

Bea. 'Then' is spoken ; fare you well now, and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio. †

Ben. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Bea. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome, therefore I will depart un-kissed. 50

Ben. Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ?

Bea. For them all together, which maintained so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part

to intermingle with them. But for which of my
good parts did you first suffer love for me? 60

Ben. Suffer love,—a good epithet! I do suffer love
indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Bea. In spite of your heart, I think; alas, poor heart,
if you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours,
for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Ben. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Bea. It appears not in this confession: there's not one
wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Ben. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the †
time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in 70
this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no
longer in monument than the bell rings and the
widow weeps.

Bea. And how long is that, think you?

Ben. Question: why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter †
in rheum: therefore is it most expedient for the †
wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own
virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising
myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praise- 80
worthy: and now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Bea. Very ill.

Ben. And how do you?

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Bea. Very ill too.

Ben. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter Ursula

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle, yonder's old coil at home, it is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused, and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently? 90

Bea. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Ben. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes; and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's. *Exeunt*

SCENE III

Before the Monument

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, and three or four with tapers

Cl. Is this the monument of Leonato?

A Lord. It is, my lord.

Cl. (*reading out of a scroll*)

Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies :
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.

So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb. 10
Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

SONG

Pardon, goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight,
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.

Midnight, assist our moan ;
Help us to sigh and groan,

Heavily, heavily :

Graves, yawn, and yield your dead, †

Till death be uttered, 20

Heavily, heavily.

Cl. Now, unto thy bones good night !
Yearly will I do this rite.

D.P. Good morrow, masters, put your torches out :
The wolves have prey'd, and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us : fare you well.

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Cl. Good morrow, masters : each his several way.

D.P. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds ; 30
And then to Leonato's we will go.

Cl. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed's
Than this for whom we render'd up this woe.

Exeunt

SCENE IV

A room in Leonato's house

*Enter Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice, Margaret,
Ursula, Friar Francis, and Hero*

Fri. Did I not tell you she was innocent ?

Leo. So are the prince and Claudio, who accus'd her
Upon the error that you heard debated :
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sorts so well.

Ben. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leo. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all, 10
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you, come hither mask'd.

Exeunt Ladies

The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
 To visit me. You know your office, brother :
 You must be father to your brother's daughter,
 And give her to young Claudio.

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Ben. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Fri. To do what, signior ?

Ben. To bind me, or undo me, one of them.

20

Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
 Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leo. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.

Ben. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leo. The sight whereof I think you had from me,
 From Claudio, and the prince : but what's your
 will ?

Ben. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical,

But, for my will, my will is, your good will
 May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
 In the estate of honourable marriage :

†

In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

31

Leo. My heart is with your liking.

Fri.

And my help.

Here comes the prince and Claudio.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio, and two or three others
D.P. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

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Leo. Good morrow, prince, good morrow, Claudio :

We here attend you. Are you yet determined

To-day to marry with my brother's daughter ?

Cl. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

Leo. Call her forth, brother ; here's the friar ready.

Exit Antonio

D.P. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what 's the matter, 40

That you have such a February face,

So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness ?

Cl. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.

Tush, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with
gold,

And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,

As once Europa did at lusty Jove,

When he would play the noble beast in love. †

Ben. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,

And some such strange bull leap'd your father's
cow

And got a calf in that same noble feat 50

Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Cl. For this I owe you : here comes other reckonings.

Re-enter Antonio, with the Ladies masked

Which is the lady I must seize upon ?

Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Cl. Why, then she 's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

Leo. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.

Cl. Give me your hand, before this holy friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Her. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife : 60

Unmasking

And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.

Cl. Another Hero !

Her. Nothing certainer :
One Hero died defil'd, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

D.P. The former Hero ! Hero that is dead !

Leo. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

Fri. All this amazement can I qualify :
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death :
Meantime let wonder seem familiar, 70
And to the chapel let us presently.

Ben. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice ?

Bea. (*unmasking*) I answer to that name ; what is your
will ?

Ben. Do not you love me ?

Bea. Why, no, no more than reason.

Ben. Why, then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio

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Have been deceived, for they swore you did.

Bea. Do not you love me ?

Ben. Troth, no, no more than reason.

Bea. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula
Are much deceiv'd ; for they did swear you did.

Ben. They swore that you were almost sick for me. 80

Bea. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Ben. 'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me ?

Bea. No, truly, but in friendly recompence.

Leo. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Cl. And I'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her,
For here's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Her. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick. 90

Ben. A miracle ! here's our own hands against our hearts.
Come, I will have thee, but, by this light, I take
thee for pity.

Bea. I would not deny you, but, by this good day, I yield
upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life,
for I was told you were in a consumption.

Ben. Peace ! I will stop your mouth. *Kissing her*

D.P. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man ?

Ben. I'll tell thee what, prince ; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think 100
I care for a satire or an epigram ? No : if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it, and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it ; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin. 110

Cl. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer ; which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Ben. Come, come, we are friends : let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leo. We'll have dancing afterward.

Ben. First, of my word, therefore play, music. Prince, 120
thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife : there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Enter a Messenger

Mes. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Ben. Think not on him till to-morrow : I'll devise thee
brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers.

Dance. Exeunt

Notes

I. i. 35-38. What all this is about no one has explained; if it is not, as it probably is, a topical allusion, it may derive from an earlier state of the play.

I. i. 98. *for then were you a child*; I do not understand the point of this retort (evidently, from Don Pedro's comment, a crushing one) which the silence of the commentators suggests that they find obvious: it can of course mean that Benedick is 'your only cuckold-maker.'

I. i. 169. *Cupid . . . Vulcan*; i.e. Cupid is only a beater, not a hunter, and Vulcan a mere worker in wood, not the armourer of the gods.

I. i. 182. *wear his cap with suspicion*; explained as 'wear his cap under suspicion that he wears it to hide the cuckold's horns.'

I. i. 185. *sigh away Sundays*; explained as 'when you have most leisure to reflect on your captive condition,' or 'when owing to the domesticity of the day you cannot escape from your yoke-fellow.' Neither seems very convincing.

I. i. 222. *hang my bugle in an invisible baldric*; we are told that the reference is 'of course' to concealing the cuckold's horn. I can see no 'of course' about it. The recheat no doubt has some allusion to the horns, as is indicated by the forehead, and the bugle may have something to do with winding the recheat; but how a baldric (a cross-belt from shoulder to waist), whether invisible or not, can conceal horns in the forehead, or for that matter can even conceal the bugle, if we imagine a clumsy pun on the bugle as a 'horn,' seems obscure. I feel that the phrase should mean 'surrender my freedom to the invisible bands of matrimony,' but I can see no reason why it should mean that.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

I. i. 252. *hours*; as the phrase stands it must mean 'put off the evil day,' but it is tempting to read *borns*.

I. i. 260. *sixth of July*; the old Midsummer Day (for Midsummer madness), (Aldis Wright).

I. ii. 22-25. I adopt a suggestion of the New Cambridge editors in the stage-direction. The entry is forecast in the first line of the scene. We must then read *Cousin* for Q's *Cousins*. *Cousin* is addressed to the nephew and *friend* to the musician. But I suspect that there is more confusion in the passage, since Leonato, as the text stands, suddenly tells his brother to acquaint Hero, which he has just said he would do himself.

I. iii. 28. *trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog*; ironic; 'the extent of the trust put in me is indicated by my muzzle, and of the freedom I am allowed by my shackle.'

I. iii. 54. This seems a very clumsy duplication of Antonio's man's eavesdropping in the last scene, and implies, if the places of eavesdropping are correctly described, that the Prince and Claudio have gone over the whole scheme twice. This may point to revision.

II. i. S.D. Q gives no entry for Margaret or Ursula. As the New Cambridge editors point out, it is better to bring them in here, as part of the unmasked household, than with the maskers in l. 77.

II. i. 36. *berrord*; this mysterious-looking word stands for either 'bear-herd' or 'bear-ward,' it is disputed which; but the meaning is certain. *lead apes in(to) bell*; a traditional occupation of old maids; cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, II. i. 34.

II. i. 77 (S.D.). Q has here the remarkable stage-direction *Enter prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthaser, or dumb Iohn*. I accept the ingenious suggestion of the New Cambridge editors,

which seems to solve several problems at once. In the first place Balthasar, who is no more than a singing-man, is not wanted in this scene. Margaret indeed needs a partner, and Q gives three of her interlocutor's speeches to *Bene* and two to *Balth*, but *Bene* is shortly to be otherwise occupied, and Borachio would be much more appropriate to Margaret than *Balth*. Finally Borachio, though given no entry in Q, is given speeches at ll. 145 and 154. The suggestion is that Shakespeare wrote *and Bor Don Iohn* (or even *Dun Iohn*, which we find in III. iii. 102) and that the compositor took it as *and B or dum Iohn*, and thought *B* stood for *Balthasar*, subsequently taking a speech-heading *Bo* first as *Be* and then as *Ba*.

II. i. 87. Jupiter and Mercury visited Philemon and Baucis in their cottage.

II. i. 118. *Hundred Merry Tales*; a jest-book, published in 1526 by John Rastell.

II. i. 190. *the base (though bitter)*; so Q. This is obscure, and Johnson's emendation, *the base, the bitter*, may be right, the compositor having misread *the* as *tho*. But the brackets have to be accounted for, and the staccato asyndeton of Johnson's reading is a trifle suspicious.

II. i. 192 (S.D.). F brings in here only Don Pedro. Q brings in not only Leonato and Hero as well, but also Don John, Borachio and Conrade, who have nothing to do throughout the scene. These superfluities are certainly some kind of evidence for either revision or cutting. But it is clearly easier to bring in Leonato and Hero here rather than later. Don Pedro, as the New Cambridge editors point out, naturally and effectively returns in triumph with Leonato and Hero, having settled the match, and looking for Claudio.

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II. i. 238. *as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary*; I have reinstated Q's comma, usually omitted, since though no doubt Q would naturally have punctuated so even with the ordinary meaning ('as quietly in hell as he would in a sanctuary') the point is, I think, rather 'a man would live as quietly in hell as here, and indeed there find sanctuary.'

II. i. 248, 249. *Prester John* was a fabulous king supposed to live in some remote district of Asia; but his name is thought to be a corruption of 'Prestigian,' the title of the king of Abyssinia. The *great Cham* is the emperor of China.

II. i. 257. This certainly looks like an allusion to some episode which is no longer part of the play.

II. i. 265. *whom you sent me to seek*; the New Cambridge editors suggest that this is to account for Beatrice's appearance, as Leonato's words in l. 313 are a device for getting her off again; and they further suggest that therefore Beatrice was not originally in the scene at all. But the fact that a dramatist likes to make his characters' entrances and exits neat is no proof of revision.

II. i. 318. *not ever sad then*; the New Cambridge editors accept with acclamation the anonymous (and obvious) emendation *even*; thereby, I think, well illustrating their own remark that editors tamper with Q at their peril. Leonato does not mean that she is not serious *even then*; still less does he mean that she is *never* serious then; he means exactly what, in Elizabethan idiom, he says, *i.e.* she is not *always* serious then, because *often* she wakes up laughing.

II. ii. 41. *hear Margaret term me Claudio*; for a full discussion of this very odd remark I can only refer the reader to the three pages on it in the New Cambridge edition, in the hope that he will understand them better than I do. What seems quite clear is this, that to read *Borachio* for *Claudio*, as is sometimes done, hardly mends matters, since to call him by his own name is exactly what Margaret,

unless otherwise prompted, would naturally do, and there would be no need to comment on it; and second that Margaret has been induced, or is to be induced, to lend herself, on whatever ingenious excuse Borachio invented, to a scene in which she should impersonate her mistress and Borachio appear to be her mistress' lover; and, for the purposes of this plot, it is highly important that she should *not* call him Claudio, since the listening Claudio would surely smell several rats. All one can say is that there is serious confusion or corruption; but I do not think that one can even with probability determine what it has been. It may even have been sheer carelessness on Shakespeare's part; Borachio must call Margaret Hero, and the *verbal* counterpart to that is that she should call him Claudio, which it is natural enough to insert if one does not think things out.

II. iii. 42. *kid-fox*; so Q. Warburton's emendation *bid-fox* is most attractive in view of (a) 'Hide fox, and all after' in *Hamlet*, IV. ii. 30, and (b) a *shill-skill* misprint in this play, I. ii. 24.

II. iii. 57. *Note, notes . . .*; 'No one has satisfactorily explained this. Surely "note" = he knows not, *i.e.* "he pretends not to know his notes or anything"' (New Cambridge). But is this elaborate explanation or any other explanation needed? Don Pedro seems to be doing no more than repeating, perhaps with slight exasperation, the words on which Balthasar has been playing, and adding a quibble of his own on *nothing-noting* (*cf.* the Elizabethan spelling of 'mote' as 'moth').

II. iii. 84. Of this serenade nothing more is heard.

II. iii. 198. *dinner*; the New Cambridge editors rightly point out that there is a confusion of time here, since in l. 38 of the scene it was evening, whereas dinner was a midday meal. This may point to revision, though mere carelessness might also account for it.

III. i. 45. *as full as fortunate*; so Q, and I retain it, in spite of the

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statement made by some editors that it is unintelligible. It seems to me a perfectly natural compound of 'as fully fortunate a bed' and 'a full as fortunate bed,' and I do not believe that any hearer or rapid reader was ever given a moment's pause by it.

III. i. 101. *every day to-morrow*; Capell remarks that this is 'a levity, indicating her raised spirits.' But even a levity is the better for meaning something, and the meaning is none too clear. Does she mean, answering the question in two ways, 'I am to be married (*i.e.* have the ceremony performed) to-morrow, and then I shall be married (*i.e.* a married woman) every day'? I feel that this is too complicated for the context, and that I am missing some quite simple sense.

III. ii. 25. *humour or a worm*; Furness quotes *Batman upon Bartholome*, "Wormes breede in the cheeke-teeth of rotted humours that be in the holownesse thereof."

III. ii. 76. *What's the matter?*; it would perhaps be better to follow Capell and assign this to Claudio.

III. iii. 118. *Deformed*; this must surely be some topical allusion to which we have lost the key.

III. iv. (S.D.). Q gives *Enter Hero, and Margaret, and Ursula*, as though Ursula had been an afterthought. The New Cambridge editors find here clear evidence of revision, Ursula being added later merely for the purpose of bringing in the also added Beatrice. It is quite true that the scene could begin at l. 6 and end at l. 36.

III. iv. 12. *tire within*; if *within* is right it seems that this must allude to a wig, left in an inner room (in the context it must mean a head-dress or way of doing the hair, and not 'attire' in general); but one may fancy that *within* conceals some technical word, *cf.* the 'tire-valiant' in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, III. iii. 49.

III. iv. 19. This passage appears to mean that the pearls ran down

the sleeves proper, the 'side-sleeves' (ornamental wide sleeves, almost like a small cape) and skirts, and were stitched on to a background of blue tinsel.

III. iv. 44. *stables . . . barns*; there is clearly a pun on *barn* in the ordinary sense and in that of 'bairn'; but I do not think that the whole phrase has been adequately explained, and have nothing to offer, except a reference to *The Winter's Tale*, II. i. 135, where Antigonus makes an equally obscure remark about *stables* in connection with his wife.

III. iv. 51. *H*; the pronunciation of the letter and of 'ache' were identical.

III. v. 52. *Francis Seacoal*; clearly a different member of the family from George, the second watchman. But I am not clear that the presence of two brothers is evidence of confusion and revision.

IV. i. 66. The New Cambridge editors print thus :

Ben. (aside) *This looks not like a nuptial.*

Hero. 'True,' O God!

Cla. *Leonato, stand I here?*

They then comment: "This aside of Benedick's is a broken line. We suggest that it was added in 1598-9 to keep the audience alive to Benedick's presence on the stage." This seems to me a perfect example of over-ingenuity. There is, in the first place, nothing to show that Benedick's remark is an aside, and it can only be made so by taking Hero's *True* to be picking up Don John's *true*, instead of a natural and moving assent to Benedick's statement. In the second place Benedick's remark, aside or not, is only a broken line if we perversely refuse to allow it its natural completion of Hero's rejoinder, and take the latter as the opening of an extremely clumsy

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line. We are of course left with a broken line somewhere, but I prefer the arrangement of the text.

IV. i. 154. The opening lines of the Friar are printed as prose (at the bottom of a page) in Q. This may possibly point to revision-dislocation. But, in spite of much comment on the lines, I cannot agree that there is obscurity of sense pointing in the same direction. The Friar surely means simply 'the only reason that I have hitherto been silent and not interfered with the course of events is that I have been concentrating my attention on the lady.'

IV. i. 209-21. To defeat my favour for the moment with a usurped ingenuity, here if anywhere in the play there are the clearest evidences of revision, which the New Cambridge editors have unaccountably missed. It must surely be clear to any reader who will examine the passage that it was originally written in a shorter form in couplets, and later expanded into blank verse. The original form, we may guess, was something like this:

*Marry, this shall change slander to remorse ;
But not for that dream I on this strange course.
She, dead on th' instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd.
But on this travail look for greater birth ;
That which we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but when lost and lack'd
Then the misprised value straight is rack'd.
The virtue that possession would not show
Is found when lost ; and so with Claudio.*

(I hope that it is unnecessary to add that I do not believe a word of this conjecture, and only insert it to show how easy the game is to play.)

IV. ii. (S.D. and speech-headings). Q's stage-direction is *Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne clarke in gownes*. That is, Conrade and the Watch are left out. And the speech-headings, as has often been pointed out, are amusing, and make it more or less certain that Q was set from a prompt copy. Verges' speeches, with one exception, which is given to *Const*, are consistently given to *Cowley* or *Couley*, i.e. one of the actors, Richard Cowley. Dogberry's, apart from four which are headed *Andrew* (i.e. 'clown') and one which is headed *Constable*, are given to *Ke*, *Kem*, *Kemp*, or (once) *Keeper*, i.e. the famous comic actor Will Kempe. Dover Wilson holds that this implies that by this stage of the play in the course of his revision Shakespeare had forgotten the names of his characters. It is possible, I think, to imagine other explanations.

IV. ii. 33. *efstest*; this unknown word is usually explained as a blunder of Dogberry's. But it does not seem to me quite like Dogberry to make a blunder in this sort of phrase, not quite like Shakespeare to make him make so obscure a blunder. The obvious emendation would be *defstest* (Theobald), which is no more than an *e:d* error with the omission of a then apparently redundant *e*; but that does not sound like Dogberry either, and I wish that one could find a word that would mean 'quickest' or 'shortest,' like the dialect use of 'soonest.'

IV. ii. 80. *batb had losses*; Collier wanted to emend *losses* to *leases*, thereby, as it seems to me, missing the whole point, which indeed has hardly merited the amount of dispute that it has provoked. To 'have had losses' is surely in a kind of topsy-turvy way (the kind of way in which Dogberry's mind works) the mark of a well-do-do man, since one must start by having something to lose!

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V. i. 16. *Bid sorrow wag, cry 'hem!' when he should groan*; this is the usual (Capell's) emendation of Q's *And sorrow, wagge, crië hem.* The New Cambridge editors regard as 'almost certainly correct' Steevens' suggestion *And—sorry wag—cry 'hem.'* It is graphically much easier than Capell's, but seems to me to have nothing else to commend it. There is nothing particularly waggish about crying 'hem.' The natural run of the lines leads one to expect some further quite ordinary phrase of the 'stroke his beard' type, such as, for example, *And wag his head*, but to support any such reading would involve suppositions of alterations finding their way into the text in the wrong place which would be outside the scope of reasonable conjecture.

V. i. 102. *wake your patience*; various conjectures instead of *wake*, but all of them, as well as many of the comments on *wake*, I think needless. Don Pedro is anxious to break off the talk, and he means simply, I think, 'We do not want to rouse your patience into something very far from patience, and so we will not argue.' (He does not mean, that is, 'wake your patience into existence.') No doubt to talk of their patience at all after their outburst is slightly ironical, but this seems to give an adequate meaning without tampering with the text.

V. i. 137. *broke cross*; if a lance was shivered by a full blow on the opponent's shield, no disgrace was involved, but if it was snapped in two by a cross blow, it implied poor tilting.

V. i. 163. *a wise gentleman*; no one has explained what the sarcastic point of Beatrice's rejoinder is.

V. i. 196-99. A very puzzling passage; I give Greg's suggestion as recorded by the New Cambridge editors: "What an amusing thing is a man when he gets on his high horse and goes to fight in his doublet and hose, leaving off his wit with his cloak! then he

seems a hero in the eyes of a fool—but then in reality a fool were good medicine for him to make him laugh himself out of his humour.” This may be right, though I do not find it convincing; but I have nothing more convincing to offer, and only a few suggestions to make. Benedick has earlier equated his wit with his sword, and one would rather have expected this to be glanced at, but this seems to give the wrong sense, since ‘in doublet and hose’ must mean ‘stripped for action’ and therefore presumably with, not without, his sword. I do not think that giant means hero, nor doctor a doctor of medicine; I think that Claudio’s remark means ‘he is a giant compared to an ape, but an ape is a learned man compared to him.’

V. i. 288. *offer and dispose*; this is the Q punctuation, whereby *dispose* is a noun and means ‘disposal,’ leaves Leonato the active offerer and disposer, and Claudio the dejected passive pawn. The usual reading gives a colon after *offer*, whereby Claudio disposes of himself. The Q reading is, I think, the more pointed.

V. i. 302. *one Deformed*; cf. III. iii. 118 and note.

V. ii. 5. *style*; with pun on ‘stile.’

V. ii. 28. *Leander swam the Hellespont to his lover Hero*; Pandar acted as go-between for his niece Cressid and Troilus.

V. ii. 45. *with that I came*; we should perhaps read *with that I came for* (Rowe).

V. ii. 69. *in the time of good neighbours*; apparently ‘when a man had no need to praise himself’ (Aldis Wright).

V. ii. 75. *Question*; I do not think ‘What a question!’ (Warburton), since the question is reasonable enough, but rather ‘You want to play a game of question and answer, there’s your question, let me see now . . . well, an hour . . .’ (cf. *King John*, I. i. 195).

V. ii. 77. *Don Worm, his conscience*; Halliwell quotes the delightful

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entry from the accounts of the Coventry mysteries, "Item, payd to ii wormes of conscience, xvi d."

V. iii. 19, 20. Something seems to have gone wrong here. In the first place there has been no adequate explanation of what death being 'uttered' means; 'vanquished' is suggested, and simply 'expressed.' But apart from that the whole sense seems to be standing on its head. The yielding up of the dead by the graves should not be a continuous process going on 'till' something else occurs, but rather the point in time until which something else goes on. *I.e.*, the expected sense would be given by

*Till graves yield up their dead
This dirge be uttered.*

I do not of course mean that that, or anything like it, can be advanced as an emendation; but I do suggest that the trouble goes much deeper than the mere meaning of *uttered*.

V. iv. 30. *the estate*; I have ventured to read this for Q's *the state*. The dropping of an *e* immediately after *the* would be easy.

V. iv. 46. Jupiter carried off Europa in the form of a bull.

Glossary

MANY words and phrases in Shakespeare require glossing, not because they are in themselves unfamiliar, but for the opposite reason, that Shakespeare uses in their Elizabethan and unfamiliar sense a large number of words which seem so familiar that there is no incentive to look for them in the glossary. It is hoped that a glossary arranged as below will make it easy to see at a glance what words and phrases in any particular scene require elucidation. A number of phrases are glossed by what seems to be, in their context, the modern equivalent rather than by lexicographical glosses on the words which compose them.

Act First

SCENE I

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
6	NAME, distinction	223	PARDON ME, let me off having . . .
38	BIRD-BOLT, blunt arrow for fowling	225	FINE, sum
43	MEET WITH, a match for	235	ARGUMENT, instance
69-70	NEXT BLOCK, <i>i.e.</i> latest fashion	238	ADAM, <i>i.e.</i> Adam Bell, the famous archer
74	SQUARER, 'blade'	262	GUARDED, trimmed
79	PRESENTLY, immediately	263	BASTED, loosely stitched
119	HUMOUR, mood	264	FLOUT OLD ENDS, flourish old tags
130	CONTINUER, 'stayer'	272	DOST THOU AFFECT, are you interested in
132	JADE'S TRICK, <i>i.e.</i> giving up the contest	285	BREAK WITH, open negotiations with
168	SAD, serious (<i>cf.</i> <i>As You Like It</i> , 'sad brow and true maid' = 'bonest Injun')	289	HIS, its
221	RECHREAT, hunting call		

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SCENE II

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
8	PLEACHED, intertwined	15	WIT, 'gumption'

SCENE III

1	WHAT THE GOOD-YEAR, <i>an un- explained interjection</i>	50	MARCH-CHICK, spring chicken
2	SAD, 'disgruntled'	52	ENTERTAINED FOR, taken as SMOKING, fumigating
7	SUFFERANCE, endurance	54	SAD, serious
29	ENFRANCHISED, freed		

Act Second

SCENE I

17	SHREWD, shrewish	173	COUNTY, count
18	CURST, 'catty'	195	LODGE, lonely house
27-28	IN THE WOOLLEN, in blankets	196	WARREN, 'preserve'
63	IMPORTANT, importunate	233	HAVE TURNED SPIT, into a turn- spit
64	MEASURE, moderation, <i>with pin on dance</i>	235	ATE, goddess of vengeance
67	CINQUE PACE, dance in 5-time	236	CONJURE, cast devils out of
70	ANCIENTRY, old-fashionedness	272	COMPLEXION, colour (as indi- cating temperament)
85	FAVOUR, appearance	273	BLAZON, description (<i>met. from heraldry</i>)
131	BOARDED, accosted	274	CONCEIT, notion
143	BREAK WITH, inform		
172	WILLOW, <i>the symbol of dis- appointed love</i>		

SCENE II

24 STALE, drab

GLOSSARY

SCENE III

<i>line</i>	<i>line</i>
14 TABOR, small drum	162 DAFED, set aside
20 ORTHOGRAPHY, verbal precision	RESPECTS, considerations
71 DUMPS, mournful tune	222 QUIRKS, turns
77 FOR A SHIFT, as a makeshift	228 CAREER OF HIS HUMOUR, free
116 GULL, hoax	course of his mood
119 HOLD IT UP, 'keep it up'	241 DAW, jackdaw
149 DISCOVER, disclose	

Act Third

SCENE I

7 PLEACHED, intertwined	52 MISPRISING, despising
14 PRESENTLY, at once	63 ANTIQUE, clown ('antick')
36 HAGGARDS, untrained hawks	65 AGATE, stone in seal-ring

SCENE II

15 SADDER, graver	61 WITH HER FACE UPWARDS, <i>i.e.</i>
32 SLOPS, loose hose	<i>under a man</i>
45 CIVET, scent	64 HOBBY-HORSES, triflers
53 STOPS, 'frets' on lute	

SCENE III

24 VAGROM, <i>i.e.</i> vagrant	88 COIL, ado
40 BILLS, weapons	127 REECHY, smoke-begrimed

SCENE IV

17 NIGHT-GOWN, dressing-gown	88 FALSE GALLOP, <i>properly</i> canter,
39 SICK TUNE, 'minor key'	<i>but here with a quibble</i>
68 CARDUUS, thistle	

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SCENE V

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
14	PALABRAS, <i>either mere words, or meaning 'pocas palabras,' few words, i.e. be quiet</i>	57	NONCOME, <i>blunder, apparently for either non-compos or non-plus</i>

Act Fourth

SCENE I

39	LUXURIOUS, lustful	185	BENT, utmost point
50	LARGE, 'broad,' licentious	187	PRACTICE, plotting
63	STALE, drab	204	MOURNING OSTENTATION, show of mourning
90	LIBERAL, licentious	219	RACK, 'put up'
165	EXPERIMENTAL SEAL, seal of experience WARRANT, guarantee the truth of	238	WONDER OF HER INFAMY, astonishment at her disgrace
167	DIVINITY, theological learning	301	BEAR HER IN HAND, lead her on
184	MISPRISION, misunderstanding	313	COMFECT, 'Comfit'

Act Fifth

SCENE I

2	SECOND, assist	38	CHANCE, the doctrine of chance (<i>i.e. were determinists</i>)
18	CANDLE-WASTERS, burners of midnight oil		SUFFERANCE, suffering
24	PRECEPTAL MEDICINE, curative platitudes	58	FLEER, gibe
38	MADE A PUSH AT, attacked	75	NICE, accurate
		76	LUSTHOOD, lustiness

GLOSSARY

Act V Sc. i—*continued*

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
78	DAFF, put off	153	CAPON, chicken
84	FOINING, thrusting	154	CURIOSLY, adeptly
90	TONGUE, thought to be seat of poison	155	WOODCOCK, traditionally stupid bird
94	SCAMBLING, quarrelsome	156	AMBLE, a kind of easy canter
95	COG, cheat	179	SENSIBLE, sensitive
134	IN THE CAREER, <i>i.e.</i> in the lists	199	TO, compared with
135	CHARGE, set it in rest	291	NAUGHTY, worthless
137	STAFF, lance	293	PACK'D IN, party to
141	TURN HIS GIRDLE, <i>i.e.</i> to bring his dagger forward		

SCENE II

15-16	GIVE THEE THE BUCKLERS, 'give you best'	57	POLITIC, well-balanced
30	CARPET-MONGERS, carpet-knights	88	COIL, ado

SCENE IV

71	PRESENTLY, immediately	122	TIPPED WITH HORN, with allu- sion to horns as symbol of cuckoldry
122	STAFF, sceptre		

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