

♣ A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES.

Wherein may be seen by
example of other with how grie-
vous plagues vices are punished, and
5 how frail and unstable worldly
prosperity is found, even of
those whom Fortune see-
meth most highly to favour.

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10 *Foelix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*

Anno 1559

Londini,

In aedibus Thomae Marshe.

10. *Foelix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*: 'Happy is he who is made wary by the dangers of others', a phrase often ascribed in the medieval and early modern periods to the Roman poet Horace (d. 8 BC). 13–14. *Londini, In aedibus Thomae Marshe*: London, In the house of Thomas Marshe.

[1] 1563: ¶ A [9] 1563: ♣ [11] 1563: Anno. Fleet Street near to Saint Dunstan's Church by
1563 [13–14] 1563: ¶ Imprinted at London in Thomas Marshe

[Baldwin's Dedication]

Love and Live.

☛ To the nobility and all other in office,
God grant wisdom and all things needful
for the preservation
of their estates.
Amen.

Plato, among many other of his notable sentences concerning the government of a commonweal, hath this: 'Well is that realm governed, in which the ambitious desire not to bear office'.⁴² Whereby you may perceive, right honourable, what offices are where they be duly executed, not gainful spoils for the greedy to hunt for but painful toils for the heedful to be charged with. You may perceive also by this sentence that there is nothing more necessary in a commonweal than that officers be diligent and trusty in their charges. And sure in whatsoever realm such provision is made that officers be forced to do their duties, there is as hard a matter to get an officer as it is in other places to shift off and put by those that with flattery, bribes, and other shifts sue and press for offices. For the ambitious (that is to say, prowlers for power or gain) seek not for offices to help other, for which cause offices are ordained, but with the undoing of other to prank up themselves. And therefore bar them once of this bait and force them to do their duties, and they will give more to be rid fro their charges than they did at the first to buy them, for they seek only their commodity and ease.

And, therefore, where the ambitious seek no office, there, no doubt, offices are duly ministered, and where offices are duly ministered, it cannot be chosen but the people are good, whereof must needs follow a good

Heading . **Love and Live**: William Baldwin's personal motto. **12. prowlers**: persons who seek gain by dishonourable means. **13–14. prank up**: glorify (lit. decorate).

[Heading] 1563: ¶ TO

20 commonweal, for if the officers be good, the people cannot be ill. Thus,
the goodness or badness of any realm lieth in the goodness or badness of
the rulers. And therefore not without great cause do the holy apostles so
earnestly charge us to pray for the magistrates, for indeed the wealth and
quiet of every commonweal, the disorder also and miseries of the same,
25 come specially through them.⁴³

I need not go either to the Romans or Greeks for proof hereof, neither
yet to the Jews or other nations, whose commonweals have always flour-
ished while their officers were good and decayed and ran to ruin when
naughty men had the regiment. Our own country stories, if we read and
30 mark them, will show us examples enow: would God we had not seen mo-
re than enow! I purpose not to stand here upon the particulars, because they
be in part set forth in the tragedies, yet by the way this I note, wishing all
other to do the like, namely, that as good governors have never lacked their
deserved renown, so have not the bad escaped infamy, besides such plagues
35 as are horrible to hear of.

For God, the ordainer of offices, although he suffer them for punish-
ment of the people to be often occupied of such, as are rather spoilers
and Judases than toilers or justices (whom the scripture therefore calleth
hypocrites), yet suffereth he them not to scape unpunished, because they
40 dishonour him, for it is God's own office, yea, his chief office, which they
bear and abuse.⁴⁴ For as justice is the chief virtue, so is the ministration
thereof the chiefest office, and therefore hath God established it with the
chiefest name, honouring and calling kings and all officers under them by
his own name, gods. Ye be all gods, as many as have in your charge any
45 ministration of justice. What a foul shame were it for any now to take
upon them the name and office of God and in their doings to show them-
selves devils. God cannot of justice but plague such shameless presump-
tion and hypocrisy, and that with shameful death, diseases, or infamy.⁴⁵

How he hath plagued evil rulers from time to time in other nations, you
50 may see gathered in Bochas's book intituled *The Fall of Princes*, translated
into English by Lydgate.⁴⁶ How he hath dealt with some of our coun-
trymen your ancestors for sundry vices not yet left, this book named *A*

30. **enow:** enough. 50. **Bochas's book:** Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, as metrically paraphrased and translated by John Lydgate under the title *The Fall of Princes*.

[26] 1563: for the proof

Mirror for Magistrates can show, which therefore I humbly offer unto your honours, beseeching you to accept it favourably. For here as in a looking
 55 glass, you shall see (if any vice be in you) how the like hath been punished
 in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion
 to move you to the sooner amendment. This is the chiefest end why it is
 set forth, which God grant it may attain.

The work was begun and part of it printed four year ago but hindered
 60 by the lord chancellor that then was; nevertheless, through the means of
 my Lord Stafford, lately perused and licenced.⁴⁷ When I first took it in
 hand, I had the help of many granted, and offered of some, but of few
 performed, scarce of any, so that where I intended to have continued it to
 Queen Mary's time I have been fain to end it much sooner, yet so that it
 65 may stand for a pattern till the rest be ready, which with God's grace (if I
 may have any help) shall be shortly.⁴⁸

In the meanwhile, my lords and gods (for so I may call you), I most
 humbly beseech you favourably to accept this rude mirror and diligently
 to read and consider it. And although you shall find in it that some have
 70 for their virtue been envied and murdered, yet cease not you to be virtuous
 but do your offices to the uttermost. Punish sin boldly, both in yourselves
 and other, so shall God (whose lieutenants you are) either so maintain you
 that no malice shall prevail or, if it do, it shall be for your good and to your
 eternal glory both here and in heaven, which I beseech God you may covet
 75 and attain. Amen.

Yours most humble,
 William Baldwin

*In the 1563 edition, Baldwin replaced the words of the penultimate paragraph
 (as presented above) of the 1559 dedication with these lines:*

80 The work was begun and part of it printed in Queen Mary's time, but
 hindered by the lord chancellor that then was. Nevertheless, through the
 means of my Lord Stafford, the first part was licensed and imprinted the
 first year of the reign of this our most noble and virtuous queen and dedicate

60. **lord chancellor:** Stephen Gardiner (d. 1555). 61. **Lord Stafford:** Henry Stafford (d. 1563), tenth Baron Stafford. 83. **first ... queen:** the first regnal year of Queen Elizabeth I (17 November 1558–16 November 1559).

[59–66] 1563: see the penultimate paragraph of the 1563 dedication, printed in this edition above at the end of the 1559 dedication text [68] 1563:

beseech your honours favourably [71] 1563: uttermost: suppress sin [72] 1563: (whose officers you are) [74] 1563: may both covet

85 then to your honours with this preface. Since which time, although I have
been called to another trade of life, yet my good Lord Stafford hath not
ceased to call upon me to publish so much as I had gotten at other men's
hands, so that through his lordship's earnest means I have now also set forth
another part containing as little of mine own as the first part doth of other
90 men's, which, in the name of all the authors, I humbly dedicate unto your
honours, instantly wishing that it may so like and delight your minds that
your cheerful receiving thereof may encourage worthy wits into enterprise
and perform the rest.⁴⁹ Which, as soon as I may procure, I intend through
God's leave and your favourable allowance to publish with all expedition.

90. **instantly**: fervently.

[Prose 1]

¶ A brief Memorial
of sundry unfortunate Englishmen

William Baldwin
to the Reader

When the printer had purposed with himself to print Lydgate's book of the *Fall of Princes* and had made privy thereto many both honourable and worshipful, he was counselled by divers of them to procure to have the story continued from whereas Bochas left unto this present time, chiefly of such as
5 Fortune had dallied with here in this island, which might be as a mirror for all men as well noble as others, to show the slippery deceits of the wavering lady and the due reward of all kind of vices. Which advice liked him so well that he required me to take pains therein. But because it was a matter passing my wit and skill and more thankless than gainful to meddle in, I refused
10 utterly to undertake it, except I might have the help of such as in wit were apt, in learning allowed, and in judgement and estimation able to wield and furnish so weighty an enterprise, thinking even so to shift my hands.

But he, earnest and diligent in his affairs, procured Atlas to set under his shoulder, for, shortly after, divers learned men whose many gifts need
15 few praises consented to take upon them part of the travail. And when certain of them to the number of seven were through a general assent at an appointed time and place gathered together to devise thereupon, I resorted unto them, bearing with me the book of Bochas, translated by Dan Lydgate, for the better observation of his order, which, although we liked
20 well, yet would it not comelily serve, seeing that both Bochas and Lydgate were dead, neither were there any alive that meddled with like argument, to whom the unfortunate might make their moan.

To make therefore a state meet for the matter, they all agreed that I should usurp Bochas's room and the wretched princes complain unto me,
25 and took upon themselves every man for his part to be sundry personages

1. **the printer**: John Wayland (d. c. 1571). 1–2. **Lydgate's book of the *Fall of Princes***: John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (c. 1431–9). 4. **Bochas**: Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375), author of the Latin prose work that Lydgate paraphrased, translated, and put into metre as *The Fall of Princes*. 12. **shift my hands**: evade fulfilment of my charge. 13–14: **procured Atlas to set under his shoulder**: i.e., he induced me to take on this weighty task. 18. **Dan**: an honorific title. 19. **order**: arrangement; practice. 20. **comelily**: properly. 24. **room**: role.

and in their behalves to bewail unto me their grievous chances, heavy destinies, and woeful misfortunes.

This done, we opened such books of chronicles as we had there present, and Master Ferrers, after he had found where Bochas left, which was about
30 the end of King Edward III's reign, to begin the matter, said thus:⁵⁰

'I marvel what Bochas meaneth to forget among his miserable princes such as were of our nation, whose number is as great as their adventures wonderful. For to let pass all both Britons, Danes, and Saxons and to come
35 to the last conquest, what a sort are they and some even in his own time? As, for example, King Richard I, slain with a quarrel in his chief prosperity, also King John his brother, as some say, poisoned – are not their histories rueful and of rare example?⁵¹ But as it should appear, he being an Italian, minded most the Roman and Italic story, or else perhaps he wanted our
40 country chronicles. It were therefore a goodly and a notable matter to search and discourse our whole story from the first beginning of the inhabiting of the isle.

'But seeing the printer's mind is to have us follow where Lydgate left, we will leave that great labour to other that may intend it and, as blind Bayard is alway boldest, I will begin at the time of Richard II, a time as
45 unfortunate as the ruler therein.⁵² And forasmuch, friend Baldwin, as it shall be your charge to note and pen orderly the whole process, I will so far as my memory and judgement serveth, somewhat further you in the truth of the story.⁵³ And therefore, omitting the ruffle made by Jack Straw and his meiny, and the murder of many notable men which thereby happened
50 (for Jack, as ye know, was but a poor prince),⁵⁴ I will begin with a notable example which within a while after ensued. And although he be no great prince, yet sithens he had a princely office, I will take upon me the miserable person of Sir Robert Tresilian, chief justice of England, and of other which suffered with him, thereby to warn all of his authority and profes-
55 sion to take heed of wrong judgements, misconstruing of laws, or wresting the same to serve the prince's turns, which rightfully brought them to a miserable end, which they may justly lament in the manner ensuing.'

29. **Master Ferrers**: George Ferrers (d. 1579). 33–4. **For ... time**: 'For passing over all of the fallen Britons, Danes and Saxons in English history in order to consider only those who have suffered since the last conquest [the Norman invasion], how numerous they are, and some of them lived and died even in Boccaccio's own time!' 35. **quarrel**: arrow. 43–4. **blind Bayard**: the impetuous bay horse ('bayard') of the proverbial phrase 'as bold as blind Bayard', which was applied to those inclined to act without considering the consequences. 48. **ruffle**: commotion; **Jack Straw**: one of the leaders of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt. 49. **meiny**: rabble. 52. **sithens**: since.

[Tragedy 1]

The Fall of Robert Tresilian, Chief Justice of England, and Other
his Fellows, for Misconstruing the Laws and Expounding Them to
Serve the Prince's Affections

In the rueful register of mischief and mishap,
Baldwin we beseech thee with our names to begin,
Whom unfriendly Fortune did train unto a trap,
When we thought our state most stable to have been,
So lightly leese they all which all do ween to win. [5]
Learn by us, ye lawyers and judges of the land,
Uncorrupt and upright in doom alway to stand.

And print it for a precedent to remain forever,
Enrol and record it in tables made of brass,
Engrave it in marble that may be razed never,⁵⁵ [10]
Where judges and justicers may see as in a glass
What fee is for falsehood and what our wages was
Who, for our prince's pleasure, corrupt with meed and awe,
Wittingly and wretchedly did wrest the sense of law.⁵⁶

A change more new or strange seldom hath be seen, [15]
Than from the bench above to come down to the bar;
Was never state so turned in no time as I ween,
As they to become clients that counsellors erst were.
But such is Fortune's play, which feately can prefer
The judge that sat above full low beneath to stand [20]
At the bar a prisoner holding up his hand.

3. **train**: lure. 5. **leese**: lose. 11. **justicers**: high-court judges. 13. **meed**: corrupt gains; **awe**: submissive reverence (for King Richard). 16. **bar**: the wooden rail before the judicial bench at which prisoners stood during arraignment, trial, or sentencing. 19. **feately can prefer**: neatly can promote (used ironically).

[21] 1563: bar as prisoner

Which in others' cause could stoutly speak and plead,
 Both in court and country, careless of the trial,
 Stand mute like mummers without advice or rede,
 Unable to utter a true plea of denial,²⁷ [25]
 Which have seen the day when that for half a rial
 We could by very art have made the black seem white
 And matters of most wrong to have appeared most right.

Behold me unfortunate foreman of this flock,
 Tresilian sometime chief justice of this land, [30]
 By descent a gentleman; no stain was in my stock.
 Lockton, Holt, and Bealknap, with other of my band²⁸
 Which the law and justice had wholly in our hand,
 Under the second Richard, a prince of great estate,
 To whom froward fortune gave a foul checkmate. [35]

In the common laws our skill was so profound,
 Our credit and authority such and so esteemed,
 That whatso we concluded was taken for a ground,
 Allowed was for law whatso to us best seemed.
 Life, death, lands, goods, and all by us was deemed, [40]
 Whereby with easy pain so great gain we did get,
 That everything was fish that came unto our net.

At sessions and at sizes we bare the stroke and sway,
 In patents and commissions of quorum alway chief,
 So that to whether side soever we did weigh, [45]
 Were it right or wrong it passed without reprieve:
 We let hang the true man somewhiles to save a thief.
 Of gold and silver our hands were never empty;
 Offices, farms, and fees fell to us in great plenty.

22. **Which:** Those who. 24. **mummers:** persons unable to speak. 26. **rial:** coin worth fifteen shillings. 29. **foreman:** leader (with an echo of the chief man of a jury). 42. **everything ... net:** everything that came to us was for our profit (a proverbial saying). 43. **At ... sway:** At trials and at assizes we held chief authority and power (**assizes:** legal sessions held periodically in English counties by judges of the higher courts). 44. **In ... chief:** In the letters patent and official documents designating the quorum, our names took the most important places (**quorum:** a group of eminent judges, the presence of one or more of whose members on shire peace commissions was necessary to make rulings valid). 46. **reprieve:** reprieve. 49. **farms:** annual payments; **fees:** rewards; bribes.

[26] 1563; when for half

But what thing may suffice unto the greedy man? [50]
 The more he hath in hold, the more he doth desire.
 Happy and twice happy is he that wisely can
 Content himself with that which reason doth require
 And moileth for no more than for his needful hire,
 But greediness of mind doth never keep the size, [55]
 Which, though it have enough, yet doth it not suffice.

For like as dropsy patients drink and still be dry,
 Whose unstaunched thirst no liquor can allay,
 And drink they never so much, yet still for more they cry,
 So covetous catchers toil both night and day, [60]
 Greedy and ever needy, prowling for their prey.
 Oh endless thirst of gold, corruptor of all laws,
 What mischief is on mould whereof thou are not cause?

Thou madest us forget the faith of our profession,
 When serjeants we were sworn to serve the common law, [65]
 Which was that in no point we should make digression
 From approved principles in sentence nor in saw.⁵⁹
 But we unhappy wretches without all dread and awe
 Of the judge eternal, for world's vain promotion,
 More to man than God did bear our whole devotion. [70]

The laws we interpreted and statutes of the land
 Not truly by the text but nully by a gloze,
 And words that were most plain when they by us were scanned
 We turned by construction like a Welshman's hose,⁶⁰
 Whereby many one both life and land did lose, [75]
 Yet this we made a mean to mount aloft on mules:
 To serve kings in all points, men must somewhile break rules.⁶¹

Thus climbing and contending alway to the top,
 From high unto higher and then to be most high,
 The honeydew of Fortune so fast on us did drop [80]
 That of King Richard's counsel we came to be full nigh,

54. **moileth**: strives. 55. **size**: proper limits. 58. **liquor**: liquid. 63. **mould**: earth. 67. **sentence nor in saw**: neither in judicial rulings nor decrees. 72. **nully**: incorrectly, in a legally invalid manner (evidently a nonce coined on the model of 'null', meaning without legal force); **gloze**: false exposition. 80. **honeydew**: manna.

To creep into whose favour we were full fine and sly,
Alway to his profit, where any word might sound,
That way (all were it wrong) the sense we did expound.

So working law like wax, the subject was not sure [85]
Of life, land, nor goods, but at the prince's will,
Which caused his kingdom the shorter time to dure.
For claiming power absolute both to save and spill,
The prince thereby presumed his people for to pill,
And set his lusts for law, and will had reason's place: [90]
No more but hang and draw, there was no better grace.

The king thus transcending the limits of his law,
Not reigning but raging by youthful insolence,
Wise and worthy persons did fro the court withdraw:
There was no grace ne place for ancient prudence. [95]
Presumption and pride, with excess of expense,
Possessed the palace, and pillage the country,
Thus all went to wrack, unlike of remedy.

The barony of England, not bearing this abuse,
Conspiring with the commons assembled by assent, [100]
And seeing neither reason nor treaty could induce
The king in anything his rigour to relent,
Maugre all his might they called a parliament
Frank and free for all men without check to debate,
As well for weal public as for the prince's state.⁶² [105]

In which parliament, much things was proponed
Concerning the regaly and rights of the crown,
By reason King Richard, which was to be moaned,
Full little regarding his honour and renown,
By sinister advice had turned all upside down. [110]
For surety of whose state, them thought it did behove
His corrupt counsellors from him to remove.

89. *pill*: rob. 100. *conspiring with*: combining with in a joint purpose (not necessarily in a negative sense). 101. *treaty*: entreaty. 106. *proponed*: put forward. 107. *regaly*: kingship.

[103] 1563: Maugre his might

[111] 1563: whose estate

Among whom Robert Vere, called duke of Ireland,
 With Michael de la Pole, of Suffolk new made earl,
 Of York also the archbishop dispatched were out of hand, [115]
 With Brembre of London mayor, a full uncourteous churl.⁶³
 Some learned in the law in exile they did hurl,
 But I, poor Tresilian, because I was the chief,
 Was damned to the gallows most vilely as a thief.⁶⁴

Lo the fine of falsehood, the stipend of corruption! [120]
 Fie on stinking lucre, of all unright the lure!
 Ye judges and ye justicers let my most just punishment
 Teach you to shake off bribes and keep your hands pure.
 Riches and promotion be vain things and unsure;
 The favour of a prince is an untrusty stay, [125]
 But justice hath a fee that shall remain alway.

What glory can be greater before God or man
 Than by the paths of equity in judgement to proceed,
 So duly and so truly the laws always to scan
 That right may take his place without reward or meed? [130]
 Set apart all flattery and vain worldly dread.
 Take God before your eyes, the just judge supreme:
 Remember well your reckoning at the day extreme.

Abandon all affray, be soothfast in your saws;
 Be constant and careless of mortal men's displeasure. [135]
 With eyes shut and hands close you should pronounce the laws;
 Esteem not worldly hire; think there is a treasure
 More worth than gold or stone a thousand times in valure
 Reposed for all such as righteousnesse ensue,
 Whereof you cannot fail: the promise made is true. [140]

If some in latter days had called unto mind
 The fatal fall of us for wresting of the right,
 The statutes of this land they should not have defined
 So wilfully and wittingly against the sentence quite.

115. **dispatched**: dismissed. 118. **chief**: i.e. the worst among the corrupt justices. 120. **lo**: behold; **fine**: end; penalty. 126. **fee**: reward. 128. **equity**: fairness. 133. **day extreme**: judgement day. 134. **affray**: fear; **soothfast**: truthful, just. 138. **valure**: value. 139. **ensue**: follow.

But though they scaped pain, the fault was nothing light. [145]
Let them that come hereafter both that and this compare
And, weighing well the end, they will I trust beware.

[Prose 2]

When Master Ferrers had finished this tragedy, which seemed not unfit for the persons touched in the same,⁶⁵ another, which in the meantime had stayed upon Sir Roger Mortimer, whose miserable end, as it should appear, was somewhat before the others, said as followeth:

5 'Although it be not greatly appertinent to our purpose, yet, in my judgement, I think it would do well to observe the times of men and, as they be more ancient, so to place them. For I find that before these of whom Master Ferrers here hath spoken, there were two Mortimers, the one hanged in Edward III's time out of our date, another slain in Ireland
10 in Richard II's time, a year before the fall of these justices, whose history, sith it is notable and the example fruitful, it were pity to overpass it.⁶⁶ And, therefore, by your licence and agreement, I will take upon me the personage of the last, who, full of wounds, miserably mangled, with a pale countenance and grisly look, may make his moan to Baldwin as followeth':

2. another: Lord Henry Stafford. **3. Sir Roger Mortimer:** Sir Roger Mortimer (d. 1398), fourth earl of March. **9. one hanged:** Sir Roger Mortimer (d. 1330), first earl of March; **out of our date:** not within the historical period on which we agreed; **another:** the fourth earl of March. **11. sith:** since.

[Tragedy 2]

How the Two Rogers Surnamed Mortimers for their Sundry Vices
Ended their Lives Unfortunately

Among the riders of the rolling wheel
That lost their holds, Baldwin forget not me,
Whose fatal thread false Fortune needs would reel
Ere it were twisted by the sisters three.
All folk be frail, their blisses brittle be; [5]
For proof whereof, although none other were,
Suffice may I, Sir Roger Mortimer.

Not he that was in Edward's days the Third,
Whom Fortune brought to boot and eft to bale,
With love of whom the king so much she stirred [10]
That none but he was heard in any tale.⁶⁷
And whiles she smooth blew on this merry gale,
He was created earl of March, alas,
Whence envy sprang, which his destruction was.⁶⁸

For wealth breedeth wrath in such as wealth do want, [15]
And pride with folly in such as it possess.
Among a thousand shall you find him scant
That can in wealth his lofty heart repress.
Which in this earl due proof did plain express,
For where he somewhat haughty was before, [20]
His high degree hath made him now much more.

For now alone he ruleth as him lust,
Ne recketh for rede, save of King Edward's mother,

1. **the rolling wheel**: the wheel of Fortune. 3. **fatal thread**: the thread spun out by the mythological Fates that determines a person's life; **reel**: take up on a reel. 4. **Ere ... three**: Before it might be spun out into a (strong) cord by the three Fates. 9. **to boot and eft to bale**: to advantage and afterwards to harm. 23. **recketh**: concern himself.

Which forcèd envy foulder out the rust
That in men's hearts before did lie and smother. [25]
The peers, the people, as well the one as the other,
Against him made so heinous a complaint
That for a traitor he was taken and attaint.

Then all such faults as were forgot before
They scour afresh, and somewhat to them add, [30]
For cruel envy hath eloquence in store
When Fortune bids to worse things meanly bad.
Five heinous crimes against him soon were had:⁶⁹
First, that he caused the king to yield the Scot,
To make a peace, townes that were from him got [35]

And therewithal the charter called Ragman;
That of the Scots he bribèd privy gain;⁷⁰
That through his means Sir Edward of Carnarvan
In Berkeley Castle traitorously was slain;
That with his prince's mother he had lain; [40]
And, finally, with polling at his pleasure
Had robbed the king and commons of their treasure.⁷¹

For these things, lo, which erst were out of mind
He was condemned and hangèd at the last,
In whom Dame Fortune fully showed her kind: [45]
For whom she heaves she hurleth down as fast.
If men to come would learn by other past,
This cousin of mine might cause them set aside
High climbing, bribing, murd'ring, lust, and pride.

The final cause why I this process tell [50]
Is that I may be known from this other,
My like in name, unlike me though he fell,

24. **foulder out**: flash or thunder forth. 28. **attaint**: condemned to death. 32. **When ... bad**: When Fortune seeks to make worse things that are only moderately bad. 37. **bribed**: obtained through taking bribes. 45. **kind**: nature. 50. **final cause**: ultimate reason; **process**: account, narrative.

[30] 1559, 1563: The scour ('The' apparently an uncorrected error for 'They')

Which was, I think, my grandsire or his brother.⁷²
 To count my kin, Dame Philip was my mother,
 Dear daughter and heir of doughty Lionel, [55]
 The second son of a king that did excel.

My father hight Sir Edmund Mortimer,
 True earl of March, which I was after earl;⁷³
 By just descent, these two my parents were,
 Of which the one of knighthood bare the ferle,⁷⁴ [60]
 Of womanhood the other was the pearl,
 Through their desert so called of every wight,
 Till death them took and left in me their right.

For why the attainder of my elder Roger
 (Whose shameful death I told you but of late) [65]
 Was found to be unjust and passèd over
 Against the law, by those that bare him hate,
 For whereby law the lowest of free estate
 Should personally be heard ere judgement pass,
 They barred him this, wherethrough destroyed he was.⁷⁵ [70]

Wherefore by doom of court in parliament,
 When we had proved our cousin ordered thus,
 The king, the lords, and commons of assent
 His lawless death unlawful did discuss
 And both to blood and good restorèd us: [75]
 A precedent most worthy showed and left,
 Lords' lives to save that lawless might be reft.

While Fortune thus did further me amain,
 King Richard's grace the second of the name
 (Whose dissolute life did soon abridge his reign) [80]
 Made me his mate in earnest and in game.
 The lords themselves so well allowed the same
 That, through my titles duly coming down,
 I was made heir apparent to the crown.⁷⁶

64. For why the attainder: Because the conviction for treason (which entailed Roger Mortimer's loss of title and the dispossession of his heirs). **66. passed over:** put into execution. **71. Wherefore:** For which reason. **73. and commons of assent:** with the agreement of the members of parliament's lower house. **74. His ... discuss:** They examined the illegalities surrounding his unlawful death. **75. And ... us:** And they restored our family both in blood and in possessions (as legally recognized descendants of and heirs to Roger the elder). **78. amain:** with full force.

[56] 1563: king who did

Who then but I was everywhere esteemed? [85]
Well was the man that might with me acquaint.
Whom I allowed, as lords the people deemed.
To whatsoever folly had me bent,
To like it well, the people did assent.
To me as prince attended great and small, [90]
In hope a day would come to pay for all.

But seldom joy continueth trouble-void;
In greatest charge cares greatest do ensue.
The most possessed are ever most annoyed;
In largest seas sore tempests lightly brew. [95]
The freshest colours soonest fade the hue;
In thickest place is made the deepest wound.
True proof whereof myself too soon have found.

For whiles that Fortune lulled me in her lap
And gave me gifts mo than I did require, [100]
The subtle quean behind me set a trap,
Whereby to dash and lay all in the mire.
The Irishmen against me did conspire
My lands of Ulster fro me to have reft,
Which heritage my mother had me left.⁷⁷ [105]

And whiles I there, to set all things in stay
(Omit my toils and troubles thitherward),
Among mine own with my retinue lay,
The wilder men whom little I did regard
(And had therefore the reckless man's reward), [110]
When least I thought set on me in such number
That fro my corpse my life they rent asunder.

87. **allowed**: praised. 90–1. **To ... all**: people of high and low station alike attended on me as if I were a prince, in hope that one day they would be recompensed. 92. **trouble-void**: untroubled. 94. **The most possessed**: those who possess most. 95. **lightly**: easily. 101. **quean**: impudent woman (a term of insult). 105. **heritage**: inherited property. 106. **in stay**: in order. 109. **The wilder men**: The 'wild Irish', the Gaelic-speaking inhabitants of Ireland who lived outside of English control.

[99] 1563: whiles fair Fortune

[100] 1563: gifts more than

Nought might avail, my courage nor my force,
 Nor strength of men which were, alas, too few;
 The cruel folk assaulted so my horse [115]
 That all my helps in pieces they to hew.
 Our blood distained the ground as drops of dew:
 Nought might prevail to flee nor yet to yield,
 For whom they take they murder in the field.⁷⁸

They know no law of arms nor none will learn; [120]
 They make not war (as other do) a play.
 The lord, the boy, the galloglass, the kern:
 Yield or not yield, whom so they take they slay.
 They save no prisoners for ransom nor for pay;
 Their chiefest boot they count their bodoh's head, [125]
 Their end of war to see their en'my dead.⁷⁹

Amongst these men – or rather savage beasts –
 I lost my life, by cruel murder slain.
 And therefore, Baldwin, note thou well my geasts
 And warn all princes rashness to refrain. [130]
 Bid them beware their en'mies when they feign
 Nor yet presume unequally to strive:
 Had I thus done, I had been man alive.

But I despised the naked Irishmen
 And for they flew, I fearèd them the less: [135]
 I thought one man enough to match with ten,
 And through this careless unadvisedness
 I was destroyed – and all my men, I guess –
 At unawares assaulted by our foen
 Which were in number forty to us one.⁸⁰ [140]

See here the stay of fortunate estate,
 The vain assurance of this brittle life,

115. **horse**: mounted soldiers. 121. **play**: game. 122. **galloglass**: soldier in the retinue of an Irish chief; **kern**: lightly armed Irish soldier of lesser degree than a galloglass. 125. **bodoh's**: see explanatory note 79. 130. **geasts**: gestures, notable actions. 134. **naked**: unarmoured.

[139] 1563: unwares

For I, but young, proclaimèd prince of late,
Right fortunate in children and in wife,⁸¹
Lost all at once by stroke of bloody knife. [145]
Whereby assured, let men themselves assure
That wealth and life are doubtful to endure.

[Prose 3]

After that this tragedy was ended, Master Ferrers said, 'Seeing it is best to place each person in his order, Baldwin take you the chronicles and mark them as they come, for there are many worthy to be noted, though not to be treated of. First, the Lord Morif, a Scottishman, who took his death's
5 wound through a stroke lent him by the earl of Nottingham, whom he challenged at the tilt.⁸² But to omit him, and also the fat prior of Tiptree, pressed to death with throng of people upon London Bridge at the Queen's entry,⁸³ I will come to the duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle, a man much minding the commonweal and yet at length miserably made away.
10 In whose person, if ye will give ear, ye shall hear what I think meet to be said.'

[Tragedy 3]

How Sir Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, Uncle to
King Richard the Second, was Unlawfully Murdered

Whose state is stablished in seeming most sure
And so far from danger of Fortune's blast,
As by the compass of man's conjecture
No brazen pillar may be fixed more fast,
Yet, wanting the stay of prudent forecast, [5]
When froward Fortune list for to frown
May in a moment turn upside down.

In proof whereof, oh Baldwin, take pain
To hearken awhile to Thomas of Woodstock,
Addressed in presence his fate to complain, [10]
In the forlorn hope of the English flock.
Extract by descent from the royal stock,
Son to King Edward third of that name
And second to none in glory and fame.

This noble father to maintain my state [15]
With Buckingham earldom did me endow.⁸⁴
Both nature and Fortune to me were grate,
Denying nothing which they might allow.
Their sundry graces in me did so flow,
As beauty, strength, high favour, and fame; [20]
Who may of God more wish than the same?

Brothers we were to the number of seven,
I being sixth and youngest but one.

10. **Addressed ... complain:** Prepared and present to complain of his fate. 11. **In ... flock:** In the vanguard (or among the most woeful) of those Englishmen who have come to complain (**forlorn hope:** the men at the very front of a military attack, a term often used figuratively to denote woeful or suffering persons). 17. **grate:** agreeable, pleasing.

[18] 1563: Denying me nothing

A more royal race was not under heaven
More stout or more stately of stomach and person, [25]
Princes all peerless in each condition,
Namely Sir Edward called the Black Prince:
When had England the like before either since?²⁵

But what of all this any man to assure,
In state uncareful of Fortune's variance? [30]
Sith daily and hourly we see it in ure
That where most cause is of affiance
Even there is found most weak assurance.
Let none trust Fortune but follow reason,
For often we see in trust is treason. [35]

This proverb in proof over-true I tried,
Finding high treason in place of high trust,
And most fault of faith where I most affied,
Being by them that should have been just [40]
Traitorously entrapped ere I could mistrust.
Ah, wretched world, what it is to trust thee
Let them that will learn now hearken to me.

After King Edward the Third's decease,
Succeeded my nephew Richard to reign, [45]
Who for his glory and honour's increase
With princely wages did me entertain,
Against the Frenchmen to be his chieftain.
So, passing the seas with royal puissance,
With God and St. George I invaded France.

Wasting the country with sword and with fire, [50]
Overturning towns, high castles and towers,
Like Mars god of war inflamed with ire,
I forced the Frenchmen to abandon their bowers.
Wherever we matched, I won at all hours,
In such wise visiting both city and village [55]
That alway my soldiers were laden with pillage.

25. **stout**: splendid; valiant; **stomach**: temperament. 27. **Namely**: Above all. 31. **sith**: since; **in ure**: in practice. 32. **affiance**: trust. 36. **I tried**: I ascertained through trial that this proverb was all too true. 38. **affied**: trusted. 46. **entertain**: retain, keep in service.

With honour and triumph was my return;
 Was none more joyous than young King Richard
 Who, minding more highly my state to adorn,
 With Gloucester dukedom did me reward.⁸⁶ [60]
 And after in marriage I was preferred
 To a daughter of Bohun, an earl honourable,
 By whom I was of England high constable.⁸⁷

Thus hoisted so high on Fortune's wheel
 As one on a stage attending a play [65]
 Seeth not on which side the scaffold doth reel
 Till timber and poles and all flee away,
 So fared it by me, for day by day
 As honour increased I looked still higher,
 Not seeing the danger of my fond desire. [70]

For when Fortune's flood ran with full stream,
 I, being a duke descended of kings,
 Constable of England, chief officer in the realm,
 Abused with esperance in these vain things,
 I went without feet and flew without wings, [75]
 Presuming so far upon my high state
 That, dread set apart, my prince I would mate.⁸⁸

For whereas all kings have counsel of their choice
 To whom they refer the rule of their land,
 With certain familiars in whom to rejoice, [80]
 For pleasure or profit, as the case shall stand,
 I, not bearing this, would needs take in hand,
 Mauge his will, those persons to disgrace
 And such as I thought fit to appoint in their place.⁸⁹

But as an old book saith, whoso will assay,⁹⁰ [85]
 About the cat's neck to hang on a bell
 Had first need to cut the cat's claws away,
 Lest if the cat be curst or not tamed well
 She haply with her nails may claw him to the fell.

61. **preferred**: brought to marriage, advanced in status. 65. **stage**: raised platform; **attending**: watching.
 66. **scaffold**: raised platform constructed out of poles and trestles. 71. **stream**: flow. 74. **esperance**: hopeful
 expectation. 77. **mate**: overpower. 88. **curst**: vicious. 89. **haply**: possibly. 89. **fell**: the flesh beneath the skin.

For doing on the bell about the cat's neck,
By being too busy I caught a sore check. [90]

Read well the sentence of the rat of renown,
Which Piers the Plowman describes in his dream,
And whoso hath wit the sense to expound
Shall find that to bridle the prince of a realm [95]
Is even (as who saith) to strive with the stream.
Note this, all subjects, and construe it well,
And busy not your brain about the cat's bell.

But in that ye be lieges learn to obey,
Submitting your wills to your prince's laws.⁹¹ [100]
It sitteth not a subject to have his own way;
Remember this byword of the cat's claws.
For princes, like lions, have long and large paws
That reach at random and, whom they once twitch,
They claw to the bone before the skin itch. [105]

But to my purpose: I being once bent
Towards the achieving of my attemptate,
Four bold barons were of mine assent
By oath and alliance fastly confederate. [110]
First, Henry of Derby, an earl of estate,
Richard of Arundel and Thomas of Warwick,
With Mowbray earl marshal, a man most warlike.

At Radcot bridge assembled our band,
The commons in clusters came to us that day
To daunt Robert Vere, then duke of Ireland, [115]
By whom King Richard was ruled alway.
We put him to flight and brake his array,⁹²
Then, maugre the king, his leave, or assent,
By constable's power we called a parliament,⁹³

Where not in robes but with bastards bright [120]
We came for to parle of the public weal,

91. busy: vigorously active; meddlesome in matters that are not one's concern. **96. strive with the stream:** fight against the current. **101. It sitteth not:** It is not proper. **104. twitch:** pull at. **109. fastly:** steadfastly. **117. brake his array:** dispersed his military force. **120. bastards:** swords.

Confirming our quarrel with main and with might,
 With swords and no words we tried our appeal,
 Instead of reason declaring our zeal.
 And whom so we knew with the king in good grace [125]
 Plainly we deprived him of power and of place.⁹⁴

Some with short process were banished the land,
 Some executed with capital pain,
 Whereof whoso list the whole to understand
 In the parliament roll it appeareth plain.⁹⁵ [130]
 And, further, how stoutly we did the king strain
 The rule of his realm wholly to resign
 To the order of those whom we did assign.

But note the sequel of such presumption:
 After we had these miracles wrought, [135]
 The king, inflamed with indignation
 That to such bondage he should be brought,
 Suppressing the ire of his inward thought
 Studied nought else but how that he might
 Be highly revenged of his high despite. [140]

Aggrieved was also this latter offence
 With former matter his ire to renew,
 For once at Windsor I brought to his presence
 The mayor of London with all his retinue
 To ask a reckoning of the realm's revenue,⁹⁶ [145]
 And the soldiers of Brest were by me made bold
 To claim entertainment, the town being sold.⁹⁷

These griefs remembered, with all the remnant,
 Of hate in his heart hoarded a treasure,
 Yet openly in show made he no semblant [150]
 By word nor by deed to bear displeasure.
 But lovedays dissembled do never endure,

122. **Confirming ... might**: adding force to our quarrel with physical strength and armed might. 131. **strain**: con-
 strain. 138. **Suppressing**: hiding. 140. **despite**: insulting treatment. 141. **Aggrieved**: exacerbated. 147. **enter-
 tainment**: support. 148–9. **These ... treasure**: these remembered griefs, along with all the rest of his grievances,
 built up a store of hatred in his heart. 152. **lovedays**: days appointed to settle disputes.

And whoso trusteth a foe reconciled
Is for the most part always beguiled.

For as fire ill quenched will up at a start, [155]
And sores not well salved do break out of new,
So hatred hidden in an ireful heart,
Where it hath had long season to brew,
Upon every occasion doth easily renew,
Not failing at last, if it be not let, [160]
To pay large usury besides the due debt.⁹⁸

Even so it fared by this friendship feigned,
Outwardly sound and inwardly rotten.
For when the king's favour in seeming was gained,
All old displeasures forgiven and forgotten, [165]
Even then at a sudden the shaft was shotten
Which pierced my heart void of mistrust –
Alas that a prince should be so unjust!

For lying at Pleshey myself to repose,
By reason of sickness which held me full sore, [170]
The king, espying me apart from those
With whom I confedered in band before,
Thought it not meet, to tract the time more
But, glad to take me at such advantage,
Came to salute me with friendly visage. [175]

Who, having a band bound to his bent,
By colour of kindness to visit his eme
Took time to accomplish his cruel intent
And, in a small vessel down by the stream,
Conveyed me to Calais out of the realm [180]
Where, without process or doom of my peers,
Not nature but murder abridged my years.⁹⁹

This act was odious to God and to man,
Yet, rigour to cloak in habit of reason,

156. **of new:** anew. 160–1. **Not ... debt:** If it (i.e. hatred hidden in an angry heart) is not checked, it will not fail to pay back those who stirred it with harm much greater than that of the original hurt. 173. **tract:** delay. 177. **eme:** uncle. 184. **Yet ... reason:** Yet in order to make their cruelty to appear to be an act of reason (**habit:** garb).

By crafty compass devise they can [185]
 Articles nine of right heinous treason.
 But doom after death is sure out of season,
 For whoever saw so strange a precedent
 As execution done before judgement?¹⁰⁰

Thus hate harboured in depth of mind [190]
 By sought occasion burst out of new,
 And cruelty abused the law of kind,
 When that the nephew the uncle slew.
 Alas, King Richard! sore mayest thou rue,
 Which by this fact preparedest the way [195]
 Of thy hard destiny to hasten the day.

For blood asketh blood as guerdon due,
 And vengeance for vengeance is just reward.
 Oh righteous God, thy judgements are true!
 For look what measure we other award, [200]
 The same for us again is prepared.
 Take heed, ye princes, by examples past:
 Blood will have blood, either first or last.¹⁰¹

185. *compass*: contrivance.

[Prose 4]

When Master Ferrers had ended this fruitful tragedy, because no man was ready with another, I, having perused the story which came next, said, 'Because you shall not say, my masters, but that I will in somewhat do my part, I will, under your correction, declare the tragedy of the Lord
 5 Mowbray, the chief worker of the duke's destruction.¹⁰² Who, to admonish all counsellors to beware of flattering princes or falsely envying or accusing their paregals, may lament his vices in manner following':

2. *story*: historical account. 7. *paregals*: peers.

[2] 1563: with any other

[Tragedy 4]

How the Lord Mowbray, Promoted by King Richard the Second,
was by him Banished the Realm and Died miserably in Exile

Though sorrow and shame abash me to rehearse
My loathsome life and death of due deserved,
Yet that the pains thereof may other pierce
To leave the like, lest they be likely served,
Ah Baldwin, mark! I will show thee how I swerved: [5]
Dissembling, envy, and flattery, bane that be
Of all their hosts, have showed their power on me.

I blame not Fortune, though she did her part,
And true it is she can do little harm.
She guideth goods; she hamp'reth not the heart: [10]
A virtuous mind is safe from every charm.
Vice, only vice, with her stout strengthless arm
Doth cause the heart to evil to incline,
Which I, alas, do find too true by mine.

For where by birth I came of noble kind, [15]
The Mowbrays' heir, a famous house and old,
Fortune, I thank her, was to me so kind
That of my prince I had what so I would,
Yet neither of us was much to other hold,
For I through flattery abused his wanton youth [20]
And his fond trust augmented my untruth.

He made me first the earl of Nottingham
And marshal of the realm, in which estate¹⁰³

4. **likely**: similarly. 12. **stout strengthless**: powerful, though it possesses no physical strength. 19. **hold**: loyal, gracious. 21. **untruth**: dishonesty; lack of fidelity.

The peers and people jointly to me came,
 With sore complaint against them that, of late [25]
 Made officers, had brought the king in hate
 By making sale of justice, right, and law
 And living nought without all dread or awe.¹⁰⁴

I gave them aid these evils to redress
 And went to London with an army strong, [30]
 And caused the king against his will oppress
 By cruel death all such as led him wrong.
 The lord chief justice suffered these among,
 So did the steward, of his household head;
 The chancellor scaped, for he aforehand fled.¹⁰⁵ [35]

These wicked men thus from the king removed,
 Who best us pleased succeeded in their place,
 For which both king and commons much us loved,
 But chiefly I with all stood high in grace.
 The king ensued my rede in every case, [40]
 Whence self-love bred, for glory maketh proud,
 And pride ay looketh alone to be allowed.¹⁰⁶

Wherefore to th'end I might alone enjoy
 The king's good will, I made his lust my law
 And where of late I laboured to destroy [45]
 Such flattering folk as thereto stood in awe,
 Now learned I among the rest to claw,
 For pride is such, if it be kindly caught,
 As stroyeth good and stirreth up every nought.

Pride pricketh men to flatter for the prey, [50]
 To oppress and poll for maintenance of the same,
 To malice such as match uneaths it may,
 And, to be brief, pride doth the heart inflame
 To fire what mischief any fraud may frame

28. **nought**: wickedly. 32. **cruel**: painful. 40. **rede**: counsel. 48. **kindly caught**: thoroughly contracted (in the manner of a disease). 49. **nought**: wicked thing. 50. **prey**: spoils. 52. **To ... may**: [Pride may lead men] to harm those who are no match for (or rival to) them (**uneaths**: scarcely, hardly). 54. **To ... frame**: To inspire the heart to pursue the ill deeds to which fraud might direct it, whatsoever they might be.

And ever at length the evils by it wrought [55]
Confound the worker and bring him unto nought.

Behold in me due proof of every part,
For pride first forced me my prince to flatter
So much, that whatsoever pleased his heart,
Were it never so evil, I thought a lawful matter, [60]
Which caused the lords afresh against him clatter,
Because he had his holds beyond sea sold
And seen his soldiers of their wages polled.

Though all these ills were done by my assent,
Yet such was luck that each man deemed no; [65]
For see the duke of Gloucester for me sent
With other lords, whose hearts did bleed for woe
To see the realm so fast to ruin go.
In fault whereof, they said the two dukes were,
The one of York, the other of Lancaster.¹⁰⁷ [70]

On whose remove fro being about the king
We all agreed and sware a solemn oath,
And while the rest provided for this thing,
I, flatter I, to win the praise of troth,
Wretch that I was brake faith and promise both, [75]
For I bewrayed the king their whole intent,
For which unwares they all were tane and shent.¹⁰⁸

Thus was the warder of the commonweal
The duke of Gloucester guiltless made away,
With other mo, more wretch I so to deal, [80]
Who through untruth their trust did ill betray,
Yet, by this means, obtained I my prey.

65. Yet ... no: Yet fortunately enough no man thought it to be so. **70. one of York:** Edmund of Langley (d. 1402), first duke of York; **other of Lancaster:** John of Gaunt (d. 1399), first duke of Lancaster. **74. flatter:** flatterer; **troth:** loyalty. **77. shent:** ruined. **80. With ... deal:** with other more, so much more was I a wretch in acting as I did.

[74] 1563: I flatterer I

Of king and dukes I found for this such favour
As made me duke of Norfolk for my labour.

But see how pride and envy jointly run: [85]
Because my prince did more than me prefer
Sir Henry Bolingbroke, the eldest son
Of John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster,
Proud I, that would alone be blazing star,
Envied this earl for nought save that the shine [90]
Of his deserts did glister more than mine.¹⁰⁹

To the end therefore his light should be the less,
I slyly sought all shifts to put it out,
But as the peise that would the palm tree press
Doth cause the boughs spread larger round about, [95]
So spite and envy causeth glory sprout,
And aye the more the top is overtrod
The deeper doth the sound root spread abroad.¹¹⁰

For when this Henry earl of Harforde^m saw
What spoil the king made of the noble blood, [100]
And that without all justice, cause, or law,
To suffer him so he thought not sure nor good.
Wherefore to me, two faced in a hood,
As touching this, he fully brake his mind
As to his friend that should remedy find. [105]

But I, although I knew my prince did ill
So that my heart abhorrèd sore the same,
Yet mischief so through malice led my will
To bring this earl from honour unto shame
And toward myself my sovereign to enflame [110]
That I bewrayed his words unto the king
Not as a rede but as a most heinous thing.

94. **peise**: weight. 103. **two faced in a hood**: duplicitous, a reference to the proverbial saying 'he bears two faces under one hood'.

[103] 1563: in hood

Thus where my duty bound me to have told
My prince his fault and willed him to refrain,
Through flattery, lo, I did his ill uphold, [115]
Which turned at length both him and me to pain.
Woe, woe to kings whose counsellors do feign!
Woe, woe to realms where such are put in trust
As leave the law, to serve the prince's lust!

And woe to him that by his flattering rede [120]
Maintaineth a prince in any kind of vice;
Woe worth him eke for envy, pride, or meed
That misreports any honest enterprise.
Because I, beast, in all these points was nice,
The plagues of all together on me light, [125]
And due, for ill illdoers doth acquite.

For when the earl was charged with my plaint,
He flat denied that any part was true
And claimed by arms to answer his attaint,
And I, by use that warly feats well knew, [130]
To his desire incontinently drew,
Wherewith the king did seem right well content,
As one that passed not much with whom it went.¹²²

At time and place appointed we appeared,
At all points armed to prove our quarrels just, [135]
And when our friends on each part had us cheered,
And that the heralds bade us do our lust,
With spear in rest we took a course to just.
But ere our horses had run half their way,
A shout was made; the king did bid us stay. [140]

And for to avoid the shedding of our blood
With shame and death, which one must needs have had,
The king through counsel of the lords thought good
To banish both, which judgement straight was rad.

124. **nice**: punctilious, precise. 126. **And ... acquite**: And appropriately so, for harm requites evildoers for their malign deeds. 129. **And ... attaint**: And he moved to challenge my imputation of his honour by means of trial by combat. 130. **warly**: martial. 138. **just**: joust. 144. **rad**: read.

[140] 1563: king commanded stay

No marvel then though both were wroth and sad, [145]
 But chiefly I, that was exiled for ay,
 My en'my stranged but for a ten-years' day.

The date expired, when by this doleful doom
 I should depart to live in banished band,
 On pain of death to England not to come, [150]
 I went my way. The king seized in his hand
 My offices, my honours, goods, and land
 To pay the due, as openly he told,
 Of mighty sums, which I had from him polled.¹⁴³

See Baldwin, see, the salary of sin; [155]
 Mark with what meed vile vices are rewarded!
 Through pride and envy I lose both kith and kin,
 And, for my flattering plaint so well regarded,
 Exile and slander are justly me awarded.
 My wife and heir lack lands and lawful right, [160]
 And me their lord made Dame Diana's knight.¹⁴⁴

If these mishaps at home be not enough,
 Adjoin to them my sorrows in exile;
 I went to Almain first, a land right rough,
 In which I found such churlish folk and vile [165]
 As made me loath my life each otherwhile.
 There, lo, I learned what it is to be a guest
 Abroad and what to live at home in rest.¹⁴⁵

For they esteem no one man more than each;
 They use as well the lackey as the lord, [170]
 And like their manners churlish is their speech,
 Their lodging hard, their board to be abhorred.
 Their pleated garments herewith well accord:
 All jagged and frounced, with divers colours decked,
 They swear, they curse, and drink till they be flecked. [175]

145. **though**: if. 146. **for ay**: forever. 147. **stranged**: banished. 157. **kith**: native country. 158. **plaint**: accusation. 161. **made Dame Diana's knight**: condemned to forced chastity. 164. **Almain**: Germany. 166. **each otherwhile**: frequently. 169. **each**: every other. 174. **frounced**: gathered up in folds. 175. **flecked**: spotted, blemished.

They hate all such as these their manners hate,
Which reason would no wise man should allow;
With these I dwelt, lamenting mine estate,
Till at the length they had got knowledge how
I was exiled because I did avow [180]
A false complaint against my trusty friend,
For which they named me traitor still unend

That what for shame and what for weariness
I stale fro thence and went to Venice town,
Whereas I found more ease and friendliness [185]
But greater grief, for now the great renown
Of Bolingbroke, whom I would have put down,
Was waxed so great in Britain and in France
That Venice through each man did him advance.

Thus, lo, his glory grew through great despite, [190]
And I thereby increased in defame.
Thus envy ever doth her host aquite
With trouble, anguish, sorrow, smart, and shame
But sets the virtues of her foe in flame,
To water like, which maketh clear the stone, [195]
And soils itself, by running thereupon.

Or ere I had sojourned there a year,
Strange tidings came he was to England gone,
Had tane the king and, that which touched him near,
Imprisoned him with other of his foen [200]
And made him yield him up his crown and throne.
When I these things for true by search had tried,
Grief gripped me so I pined away and died.¹¹⁶

Note here the end of pride; see flattery's fine;
Mark the reward of envy and false complaint. [205]

182. *still unend*: endlessly. 188. *Britain*: Brittany. 189. *That ... advance*: That throughout Venice each man extolled him. 190. *despite*: hatred. 192. *aquite*: acquit, repay. 195. *To water like*: In the same manner as water. 197. *Or ere*: Before.

[195–6] 1563: Like water waves, which cleanse the muddy stone / And soils themselves by beating thereupon

And warn all princes from them to decline
 Lest likely fault do find the like attaint.
 Let this my life be to them a restraint:
 By other's harms who listeth take no heed
 Shall by his own learn other better rede. [210]

206. **decline**: turn away. 207. **likely**: similar; **attaint**: condemnation.

[206] 1563: all people from

[208] 1563: life to them be a

[Prose 5]

This tragical example was of all the company well liked; howbeit a doubt was found therein, and that by means of the diversity of the chronicles. For whereas Master Hall, whom in this story we chiefly followed, maketh
 5 Mowbray accuser and Bolingbroke appellant, Master Fabyan reporteth the matter quite contrary (and that by the report of good authors), making Bolingbroke the accuser and Mowbray the appellant.¹¹⁷ Which matter, sith it is more hard to decise than needful to our purpose, which mind only to dissuade from vices and exalt virtue, we refer to the determination of the heralds or such as may come by the records and registers of these doings,
 10 contented in the meanwhile with the best allowed judgement and which maketh most for our foreshowed purpose.¹¹⁸

This doubt thus let pass, 'I would', quoth one of the company, 'gladly say somewhat for King Richard. But his personage is so sore entangled as I think few benefices be at this day, for, after his imprisonment, his brother
 15 and divers other made a masque, minding by Henry's destruction to have restored him, which masquers' matter so runneth in this, that I doubt which ought to go before.¹¹⁹ But seeing no man is ready to say ought in their behalf, I will give whoso listeth leisure to think thereupon and, in the meantime to further your enterprise, I will in the king's behalf recount
 20 such part of his story as I think most necessary. And therefore imagine, Baldwin, that you see him all-to bemangled, with blue wounds, lying pale and wan all naked upon the cold stones in Paul's church, the people standing round about him and making his moan in this sort':¹²⁰

4. **appellant**: a mistake for 'appellee' (the person accused in an appeal of treason). 6. **sith**: since. 13. **personage**: personal identity; **entangled**: fraught with difficulties and embarrassments. 14. **benefices**: kindnesses. 21. **all-to bemangled, with blue wounds**: completely lacerated, with bruises. 22. **stones in Paul's church**: floor slabs in St Paul's Cathedral, London.

[Tragedy 5]

How King Richard the Second was for his evil Governance
Deposed from his Seat and miserably Murdered in Prison

Happy is the prince that hath in wealth the grace
To follow virtue, keeping vices under.
But woe to him whose will hath wisdom's place,
For whoso renteth right and law asunder
On him at length, lo, all the world shall wonder. [5]
High birth, choice fortune, force, nor princely mace
Can warrant king or kaiser fro the case:
Shame sueth sin, as raindrops do the thunder;
Let princes therefore virtuous life embrace,
That wilful pleasures cause them not to blunder. [10]

Behold my hap, see how the seely rout
Do gaze upon me, and each to other say:
'See where he lieth for whom none late might rout.
Lo how the power, the pride, and rich array
Of mighty rulers lightly fade away. [15]
The king, which erst kept all the realm in doubt,
The veriest rascal now dare check and lout.
What mould be kings made of but carrion clay?
Behold his wounds, how blue they be about,
Which, while he lived, thought never to decay.' [20]

Methinks I hear the people thus devise,
And, therefore, Baldwin, sith thou wilt declare

7. **Can ... case:** can protect king or emperor from the consequences of debilitating right and law. 8. **sueth:** follows as a consequence. 11. **seely rout:** simple, low-born crowd. 13. **for ... rout:** whom none previously might ever threaten (**rout for:** approach with the intention to attack). 16. **doubt:** dread, fear. 17. **The ... lout:** the lowest of the rabble now may beat and mock. 18. **mould:** matter; **carrion clay:** flesh subject to decay (with 'clay' echoing the biblical idea that humans are made of dust and will return to dust once more (Genesis 2:7, 3:19)). 22. **sith:** since.

How princes fell, to make the living wise,
 My vicious story in no point see thou spare,
 But paint it out that rulers may beware [25]
 Good counsel, law, or virtue to despise.
 For realms have rules, and rulers have a size
 Which, if they keep not, doubtless say I dare
 That either's griefs the other shall agrise,
 Till the one be lost, the other brought to care. [30]

I am a king that rulèd all by lust,
 That forcèd not of virtue, right, or law,
 But always put false flatterers most in trust,
 Ensuing such as could my vices claw,
 By faithful counsel passing not a straw. [35]
 What pleasure pricked, that thought I to be just:
 I set my mind to feed, to spoil, to just.
 Three meals a day could scarce content my maw,
 And all to augment my lecherous mind that must
 To Venus' pleasures always be in awe.¹²¹ [40]

For maintenance whereof my realm I polled,
 Through subsidies, sore fines, loans, many a prest,
 Blank charters, oaths, and shifts not known of old,¹²²
 For which my subjects did me sore detest. [45]
 I also made away the town of Brest,
 My fault wherein because mine uncle told
 (For princes' vices may not be controlled),
 I found the means his bowels to unbreast,
 The peers and lords that did his cause uphold
 With death, exile, or grievous fines oppressed.¹²³ [50]

Neither lacked I aid in any wicked deed,
 For gaping gulls whom I promoted had
 Would further all in hope of higher meed.

24. **vicious**: vice-ridden. 27. **size**: a proper limit to behaviour. 29. **agrise**: fill with horror. 32. **forced not of**: cared nothing for. 34. **Ensuing**: following the guidance of; **claw**: gratify. 37. **just**: joust. 42. **many a prest**: many a charge, duty, and/or tax. 43. **blank charters**: see explanatory note 122. 48. **unbreast**: free or take from the breast (either a reference to wounding so that the bowels spill from the body or to the early modern practice of removing abdominal organs from a corpse to prepare it for burial). 52. **gaping gulls**: greedy hangers-on (gulls were thought to be particularly greedy, ravenous birds).

A king can never imagine ought so bad
But most about him will perform it glad, [55]
For sickness seldom doth so swiftly breed
As vicious humours grow the grief to feed.
Thus kings' estates of all be worst bested,
Abused in wealth, abandonèd at need,
And nearest harm when they be least adread. [60]

My life and death the truth of this can try,
For while I fought in Ireland with my foes
Mine uncle Edmund, whom I left to guide
My realm at home, right trait'rously arose [65]
To help the Percies plying my depose
And called from France Earl Bolingbroke, whom I
Condemnèd ten years in exile to lie,¹²⁴
Who cruelly did put to death all those
That in mine aid durst look but once awry –
Whose number was but slender, I suppose. [70]

For when I was come back this stir to stay,
The earl of Worcester whom I trusted most
(Whiles we in Wales at Flint our castle lay,
Both to refresh and multiply mine host)
Did in my hall in sight of least and most [75]
Bebreak his staff, my household office stay,
Bade each man shift and rode himself away.¹²⁵
See princes, see the power whereof we boast:
Whom most we trust at need do us betray,
Through whose false faith my land and life I lost. [80]

For when my traitorous steward thus was goen,
My servants shrank away on every side,

56–7. **For ... feed:** For sicknesses seldom grow to cause grief as quickly as depraved inclinations do. 58. **bested:** constituted. 60. **adread:** revered, feared. 65. **plying my depose:** working to depose me. 66. **Earl Bolingbroke:** Henry Bolingbroke (d. 1413), first duke of Hereford and later King Henry IV (the title 'earl' is evidently an unconscious error; cf. line 85). 68–70. **Who ... suppose:** Who put cruelly to death all those who offered me even a little bit of support – a small number of subjects, I have to believe (**look ... awry:** cast an oblique glance). 76. **my household office stay:** the prop, buttress of my household's offices (the steward was the chief officer of the royal household).

[77] 1563: each make shift [**make shift:** bestir himself]

That caught I was and carried to my foen,
 Who for their prince a prison did provide
 And therein kept me, till Duke Henry's pride [85]
 Did cause me yield him up my crown and throne,
 Which shortly made my friendly foes to groan.
 For Henry, seeing in me their falsehood tried,
 Abhorred them all and would be ruled by none,
 For which they sought to stop him straight a tide.¹²⁶ [90]

The chief conspired by death to drive him down,
 For which exploit a solemn oath they swore,
 To render me my liberty and crown
 Whereof themselves deprived me before.
 But salves help sold an overlong suff' red sore; [95]
 To stop the breech no boot to run or rown,
 When swelling floods have overflown the town.
 Till sails be spread, the ship may keep the shore;
 The anchors weighed, though all the freight do frown,
 With stream and steer perforce it shall be bore. [100]

For though the peers set Henry in his state,
 Yet could they not displace him thence again,
 And where they easily put me down of late,
 They could restore me by no manner pain:
 Things hardly mend but may be marred amain. [105]
 And when a man is fall'n in froward fate,
 Still mischiefs light one in another's pate,
 And well-meant means his mishaps to restrain
 Wax wretched moans, whereby his joys abate:
 Due proof whereof in me appeareth plain. [110]

For when King Henry knew that for my cause
 His lords in mask would kill him if they might,¹²⁷

87. **friendly foes**: those who had accepted Henry Bolingbroke's victory but still sympathized with the deposed Richard. 90. **straight a tide**: straightway. 96–7. **To ... town**: It is useless to run or to hold a discussion once floods have overwhelmed the town (**rown**: round, in the sense of 'talk about or discuss something'). 99–100. **The ... bore**: Once the anchor is weighed, the current and helmsman will guide the ship along, no matter how much the passengers may frown (**freight**: those who paid for passage on the ship). 105. **Things ... amain**: Things are put right only with difficulty, but they can be damaged very quickly. 106–9. **And ... abate**: And when a man has fallen into an adverse fate, troubles continually descend on him, one on top of the other, and well-meant attempts to lessen his misfortunes only increase the wretched moans that end his joys.

[107] 1563: on one another's

To dash all doubts, he took no farther pause
 But sent Sir Pierce of Exton, a trait'rous knight,
 To Pomfret Castle, with other armèd light, [115]
 Who causeless killed me there against all laws.¹²⁸
 Thus lawless life to lawless death ay draws,
 Wherefore bid kings be ruled and rule by right:
 Who worketh his will and shunneth wisdom's saws
 In flattery's claws and shame's foul paws shall light. [120]

117. ay: ever.

[Prose 6]

When he had ended this so woeful a tragedy, and to all princes a right worthy instruction, we paused, having passed through a miserable time full of piteous tragedies. And seeing the reign of Henry the Fourth ensued, a man more ware and prosperous in his doings, although not untroubled with wars
 5 both of outforth and inward enemies, we began to search what peers were fallen therein, whereof the number was not small. And yet, because their examples were not much to be noted for our purpose, we passed over all the masquers (of whom King Richard's brother was chief) which were all slain and put to death for their traitorous attempt.¹²⁹ And finding Owen Glendour
 10 next, one of fortune's own whelps, and the Percies his confederates, I thought them unmeet to be overpassed, and therefore said thus to the silent company: 'What, my masters, is every man at once in a brown study? Hath no man affection to any of these stories? You mind so much some other belike, that these do not move you: and to say the troth there is no special cause why they
 15 should. Howbeit Owen Glendour, because he was one of fortune's darlings, rather than he should be forgotten, I will tell his tale for him under the privilege of Martin Hundred,¹³⁰ which Owen, coming out of the wild mountains like the image of death in all points (his dart only excepted), so sore hath famine and hunger consumed him, may lament his folly after this manner.'

1. **he**: Sir Thomas Chaloner. 4. **ware**: cautious. 9. **Owen Glendour**: Owain Glyn Dŵr (d. c. 1416), Welsh rebel leader. 10. **Percies**: Henry Percy (d. 1408), first earl of Northumberland, and his kinsmen. 12. **in a brown study**: lost in gloomy reflection. 18. **dart**: light spear. (The image of a personified, skeletal death and his dart was familiar in early modern England.)

[1] 1554: When Master Chaloner had [1–2] 1554: a right notable and worthy [4] 1554: a man more prosperous, although [5] 1554: what princes [14] 1554: and to say troth [15–16] 1554: because he is a man of that country whence (as the Welshmen take me in hand) my pedigree is descended, although he be but a slender prince, yet rather [take me in hand: lead me to believe] [17] 1554: coming naked out [19] 1554: him, lamenteth his infortune after

[Tragedy 6]

How Owen Glendour, Seduced by False Prophecies, Took Upon
Him to be Prince of Wales and was by Henry, then Prince Thereof,
Chased to the Mountains, where he Miserably Died for Lack of Food

I pray thee Baldwin, sith thou dost intend
To show the fall of such as climb too high,
Remember me, whose miserable end
May teach a man his vicious life to fly.
Oh Fortune, Fortune, out on her I cry! [5]
My body and fame she hath made lean and slender,
For I, poor wretch, am starvèd Owen Glendour.

A Welshman born and of a gentle blood,
But ill brought up, whereby full well I find
That neither birth nor lin'age make us good, [10]
Though it be true that cat will after kind.
Flesh gend'reth flesh, so doth not soul or mind:
They gender not but foully do degender,
When men to vice from virtue them do surrender.

Each thing by nature tendeth to the same [15]
Whereof it came and is disposèd like.
Down sinks the mould, up mounts the fiery flame;
With horn the hart, with hoof the horse doth strike;
The wolf doth spoil, the subtle fox doth pike;
And generally no fish, flesh, fowl, or plant [20]
Doth any property that their dame had want.

But as for men, sith severally they have
A mind whose manners are by learning made,

Title: Henry: Henry of Monmouth (d. 1422), prince of Wales and the future King Henry V. **1. sith:** since. **11. a cat will after kind:** a cat will act according to its nature (a proverbial saying). **12. gend'reth:** engenders. **13. gender:** reproduce; **degender:** degenerate. **17. mould:** soil, earth. **19. pike:** steal ('pick'). **22. severally:** each individually.

[2] 1554: falls

[14] 1554: do render; 1563: them surrender

[10] 1554: make men good

Good bringing up alonely doth them save
 In virtuous deeds, which with their parents fade, [25]
 So that true gentry standeth in the trade
 Of virtuous life, not in the fleshly line,
 For blood is brute, but gentry is divine.³¹

Experience doth cause me thus to say
 And that the rather for my countrymen, [30]
 Which vaunt and boast their selves above the day,
 If they may strain their stock for worthy men:
 Which let be true, are they the better then?
 Nay far the worse, if so they be not good,
 For why they stain the beauty of their blood. [35]

How would we mock the burden-bearing mule
 If he would brag he were an horse's son?
 To press his pride (might nothing else him rule),
 His boast to prove, no more but bid him run.
 The horse for swiftness hath his glory won, [40]
 To which the mule could never the more aspire,
 Though he should prove that Pegas was his sire.

Each man may crack of that which is his own;
 Our parents' virtues theirs are and not ours.
 Who therefore will of noble kind be known [45]
 Ought shine in virtue like his ancestors.
 Gentry consisteth not in lands and towers:
 He is a churl though all the world be his,
 Yea Arthur's heir, if that he live amiss.

For virtuous life doth make a gentleman [50]
 Of her possessor, all be he poor as Job,
 Yea though no name of elders show he can.

24–5. **Good ... fade:** Good bringing-up in virtuous deeds alone will preserve them (in honour), since the good their parents performed will eventually fade away. 32. **strain their stock:** insist on their ancestry. 35. **For why:** Because. 38. **press:** suppress. 42. **Pegas:** Pegasus. 43. **crack:** boast. 49. **Yea ... amiss:** Even if he is King Arthur's heir, he is a churl if he lives amiss. 51. **all be he:** even though he be.

[31] 1554, 1563: boast themselves [32] 1563: stock
 fro worthy [38] 1563: press the pride [39] 1563: his
 boasts to [42] 1554: Pegas were his; 1563: Pegas is
 his [43] 1563: which was his [49] 1559: He Arthur's
 (an uncorrected fault in the 1559 edition for 'Yea
 Arthur's', which is the 1563 reading)

For proof take Merlin fathered by an hob,
 But who so sets his mind to spoil and rob,
 Although he come by due descent fro Brute, [55]
 He is a churl, ungentle, vile, and brute.¹³²

Well thus did I for want of better wit,
 Because my parents noughtly brought me up,
 For gentle men (they said) was nought so fit
 As to attaste by bold attempts the cup [60]
 Of conquest's wine, whereof I thought to sup,
 And therefore bent myself to rob and rive,
 And whom I could of lands and goods deprive.

For Henry the Fourth did then usurp the crown,
 Despoiled the king, with Mortimer the heir, [65]
 For which his subjects sought to put him down.¹³³
 And I, while Fortune offered me so fair,
 Did what I might his honour to appair
 And took on me to be the prince of Wales,
 Enticed thereto by many of Merlin's tales. [70]

For which, such idle as wait upon the spoil
 From every part of Wales unto me drew,
 For loit'ring youth untaught in any toil
 Are ready ay all mischief to ensue.
 Through help of these so great my glory grew [75]
 That I defied my king through lofty heart
 And made sharp war on all that took his part.

See luck, I took Lord Reynold Grey of Rithen
 And him enforced my daughter to espouse,
 And so unransomed held him still. And sithen [80]
 In Wigmore land through battle rigorous
 I caught the right heir of the crownèd house
 The earl of March, Sir Edmund Mortimer,
 And in a dungeon kept him prisoner.¹³⁴

53. **hob**: hobgoblin. 62. **rive**: pillage. 68. **appair**: impair. 71. **idle**: idlers. 74. **ay**: always. 80. **still**: perpetually; **sithen**: afterwards.

[53] 1554: Merlin, whose father was an hob

Then all the marches longing unto Wales [85]
By Severn west I did invade and burn,
Destroyed the towns in mountains and in vales,
And rich in spoils did homeward safe return:
Was none so bold durst once against me spurn.
Thus prosperously doth Fortune forward call [90]
Those whom she minds to give the sorest fall.¹³⁵

When fame had brought these tidings to the king
(Although the Scots then vexèd him right sore),
A mighty army against me he did bring,
Whereof the French King being warned afore, [95]
Who mortal hate against King Henry bore,
To grieve our foe he quickly to me sent
Twelve thousand Frenchmen armed to war and bent.

A part of them led by the earl of March
Lord James of Bourbon, a valiant tried knight, [100]
Withheld by winds to Wales-ward forth to march,
Took land at Plymouth privily on a night,
And when he had done all he durst or might,
After that a many of his men were slain,
He stole to ship and sailèd home again. [105]

Twelve thousand mo in Milford did arrive
And came to me, then lying at Denbigh
With armèd Welshmen thousands double five,
With whom we went to Worcèster well nigh
And there encamped us on a mount on high [110]
To abide the king, who shortly after came
And pitched his field on a hill hard by the same.

There eight days long our hosts lay face to face,
And neither durst the other's power assail,
But they so stopped the passages the space [115]

86. *Severn*: a river of Wales and west England. 101. *to Wales-ward*: towards Wales. 112. *pitched his field*: positioned his troops for battle.

[88] 1554: And with rich; 1563: spoils had

That vitals could not come to our avail,
 Wherethrough constrained, our hearts began to fail
 So that the Frenchmen shrank away by night,
 And I with mine to the mountains took our flight:

The king pursued us, greatly to his cost, [120]
 From hills to woods, fro woods to valleys plain,
 And by the way his men and stuff he lost,
 And when he see he gainèd nought save pain,
 He blew retreat and got him home again.
 Then with my power I boldly came abroad, [125]
 Taken in my country for a very god.

Immediately after fell a jolly jar
 Between the king and Percy's worthy bloods,
 Which grew at last unto a deadly war,
 For like as drops engender mighty floods [130]
 And little seeds sprout forth great leaves and buds,
 Even so small strifes, if they be suffered run,
 Breed wrath and war and death or they be done.

The king would have the ransom of such Scots
 As these the Percies had tane in the field, [135]
 But see how strongly lucre knits her knots:
 The king will have; the Percies will not yield.
 Desire of goods soon craves but granteth seld.
 Oh cursèd goods! desire of you hath wrought
 All wickedness that hath or can be thought. ¹³⁶ [140]

The Percies deemed it meeter for the king
 To have redeemed their cousin Mortimer –
 Who in his quarrel all his power did bring
 To fight with me that took him prisoner –
 Than of their prey to rob his Soldier [145]
 And therefore willed him see some mean were found
 To quit forth him whom I kept vilely bound.

116. vitals: victuals. **128. Percy's worthy bloods:** worthy men of the Percy lineage (at the time the dominant noble family in the north of England). **133. or:** before. **141–5. The ... Soldier:** The Percies deemed it fitter for Henry IV to redeem their kinsman Mortimer, who on the king's behalf had marshalled all his forces to fight me (i.e. Glendour), than to 'rob' a man who fought in the king's service (**his Soldier:** Sir Henry Percy) of his family's spoils of war.

147. quit forth: set free.

Because the king mislikèd their request,
They came themselves and did accord with me,
Complaining how the kingdom was oppressed [150]
By Henry's rule, wherefore we did agree
To put him down and part the realm in three:
The North part theirs, Wales wholly to be mine,
The rest to rest to th'earl of March's line.¹³⁷

And for to set us hereon more agog, [155]
A prophet came (a vengeance take them all!)
Affirming Henry to be Gogmagog,¹³⁸
Whom Merlin doth a mouldwarp ever call,
Accursed of God, that must be brought in thrall
By a wolf, a dragon, and a lion strong, [160]
Which should divide his kingdom them among.

This crafty dreamer made us, three such beasts,
To think we were these foresaid beasts indeed,
And for that cause our badges and our crests
We searchèd out, which scarcely well agreed; [165]
Howbeit the heralds, ready at such a need,
Drew down such issues from old ancestors
As proved these ensigns to be surely ours.

Ye crafty Welshmen, wherefore do you mock
The noble men thus with your feignèd rhymes? [170]
Ye noble men, why fly you not the flock
Of such as have seduced so many times?
False prophecies are plagues for divers crimes,
Which God doth let the devilish sort devise
To trouble such as are not godly wise. [175]

And that appeared by us three beasts in deed,
Through false persuasion highly borne in hand
That in our feat we could not choose but speed
To kill the king and to enjoy his land,
For which exploit we bound ourselves in band [180]
To stand contented each man with his part,
So fully folly assured our foolish heart.

158. *mouldwarp*: mole. 176. *in deed*: in actual practice. 177. *borne in hand*: deluded.

But such they say as fish before the net
 Shall seldom surfeit of the prey they take;
 Of things to come the haps be so unset [185]
 That none but fools may warrant of them make.
 The full assured success doth oft forsake,
 For Fortune findeth none so fit to flout
 As suresby sots which cast no kind of doubt.

How sayest thou Henry Hotspur, do I lie? [190]
 For thou right manly gavest the king a field
 And there was slain because thou wouldst not fly.
 Sir Thomas Percy thine uncle, forced to yield,
 Did cast his head (a wonder seen but sold)
 From Shrewsbury town to the top of London Bridge: [195]
 Lo, thus fond hope did their both lives abridge.¹⁸⁹

When Henry King this victory had won,
 Destroyed the Percies, put their power to flight,
 He did appoint Prince Henry, his eldest son,
 With all his power to meet me if he might, [200]
 But I, discomfit through my partners' fight,
 Had not the heart to meet him face to face
 But fled away, and he pursued the chase.

Now Baldwin mark, for I, called prince of Wales
 And made believe I should be he indeed, [205]
 Was made to fly among the hills and dales,
 Where all my men forsook me at my need:
 Who trusteth loiterers sold hath lucky speed,
 And when the captain's courage doth him fail
 His soldiers' hearts a little thing may quail. [210]

And so Prince Henry chasèd me that, lo,
 I found no place wherein I might abide,
 For as the dogs pursue the seely doe,
 The brach behind the hounds on every side,
 So traced they me among the mountains wide, [215]

189. **suresby sots**: over-confident fools. 191. **a field**: a battle. 213. **seely**: innocent. 214. **brach**: scent hound.

Whereby I found I was the heartless hare
And not the beast Coleprophet did declare.

And at the last – like as the little roach
Must either be eat or leap upon the shore
Whenas the hungry pickrel doth approach [220]
And there find death which it escaped before –
So double death assaulted me so sore
That either I must unto my en'my yield
Or starve for hunger in the barren field.

Here shame and pain a while were at a strife: [225]
Pain prayed me yield, shame bade me rather fast;
The one bade spare, the other spend my life,
But shame (shame have it) overcame at last.
Then hunger gnew that doth the stone wall brast
And made me eat both gravel, dirt, and mud, [230]
And, last of all, my dung, my flesh, and blood.¹⁴⁰

This was mine end, too horrible to hear,
Yet good enough for a life that was so ill.
Whereby (O Baldwin) warn all men to bear
Their youth such love to bring them up in skill. [235]
Bid Princes fly Coleprophet's lying bill
And not presume to climb above their states,
For they be faults that foil men, not their fates.

217. Coleprophet: false prophet (the false prophet of line 156). **218. roach:** a small freshwater fish. **220. pickrel:** pike. **228. shame have it:** an obscure phrase: perhaps 'as shame would have it'. **229. gnew:** gnawed. **235. in skill:** in accordance with what is right.

[Prose 7]

When starved Owen had ended his hungry exhortation, it was well-enough liked. Howbeit, one found a doubt worth the moving, and that concerning this title 'earl of March': for, as it appeareth, there were three men of three divers nations together in one time entitled by that honour.
5 First, Sir Edmund Mortimer, whom Owen kept in prison, an Englishman; the second, the Lord George of Dunbar, a valiant Scot, banished out of his

5. Mortimer: Sir Edmund Mortimer (d. 1425), fifth earl of March. **6. George of Dunbar:** George Dunbar (d. between 1416 and 1423), ninth earl of March.

country and well esteemed of Henry the Fourth; the third, Lord James of Bourbon, a Frenchman, sent by the French king to help Owen Glendour. These three men had this title all at once, which caused him to ask how
 10 it was true that every one of these could be earl of March. Whereunto was answered that every country hath marches belonging unto them, and those so large that they were earldoms, and the lords thereof intituled thereby, so that Lord Edmund Mortimer was earl of March in England, Lord James of Bourbon of the Marches of France, and Lord George of Dunbar earl
 15 of the Marches in Scotland.¹⁴¹ For otherwise neither could have interest in other's title.

This doubt thus dissolved, Master Ferrers said, 'if no man have affection to the Percies, let us pass the times both of Henry the Fourth and the Fifth and come to Henry the Sixth, in whose time Fortune (as she doth
 20 in the minority of princes) bare a great stroke among the nobles. And yet in Henry the Fourth's time are examples which I would wish Baldwin that you should not forget, as the conspiracy made by the bishop of York and the Lord Mowbray, son of him whom you late treated of, pricked forward by the earl of Northumberland, father to Sir Henry Hotspur, who
 25 fled himself, but his partners were apprehended and put to death, with Baynton and Blinkinsops, which could not see their duty to their king but took part with Percy that banished rebel.'¹⁴²

As he was proceeding, he was desired to stay by one which had pondered the story of the Percies, who briefly said, 'to the end, Baldwin, that
 30 you may know what to say of the Percies, whose story is not all out of my memory (and it is a notable story), I will take upon me the person of Lord Henry, earl of Northumberland, father of Henry Hotspur, in whose behalf this may be said:

18. the Percies: Henry Percy (d. 1408), first earl of Northumberland, and his son Sir Henry Percy (d. 1403), called 'Hotspur'. **20. bare a great stroke:** wielded great influence. **23. son of him:** son of Thomas Mowbray (d. 1399), first duke of Norfolk, speaker of Tragedy 3. **24. earl of Northumberland:** Henry Percy (d. 1408), first earl of Northumberland; **Sir Henry Hotspur:** Sir Henry Percy (d. 1403), called 'Hotspur'. **27. banished:** driven away.

[Tragedy 7]

How Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, was for his Covetous
and Traitorous Attempt Put to Death at York

Oh moral Senec, true find I thy saying
That neither kinsfolk, riches, strength, or favour
Are free from Fortune but are ay decaying.
No worldly wealth is aught save doubtful labour;
Man's life in earth is like unto a tabor, [5]
Which now to mirth doth mildly men provoke,
And straight to war with a more sturdy stroke.¹⁴³

All this full true I, Percy, find by proof,
Which whilom was earl of Northumberland,
And therefore, Baldwin, for my peers' behoof, [10]
To note men's falls sith thou hast tane in hand,
I would thou shouldest my state well understand,
For fewè kings were more than I redoubted,
Through double Fortune lifted up and louted.

As for my kin, their nobleness is known, [15]
My valiantise were folly for to praise,
Wherethrough the Scots so oft were overthrown
That who but I was doubted in my days?
And that King Richard found at all assays,
For never Scots rebellèd in his reign [20]
But through my force were either caught or slain.

A brother I had was earl of Worcester,
Always in favour and office with the king,¹⁴⁴

4. **aight save**: anything but. 11. **sith**: since. 13. **fewe**: few (disyllabic); **redoubted**: respected. 14. **Through ... louted**: Through duplicitous Fortune first raised up and then forced to stoop. 18. **doubted**: dreaded. 19. **assays**: martial attempts.

And by my wife Dame Eleanor Mortimer
 I had a son, which so the Scots did sting [25]
 That, being young and but a very spring,
 Sir Henry Hotspur they gave him to name,
 And though I say it, he did deserve the same.¹⁴⁵

We three triumphèd in King Richard's time,
 Till Fortune ought both him and us a spite, [30]
 But chiefly me, whom clear from any crime
 My king did banish from his favour quite
 And openly proclaimed a traitorous knight –
 Wherethrough false slander forcèd me to be
 That which before I did most deadly flee.¹⁴⁶ [35]

Let men beware how they true folk defame,
 Or threaten on them the blame of vices nought,
 For infamy breedeth wrath, wreck followeth shame,
 Eke open slander oftentimes hath brought
 That to effect that erst was never thought. [40]
 To be misdeemed men suffer in a sort,
 But none can bear the grief of misreport.

Because my king did shame me wrongfully,
 I hated him and indeed became his foe,
 And, while he did at war in Ireland lie, [45]
 I did conspire to turn his weal to woe,
 And through the duke of York and other mo
 All royal power from him we quickly took
 And gave the same to Henry Bolingbroke.¹⁴⁷

Neither did we this alone for this cause [50]
 But, to say truth, force drave us to the same,
 For he, despising God and all good laws,
 Slew whom he would, made sin a very game.
 And seeing neither age nor counsel could him tame,
 We thought it well done for the kingdom's sake [55]
 To leave his rule that did all rule forsake.

24. **Eleanor Mortimer**: the poet's error for Northumberland's actual first wife Margaret Neville (d. 1372). 26. **a very spring**: a true youth. 30. **Till ... spite**: Until Fortune dealt harm to both King Richard and us. 37. **vices nought**: non-existent vices. 41. **to be misdeemed**: to be looked on unfavourably; to be thought evil of.

But when Sir Henry had attained his place,
He straight became in all points worse than he,
Destroyed the peers and slew King Richard's grace,
Against his oath made to the lords and me.¹⁴⁸ [60]
And, seeking quarrels how to disagree,
He shamelessly required me and my son
To yield him Scots, which we in field had won.¹⁴⁹

My nephew, also, Edmund Mortimer,
The very heir apparent to the crown, [65]
Whom Owen Glendour held as prisoner
Vilely bound, in dungeon deep cast down,
He would not ransom but did felly frown
Against my brother and me that for him spake,
And him proclaimed traitor for our sake.¹⁵⁰ [70]

This foul despite did cause us to conspire
To put him down as we did Richard erst,
And that we might this matter set on fire,
From Owen's jail our cousin we remerced
And unto Glendour all our griefs rehearsed, [75]
Who made a bond with Mortimer and me
To prive the king and part the realm in three.¹⁵¹

But when King Henry heard of this device,
Toward Owen Glendour he sped him very quick,
Minding by force to stop our enterprise. [80]
And, as the devil would, then fell I sick;
Howbeit, my brother and son, more politic
Than prosperous, with an host fro Scotland brought,
Encountered him at Shrewsbury, where they fought.

The one was tane and killed, the other slain, [85]
And shortly after was Owen put to flight,
By means whereof, I forcèd was to feign
That I knew nothing of the former fight.
Fraud oft avails more than doth sturdy might,

68. **felly**: fiercely. 74. **remerced**: redeemed. 77. **prive**: deprive. 82. **politic**: crafty.

For by my feigning I brought him in belief [90]
I knew not that wherein my part was chief.¹⁵²

And while the king thus took me for his friend,
I sought all means my former wrong to wreak,
Which that I might bring to the sooner end
To the bishop of York I did the matter break, [95]
And to th'Earl Marshal likewise did I speak,
Whose father was through Henry's cause exiled;
The bishop's brother with traitorous death defiled.

These straight assented to do what they could,
So did Lord Hastings and Lord Fauconbridge, [100]
Which altogether promised they would
Set all their power the king's days to abridge.¹⁵³
But see the spite: before the birds were flidge,
The king had word and seasoned on the nest,
Whereby, alas, my friends were all oppressed. [105]

The bloody tyrant brought them all to end
Excepted me, which into Scotland scaped
To George of Dunbar, th'earl of March, my friend,
Who in my cause all that he could ay scraped. [110]
And, when I had for greater succour gaped
Both at the Frenchmen and the Flemings' hand
And could get none, I took such as I fand.

And, with the help of George my very friend,
I did invade Northumberland full bold,
Whereas the folk drew to me still unend, [115]
Bent to the death my party to uphold.
Through help of these full many a fort and hold,
The which the king right manfully had manned,
I eas'ly won and seized in my hand.¹⁵⁴

Not so content (for vengeance drave me on), [120]
I entered Yorkshire, there to waste and spoil

93. **wreak**: revenge. 103. **flidge**: fledged. 104. **seasoned on**: dug his claws into (said of a bird or beast of prey). 112. **fand**: found (northern dialect).

But, ere I had far in the country gone,
 The sheriff thereof, Rafe Rekesby, did assoil
 My troubled host of much part of our toil.
 For he, assaulting freshly, took through power [125]
 Me and Lord Bardolf both at Bramham Moor,

And thence conveyed us to the town of York
 Until he knew what was the king's intent.
 There, lo, Lord Bardolf, kinder than the stork,¹⁵⁵
 Did lose his head, which was to London sent, [130]
 With whom for friendship mine in like case went.¹⁵⁶
 This was my hap, my fortune, or my fawte:
 This life I led, and thus I came to nought.

Wherefore, good Baldwin, will the peers take heed
 Of slander, malice, and conspiracy, [135]
 Of covetise whence all the rest proceed,
 For covetise joint with contumacy
 Doth cause all mischief in men's hearts to breed.
 Add therefore this to *Esperance*, my word:
 Who causeth bloodshed shall not scape the sword.¹⁵⁷ [140]

123. *assoil*: set free, discharge. 129. *lo*: behold, sec. 132. *fawte*: fault, failing.

[Prose 8]

By that this was ended, I had found out the story of Richard, earl of Cambridge, and, because it contained matter in it, though not very notable, yet for the better understanding of the rest I thought it meet to touch it and, therefore, said as followeth: 'You have said well of the Percies and favourably, for indeed, as it should appear, the chief cause of their conspiracy against King Henry was for Edmund Mortimer their cousin's sake, whom the king very maliciously proclaimed to have yielded himself to Owen colourably, whenas indeed he was taken forcibly against his will and very cruelly ordered in prison.¹⁵⁸ And, seeing we are in hand with
 5
 10 Mortimer's matter, I will take upon me the person of Richard Plantagenet,

1. **Richard**: Richard (d. 1415), first earl of Cambridge. 8. **colourably**: in appearance but not in reality (see Tragedy 7, n. 150); **whenas**: when.

15 earl of Cambridge, who for his sake likewise died. And, therefore, I let pass Edmund Holland, earl of Kent, whom Henry the Fourth made admiral to scour the seas, because the Bretons were abroad, which earl (as many things happen in war) was slain with an arrow at the assault of Briake, shortly after whose death this king died and his son Henry the fifth of that name succeeded in his place. In the beginning of this Henry the Fifth's reign died this Richard and, with him, Henry the Lord Scrope and others, in whose behalf this may be said.¹⁵⁹

[17] 1563: other

[Tragedy 8]

How Richard, Earl of Cambridge, Intending to the King's
Destruction, was Put to Death at Southampton

'Haste maketh waste' hath commonly been said,
And secret mischief seld hath lucky speed;
A murdering mind with proper peise is weighed:
All this is true; I find it in my creed.
And therefore, Baldwin, warn all states take heed [5]
How they conspire any other to betray,
Lest mischief meant light in the miner's lap.

For I, Lord Richard, heir Plantagenet,
Was earl of Cambridge and right fortunate,
If I had had the grace my wit to set [10]
To have content me with mine own estate.
But oh false honours, breeders of debate,
The love of you our lewd hearts doth allure
To leese ourselves by seeking you unsure.

Because my brother Edmund Mortimer, [15]
Whose eldest sister was my wedded wife –
I mean that Edmund that was prisoner
In Wales so long through Owen's busy strife –
Because, I say, that after Edmund's life
His rights and titles must by law be mine [20]
(For he ne had nor could increase his line),¹⁶⁰

Because the right of realm and crown was ours,
I searchèd means to help him thereunto

3. **peise**: heaviness, burden (of guilt). 5. **all states**: members of every class. 7. **miner**: underminer, literally a soldier charged with setting explosives to undermine walls; used figuratively to mean a secret assailant bent on destruction. 14. **leese**: lose.

And, where the Henrys held it by their powers,
 I sought a shift their tenures to undo, [25]
 Which being force, sith force or sleight must do,
 I, void of might, because their power was strong,
 Set privy sleight against their open wrong.

But sith the deaths of most part of my kin
 Did dash my hope, throughout the father's days [30]
 I let it slip and thought it best begin
 Whenas the son should dread least such assays,
 For force through speed, sleight speedeth through delays,
 And seld doth treason time so fitly find
 As when all dangers most be out of mind.¹⁶¹ [35]

Wherefore while Henry of that name the Fift
 Prepared his army to go conquer France,
 Lord Scrope and I thought to attempt a drift
 To put him down, my brother to advance.
 But, were it God's will, my luck, or his good chance, [40]
 The king wist wholly whereabouts we went
 The night before the king to shipward bent.¹⁶²

Then were we straight as traitors apprehended;
 Our purpose spied, the cause thereof was hid.
 And, therefore, lo, a false cause we pretended, [45]
 Wherethrough my brother was fro danger rid.
 We said for hire of the French king's coin we did
 Behight to kill the king, and thus with shame
 We stained ourselves to save our friend fro blame.¹⁶³

When we had thus confessed so foul a treason, [50]
 That we deserved we suffered by the law.
 See, Baldwin, see, and note (as it is reason)
 How wicked deeds to woeful ends do draw.
 All force doth fail; no craft is worth a straw

24. **Henrys**: Henry IV and Henry V. 25. **tenures**: possession of the crown. 26. **being force**: was necessary; **sith**: since. 30. **father's**: i.e. Henry IV's. 33. **force ... delays**: force finds success through rapid execution; plots succeed through delays. 48. **Behight**: vow.

[42] 1563: before to shipward he him bent

To attain things lost, and therefore let them go, [55]
For might ruleth right, and will though God say no.

[Prose 9]

When stout Richard had stoutly said his mind, 'belike', quoth one, 'this Richard was but a little man or else little favoured of writers, for our chronicles speak very little of him. But, seeing we be come now to King Henry's voyage into France, we cannot lack valiant men to speak of, for
5 among so many as were led and sent by the king out of this realm thither, it cannot be chosen but some, and that a great sum, were slain among them, wherefore to speak of them all I think not needful. And therefore to let pass Edward, duke of York, and the earl of Suffolk slain both at the battle of Agincourt,¹⁶⁴ as were also many other, let us end the time of Henry the
10 Fifth and come to his son Henry the Sixth, whose nonage brought France and Normandy out of bondage and was cause that few of our noblemen died aged. Of whom to let pass the number, I will take upon me the person of Thomas Montagu, earl of Salisbury, whose name was not so good at home (and yet he was called the good earl) as it was dreadful abroad,¹⁶⁵
15 who, exclaiming upon the mutability of fortune, justly may say thus:

2. **little man**: person of no great importance. 3–4. **King Henry's voyage**: Henry V's 1415 invasion of France.

[Tragedy 9]

How Thomas Montagu, the Earl of Salisbury, in the mids of his
Glory was Chanceably Slain with a Piece of Ordnance

What fools be we to trust unto our strength,
Our wit, our courage, or our noble fame,
Which time itself must needs devour at length,
Though froward Fortune could not foil the same.
But seeing this goddess guideth all the game, [5]
Which still to change doth set her only lust,
Why toil we so for things so hard to trust?

A goodly thing is surely good report,
Which noble hearts do seek by course of kind.
But seen the date so doubtful and so short, [10]
The ways so rough whereby we do it find,
I cannot choose but praise the princely mind
That presseth for it, though we find oppressed
By foul defame those that deserve it best.

Concerning whom, mark Baldwin what I say, [15]
I mean the virtuous hindered of their bruit,
Among which number reckon well I may
My valiant father John Lord Montacute,
Who lost his life, I judge, in just pursuit.
I say the cause and not the casual speed [20]
Is to be weighed in every kind of deed.¹⁶⁶

This rule observed, how many shall we find
For virtue's sake by infamy oppressed?
How many again, through help of fortune blind,
For ill attempts achieved with honour blest? [25]

9. **course of kind:** by their very nature. 10. **seen:** seeing; **date:** duration. 20. **the casual speed:** the chance success.

Success is worst oft-times when cause is best.
Therefore say I God send them sorry haps
That judge the causes by their afterclaps!

The end indeed is judge of everything,
Which is the cause or latter point of time. [30]
The first true verdict at the first may bring;
The last is slow or slipper as the slime,
Oft changing names of innocence and crime.
Duke Thomas's death was justice two years long
And ever since sore tyranny and wrong.¹⁶⁷ [35]

Wherefore I pray thee, Baldwin, weigh the cause
And praise my father as he doth deserve.
Because Earl Henry, king against all laws,
Endeavourèd King Richard for to starve
In jail, whereby the regal crown might swarve [40]
Out of the line to which it then was due
(Whereby God knows what evil might ensue),¹⁶⁸

My Lord John Holland, duke of Exeter,
Which was dear cousin to this wretched king,
Did move my father and the earl of Gloucester, [45]
With other lords, to ponder well the thing.
Who, seeing the mischief that began to spring,
Did all consent this Henry to depose
And to restore King Richard to the rose.¹⁶⁹

And while they did devise a pretty train [50]
Whereby to bring their purpose better about,
Which was, in mask, this Henry to have slain,
The duke of Aumale blew their counsel out.
Yet was their purpose good, there is no doubt:
What cause can be more worthy for a knight [55]
Than save his king and help true heirs to right?¹⁷⁰

28. That ... afterclaps: who judge the worthiness of a cause by the results it produced. **29. end:** purpose of an action; result of an action. **31. The ... bring:** The first named (i.e. the cause) may immediately provide the true judgement concerning the action in question. **45. earl of Gloucester:** Thomas (d. 1400), second Lord Despenser and, until November 1399, first earl of Gloucester. **49. rose:** figuratively, the rule of England (the English rose as a symbol of the country). **50. train:** stratagem.

For this with them my father was destroyed
 And buried in the dunghill of defame.¹⁷¹
 Thus evil chance their glory did avoid,
 Whereas their cause doth claim eternal fame. [60]
 When deeds therefore unluckily do frame,
 Men ought not judge the authors to be naught,
 For right through might is often overraught.

And God doth suffer that it should be so,
 But why, my wit is feeble to decide, [65]
 Except it be to heap up wrath and woe
 Upon their heads that injuries devise.
 The cause why mischiefs many times arise
 And light on them that would men's wrongs redress
 Is for the rancour that they bear, I guess. [70]

God hateth rigour, though it further right,
 For sin is sin however it be used,
 And therefore suffereth shame and death to light
 To punish vice, though it be well abused.
 Who furthereth right is not thereby excused, [75]
 If through the same he do some other wrong:
 To every vice due guerdon doth belong.

What preach I now: I am a man of war,
 And that my body, I dare say, doth profess. [80]
 Of cured wounds beset with many a scar,
 My broken jaw unhealed can say no less.
 Oh Fortune, Fortune, cause of all distress!
 My father had great cause thy fraud to curse,
 But much more I, abusèd ten times worse.

Thou never flattered'st him in all his life, [85]
 But me thou dandled'st like thy darling dear.

59. **avoid**: make void. 63. **overraught**: overpowered. 65. **decide**: decide. 73. **light**: descend (upon someone). 74. **well abusèd**: used improperly but for good ends. 77. **guedon**: requital. 78. **What preach I now**: What I now proclaim.

[67] 1563: On wicked heads

[86] 1563: like the darling

Thy gifts I found in every corner rife;
Wherever I went I met thy smiling cheer,
Which was not for a day or for a year
But through the reign of three right worthy kings [90]
I found thee forward in all kind of things.

The while King Henry conquerèd in France,
I sued the wars and still found victory;
In all assaults so happy was my chance,
Holds yield or won did make my en'mies sorry. [95]
Dame Prudence eke augmented so my glory
That in all treaties ever I was one
When weighty matters were agreed upon.¹⁷²

But when this king, this mighty conqueror,
Through death unripe was both his realms bereft, [100]
His seely infant did receive his power,
Poor little babe full young in cradle left,
Where crown and sceptre hurt him with the heft,
Whose worthy uncles had the governance,
The one at home, the other abroad in France.¹⁷³ [105]

And I, which was in peace and war well skilled,
With both these rulers greatly was esteemed,
Bare rule at home as often as they willed
And fought in France when they it needful deemed. [110]
And everywhere so good my service seemed
That Englishmen to me great love did bear;
Our foes, the French, my force fulfilled with fear.

I always thought it fitly for a prince
And such as have the regiment of realms
His subjects' hearts with mildness to convince, [115]
With justice mixed, avoiding all extremes.
For like as Phoebus with his cheerful beams

88. **cheer**: countenance. 90. **three right worthy kings**: Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI. 91. **forward**: ready, eager. 92. **King Henry**: King Henry V. 93. **sued**: followed. 94. **happy**: successful. 96. **Dame Prudence**: good sense, discretion. 101. **seely**: helpless, innocent.

Doth freshly force the fragrant flow'rs to flourish,
So rulers' mildness subjects' love doth nourish.

This found I true, for through my mild behaviour [120]
Their hearts I had with me to live and die,
And in their speech for to declare their favour
They called me still good earl of Salisbury.
The lords confessed the commons did not lie,
For virtuous life, free heart, and lowly mind [125]
With high and low shall always favour find.¹⁷⁴

Which virtues chief become a man of war,
Whereof in France I found experience,
For in assaults due mildness passeth far
All rigour, force, and sturdy violence, [130]
For men will stoutly stick to their defence
When cruel captains covet them to spoil
And, so enforced, oft give their foes the foil.

But when they know they shall be friendly used,
They hazard not their heads but rather yield; [135]
For this, my offers never were refused
Of any town, or surely very seld.
But force and furies fit be for the field,
And there indeed I usèd so the same:
My foes would fly if they had heard my name.¹⁷⁵ [140]

For when Lord Stewart and Earl Vantadore
Had cruelly besieged Cravant town,
Which we had wan and kept long time before,
Which lieth in Auxerre on the river Yonne, [145]
To raise the siege the regent sent me down,
Where, as I used all rigour that I might,
I killèd all that were not saved by flight.¹⁷⁶

When the earl of Bedford, then in France lord regent,
Knew in what sort I had removed the siege,

118. **freshly force**: vigorously impel. 148. **earl of Bedford**: duke of Bedford.

[122] 1563: speech bewrayer of their (**bewrayer of**: discloser of) [132] 1563: covet after spoil

In Brie and Champagne he made me vicegerent [150]
And lieutenant for him and for my liege,
Which caused me go to Brie and there besiege
Montaiguillon with twenty weeks' assault,
Which at the last was yielded me for naught.¹⁷⁷

And for the duke of Britain's brother, Arthur, [155]
Both earl of Richmond and of Ivery,¹⁷⁸
Against his oath from us had made departure
To Charles the Dolphin, our chief enemy,
I with the regent went to Normandy
To take his town of Ivery, which of spite [160]
Did to us daily all the harm they might.

They at the first compounded by a day
To yield, if rescues did not come before.
And, whiles in hope to fight, we at it lay,
The Dolphin gathered men two thousand score, [165]
With earls, lords, and captains jolly store,
Of which the duke of Alençon was guide,
And sent them down to see if we would bide.¹⁷⁹

But they left us and down to Verneuil went,
And made their vaunt they had our army slain, [170]
And through that lie that town from us they hent,
Which shortly after turned to their pain,
For there both armies met upon the plain
And we eight thousand, whom they flew not slew before,
Did kill of them ten thousand men and more.¹⁸⁰ [175]

When we had taken Verneuil thus again,
To drive the Dolphin utterly out of France
The regent sent me to Anjou and to Maine,
Where I besieged the warlike town of Mawns.
There lord of Toyser's, Baldwin's, valiance [180]
Did well appear, which would not yield the town,
Till all the towers and walls were battered down.¹⁸¹

158. Dolphin: Dauphin. **162–3. They ... before:** They made terms to surrender if relief (supplied by the Dauphin) did not come by a certain appointed day. **164. we at it lay:** we lay in siege (at Ivry). **166. jolly store:** in admirably great supply. **171. hent:** seized. **174. flew:** fled from. **180. lord of Toyser's:** seigneur de Tucé's.

But hear now, Baldwin; take it in good part:
 Though that I brought this Baldwin there to yield,
 The lion fierce for all his noble heart [185]
 Being overmatched is forced to fly the field.
 If Mars himself had there been with his shield
 And in my storms had stoutly me withstood,
 He should have yield or else have shed my blood.

This worthy knight, both hardy, stout, and wise, [190]
 Wrought well his feat, as time and place require.
 When fortune fails, it is the best advice
 To strike the sail, lest all lie in the mire.
 This have I said to th'end thou take no ire,
 For, though no cause be found, so nature frames, [195]
 Men have a zeal to such as bear their names.¹⁸²

But to return, in Maine wan I at length
 Such towns and forts as might either help or hurt;
 I manned Mayenne and Suzannes, towns of strength,
 Fort Barnarde, Thanceaux, and S. Cales the curt, [200]
 With Lile sues Bolton, standing in the dirt;
 Eke Gwerland, Suszè, Louplande, and Mountsure,
 With Malicorne, these wan I and kept full sure.¹⁸³

Besides all this, I took near forty holds,
 But those I razèd even with the ground, [205]
 And for these deeds, as seely sheep in folds
 Do shrink for fear at every little sound,
 So fled my foes before my face full round.
 Was none so hardy durst abide the fight,
 So Mars and Fortune furthered me their knight. [210]

I tell no lie, so ghastrful grew my name
 That it alone discomfited an host.

188. storms: artillery assaults. **189. should have yield:** would have yielded. **199. Mayenne:** Mayenne-la-Juhez; **Suzannes:** Sainte-Suzanne. **200. Fort Barnard:** La Ferté-Bernard; **Thanceaux:** Château L'Hermitage; **S. Cales:** Saint-Calais; **curt:** large house or castle ('court'); short. **201. Lile sues Bolton:** l'Isle sous Brûlon. **202. Gwerland:** Château de Gallerande; **Susze:** La Suze-sur-Sarthe ('Susze' is disyllabic in the poem); **Mountsure:** Montsûrs. **203. Malicorne:** Malicorne-sur-Sarthe. **206. seely:** simple-minded.

[186] 1563: to flee

The Scots and Frenchmen will confess the same,
Else will the town which they like cowards lost.
For when they siegèd Bewron with great boast, [215]
Being forty thousand Britains, French, and Scots,
Five hundred men did vanquish them like sots.

For while the Frenchmen did assault them still,
Our Englishmen came boldly forth at night,
Crying 'Saint George! Salisbury! Kill, kill, kill!', [220]
And offered freshly with their foes to fight,
And they as Frenchly took themselves to flight,
Supposing surely that I had been there:
See how my name did put them all in fear.

Thus was the Dolphin's power discomfited, [225]
Four thousand slain, their camp tane as it stood,
Whereby our town and soldiers profited,
For there were victuals plentiful and good.¹⁸⁴
This while was I in England, by the rood,
To appease a strife that was right foul befall, [230]
Between Duke Humphrey and the Cardinal.¹⁸⁵

The duke of Exeter shortly after died,
Which of the king at home had governance,
Whose room the earl of Warwick then supplied,
And I took his and sped me into France. [235]
And, having a zeal to conquer Orlyauce,
With much ado I gat the regent's aid
And marched thither and siege about it laid.¹⁸⁶

But in the way I took the town of Yayn,
Where murdered were for stoutness many a man; [240]
But Beaugency I took with little pain,
For which to show them favour I began.
This caused the towns of Mewne and Jargeman,

215. **Bewron:** Beuvron. 216. **Britains:** Bretons. 226. **tane:** taken. 229. **by the rood:** by the cross (an oath). 236. **Orlyauce:** Orléans. 239. **Yayn:** Janville.

[218] 1563: freshly assaulted still

That stood on Loire, to proffer me the keys
 Ere I came near them, well nigh by two days.¹⁸⁷ [245]

See here how Fortune forward can allure,
 What baits she layeth to bring men to their ends!
 Who having hap like this but would hope sure
 To bring to bail whatever he intends?
 But soon is sour the sweet that Fortune sends: [250]
 When hope and hap, when health and wealth is high'st,
 Then woe and wrack, disease, and need be nigh'st.

For while I, suing this so-good success,
 Laid siege to Orlyauce on the river side,
 The Bastard (cuckold Cawny's son, I guess, [255]
 Though thought the duke's), who had this town in guide,¹⁸⁸
 Came fiercely forth, when he his time espied,
 To raise the siege but was beat back again
 And hard pursued both to his loss and pain.

For there we won the bulwark on the bridge [260]
 With a mighty tower standing fast thereby.
 Ah, cursèd tower that didst my days abridge,
 Would God thou hadst been further, either I!
 For in this tower a chamber stands on high,
 From which a man may view through all the town [265]
 By certain windows, iron grated, down.¹⁸⁹

Where on a day (now Baldwin note mine end)
 I stood in viewing where the town was weak,
 And, as I busily talkèd with my friend,
 Shot fro the town, which all the grate did break, [270]
 A pellet came and drove a mighty flake
 Against my face and tare away my cheek,
 For pain whereof, I died within a week.¹⁹⁰

248. **hap**: good luck. 249. **bring to bail**: bring into his power. 260. **bulwark**: fortification (including the bridge's gatehouse and tower). 271. **pellet**: cannonball; **flake**: fragment.

[247] 1563: their end

[248] 1563: but hopeth sure

See Baldwin, see the uncertainty of glory,
 How sudden mischief dasheth all to dust! [275]
 And warn all princes by my broken story
 The happiest fortune chiefly to mistrust.
 Was never man that alway had his lust.
 Then such be fools, in fancy more than mad,
 Which hope to have that never any had. [280]

277. **happiest fortune**: most favourable set of circumstances.

[Prose 10]

This strange adventure of the good earl drave us all into a dump, inwardly lamenting his woeful destiny, out of which we were awaked after this sort:

‘To what end’, quoth one, ‘muse we so much on this matter? This earl is neither the first nor the last whom Fortune hath foundered in the height of
 5 their prosperity. For all through the reign of this unfortunate King Henry we shall find many which have been likewise served, whose chances, sith they be martial and therefore honourable, may the better be omitted. And, therefore, we will let go the Lords Morlines and Poynings, slain both at the siege of Orléans shortly after the death of this earl.¹⁹¹ Also the valiant earl
 10 of Arundel, destroyed with a bullet at the assault of Gerbory, whose stories nevertheless are worth the hearing.¹⁹² And to quicken up your spirits, I will take upon me a tragical person indeed; I mean King Jamie, slain by his servants in his privy chamber, who, although he be a Scot, yet seeing he was brought up in England, where he learned the language, his example
 15 also so notable, it were not meet he should be forgotten.

And therefore mark, Baldwin, what I think he may say:

1. **good earl**: Thomas Montagu (d. 1428), fourth earl of Salisbury, the speaker of the previous tragedy. 5. **King Henry**: Henry VI. 6. **sith**: Since. 12. **King Jamie**: King James I (d. 1437) of Scotland.

[1] 1563: dump

[3] 1563: on the matter

[15] 1563: meet it should

[Tragedy 10]

How King James the First, for Breaking his Oaths and Bonds, was
by God's Sufferance Miserably Murdered of his own Subjects

If for example's sake thou write thy book,
I charge thee Baldwin thou forget me not,
Whom Fortune always frowardly forsook,
Such was my luck, my merit, or my lot.
I am that James, King Robert's son, the Scot [5]
That was in England prisoner all his youth,
Through mine Uncle Walter's traitorous untruth.

For when my father, through disease and age,
Unwieldy was to govern well his land,¹⁹³
Because his brother Walter seemèd sage, [10]
He put the rule thereof into his hand.¹⁹⁴
Then had my father, you shall understand,
Of lawful bairns me and one only other,
Nempt Davy Rothsay, who was mine elder brother.

This Davy was prince of Scotland, and so take, [15]
Till his adultery causèd men complain;
Which that he might by monishment forsake,
My father prayed mine uncle take the pain
To threaten him, his vices to refrain.
But he, false traitor, butcherly murd'ring wretch, [20]
To get the crown began to fetch a fetch

And, finding now a proffer to his prey,
Devisèd means my brother to devour

7. **untruth**: disloyalty. 13. **bairns**: children (chiefly Scottish). 14. **nempt**: named (chiefly Scottish); **Davy Rothsay**: David Stewart (d. 1402), first duke of Rothesay. 15. **and so take**: take it as a fact. 21. **fetch a fetch**: devise a stratagem. 22. **proffer**: apparently used here to mean opening or means (though the *OED* records no such usage).

And for that cause conveyed him day by day
From place to place, from castle unto tower, [25]
To Falkland fort, where like a tormenter
He starvèd him and put to death a wife
Whom through a reed he sucked to save his life.¹⁹⁵

Oh wretched death! Fie, cruel tyranny!
A prince in prison lost for fault of food? [30]
Was never en'my wrought such villainy:
A trusted brother stroy his brother's blood.
Woe worth foe friendly! Fie on double-hood!
Ah, wretched father, see thy son is lost,
Starved by thy brother, whom thou trusted'st most. [35]

Of whom when some began to find the fraud
(And yet the traitor made himself so clear
That he should seem to have deservèd laud,
So woeful did he for his death appear),
My doubtful father, loving me full dear, [40]
To avoid all danger that might after chance,
Sent me away, but nine years old, to France.

But winds and weather were so contrary
That we were driven to the English coast,
Which realm with Scotland at that time did vary, [45]
So that they took me prisoner, not as host,
For which my father, fearing I were lost,
Conceivèd shortly such an inward thought
As to the grave immediately him brought.¹⁹⁶

Then had mine uncle all the regiment [50]
At home, and I in England prisoner lay,
For to himself he thought it detriment
For my release any ransom for to pay,
For, as he thought, he had possessed his prey,

31–2. **Was ... blood:** There was never before an enemy who practised such villainy as a trusted brother's destruction of his brother's blood kindred. 33. **double-hood:** duplicity. 54. **prey:** that for which he had hunted; plunder.

[33] 1563: worth so friendly

And therefore wished I might in durance dure [55]
Till I had died, so should his reign be sure.

But good King Henry, seeing I was a child
And heir by right unto a realm and crown,
Did bring me up, not like my brother, wild,
But virtuously in feats of high renown, [60]
In liberal arts, in instrumental sowne,
By mean whereof when I was after king,
I did my realm to civil order bring.¹⁹⁷

For ere I had been prisoner eighteen year –
In which short space two noble princes died, [65]
Whereof the first in prudence had no peer,
The other in war most valiant throughly tried,
Whose room his son, babe Henry, eke supplied –
The peers of England, which did govern all,
Did of their goodness help me out of thrall. [70]

They married me to a cousin of their king,
The duke of Somerset's daughter, rich and fair,
Released my ransom save a trifling thing,
And after I had done homage to the heir [75]
And sworn my friendship never should appair,
They brought me kingly furnished to my land,
Which I receivèd at mine uncle's hand.¹⁹⁸

Whereof my lords and commons were full glad,
So was mine uncle chiefly (as he said),
Who in his mouth no other matter had [80]
Save punish such as had my brother trayed,
The fault whereof apparently he laid
To good Duke Murdo, his elder brother's son,
Whose father died long ere this deed was done.

My cursèd uncle, slier than the snake, [85]
Which would by craft unto the crown aspire,

55. **in durance dure**: remain in forced constraint. 57. **King Henry**: Henry IV. 61. **sowne**: music (lit. sound; chiefly a Scottish usage). 65. **two noble princes**: Henry IV and Henry V. 67. **throughly tried**: thoroughly proven. 68. **babe Henry**: King Henry VI. 74. **heir**: Henry VI. 75. **appair**: diminish. 77. **my uncle's**: 'Walter', duke of Albany's. 81. **trayed**: betrayed. 82. **apparently**: openly; in appearance only.

Because he saw this Murdo was a stake
 That stayèd up the stop of his desire
 (For his elder brother was Duke Murdo's sire),
 He thought it best to have him made away, [90]
 So was he sure, I gone, to have his prey.

And by his crafts the traitor brought to pass
 That I destroyed Duke Murdo and his kin,
 Poor innocents, my loving friends, alas!
 Oh kings and princes, what plight stand we in: [95]
 A trusted traitor shall you quickly win
 To put to death your kin and friends most just.
 Take heed, therefore, take heed whose rede you trust.¹⁹⁹

And at the last to bring me whole in hate
 With God and man at home and eke abroad, [100]
 He counselled me for 'surance of my state
 To help the Frenchmen, then nigh overtrode
 By Englishmen, and more to lay on load,
 With power and force all England to invade,
 Against the oath and homage that I made.²⁰⁰ [105]

And though at first my conscience did grudge
 To break the bonds of friendship knit by oath,
 Yet after proof (see mischief) I did judge
 It madness for a king to keep his troth.
 And semblably with all the world it go'th: [110]
 Sins oft assayed are thought to be no sin,
 So sin doth soil the soul it sinketh in.

But as diseases, common cause of death,
 Bring danger most when least they prick and smart,
 Which is a sign they have expulsed the breath [115]
 Of lively heat which doth defend the heart,²⁰¹
 Even so such sins as felt are on no part

103. **and more to lay on load**: and further to harm. 106. **did grudge**: showed itself unwilling. 108. **Yet after proof (see mischief)**: Yet after putting it to the proof (regard this as evil-doing). 110. **semblably**: in a similar manner. 115–16. **the breath of lively heat**: the breath (*spiritus*) of life-giving heat (see explanatory note 201).

[112] 1563: So soileth sin the

Have conquered grace and, by their wicked ure,
So killed the soul that it can have no cure.

And grace agate, vice still succeedeth vice, [120]
And all to haste the vengeance of the first.

I arede therefore all people to be wise
And stop the brack when it begins to burst.
Attaste no poison (vice is venom worst:
It mates the mind); beware eke of too much: [125]
All kill through muchness, some with only touch.

When I had learned to set my oath at nought,
And through much use the sense of sin exiled,
Against King Henry what I could I wrought –
My faith, my oath, unjustly foul defiled. [130]
And while sly Fortune at my doings smiled,
The wrath of God, which I had well deserved
Fell on my neck, for thus, lo, was I served.

Ere I had reignèd fully fifteen year,
While time I lay at Pertho at my place, [135]
With the queen my wife and children me to cheer,
My murd'ring uncle with the double face
That longèd for my kingdom and my mace,
To slay me there subornèd Robert Graham,
With whom his nephew Robert Stuart came. [140]

And when they time fit for their purpose found,
Into my privy chamber they astart,
Wherewith their swords they gave me many a wound,
And slew all such as stuck unto my part.
There, lo, my wife did show her loving heart, [145]
Who, to defend me, fellèd one or twain
And was sore wounded ere I could be slain.²⁰²

118. **ure**: regular exercise, practice. 120. **agate**: going away. 122. **arede**: advise. 123. **stop the brack**: fill the break. 124. **Attaste**: taste; **vice ... worst**: vice is worse than posion. 125. **mates**: kills. 126. **All ... touch**: All things kill through overindulgence; some kill simply by mere contact. 142. **astart**: start up; appear suddenly.

[141] 1563: for the purpose

See Baldwin, Baldwin, the unhappy ends
 Of such as pass not for their lawful oath,
 Of those that causeless leave their faith or friends [150]
 And murder kinsfolk through their foes' untroth.
 Warn, warn all princes all like sins to loathe
 And chiefly such as in my realm be born,
 For God hates highly such as are forsworn.

151. **untroth**: treachery.

[154] 1563: highly all that are

[Prose II]

When this was said, 'Let King Jamie go', quoth Master Ferrers, 'and return we to our own story and see what broils were among the nobility in the king's minority, how the Cardinal Beaufort maligneth the estate of good Duke Humphrey, the king's uncle and protector of the realm, and by
 5 what drifts he first banisheth his wife from him, and, lastly, how the good duke is murderously made away through conspiracy of Queen Margaret and other, both whose tragedies I intend at leisure to declare, for they be notable.'²⁰³

10 'Do so I pray you', quoth another, 'but take heed ye demur not upon them. And I to be occupied the meantime, will show what I have noted in the duke of Suffolk's doings, one of the chiefest of Duke Humphrey's destroyers, who, by the providence of God, came shortly after in such hatred of the people that the king himself could not save him from a strange and notable death, which he may lament after this manner.'

3. **the king's**: Henry VI's; **Cardinal Beaufort**: Henry Beaufort (d. 1447), cardinal and bishop of Winchester.
 4. **Duke Humphrey**: Humphrey (d. 1447), first duke of Gloucester. 5. **his wife**: Eleanor, née Cobham (d. 1452), duchess of Gloucester. 6. **Queen Margaret**: Queen Margaret of Anjou (d. 1482), Henry VI's wife.

[Tragedy II]

How Lord William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, was worthily
Punished for Abusing his King and Causing the Destruction
of Good Duke Humphrey

Heavy is the hap whereto all men be bound,
I mean the death, which no estate may fly,
But to be banished, headed so, and drowned
In sink of shame from top of honours high
Was never man so served I think but I. [5]
And therefore, Baldwin, fro thy grave of grief
Reject me not, of wretched princes chief.

My only life in all points may suffice
To show how base all baits of Fortune be,
Which thaw like ice through heat of envy's eyes [10]
Or vicious deeds which much possessèd me.
Good hap with vices cannot long agree,
Which bring best fortunes to the basest fall
And happiest hap to envy to be thrall.

I am the prince Duke William de la Poole²⁰⁴ [15]
That was so famous in Queen Margaret's days,
That found the mean Duke Humphrey's blood to cool,
Whose virtuous pains deserve eternal praise.
Whereby I note that Fortune cannot raise
Anyone aloft without some other's wrack: [20]
Floods drown no fields before they find a brack.

But as the waters which do break their walls
Do lose the course they had within the shore,

Title. **his king:** King Henry VI; **Duke Humphrey:** Humphrey (d. 1447), first duke of Gloucester. **1. hap:** lot.
4. sink: pool for collecting sewage. **8. My only life:** My life by itself. **12. Good hap:** success, prosperity.
14. happiest hap: most fortunate; most pleasing situation in life. **21. brack:** breach.

[Title] 1563: Worthily Banished for

[23] 1563: lose their course

And, daily rotting, stink within their stalls
For fault of moving, which they found before, [25]
Even so the state that over high is bore
Doth lose the life of people's love it had
And rots itself until it fall to bad.

For while I was but earl, each man was glad
To say and do the best by me they might, [30]
And Fortune, ever since I was a lad,
Did smile upon me with a cheerful sight,
For when my king had dubbèd me a knight
And sent me forth to serve at war in France,
My lucky speed mine honour did enhance.²⁰⁵ [35]

Where to omit the many feats I wrought
Under others' guide, I do remember one
Which with my soldiers valiantly was fought,
None other captain save myself alone,
I mean not now the apprinze of Pucelle Joan [40]
In which attempt my travail was not small,
Though the Duke of Burgoyne had the praise of all.²⁰⁶

But the siege of Aumerle is the feat I praise,
A strong-built town, with castles, walls, and vaults, [45]
With men and weapon armed at all assays,
To which I gave nigh five times five assaults
Till at the last they yielded it for naughts,
Yet Lord Rambures, like a valiant knight,
Defended it as long as ever he might.²⁰⁷

But what prevailèd it these towns to win, [50]
Which shortly after must be lost again?
Whereby I see there is more glory in
The keeping things than is in their attain:
To get and keep not is but loss of pain.

24. **stalls**: standing places. 40. **apprinze**: apprehension (apparently a neologism). 44. **castles**: strongholds. 45. **at all assays**: ready at all times.

Therefore ought men provide to save their winnings [55]
 In all attempts, else lose they their beginnings.

Because we could not keep the towns we won
 (For they were more than we might easily wield),
 One year undid what we in ten had done,
 For envy at home and treason abroad did yield [60]
 King Charles his realm of France, made barren field,
 For bloody wars had wasted all increase,
 Which caused the pope help poverty sue for peace.

So that in Touraine at the town of Tours [65]
 Duke Charles and other for their prince appeared,
 So did Lord Ross and I, then earl, for ours,
 And when we showed wherein each other dered
 We sought out means all quarrels to have cleared,
 Wherein the lords of Germany, of Spain,
 Of Hungary, and Denmark took exceeding pain.²⁰⁸ [70]

But sith we could no final peace induce
 (For neither would the other's covenants hear),
 For eighteen months we did conclude a truce
 And, while as friends we lay together there,
 Because my warrant did me therein bear [75]
 To make a perfect peace and through accord,
 I sought a marriage for my sovereign lord.²⁰⁹

And for the French king's daughters were too small,
 I fancied most Dame Margaret his niece,
 A lovely lady, beautiful and tall, [80]
 Fair spoken, pleasant, a very princely piece,
 In wit and learning matchless hence to Greece—
 Duke Rainer's daughter, of Anjou, king by style
 Of Naples, Jerusalem, and of Sicil Isle.

But ere I could the grant of her attain, [85]
 All that our king had of her father's lands,

61. **King Charles:** King Charles VII. 67. **And ... dered:** And when we showed each other what troubled us. 71. **sith:** since. 76. **through:** thorough. 83. **king by style:** titular king.

As Mauntes the city, the county whole of Maine,
And most of Anjou duchy in our hands
I did release him by assurèd bands
And, as for dowry, with her none I sought: [90]
I thought no peace could be too dearly bought.²¹⁰

But when this marriage throughly was agreed,
Although my king were glad of such a make,
His Uncle Humphrey abhorred it indeed,
Because thereby his pre-contract he brake, [95]
Made with the heir of the earl of Arminake,
A noble maid with store of goods endowed,
Which more than this, with loss, the duke allowed.²¹¹

But love and beauty in the king so wrought
That neither profit or promise he regarded [100]
But set his uncle's counsel still at nought,
And for my pains I highly was rewarded:
Thus virtue starves, but lustfood must be larded.
For I, made marquess, went into France again
And brought this bride unto my sovereign.²¹² [105]

At whom because Duke Humphrey ay repined,
Calling their marriage adultery (as it was),
The Queen did move me, erst thereto inclined,
To help to bring him to his requiem mass,
Which, sith it could for no crime come to pass [110]
(His life and doings were so right and clear),
Through privy murder we brought him to his bier.²¹³

Thus righteousness brought Humphrey to rebuke,
Because he would no wickedness allow,
But for my doings I was made a duke, [115]
So Fortune can both bend and smooth her brow
On whom she list, not passing why nor how.
Oh Lord, how high, how soon she did me raise,
How fast she filled me both with preys and praise!

87. **Mauntes**: Le Mans, capital of Maine; **county**: territory traditionally subject to a count. 93. **make**: wife.
96. **earl of Arminake**: count of Armagnac. 98. **allowed**: declared. 103. **lustfood**: matter that maintains lust;
larded: fattened. 119. **preys**: plunder, goods.

The lords and commons both of like assent [120]
 Besought my sovereign, kneeling on their knees,
 To record my doings in the parliament
 As deeds deserving everlasting fees,
 In which attempt they did no labour leese,
 For they set not my praise so fast in flame [125]
 As he was ready to reward the same.²¹⁴

But note the end: my deeds so worthy deemed
 Of king, of lords, and commons altogether
 Were shortly after treasons false esteemed,
 And all men cursed Queen Margaret's coming hither, [130]
 For Charles the French king, in his feats not lither,
 When he had rendered Rainer Mauntes and Maine,
 Found mean to win all Normandy again.²¹⁵

This made the people curse the marriage,
 Esteeming it the cause of every loss, [135]
 Wherefore at me with open mouth they rage,
 Affirming me to have brought the realm to moss.
 When king and queen saw things thus go across,
 To quiet all a parliament they called
 And causèd me in prison to be thralld [140]

And, shortly after, brought me forth abroad,
 Which made the commons more than double wood,
 And some with weapons would have laid on load,
 If their grand captain Bluebeard, in his mood, [145]
 Had not in time with wisdom been withstood.
 But though that he and mo were executed,
 The people still their worst against me bruited²¹⁶

And so applied the parliament with bills
 Of heinous wrongs and open trait'rous crimes
 That king and queen were forced against their wills [150]
 Fro place to place to adjourn it divers times.

124. leese: lose. 125. fast: firmly. 131. lither: sluggish. 137. to moss: to decay. 138. go across: go awry.
 143. laid on load: committed violent acts.

For princes' power is like the sandy slimes,
Which must perforce give place unto the wave
Or sue the windy surges when they rave.

Their life was not more dear to them than I, [155]
Which made them search all shifts to save me still,
But ay my foes such faults did on me try
That to preserve me from a worser ill
The king was fain, full sore against his will,
For five years' space to send me in exile, [160]
In hope to have restored me in a while.²¹⁷

But mark how vengeance waiteth upon vice:
As I was sailing toward the coast of France,
The earl of Devonshire's bark, of little price,
Encountered me upon the seas by chance, [165]
Whose captain took me by his valiance,
Let pass my ships with all the freight and load
But led me with him into Dover road,

Where, when he had recounted me my faults,
As murd'ring of Duke Humphrey in his bed, [170]
And how I had brought all the realm to naughts
In causing the king unlawfully to wed,
There was no grace but I must lose my head,
Wherefore he made me shrive me in his boat,
On the edge whereof my neck in two he smote.²¹⁸ [175]

A piteous end, and therefore Baldwin warn
All peers and princes to abhor untrouth,
For vicious grain must come to foul end's barn.
Who breweth breach of lawful bond or oath
God will, ere long, cause all the world to loathe. [180]
Was never prince that other did oppress
Unrighteously but died in distress.²¹⁹

152. **sandy slimes**: littoral sandy mud. 154. **sue**: follow. 157. **ay**: ever; **on me try**: prove against me. 164. **price**: worth, esteem. 168. **Dover road**: sheltered water near Dover, Kent, where ships could rest at anchor. 174. **shrive me**: make my confession (in the religious sense). 177. **untrouth**: unfaithfulness.

[Prose 12]

When this was said, every man rejoiced to hear of a wicked man so marvellously well punished, for though Fortune in many points be injurious to princes, yet in this and such like she is most righteous and only deserveth the name of a goddess, when she provideth means to punish and destroy tyrants.

5 And when we had a while considered the drifts of the king and queen to have saved this duke, and yet they could not, 'it is worth the labour', said one, 'to weigh the works and judgements of God, which, seeing they are known most evidently by comparing contraries, I will touch the story
10 of Jack Cade in order next following, whom King Henry with all his puissance was no more able for a while to destroy (yet was he his rebellious enemy) than he was to preserve the duke of Suffolk his dearest friend, by which two examples doth appear how notably God disposeth all things and that no force stretcheth farther than it pleaseth him to suffer. For this
15 Cade, being but base born, of no ability and less power, accompanied with a few naked Kentishmen, caused the king with his army at all points appointed to leave the field and to suffer him to do whatsoever he lusted; in whose behalf, seeing he is one of Fortune's whelps, I will trouble you a while to hear the process of his enterprise, which he may declare in manner
20 following:

16–17. **naked**: without armour; **at all points appointed**: completely equipped. 18. **one of Fortune's whelps**: one of Fortune's offspring (a man fully under Fortune's control). 19. **process**: narrative.

[Tragedy 12]

⚔ How Jack Cade, Traitorously Rebelling Against his King, was for his Treasons and Cruel Doings Worthily Punished

Shall I call it Fortune or my froward folly
That lifted me and laid me down below?
Or was it courage that me made so jolly,
Which of the stars and bodies' 'greement grow?
Whatever it were, this one point sure I know, [5]
Which shall be meet for every man to mark:
Our lust and wills our evils chiefly wark.

It may be well that planets do incline
And our complexions move our minds to ill,
But such is reason that they bring to fine [10]
No work unaided of our lust and will,
For heaven and earth are subject both to skill:
The skill of God ruleth all, it is so strong;
Man may by skill guide things that to him long.

Though lust be sturdy and will inclined to nought [15]
(This forced by mixture, that by heaven's course),
Yet through the skill God hath in reason wrought
And given man, no lust nor will so coarse
But may be stayed or swaged of the source,

3–4. **Or ... grow:** Or was it my courage that made me so high-spirited and presumptuous, courage which grows from the astrological affinity of the stars and other heavenly bodies? (**courage:** inherent spirit of liveliness, vigour). 7. **lust and wills:** fleshly appetites and mental inclinations. 8–9. **It ... ill:** It may well be that the influence of astrological bodies and our own natural constitutions impel us toward the commission of evil (**complexions:** specific combinations of bodily humours understood to influence a person's temperament and disposition). 10. **fine:** conclusion. 12. **skill:** moral discrimination, sense of what is right. 13. **skill of God:** God's moral certainty; God's expertness in his tasks. 14. **skill:** conscience; **long:** belong. 15–21. See explanatory note 220. 15. **sturdy:** vigorous, robust; **nought:** wickedness. 17. **skill:** the power of moral discernment; **wrought:** incorporated, worked (into). 19. **swaged:** pacified.

[Title] 1563: [no fleuron]

So that it shall in nothing force the mind [20]
 To work our woe or leave the proper kind.²²⁰

But though this skill be given every man
 To rule the will and keep the mind aloft,
 For lack of grace full fewè use it can,
 These worldly pleasures tickle us so oft. [25]
 Skill is not weak, but will strong; flesh is soft
 And yields itself to pleasure that it loveth
 And haies the mind to that it most reproveth.

Now if this hap whereby we yield our mind [30]
 To lust and will be fortune, as we name her,
 Then is she justly callèd false and blind
 And no reproach can be too much to blame her,
 Yet is the shame our own when so we shame her,
 For sure this hap, if it be rightly known,
 Cometh of ourselves, and so the blame our own. [35]

For who so liveth in the school of skill
 And meddleth not with any world's affairs,
 Forsaketh poms and honours that do spill
 The mind's recourse to grace's quiet stayers,
 His state no fortune by no mean appairs, [40]
 For Fortune is the folly and plague of those
 Which to the world their wretched wills dispose.

Among which fools – mark, Baldwin! – I am one
 That would not stay myself in mine estate.
 I thought to rule but to obey to none, [45]
 And therefore fell I with my king at bate
 And to the end I might him better mate
 John Mortimer I caused myself be called,
 Whose kingly blood the Henries nigh had thrallèd.²²¹

This shift I used the people to persuade [50]
 To leave their prince, on my side more to stick,

21. **proper kind**: mode of action proper for humans. 22. **skill**: power of moral discernment. 23. **aloft**: dominant; fixed on highest matters. 24. **grace**: inner virtue, goodness; **fewe**: few (disyllabic). 25. **tickle**: stir, excite. 26. **Skill**: conscience. 28. **haies**: draws. 29. **hap**: determiner of events. 36. **For ... skill**: For whose follows the instruction of conscience. 38. **spill**: destroy. 39. **quiet stayers**: calming restraints. 40. **fortune**: happenstance; **appairs**: weakens. 42. **dispose**: give over. 46. **at bate**: into contention. 47. **mate**: defeat. 49. **nigh had thrallèd**: all but kept captive.

Whereas indeed my father's name was Cade,
Whose noble stock was never worth a stick,
But, touching wit, I was both ripe and quick,
Had strength of limbs, large stature, comely face, [55]
Which made men ween my lin'age were not base.

And seeing stoutness stuck by men in Kent,
Whose valiant hearts refuse none enterprise,
With false persuasions straight to them I went
And said they suffered too-great injuries, [60]
By mean whereof I causèd them to rise
And battlewise to come to Blackheath plain
And thence their griefs unto the king complain,

Who being deaf, as men say, on that ear,
For we desired release of subsidies, [65]
Refusèd roughly our requests to hear
And came against us as his enemies.
But we, to trap him, sought out subtleties,
Removed our camp, and back to Senock went,
After whom the Staffords with their power were sent.²²² [70]

See here how Fortune setting us afloat
Brought to our nets a portion of our prey,
Forwhy the Staffords with their army hot
Assailèd us at Senock where we lay, [75]
From whence alive they parted not away,
Which when the king's retinue understood,
They all affirmed my quarrel to be good.²²³

Which caused the king and queen, whom all did hate,
To raise their camp and suddenly depart,
And that they might the people's grudge abate [80]
To imprison some full sore against their heart.
Lord Sayes was one, whom I made after smart,
For after the Staffords and their host was slain,
To Blackheath field I marchèd back again.

53. **stock**: lineage (with a play on 'wood, stump'). 62. **battlewise**: ordered for battle. 73. **Forwhy**: because.

[68] 1563: to tray him [**tray**: trouble]

And where the king would nothing hear before, [85]
 Now he was glad to send to know my mind,
 And I thereby enflamèd much the more
 Refused his grants, so folly made me blind.
 For this, he flew and left Lord Scales behind
 To help the town and strengthen London Tower, [90]
 Towards which I marchèd forward with my power²²⁴

And found there all things after my desire.
 I entered London, did there what I list,
 The treasurer, Lord Sayes, I did conspire
 To have condemnèd: whereof, when I missed [95]
 (For he by law my malice did resist),
 By force I took him in Guildhall fro the heap
 And headed him before the cross in Cheap.

His son-in-law James Cromer, shrive of Kent,
 I caught at Mile End, whereas then he lay, [100]
 Beheaded him and on a pole I sent
 His head to London, where his father's lay.
 With these two heads I made a pretty play,
 For pight on poles I bare them through the street
 And for my sport made each kiss other sweet. ²²⁵ [105]

Then brake I prisons, let forth whom I would,
 And used the city as it had be mine,
 Took from the merchants money, ware, and gold,
 From some by force, from other some by fine. [110]
 This at the length did cause them to repine,
 So that Lord Scales, consenting with the mayor,
 Forbade us to their city to repair.

For all this while mine host in Southwark lay,
 Who, when they knew our passage was denied,
 Came boldly to the bridge and made a fray, [115]

97. **the heap**: the crowd (at Guildhall). 99. **shrive**: sheriff. 100. **Mile End**: a village close to east London. 102. **father's**: father-in-law's. 104. **pight**: set in place. 112. **repair**: return. 115. **the bridge**: London Bridge.

[90] 1559: Mo help [an uncorrected printer's error]

[107] 1563: had been mine

For in we would, the townsmen us defied.
 But, when with strokes we had the matter tried,
 We won the bridge and set much part on fire;
 This done, to Southwark back we did retire.²²⁶

The morrow after came the chancellor [120]
 With general pardon for my men half gone,
 Which heard and read, the rest within an hour
 Shrank all away, each man to shift for one.
 And when I saw they left me post alone,
 I did disguise me like a knight of the post [125]
 And into Sussex rode away in post.²²⁷

And there I lurkèd, till that cursèd coin,
 That restless beagle, sought and found me out,
 For straight the king by promise did enjoin
 A thousand mark to whosoever mought [130]
 Apprend my corse, which made men seek about,
 Among the which one Alexander Iden
 Found out the hole wherein the fox was hidden,

But ere he took me, I put him to his trumps,
 For yield I would not while my hands would hold, [135]
 But hope of money made him stir his stumps
 And to assault me valiantly and bold.
 Two hours and more our combat was not cold,
 Till at the last he lent me such a stroke
 That down I fell and never after spoke.²²⁸ [140]

Then was my carcass carried like a hog
 To Southwark borough where it lay a night;
 The next day drawn to Newgate like a dog,
 All men rejoicing at the rueful sight.

123. **shift for one**: look out for himself. 124. **post alone**: all by myself. 125. **knight of the post**: falsifier, duplicitous person (**post**: whipping post). 126. **in post**: with great haste. 128. **restless beagle**: unwearrying tracking hound. 129. **enjoin**: grant (lit. impose). 130. **mark**: marks (coins worth two-thirds of an English pound); **mought**: might. 131. **apprend my corse**: seize my body (whether living or dead). 134. **But ... trumps**: But before he took me, I pushed him to his limits. 136. **stir his stumps**: act briskly (lit. move his legs).

[131] 1563: made them seek

Then were on poles my parboiled quarters pight [145]
 And set aloft for vermin to devour:
 Meet grave for rebels that resist the power.²²⁹

Full little know we wretches what we do,
 When we presume our princes to resist.
 We war with God, against his glory too, [150]
 That placeth in his office whom he list.
 Therefore was never traitor yet but missed
 The mark he shot and came to shameful end,
 Nor never shall, till God be forced to bend.

God hath ordained the power; all princes be [155]
 His lieutenants or debities in realms.
 Against their foes still therefore fighteth he,
 And, as his en'mies, drives them to extremes;
 Their wise devices prove but doltish dreams.
 No subject ought for any kind of cause [160]
 To force the lord, but yield him to the laws.

And therefore Baldwin warn men follow reason,
 Subdue their wills and be not Fortune's slaves;
 A troublous end doth ever follow treason.
 There is no trust in rebels, rascal knaves, [165]
 In Fortune less, which worketh as the waves,
 From whose assaults, who list to stand at large
 Must follow skill and fly all worldly charge.

147. **Meet ... power:** fitting resting place for rebels who strive against those in authority. 149. **princes:** sovereigns, governors. 156. **debities:** deputies. 158. **extremes:** utmost hardships. 159. **wise devices:** clever stratagems. 161. **lord:** governor; God. 167. **at large:** in freedom. 168. **skill:** conscience; **worldly charge:** worldly dictates; troublesome matters.

[Prose 13]

‘By Saint Mary’, quoth one, ‘if Jack were as well learned as you have made his oration, whatsoever he was by birth I warrant him a gentleman by his learning.²³⁰ How notably and philosopher-like hath he described Fortune and the causes of worldly cumbrance? How uprightly also and how like
5 a divine hath he determined the states both of officers and rebels?²³¹ For indeed officers be God’s deputies, and it is God’s office which they bear, and it is he which ordaineth thereto such as himself listeth, good when he favoureth the people and evil when he will punish them. And, therefore, whosoever rebelleth against any ruler either good or bad rebelleth against
10 GOD and shall be sure of a wretched end, for God cannot but maintain his deputy.²³²

‘Yet, this I note by the way concerning rebels and rebellions: although the devil raise them, yet God always useth them to his glory, as a part of his justice, for when kings and chief rulers suffer their under-officers to misuse
15 their subjects and will not hear nor remedy their people’s wrongs when they complain, then suffereth GOD the rebel to rage and to execute that part of his justice which the partial prince would not.²³³ For the Lord Sayes, a very corrupt officer and one whom notwithstanding the king always maintained, was destroyed by this Jack, as was also the bishop of Salisbury
20 (a proud and covetous prelate) by other of the rebels.²³⁴ And, therefore, whatsoever prince desireth to live quietly without rebellion must do his subjects right in all things and punish such officers as grieve or oppress them: thus shall they be sure from all rebellion. And for the clearer opening hereof, it were well done to set forth this Lord Sayes’s tragedy.’

‘What need that’, quoth another, ‘seeing the like example is seen in the
25 duke of Suffolk, whose doings are declared sufficiently already? Nay, rather let us go forward, for we have a great many behind that may not be omitted, and the time, as you see, passeth away. As for this Lord Sayes, whom Cade so cruelly killed and spitefully used after his death, I dare say shall
30 be known thereby what he was to all that read or hear this story, for God would never have suffered him to have been so used, except he had first deserved it. Therefore, let him go and, with him, the bishop and all other slain in that rebellion, which was raised, as it may be thought, through some drift of the duke of York,²³⁵ who shortly after began to endeavour all

4. **cumbrance**: trouble, distress. 17. **partial**: biased. 23–4. **opening**: disclosing. 25. **another**: George Ferrers. 26. **duke of Suffolk**: see Tragedy 11.

[10] 1563: wicked end

35 means to attain the crown and therefore gathered an army in Wales and
 marched toward London. But the king with his power tarried and met him
 at St. Albans, where, while the king and he were about a treaty, the earl of
 Warwick set upon the king's army and slew the duke of Somerset, the earl
 of Northumberland, the Lord Clifford, and other and, in conclusion, got
 40 the victory, and the duke was made lord protector, which so grieved the
 queen and her accomplices that privy grudges and open dissembling never
 ceased till the duke and his allies were glad to fly the field and realm, he into
 Ireland, they to Calais.²³⁶ Whence they came again with an army, whereof
 the earl of Salisbury was leader, and marched toward Coventry, where the
 45 king then was and had gathered an army to subdue them and encountered
 them at Northampton and fought and lost the field and was taken himself,
 the duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, the Viscount Beaumont,
 the Lord Egremont, and many other of his retinue slain.²³⁷ If no man have
 any mind to any of these noble personages, because they were honourably
 50 slain in battle, let some man else take the book, for I mind to say somewhat
 of this duke of Somerset.²³⁸

• While he was devising thereon, and every man seeking farther notes,
 I looked on the chronicles and, finding still field upon field, and many
 noble men slain, I purposed to have overpassed all, for I was so weary that
 55 I waxed drowsy and began indeed to slumber, but my imagination, still
 prosecuting this tragical matter, brought me such a fantasy:²³⁹ me thought
 there stood before us a tall man's body full of fresh wounds but lacking a
 head, holding by the hand a goodly child, whose breast was so wounded
 that his heart might be seen, his lovely face and eyes disfigured with drop-
 60 ping tears, his hair through horror standing upright, his mercy-craving
 hands all-to bemangled, and all his body imbrued with his own blood.
 And, when through the ghastfulness of this piteous spectacle, I waxed
 afeared and turned away my face, me thought there came a shrieking voice
 out of the weasand pipe of the headless body, saying as followeth:

36. **tarried**: awaited. 53. **still field upon field**: continually battle after battle. 61. **all-to bemangled**: completely lacerated. 64. **weasand pipe**: trachea.

[42] 1563: glad to flee

[Tragedy 13]

How Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, was Slain Through his
OVERRASH BOLDNESS, and his Son the Earl of Rutland for his
Lack of Valiance

'Trust Fortune', quoth he, in whom was never trust:
Oh folly of men that have no better grace!
All rest, renown, and deeds lie in the dust
Of all the sort that sue her slipper trace.
What meanest thou Baldwin for to hide thy face? [5]
Thou needest not fear, although I miss my head,
Nor yet to mourn for this my son is dead.

The cause why thus I lead him in my hand,
His skin with blood and tears so sore bestained,
Is that thou mayst the better understand [10]
How hardly Fortune hath for us ordained,
In whom her love and hate be whole contained,
For I am Richard, Prince Plantagenet,
The duke of York in royal race beget.

For Richard, earl of Cambridge, eldest son [15]
Of Edmund Langley, third son of King Edward,²⁴⁰
Engendered me of Anne, whose course did run
Of Mortimers to be the issue guard;
For when her brother Edmund died a ward,
She was sole heir by due descent of line, [20]
Whereby her rights and titles all were mine.²⁴¹

But mark me now, I pray thee Baldwin, mark,
And see how force oft overbeareth right.
Weigh how usurpers tyrannously wark

3. **dust**: remains. 4. **Of ... trace**: of all those who follow her slippery track. 11. **hardly**: cruelly. 18. **issue guard**:
keeper of the hereditary line. 19. **ward**: prisoner.

To keep by murder that they get by might. [25]
 And note what troublous dangers do alight
 On such as seek to repossess their own,
 And how through rigour right is overthrowen.

The earl of Herford, Henry Bolingbroke,
 Of whom Duke Mowbray told thee now of late, [30]
 When, void of cause, he had King Richard took,
 He murdered him, usurpèd his estate
 Without all right or title, saving hate
 Of others' rule or love to rule alone;
 These two excepted, title had he none. [35]

The realm and crown was Edmund Mortimer's,
 Whose father Roger was King Richard's heir,
 Which causèd Henry and the Lancasters
 To seek all shifts our households to appair, [40]
 For sure he was to sit beside the chair
 Were we of power to claim our lawful right,
 Wherefore to stroy us he did all he might.

His cursèd son ensued his cruel path
 And kept my guiltless cousin straight in durance,
 For whom my father hard entreated hath. [45]
 But, living hopeless of his life's assurance,
 He thought it best by politic procurance
 To prive the king and so restore his friend,
 Which brought himself to an infamous end,²⁴²

For when King Henry of that name the Fift [50]
 Had tane my father in this conspiracy,
 He, from Sir Edmund all the blame to shift,
 Was fain to say the French king, his ally,
 Had hired him this traitorous act to try,
 For which condemnèd, shortly he was slain: [55]
 In helping right this was my father's gain.²⁴³

25. that: that which. **29. earl of Herford:** Henry Bolingbroke (d. 1413), first duke (not earl) of Hereford and, later, King Henry IV. **30. Duke Mowbray:** Thomas Mowbray (d. 1399), first duke of Norfolk, speaker of Tragedy 4. **31. King Richard:** King Richard II. **39. appair:** damage, weaken. **40. For ... chair:** For he would certainly be removed from the throne. **44. cousin:** near relative (i.e. Edmund, earl of March); **straight in durance:** closely held in prison. **48. prive:** depose. **53. fain to say:** willing to say (as the lesser of two evils).

Thus when the lin'age of the Mortimers
Were made away by this usurping line,
Some hanged, some slain, some pinèd prisoners,
Because the crown by right of law was mine, [60]
They gan as fast against me to repine,
In fear always lest I should stir them strife,
For guilty hearts have never quiet life.²⁴⁴

Yet at the last in Henry's days the Sixt,
I was restorèd to my father's lands, [65]
Made duke of York, wherethrough my mind I fixed
To get the crown and kingdom in my hands,²⁴⁵
For aid wherein I knit assurèd bands
With Neville's stock, whose daughter was my make,
Who for no woe would ever me forsake. [70]

Oh Lord, what hap had I through marriage!
Four goodly boys in youth my wife she bore,
Right valiant men, and prudent for their age.
Such brethren she had and nephews still in store
As none had erst nor any shall have more. [75]
The earl of Salisbury and his son of Warwick
Were matchless men from Barbary to Berwick,²⁴⁶

Through help of whom and Fortune's lovely look,
I undertook to claim my lawful right
And, to abash such as against me took, [80]
I raisèd power at all points prest to fight,
Of whom the chief that chiefly bare me spite
Was Somerset the duke, whom to annoy
I alway sought, through spite, spite to destroy.

And maugre him, so choice, lo, was my chance, [85]
Yea, though the queen that all ruled took his part,
I twice bare stroke in Normandy and France

69. **Neville's stock**: the family of Ralph Neville (d. 1425), first earl of Westmorland; **make**: mate. 71. **hap**: good fortune. 72. **four goodly boys**: see explanatory note 246. 77. **Were ... Berwick**: i.e. were men who had no match anywhere in the world. 81. **prest**: ready, eager. 84. **I ... destroy**: I ever sought through hostile action to destroy the duke of Somerset's own spite towards me. 87. **bare stroke**: held chief authority.

[87] 1563: bare rule in

And last lieutenant in Ireland, where my heart
 Found remedy for every kind of smart,
 For through the love my doings there did breed, [90]
 I had their help at all times in my need.²⁴⁷

This spiteful duke, his silly king and queen,
 With armèd hosts I thrice met in the field:
 The first unfought through treaty made between,
 The second joined, wherein the king did yield, [95]
 The duke was slain, the queen enforced to shield
 Herself by flight. The third the queen did fight,
 Where I was slain, being overmatched by might.²⁴⁸

Before this last were other battles three,
 The first the earl of Salisbury led alone [100]
 And fought on Blore Heath and got the victory.
 In the next was I and my kinsfolk every chone,
 But, seeing our soldiers stale unto our foen,
 We warely brake our company on a night,
 Dissolved our host and took ourselves to flight.²⁴⁹ [105]

This boy and I in Ireland did us save;
 Mine eldest son with Warwick and his father
 To Calais got, whence by the rede I gave
 They came again to London and did gather [110]
 Another host, whereof I spake not rather,
 And met our foes, slew many a lord and knight,
 And took the king and drave the queen to flight.²⁵⁰

This done, came I to England all in haste
 To make my claim unto the realm and crown,
 And in the house while parliament did last [115]
 I in the king's seat boldly sat me down
 And claimed it, whereat the lords did frown.
 But what for that? I did so well proceed
 That all at last confessed it mine indeed.

96. **the duke**: the duke of Somerset. 102. **every chone**: everyone. 103. **foen**: foes. 104. **warely**: prudently. 106. **This boy**: Edmund (d. 1460), styled earl of Rutland. 110. **rather**: earlier.

[101] 1563: got victory

But sith the king had reignèd now so long, [120]
They would he should continue till he died,
And to the end that then none did me wrong
Protector and heir apparent they me cried.
But sith the queen and others this denied,
I sped me toward the north, where then she lay, [125]
In mind by force to cause her to obey.²⁵¹

Whereof she warnèd prepared a mighty power
And, ere that mine were altogether ready,
Came bold to Bosworth and besieged my bower,²⁵²
Where, like a beast, I was so rash and heady [130]
That out I would – there could be no remedy –
With scant five thousand soldiers to assail
Four times so many encamped to most avail,

And so was slain at first, and while my child
Scarce twelve year old sought secretly to part, [135]
That cruel Clifford, lord, nay lorel wild,
While the infant wept and prayed him rue his smart,
Knowing what he was, with his dagger clave his heart.²⁵³
This done, he came to the camp where I lay dead,
Despoiled my corpse and cut away my head. [140]

And when he had put a paper crown thereon,
As a gauring-stock he sent it to the queen,
And she for spite commanded it anon
To be had to York, where that it might be seen.
They placèd it where other traitors been. [145]
This mischief Fortune did me after death,
Such was my life and such my loss of breath.²⁵⁴

Wherefore see Baldwin that thou set it forth
To the end the fraud of Fortune may be known,
That eke all princes well may weigh the worth [150]
Of things for which the seeds of war be sown.

120. **sith**: since. 133. **most avail**: greatest advantage. 134. **at first**: immediately. 135. **part**: depart (the field of battle). 136. **lorel**: blackguard, scoundrel. 137. **infant**: child; **rue his smart**: pity his pain. 138. **Knowing ... heart**: Knowing him to be who he was (i.e. the duke of York's son), he cleaved his heart with his dagger. 142. **gauring-stock**: gazing stock.

[129] 1563: Came swift to Sandal and

No state so sure but soon is overthrown;
 No worldly good can counterpoise the price
 Of half the pains that may thereof arise.

Far better it were to lose a piece of right [155]
 Than limbs and life in sousing for the same;
 It is not force of friendship nor of might
 But God that causeth things to fro or frame.
 Not wit but luck doth wield the winner's game.
 Wherefore, if we our follies would refrain, [160]
 Time would redress all wrongs, we void of pain.

Wherefore warn princes not to wade in war
 For any cause except the realm's defence;
 Their troublous titles are unworthy far
 The blood, the life, the spoil of innocence. [165]
 Of friends and foes behold my foul expense
 And never the near; best therefore tarry time,
 So right shall reign and quiet calm each crime.

153. counterpoise: balance out. **156. sousing:** fighting, exchanging blows. **158. fro:** go forwardly, be unsuccessful; **frame:** be successful. **161. void of pain:** free from suffering, free from having to make an effort. **166. expense:** loss. **168. near:** nearer.

[Prose 14]

With this, Master Ferrers shook me by the sleeve, saying 'why, how now, man, do you forget yourself? Belike you mind our matters very much!' 'So I do indeed', quoth I, 'for I dream of them.' And when I had rehearsed my dream, we had long talk concerning the natures of dreams, which to stint
 5 and to bring us to our matter again, thus said one of them, 'I am glad it was your chance to dream of Duke Richard, for it had been pity to have overpassed him.²⁵⁵ And as concerning this Lord Clifford, which so cruelly killed his son, I purpose to give you notes, who, as he well deserved, came shortly after to a sudden death, and yet too good for so cruel a tyrant.²⁵⁶
 10 Wherefore as you thought you saw and heard the headless duke speak through his neck, so suppose you see this Lord Clifford all armed save his head, with his breastplate all gore blood running from his throat, wherein an headless arrow sticketh, through which wound he sayeth thus:

4. stint: leave off. **12. all ... throat:** covered in blood that runs from his throat.

[4] 1563: nature

[Tragedy 14]

How the Lord Clifford, for his Strange and Abominable Cruelty,
Came to as Strange and Sudden a Death

Open confession asketh open penance,
And wisdom would a man his shame to hide.
Yet, sith forgiveness cometh through repentance,
I think it best that men their crimes ascried,
For nought so secret but at length is spied, [5]
For cover fire and it will never lin
Till it break forth: in like case shame and sin.

As for myself, my faults be out so plain
And published so broad in every place,
That though I would I cannot hide a grain; [10]
All care is bootless in a cureless case.
To learn by others' grief, some have the grace,
And, therefore, Baldwin, write my wretched fall,
The brief whereof I briefly utter shall.

I am the same that slew Duke Richard's child, [15]
The lovely babe that beggèd life with tears,
Whereby my honour foully I defiled.
Poor silly lambs the lion never tears,
The feeble mouse may lie among the bears,
But wrath of man his rancour to requite [20]
Forgets all reason, ruth, and virtue quite.²⁵⁷

I mean by rancour the parental wreak
Surnamed a virtue, as the vicious say,
But little know the wicked what they speak

3. **sith**: since. 4. **ascried**: divulged. 6. **lin**: desist. 10. a **grain**: (even) the smallest bit. 14. **brief**: report.
20. **But ... requite**: But a man's fit of rage to avenge that which has caused him rancour. 22. **parental wreak**:
revenge taken on behalf of a parent.

In 'bold'ning us our en'mies' kin to slay. [25]
 To punish sin is good, it is no nay;
 They wreak not sin but merit wreak for sin
 That wreak the father's faults upon his kin.

Because my father Lord John Clifford died,
 Slain at St Albans in his prince's aid, [30]
 Against the duke my heart for malice fried
 So that I could from wreak no way be stayed,
 But to avenge my father's death assayed
 All means I might the duke of York to annoy
 And all his kin and friends to kill and stroy.²⁵⁸ [35]

This made me with my bloody dagger wound
 His guiltless son that never against me stirred,
 His father's body lying dead on ground
 To pierce with spear, eke with my cruel sword
 To part his neck and with his head to bourd, [40]
 Invested with a paper royal crown,
 From place to place to bear it up and down.²⁵⁹

But cruelty can never scape the scourge
 Of shame, of horror, and of sudden death.
 Repentance self, that other sins may purge, [45]
 Doth fly from this, so sore the soul it slayeth.
 Despair dissolves the tyrant's bitter breath,
 For sudden vengeance suddenly alights
 On cruel heads, to quite their cruel spites.

This find I true, for as I lay in stale [50]
 To fight against Duke Richard's eldest son,
 I was destroyed not far from Dintingdale,
 For as I would my gorget have undone
 To event the heat that had me nigh undone,
 An headless arrow strake me through the throat, [55]
 Wherethrough my soul forsook his filthy coat.²⁶⁰

26. **it is no nay**: that is undeniable. 27–8. **They ... kin**: Those who revenge the acts of a father on his kin deserve punishment themselves for such a sinful deed. 40. **bourd**: play. 41. **Invested**: Clothed in the insignia of a new office (used ironically). 45. **Revenge ... purge**: Repentance itself, which can free one from other sins. 47. **dis-solves**: removes from existence. 49. **quite**: repay. 50. **in stale**: in battle array. 51. **Duke Richard's eldest son**: King Edward IV. 53. **gorget**: neck-guard. 54. **event**: cool.

Was this a chance? No, sure, God's just award,
 Wherein due justice plainly doth appear.
 An headless arrow paid me my reward
 For heading Richard lying on the bier. [60]
 And as I would his child in nowise hear,
 So sudden death bereft my tongue the power
 To ask for pardon at my dying hour.

Wherefore, good Baldwin, warn the bloody sort
 To leave their wrath, their rigour to refrain. [65]
 Tell cruel judges horror is the port
 To which they sail through shame and sudden pain.
 Hell haleth tyrants down to death amain.
 Was never yet nor shall be cruel deed
 Left unrewarded with as cruel meed. [70]

57. **chance**: chance event. 68. **haleth**: drags; **amain**: quickly, with violence.

[Prose 15]

When this tragedy was ended, 'oh Lord', quoth another, 'how horrible a thing is division in a realm! To how many mischiefs is it the mother, what vice is not thereby kindled, what virtue left unquenched? For what was the cause of the duke of York's death and of the cruelty of this Clifford, save
 5 the variance between King Henry and the house of York, which at length, besides millions of the commons, brought to destruction all the nobility? For Edward, the duke's eldest son, immediately after his father was slain, through help of the Nevilles, gave the king a battle whereat, besides this Clifford and thirty-six thousand other soldiers, were slain their captains
 10 the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, with the Lords Dacres and Welles; the winning of which field brought Edward to the crown, and the loss drave King Henry and his wife into Scotland.²⁶¹ But as few reigns begin without blood, so King Edward, to keep order, caused the earls of Devonshire and Oxford, with divers other his enemies, to be attainted
 15 and put to death. And, shortly after, he did execution upon the duke of Somerset and the Lords Hungerford and Ros, whom he took prisoners at Hexham field, for thither they came with King Henry out of Scotland,

8. **the Nevilles**: Edward Hall mentions several Nevilles fighting on the Yorkist side at the Battle of Towton (1461), chief among them Richard Neville (d. 1471), sixteenth earl of Warwick; and William Neville (d. 1463), sixth Baron Fauconberg. 14. **attainted**: convicted; often used specifically to mean condemned to death with corruption of blood and forfeit of all rights and possessions.

with an army of Scots, and fought a battle, which was lost and most part
of the army slain. And because these are all noble men, I will leave them
20 to Baldwin's discretion. But seeing the earl of Worcester was the chief in-
strument whom King Edward used as well in these men's matters as in like
bloody affairs, because he should not be forgotten, ye shall hear what I
have noted concerning his tragedy.²⁶²

[19] 1563: of them slain

[Tragedy 15]

The Infamous End of Lord John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, for
Cruelly Executing his Prince's Butcherly Commandments

The glorious man is not so loath to lurk
As the infamous glad to lie unknown,
Which maketh me, Baldwin, disallow thy work,
Where princes' faults so openly be blown.
I speak not this alone for mine own, [5]
Which were my prince's (if that they were any),
But for my peers, in number very many.

Or might report uprightly use her tongue,
It would less grieve us to augment thy matter,
But sure I am thou shalt be forced among [10]
To 'frain the truth, the living for to flatter,
And otherwhiles in points unknown to smatter,
For time never was, nor ever I think shall be,
That truth unshent should speak in all things free.

This doth appear, I dare say, by my story, [15]
Which divers writers diversely declare.
But story writers ought for neither glory,
Feare, nor favour, truth of things to spare.
But still it fares as alway it did fare:
Affection, fear, or doubts that daily brew [20]
Do cause that stories never can be true.

3. **disallow**: discommend. 10. **among**: at this time. 11. **'frain**: refrain, hold back. 12. **otherwhiles**: sometimes; **smatter**: to speak ignorantly or superficially. 14. **unshent**: unspoiled. 18. **Feare**: Fear (disyllabic).

[Title] 1563: Lord Tiptoft

Unfruitful Fabyan followèd the face
 Of time and deeds but let the causes slip,
 Which Hall hath added, but with double grace, [25]
 For fear, I think, lest trouble might him trip.
 'For this or that', sayeth he, 'he felt the whip';
 Thus story writers leave the causes out
 Or so rehearse them as they were in doubt.²⁶³

But seeing causes are the chiefest things
 That should be noted of the story writers [30]
 That men may learn what end all causes brings,
 They be unworthy the name of chroniclers
 That leave them clean out of their registers
 Or doubtfully report them, for the fruit
 Of reading stories standeth in the suit. [35]

And therefore, Baldwin, either speak upright
 Of our affairs or touch them not at all.
 As for myself, I weigh all things so light
 That nought I pass how men report my fall;
 The truth whereof yet plainly show I shall, [40]
 That thou mayst write and other thereby read
 What things I did, whereof they should take heed.

Thou hast heard of Tiptofts, earls of Worcester;
 I am that John that lived in Edward's days
 (The Fourth) and was his friend and counsellor [45]
 And butcher too, as common rumour says.
 But people's voice is neither shame nor praise,
 For whom they would alive devour today,
 Tomorrow, dead, they will worship what they may.

But though the people's verdict go by chance, [50]
 Yet was there cause to call me as they did,

22. **face**: outer surface. 24. **grace**: favour; seemliness. 28. **as**: as if. 35. **in the suit**: in the sequence (of cause and effect). 49. **they ... may**: they perhaps may worship (the person they had previously hated).

[44] 1563: that Lord that

[51] 1563: Yet had they cause

For I, enforced by mean of governance,
Did execute whatever my king did bid.
From blame herein myself I cannot rid,
But fie upon the wretched state that must [55]
Defame itself to serve the prince's lust!

The chiefest crime wherewith men do me charge
Is death of the earl of Desmond's noble sons,
Of which the king's charge doth me clear discharge
By straight commandment and injunctions, [60]
Th'effect whereof so rigorously runs
That either I must procure to see them dead
Or for contempt as a traitor lose my head.²⁶⁴

What would mine enemies do in such a case,
Obey the king or proper death procure? [65]
They may well say their fancy for a face,
But life is sweet and love hard to recure.
They would have done as I did I am sure,
For seldom will a wealthy man at ease
For others' cause his prince in aught displease. [70]

How much less I, which was lieutenant then
In the Irish isle, preferred by the king?
But who for love or dread of any man
Consents to accomplish any wicked thing, [75]
Although chief fault thereof from other spring,
Shall not escape God's vengeance for his deed,
Who scuseth none that dare do ill for dread.

This in my king and me may well appear,
Which for our faults did not escape the scourge,
For when we thought our states most sure and clear, [80]

52. **by mean of governance:** by the agency of (royal) authority. 65. **proper:** their own. 66. **They ... face:** They may well utter their groundless assertions for appearance's sake. 67. **recure:** regain. 80. **clear:** free, without limitation.

[80] 1563: our state most

The wind of Warwick blew up such a surge
 As from the realm and crown the king did purge,
 And me both from mine office, friends, and wife,
 From good report, from honest death and life.

For th'earl of Warwick, through a cankered grudge [85]
 Which to King Edward causeless he did bear,
 Out of his realm by force did make him trudge
 And set King Henry again upon his chair.²⁶⁵
 And then all such as Edward's lovers were,
 As traitors tane, were grievously oppressed, [90]
 But chiefly I, because I loved him best.

And for my goods and livings were not small,
 The gapers for them bare the world in hand
 For ten years' space that I was cause of all
 The executions done within the land. [95]
 For this did such as did not understand
 My en'mies' drift think all reports were true
 And so to hate me worse than any Jew.²⁶⁶

For seldom shall a ruler lose his life
 Before false rumours openly be spread, [100]
 Whereby this proverb is as true as rife,
 That rulers rumours hunt about ahead.
 Frown Fortune once all good report is fled,
 For present show doth make the many blind,
 And such as see dare not disclose their mind. [105]

Through this was I King Edward's butcher named
 And bare the shame of all his cruel deeds.
 I clear me not; I worthily was blamed,
 Though force was such I must obey him needs.
 With highest rulers seldom well it speeds, [110]

93. **bare the world in hand:** led the world to believe. 102. **rulers rumours hunt about ahead:** An obscure phrase, perhaps meaning 'rumours hunt for rulers unrestrainedly'.

For they be ever nearest to the nip,
And fault who shall, for all feel they the whip.

For when I was by parliament attained,
King Edward's evils all were counted mine.²⁶⁷
No truth availed, so lies were fast and painted, [115]
Which made the people at my life repine,
Crying '*crucifige*, kill that butcher's line!'²⁶⁸
That when I should have gone to Blockham feast,
I could not pass, so sore they on me pressed.

And had not been the officers so strong, [120]
I think they would have eaten me alive;
Howbeit, hardly halèd from the throng,
I was in the Fleet fast shrouded by the shrive.
Thus one day's life their malice did me give,
Which when they knew, for spite the next day after, [125]
They kept them calm, so suffered I the slaughter.²⁶⁹

Now tell me Baldwin, what fault dost thou find
In me that justly should such death deserve?
None sure, except desire of honour blind
Which made me seek in offices to serve. [130]
What mind so good that honours make not swerve?
So mayst thou see, it was only my state
That caused my death and brought me so in hate.

Warn therefore all men wisely to beware
What offices they enterprise to bear. [135]
The highest always most malignèd are
Of people's grudge and princes' hate in fear;
For princes' faults, his fautors all men tear.
Which to avoid, let none such office take,
Save he that can for right his prince forsake. [140]

112. **And ... whip**: No matter who is at fault, they receive the punishment. 115. **fast**: firmly fixed in place.
118. **Blockham feast**: the chopping block. 122. **hardly halèd**: dragged with difficulty. 123. **fast shrouded by the shrive**: securely sheltered by the sheriff. 132. **state**: office, high position. 135. **enterprise**: take in hand.
138. **faults**: defects, offences; **fautors**: adherents.

[Prose 16]

This earl's tragedy was not so soon finished but one of the company had provided for another of a notable person, Lord Tiptoft's chief enemy, concerning whom he said, 'Lord God, what trust is there in worldly chances? What stay in any prosperity? For see the earl of Warwick, which caused
 5 the earl of Worcester to be apprehended, attainted, and put to death,²⁷⁰ triumphing with his old imprisoned and new unprisoned prince King Henry, was by and by after (and his brother with him) slain at Barnet Field by King Edward, whom he had beforetime damaged divers ways,²⁷¹ as first by his friends at Banbury Field, where, to revenge the death of his cousin
 10 Harry Neville, Sir John Conyers and John Clapham his servants slew five thousand Welshmen and beheaded their captains the earl of Pembroke and Sir Richard Herbert his brother after they were yielded prisoners, of whom Sir Richard Herbert was the tallest gentleman both of his person and hands that ever I read or heard of.²⁷²

15 'At which time also Robin of Redesdale, a rebel of the earl of Warwick's raising, took the Earl Rivers, King Edward's wife's father, and his son John, at his manor of Grafton and carried them to Northampton and there, without cause or process, beheaded them. Which spites to requite, King Edward caused the Lord Stafford of Southwick, one of Warwick's chief
 20 friends, to be taken at Brent March and headed at Bridgewater.²⁷³ This caused the earl shortly after to raise his power to encounter the king, which came against him with an army beside Warwick, at Woulney, where he won the field, took the king prisoner and kept him a while at Yorkshire in Middleham Castle, whence, as some say, he released him again, but other
 25 think he corrupted his keepers and so escaped.²⁷⁴ Then through the lords the matter was taken up between them and they brought to talk together, but because they could not agree, the earl raised a new army, whereof he made captain the Lord Welles's son, which broil King Edward, minding to appease by policy, foully distained his honour, committing perjury, for he
 30 sent for the Lord Welles and his brother Sir Thomas Dymoke under safe conduct, promising them upon his faith to keep them harmless, but, after, because the Lord Welles's son would not dissolve his army, beheaded them

9. **Banbury Field**: the Battle of Edgecote Moor (July 1469). 13–14. **tallest ... hands**: the tallest and most doughty man. 26. **they**: the earl of Warwick and Edward IV. 29. **policy**: trickery.

[26] 1563: earl araised [**araised**: raised]

both and went with his power down into Lincolnshire and there fought
with Sir Robert Welles and slew ten thousand of his soldiers (yet ran they
35 away so fast that the casting of their clothes for the more speed caused it to
be called Losecoat Field) and took Sir Robert and other and put them to
death in the same place.²⁷⁵

‘This misfortune forced the earl of Warwick to sail into France, where
he was well entertained of the king awhile and, at last, with such poor help
40 as he procured there of Duke Rainer and other, he came into England
again and increased such a power in King Henry’s name that, as the Lord
Tiptoft said in his tragedy, King Edward, unable to abide him, was fain to
fly over the Washes in Lincolnshire to get a ship to sail out of his kingdom
to his brother-in-law the Duke of Burgoyne – so was King Henry restored
45 again to the kingdom.’²⁷⁶

‘All these despites and troubles the earl wrought against King Edward,
but Henry was so infortunate that ere half a year was expired, King Edward
came back again and imprisoned him and gave the earl a field, wherein he
slew both him and his brother.’²⁷⁷ I have recounted thus much beforehand
50 for the better opening of the story, which, if it should have been spo-
ken in his tragedy, would rather have made a volume than a pamphlet,
for I intend only to say in the tragedy what I have noted in the earl of
Warwick’s person, wishing that these other noblemen, whom I have by the
way touched, should not be forgotten.

55 ‘And therefore imagine that you see this earl lying with his brother in
Paul’s Church in his coat armour, with such a face and countenance as he
beareth in the portraiture over the door in Paul’s at the going down to Jesus
Chapel fro the south end of the choir stairs, and saying as followeth’:²⁷⁸

43. **the Washes**: the fordable part of the estuary between Lincolnshire and Norfolk. 48. **gave the earl a field**: met the earl in battle. 56. **coat armour**: a vest displaying colours or insignia designed to identify the wearer while he was in armour; **countenance**: facial expression. 57. **portraiture**: painting (not necessarily a portrait of a single individual).

[Tragedy 16]

How Sir Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, and his Brother John
Lord Marquess Montagu through their too-much Boldness were
Slain at Barnet Field

Among the heavy heap of happy knights
Whom Fortune stalled upon her stayless stage,
Oft hoist on high, oft pight in wretched plights,
Behold me, Baldwin, 'A *per se*' of my age:
Lord Richard Neville, earl by marriage [5]
Of Warwick duchy, of Sarum by descent,
Which erst my father through his marriage hent.²⁷⁹

Wouldst thou behold false Fortune in her kind,
Note well my life: so shalt thou see her naked,
Full fair before but too, too foul behind, [10]
Most drowsy still when most she seems awaked.
My fame and shame her shift full oft hath shaken,
By interchange alow and up aloft,
The lizard like that changeth hue full oft.

For while the duke of York in life remained [15]
Mine uncle dear, I was his happy hand;
In all attempts my purpose I attained,
Though king and queen and most lords of the land
With all their power did often me withstand,
For God gave fortune, and my good behaviour [20]
Did from their prince steal me the people's favour.²⁸⁰

1. **happy knights**: knights subject to fortune. 2. **stalled**: placed; **stayless stage**: ever-moving place on Fortune's wheel. 3. **pight in**: pitched into. 4. **A *per se***: the person most excellent or pre-eminent. 6. **Sarum**: Salisbury. 7. **hent**: obtained. 8. **kind**: true nature. 14. **The lizard like**: Like the lizard (i.e. the chameleon). 16. **happy hand**: successful agent. 20. **gave fortune**: gave me good luck.

[7] 1563: through this

So that through me in fields right manly fought
By force mine uncle took King Henry twice,
And for my cousin Edward so I wrought,
When both our sires were slain through rash advice, [25]
That he achieved his father's enterprise,
For into Scotland king and queen we chased,
By mean whereof the kingdom he embraced.²⁸¹

Which after he had enjoyed in quiet peace
(For shortly after was King Henry take [30]
And put in prison), his power to increase,
I went to France and matched him with a make,
The French king's daughter, whom he did forsake,
For while with pain I brought his suit to pass,
He to a widow rashly wedded was.²⁸² [35]

This made the French king shrewdly to suspect
That all my treaties had but ill pretence,
And when I saw my king so bent to lust
That with his faith he passed not to dispense
(Which is a prince's honour's chief defence), [40]
I could not rest till I had found a mean
To mend his miss or else to mar him clean.²⁸³

Wherefore I allied me with his brother George,
Incensing him his brother to malign
Through many a tale I did against him forge,²⁸⁴ [45]
So that, through power we did from Calais bring
And found at home, we frayèd so the king
That he to go to Frieslandward amain,
Whereby King Henry had the crown again.²⁸⁵

Then put we the earl of Worcèster to death, [50]
King Edward's friend, a man too foul defamed,²⁸⁶

22. **fields**: battles. 32. **make**: spouse. 42. **mend his miss**: correct his wrongdoing, end his sinfulness.
44. **malign**: regard with hatred. 48. **That ... amain**: That he was forced to flee toward Friesland in great haste.

[36] 1563: to mistrust

And in the while came Edward into breath,
 For with the duke of Burgoyne so he framed
 That, with the power that he to him had named,
 Unlookèd for he came to England straight [55]
 And got to York and took the town by sleight.

And after through the sufferance of my brother,
 Which like a beast occasion foully lost,
 He came to London safe with many other
 And took the town to good King Harry's cost, [60]
 Which was through him from post to pillar tossed,
 Till the earl of Oxford, I, and other more
 Assembled power, his freedom to restore.²⁸⁷

Whereof King Edward, warnèd, came with speed
 And campèd with his host at Barnet Town, [65]
 Where we right fierce encountered him indeed
 On Easter day right early, on the down.
 There many a man was slain and stricken down
 On either side, and neither part did gain,
 Till I and my brother both at length were slain. [70]

For we, to hearten our overmatchèd men,
 Forsook our steeds and in the thickest throng
 Ran pressing forth on foot and fought so then
 That down we drave them, were they never so strong.
 But, ere this luck had lasted very long, [75]
 With number and force we were so foully cloyed,
 And rescue failed, that quite we were destroyed.²⁸⁸

Now tell me Baldwin, hast thou heard or read
 Of any man that did as I have done?
 That in his time so many armies led [80]
 And victory at every voyage won?

52. **came ... into breath**: regained his strength, abilities (lit. was no longer out of breath). 54. **named**: assigned.
 67. **down**: open field. 76. **cloyed**: obstructed, impeded. 81. **voyage**: martial undertaking.

[60] 1563: King Henry's cost
 [61] 1563: Who was

[65] 1563: host in Barnet

Hast thou ever heard of subject under sun
That placed and based his sovèrigns so oft
By interchange, now low and then aloft?

Perchance thou think'st my doings were not such [85]
As I and other do affirm they were,
And in thy mind I see thou musest much
What means I used that should me so prefer.
Wherein, because I will thou shalt not err,
The truth of all I will at large recite: [90]
The short is this, I was no hypocrite.²⁸⁹

I never did nor said save what I meant;
The commonweal was still my chiefest care.
To private gain or glory I was not bent.
I never passed upon delicious fare; [95]
Of needful food my board was never bare.
No creditor did curse me day by day;
I usèd plainness: ever pitch and pay.

I heard old soldiers and poor workmen whine,
Because their duties were not duly paid. [100]
Again, I saw how people did repine
At those through whom their payments were delayed.
And proof did oft assure (as scripture said)
That God doth wreak the wretched people's griefs:²⁹⁰
I saw the polls cut off fro polling thieves. [105]

This made me alway justly for to deal,
Which, when the people plainly understood,
Because they saw me mind the commonweal,
They still endeavoured how to do me good,
Ready to spend their substance, life and blood [110]
In any cause whereto I did them move,
For sure they were it was for their behove,

83. based: brought low. 89. will: desire. 95. passed upon: cared about. 96. board: table. 98. ever pitch and pay: [I] always paid immediately for any purchase. 100. duties: fees, charges. 103. assure: make certain. 104. wreak: avenge, requite. 105. I ... thieves: I saw the hands cut off of robbing thieves. 112. behove: benefit.

And so it was. For when the realm decayed
 By such as good King Henry sore abused,
 To mend the state I gave his en'mies aid,²⁹¹ [115]
 But when King Edward sinful pranks still used
 And would not mend, I likewise him refused
 And holp up Henry, the better of the twain,
 And in his quarrel (just, I think,) was slain.

And therefore, Baldwin, teach by proof of me [120]
 That such as covet people's love to get
 Must see their works and words in all agree,
 Live liberally and keep them out of debt,
 On commonweal let all their care be set.
 For upright dealing, debts paid, poor sustained [125]
 Is mean whereby all hearts are throughly gained.²⁹²

126. **throughly**: thoroughly.

[Prose 17]

As soon as the earl had ended his admonition, 'sure', quoth one, 'I think the earl of Warwick, although he were a glorious man, hath said no more of himself than what is true, for if he had not had notable good virtues or virtuous qualities and used laudable means in his trade of life, the
 5 people would never have loved him as they did. But God be with him and send his soul rest, for sure his body never had any.²⁹³ And although he died, yet civil wars ceased not, for immediately after his death came Queen Margaret with a power out of France, bringing with her her young son Prince Edward, and, with such friends as she found here, gave King
 10 Edward a battle at Tewkesbury, where both she and her son were taken prisoners, with Edmund, duke of Somerset, her chief captain, whose son Lord John and the earl of Devonshire were slain in the fight, and the duke himself with divers other immediately beheaded, whose infortunes are worthy to be remembered, chiefly Prince Edward's, whom the king,

2. **were**: may be; **glorious**: proud, boastful.

[1] 1563: ended this

15 for speaking truth, cruelly struck with his gauntlet and his brothers tyrannously murdered.²⁹⁴

‘But, seeing the time so far spent, I will pass them over and, with them, Fauconbridge that jolly rover, beheaded at Southampton, whose commotion made in Kent was cause of seely Henry’s destruction.²⁹⁵ And seeing
20 King Henry himself was cause of the destruction of many noble princes, being of all other most unfortunate himself, I will declare what I have noted in his unlucky life, who, wounded in prison with a dagger, may lament his wretchedness in manner following.²⁹⁶

15. gauntlet: armoured glove; **brothers:** George (d. 1478), first duke of Clarence, and Richard (d. 1485), first duke of Gloucester. **18. jolly:** gallant; excessively self-confident; **rover:** pirate. **19. seely:** helpless; innocent; simple minded.

[Tragedy 17]

How King Henry the Sixth, a Virtuous Prince, was after Many
Other Miseries Cruelly Murdered in the Tower of London

If ever woeful wight had cause to rue his state
Or by his rueful plight to move men moan his fate,
My piteous plaint may press my mishaps to rehearse,
Whereof the least most lightly heard, the hardest heart may pearce.

What heart so hard can hear of innocence oppressed [5]
By fraud in worldly goods but melteth in the breast?
When guiltless men be spoiled, imprisoned for their own,
Who waileth not their wretched case to whom the cause is known?

The lion licketh the sores of seely wounded sheep;
The dead man's corpse may cause the crocodile to weep;²⁹⁷ [10]
The waves that waste the rocks refresh the rotten reeds:
Such ruth the wrack of innocence in cruel creature breeds.

What heart is then so hard but will for pity bleed
To hear so cruel luck so clear a life succeed,
To see a silly soul with woe and sorrow soused, [15]
A king deprived, in prison pent, to death with daggers doused?

Would God the day of birth had brought me to my bier,
Then had I never felt the change of Fortune's cheer.
Would God the grave had gripped me in her greedy womb,
When crown in cradle made me king, with oil of holy thumb. [20]

4. **pearce**: pierce. 6. **wordly goods**: personal possessions. 9. **seely**: weak, innocent. 14. **clear**: blameless; **succeed**: follow in the course of events. 16. **doused**: struck.

Would God the rueful tomb had been my royal throne,
 So should no kingly charge have made me make my moan.
 Oh that my soul had flown to heaven with the joy,
 When one sort cried 'God save the king'; another, '*vive le roy*'!²⁹⁸

So had I not been washed in waves of worldly woe, [25]
 My mind, to quiet bent, had not been tossed so,
 My friends had been alive, my subjects unoppressed,
 But death or cruel destiny denied me this rest.

Alas, what should we count the cause of wretches' cares?
 'The stars do stir them up', astronomy declares; [30]
 'Or humours', saith the leech; the double true divines,
 To the will of God or ill of man the doubtful cause assigns.

Such doltish heads as dream that all things drive by haps
 Count lack of former care for cause of afterclaps,
 Attributing to man a power fro God bereft, [35]
 Abusing us and robbing him, through their most wicked theft.

But God doth guide the world and every hap by skill;
 Our wit and willing power are peised by his will.
 What wit most wisely wards and will most deadly irks,
 Though all our power would press it down, doth dash our warest works. [40]

Then destiny, our sin, God's will, or else his wreak
 Do work our wretched woes, for humours be too weak,
 Except we take them so as they provoke to sin,
 For through our lust by humours fed all vicious deeds begin.

So sin and they be one, both working like effect [45]
 And cause the wrath of God to wreak the soul infect.

31. **leech**: physician; **double**: doubly. 33. **haps**: chance events. 34. **afterclaps**: undesirable results, consequences. 37. **hap**: occurrence; **skill**: a sense of what is right or proper. 38. **wit**: consciousness, intellect; **willing power**: will; **peised**: counterbalanced; weighed down. 39. **wards**: protects; **irks**: loathes. 40. **warest works**: most careful actions. 41. **wreak**: vengeance. 42-4. **for ... begin**: for bodily humours are too weak [to bring about our tragic actions] unless we allow them to lead us to pursue our illicit appetites, the beginning of all sinful deeds. 46. **wreak**: punish; **infect**: tainted.

[27] 1563: not oppressed

[31] 1563: Our humours

Thus wrath and wreak divine, man's sins and humours ill,
Concur in one, though in a sort, each doth a course fulfil.

If likewise such as say the welkin fortune warks
Take fortune for our fate and stars thereof the marks, [50]
Then destiny with fate and God's will all be one,
But if they mean it otherwise, scathe-causers skies be none.²⁹⁹

Thus of our heavy haps chief causes be but twain,
Whereon the rest depend and, underput, remain:
The chief, the will divine, called destiny and fate; [55]
The other sin, through humours' holp, which God doth
highly hate.

The first appointeth pain for good men's exercise;
The second doth deserve due punishment for vice;
This witnesseth the wrath and that the love of God;
The good for love, the bad for sin, God beateth with his rod.³⁰⁰ [60]

Although my sundry sins do place me with the worst,
My haps yet cause me hope to be among the first:
The eye that searcheth all and seeth every thought
Doth know how sore I hated sin and after virtue sought.

The solace of the soul my chiefest pleasure was; [65]
Of worldly pomp, of fame, or game, I did not pass.
My kingdoms nor my crown I prizèd not a crumb:
In heaven were my riches heaped, to which I sought to come.³⁰¹

Yet were my sorrows such as never man had like,
So divers storms at once so often did me strike. [70]
But why – God knows, not I, except it were for this:
To show by pattern of a prince how brittle honour is.

47–8. **Thus ... fulfil:** Thus divine wrath, divine vengeance, sins, and malign humours all come together in one person, though each in its own way has a determined course of action that it accomplishes. 49. **such ... warks:** those who say that the heavenly bodies bring about one's fortune on earth. 50. **marks:** signs, indications. 52. **scathe-causers:** causers of harm; **skies:** the stars and heavenly bodies. 54. **underput:** placed beneath. 57. **exercise:** training with the goal of spiritual improvement. 62. **haps:** things that befell me in life. 66. **game:** amusement, diversion.

[64] Is judge how

Our kingdoms are but cares, our state devoid of stay,
Our riches ready snares to hasten our decay,
Our pleasures privy pricks our vices to provoke, [75]
Our pomp a pump, our fame a flame, our power a smould'ring
smoke.

I speak not but by proof, and that may many rue.
My life doth cry it out; my death doth try it true.
Whereof I will in brief rehearse my heavy hap,
That Baldwin in his woeful warp my wretchedness may wrap. [80]

In Windsor born I was and bare my father's name,
Who won by war all France, to his eternal fame,
And left to me the crown, to be received in peace,
Through marriage made with Charles his heir, upon his life's decease.

Which shortly did ensue, yet died my father first, [85]
And both their realms were mine, ere I a year were nursed.³⁰²
Which, as they fell too soon, so faded they as fast,
For Charles and Edward got them both, or forty years were past.³⁰³

This Charles was eldest son of Charles my father-in-law,
To whom as heir of France, the Frenchmen did them draw. [90]
But Edward was the heir of Richard, duke of York,
The heir of Roger Mortimer, slain by the kern of Cork.³⁰⁴

Before I came to age, Charles had recovered France
And killed my men of war, so lucky was his chance,
And through a mad contract I made with Rainer's daughter, [95]
I gave and lost all Normandy, the cause of many a slaughter:³⁰⁵

First of mine Uncle Humphrey, abhorring sore this act,
Because I thereby brake a better pre-contract,
Then of the flatt'ring duke that first the marriage made:
The just reward of such as dare their princes ill persuade.³⁰⁶ [100]

76. **pump**: a sink of vice. 77. **proof**: experience. 80. **warp**: narrative work (lit. the threads that issue lengthwise from the loom). 83. **the crown**: the French crown. 84. **Charles his**: Charles's. 89. **father-in-law**: the poet's mistake for 'grandfather'. 92. **kern**: Irish foot soldiers. 99. **the flattering duke**: William de la Pole (d. 1450), first duke of Suffolk.

[79] 1563: rehearse the heavy

And I, poor seely wretch, abode the brunt of all:
 My marriage lust so sweet was mixed with bitter gall.
 My wife was wise and good, had she been rightly sought,
 But our unlawful getting it may make a good thing nought.

Wherefore warn men beware how they just promise break, [105]
 Lest proof of painful plagues do cause them wail the wreak.
 Advise well ere they grant, but what they grant, perform,
 For God will plague all doubleness, although we feel no worm.

I, falsely borne in hand, believèd I did well,
 But all things be not true that learnèd men do tell. [110]
 My clergy said a prince was to no promise bound,
 Whose words to be no gospel though, I, to my grief, have found.³⁰⁷

For after marriage joined Queen Margaret and me,
 For one mishap afore, I daily met with three.
 Of Normandy and France, Charles got away my crown; [115]
 The duke of York and other sought at home to put me down.

Bellona rang the bell at home and all abroad,
 With whose mishaps amain fell Fortune did me load:
 In France I lost my forts, at home the foughten field,
 My kindred slain, my friends oppressed, myself enforced to yield. [120]

Duke Richard took me twice and forced me to resign
 My crown and titles, due unto my father's line,
 And kept me as a ward, did all things as him list,
 Till time my wife, through bloody sword, had tane me from his fist.³⁰⁸

But though she slew the duke, my sorrows did not slake, [125]
 But, like to hydra's head, still more and more awake,
 For Edward, through the aid of Warwick and his brother,
 From one field drave me to the Scots and took me in another.

101. abode: suffered. **102. marriage lust:** pleasure in marriage. **104. But ... nought:** But the unlawful achievement of something can make it worthless. **106. wreak:** punishment. **108. worm:** mental pain. **109. borne in hand:** misled. **117. Bellona:** the goddess of war. **118. amain:** quickly. **119. foughten field:** battlefield. **126. awake:** come into being (it was said of the mythological Hydra that if one of its heads were cut off, two more would grow in its place). **127. Warwick and his brother:** Richard Neville (d. 1471), sixteenth earl of Warwick, and John Neville (d. 1471), first Baron Montagu.

Then went my friends to wrack, for Edward ware the crown,
Fro which for nine-years' space his prison held me down. [130]
Yet thence through Warwick's work I was again released
And Edward driven fro the realm to seek his friends by east.³⁰⁹

But what prevaileth pain or providence of man
To help him to good hap, whom destiny doth ban?
Who moileth to remove the rock out of the mud [135]
Shall mire himself and hardly scape the swelling of the flood.

This all my friends have found, and I have felt it so,
Ordained to be the touch of wretchedness and woe,
For ere I had a year possessed my seat again,
I lost both it and liberty; my helpers all were slain. [140]

For Edward, first by stealth and sith by gathered strength,
Arrived and got to York and London at the length,
Took me and tied me up, yet Warwick was so stout,
He came with power to Barnet Field, in hope to help me out

And there alas was slain, with many a worthy knight: [145]
Oh Lord, that ever such luck should hap in helping right!
Last came my wife and son, that long lay in exile,
Defied the king and fought a field, I may bewail the while.

For there mine only son, not thirteen year of age,
Was tane and murdered straight by Edward in his rage, [150]
And shortly I myself, to stint all further strife,
Stabbed with his brother's bloody blade, in prison lost my life.³¹⁰

Lo here the heavy haps which happened me by heap,
See here the pleasant fruits that many princes reap,
The painful plagues of those that break their lawful bands, [155]
Their meed which may and will not save their friends fro bloody hands.

God grant my woeful haps, too grievous to rehearse,
May teach all states to know how deeply dangers pierce,
How frail all honours are, how brittle worldly bliss,
That, warnèd through my fearful fate, they fear to do amiss. [160]

129. **wrack**: harm. 135. **moileth**: toils. 138. **touch**: touchstone, proof. 141. **sith**: subsequently. 155. **bands**: moral or spiritual bonds of union (as in 'marriage bands').

[Prose 18]

This tragedy ended, another said, 'either you or King Henry are a good philosopher, so narrowly to argue the causes of misfortunes! But there is nothing to experience which taught or might teach the king this lesson. But to proceed in our matter, I find mention here shortly after the death
5 of this king of a duke of Exeter found dead in the sea between Dover and Calais. But what he was or by what adventure he died, Master Fabyan hath not showed, and Master Hall hath overskipped him, so, that except we be friendlier unto him, he is like to be double drowned, both in the sea and in the gulf of forgetfulness.'³¹¹

10 About this matter was much talk, but because one took upon him to seek out that story, that charge was committed to him. And, to be occupied the meanwhile, I found the story of one drowned likewise and that so notably, though privily, that all the world knew of it; wherefore, I said, 'because night approacheth and that we will lose no time, ye shall hear what I
15 have noted concerning the duke of Clarence, King Edward's brother, who, all-to bewashed in wine, may bewail his infortune after this manner.'³¹²

16. **all-to bewashed**: completely soaked.

[Tragedy 18]

How George Plantagenet, Third Son of the Duke of York, was
by his Brother King Edward Wrongfully Imprisoned and by his
Brother Richard Miserably Murdered

The fowl is foul, men say, that files the nest,
Which maketh me loath to speak now, might I choose,
But seeing time unburdened hath her breast,
And fame blown up the blast of all abuse,
My silence rather might my life accuse [5]
Than shroud our shame, though fain I would it so,
For truth will out, though all the world say no.

And therefore, Baldwin, heartily I thee beseech
To pause awhile upon my heavy plaint,
And though uneth I utter speedy speech, [10]
No fault of wit or folly maketh me faint;
No heady drinks have given my tongue attaint
Through quaffing craft, yet wine my wits confound:
Not which I drank of, but wherein I drowned.³¹³

What prince I am, although I need not show, [15]
Because my wine bewrays me by the smell,
For never was creature soused in Bacchus' dew
To death but I, through Fortune's rigour fell.
Yet, that thou mayst my story better tell,
I will declare as briefly as I may [20]
My wealth, my woe, and causers of decay.

1. **files**: defiles. 4. **And ... abuse**: And since public report has trumpeted out all the insults laid against me.
10. **uneth**: with difficulty. 12. **given my tongue attaint**: overpowered my tongue. 17. **soused ... dew**: immersed
in wine. 18. **rigour fell**: malign cruelty.

The famous house sournamed Plantagenet,
 Whereat Dame Fortune frowardly did frown,
 While Bolingbroke unjustly sought to set
 His lord King Richard quite beside the crown, [25]
 Though many a day it wanted due renown,
 God so preserved by providence and grace
 That lawful heirs did never fail the race.³¹⁴

For Lionel, King Edward's elder child,
 Both uncle and heir to Richard issueless, ³¹⁵ [30]
 Begot a daughter, Philip, whom unfild
 The earl of March espoused and God did bless
 With fruit assigned the kingdom to possess:
 I mean Sir Roger Mortimer, whose heir
 The earl of Cambridge married – Anne the fair.³¹⁶ [35]

This earl of Cambridge, Richard cleped by name,
 Was son to Edmund Langley, duke of York,
 Which Edmund was fifth brother to the same
 Duke Lionel, that all this line doth cork,
 Of which two houses joinèd in a fork, [40]
 My father Richard, prince Plantagenet,
 True duke of York was lawful heir beget.

Who took to wife, as you shall understand,
 A maiden of a noble house and old,
 Ralph Neville's daughter, earl of Westmoreland, [45]
 Whose son Earl Richard was a baron bold
 And had the right of Salisbury in hold,
 Through marriage made with good Earl Thomas' heir,
 Whose earned praises never shall appair.³¹⁷

22. sournamed: surnamed, with likely pun on **sour:** extremely distasteful, unpleasant. **29–30. For ... issueless:** see explanatory note 315. **31–5. Begot ... fair:** see explanatory note 316 (**unfiled:** undefined). **36. cleped:** called. **37. Edmund Langley:** Edmund of Langley (d. 1402), first duke of York. **39. Duke ... cork:** Duke Lionel, who upholds this whole line of succession (**cork:** a float used to help swimmers stay buoyant). **49. appair:** decay.

[22] 1563: surnamed

[29] 1563: Edward's eldest child

[43] 1563: as ye shall

The duke my father had by this his wife [50]
Four sons, of whom the eldest Edward hight,
The second, John, who lost in youth his life
At Wakefield slain by Clifford, cruel knight.
I George am third, of Clarence duke by right;
The fourth, born to the mischief of us all, [55]
Was duke of Gloucester, whom men Richard call.³¹⁸

Whenas our sire in suit of right was slain
(Whose life and death himself declarèd erst),
My brother Edward plied his cause amain
And got the crown, as Warwick hath rehearsed. [60]
The pride whereof so deep his stomach pierced
That he forgot his friends, despised his kin,
Of oath and office passing not a pin.

Which made the earl of Warwick to malign
My brother's state and to attempt a way [65]
To bring from prison Henry, seely king,
To help him to the kingdom if he may.
And, knowing me to be the chiefest stay
My brother had, he did me undermine
To cause me to his treasons to incline. [70]

Whereto I was preparèd long before,
My brother had been to me so unkind,
For sure no canker fretteth flesh so sore
As unkind dealing doth a loving mind.
Love's strongest bands unkindness doth unbind; [75]
It moveth love to malice, zeal to hate,
Chief friends to foes, and brethren to debate.³¹⁹

And though the earl of Warwick, subtle sire,
Perceived I bare a grudge against my brother,

57. **Whenas**: At the time at which. 58. **declared erst**: i.e. in Tragedy 13 (**erst**: earlier). 59. **plied**: applied himself to; **amain**: with full force, with all speed. 60. **as Warwick hath rehearsed**: as the ghost of Richard Neville (d. 1471), sixteenth earl of Warwick, has already related (in Tragedy 16). 63. **office**: duty; **not a pin**: not a bit. 66. **seely**: simple, helpless. 72. **unkind**: hurtful, unnatural (not befitting a kinsman). 73. **canker**: unhealing sore. 77. **debate**: strife.

Yet toward his feat to set me more on fire, [80]
 He kindled up one firebrand with another,
 For, knowing fancy was the forcing rother
 Which steereth youth to any kind of strife,
 He offered me his daughter to my wife.

Wherethrough, and with his crafty filed tongue, [85]
 He stale my heart that erst unsteady was,
 For I was witless, wanton, fond, and young,
 Whole bent to pleasure, brittle as the glass:
 I cannot lie, *in vino veritas*.
 I did esteem the beauty of my bride [90]
 Above myself and all the world beside.

These fond affections joint with lack of skill
 (Which trap the heart and blind the eyes of youth
 And prick the mind to practise any ill)
 So tickled me that, void of kindly truth [95]
 (Which, where it wants, all wickedness ensueth),
 I stinted not to persecute my brother
 Till time he left his kingdom to another.⁸²⁰

Thus carnal love did quench the love of kind,
 Till lust were lost through fancy fully fed, [100]
 But when at length I came unto my mind
 I saw how lewdly lightness had me led
 To seek with pain the peril of my head,
 For had King Henry once been settled sure,
 I was assured my days could not endure. [105]

And therefore, though I bound myself by oath
 To help King Henry all that ever I might,
 Yet at the treaty of my brethren both

82. **fancy**: amorous desire; **forcing rother**: guiding rudder. 85. **filed**: smooth. 86. **erst**: already. 89. *in vino veritas*: in wine [there is] truth. A proverbial saying. 92. **skill**: reason, discernment. 95. **kindly truth**: loyalty to kin. 97. **I stinted not to persecute**: I did not leave off persecuting. 99. **kind**: kin. 102. **lewdly lightness**: wickedly wantonness, fickleness. 108. **treaty**: entreaty.

[96] 1563: (Which, if it want, all wretchedness ensueth)

(Which reason granted to require but right),
I left his part, whereby he perished quite, [110]
And reconciled me to my brethren twain,
And so came Edward to the crown again.³²¹

This made my father-in-law to fret and fume,
To stamp and stare and call me false forsworn
And, at the length, with all his power presume [115]
To help King Henry utterly forlorn.
Our friendly proffers still he took in scorn,
Refused peace and came to Barnet Field
And there was killed, because he would not yield.

His brother also there with him was slain, [120]
Whereby decayed the keys of chivalry,
For never lived the matches of them twain
In manhood, power, and martial policy,
In virtuous thews and friendly constancy
That, would to God, if it had been his will, [125]
They might have turned to us and livèd still.³²²

But what shall be, shall be; there is no choice:
Things needs must drive as destiny decreeth,
For which we ought in all our haps rejoice,
Because the eye eterne all thing forseeth [130]
Which to no ill at any time agreeth,
For ills too ill to us be good to it,
So far his skills exceed our reach of wit.

The wounded man which must abide the smart
Of stitching up or searing of his sore [135]
As thing too bad reproves the surgeon's art,
Which notwithstanding doth his health restore.
The child, likewise, to science plied sore
Counts knowledge ill, his teacher to be wood,
Yet surgery and sciences be good. [140]

109. Which ... right: Which request reason acknowledged that for them to ask was only right. **121. keys:** main-stays, key men of. **124. thews:** practices. **129. haps:** chances, occurrences. **132–3. For ... wit:** For ills that seem too ill to us are good to God's eye, so far are his reasons for action beyond the reach of our comprehension. **138. science:** knowledge acquired by study; **plied sore:** made to apply himself with great exertion.

But as the patient's grief and scholar's pain
 Cause them deem bad such things as sure be best,
 So want of wisdom causeth us to complain
 Of every hap, whereby we seem oppressed.
 The poor do pine for pelf, the rich for rest, [145]
 And whenas loss or sickness us assail,
 We curse our fate, our fortune we bewail.

Yet for our good God worketh everything,
 For through the death of those two noble peers
 My brother lived and reigned a quiet king, [150]
 Who, had they lived perchance in course of years,
 Would have delivered Henry from the breres
 Or holp his son to enjoy the careful crown,
 Whereby our line should have be quite put down.

'A careful crown' it may be justly named, [155]
 Not only for the cares thereto annexed
 To see the subject well and duly framed
 (With which good care few kings are greatly vexed),
 But for the dread wherewith they are perplexed
 Of losing lordship, liberty, or life, [160]
 Which woeful wracks in kingdoms happen rife.

The which to shun (while some too sore have sought),
 They have not spared all persons to suspect
 And to destroy such as they guilty thought,
 Though no appearance provèd them infect. [165]
 Take me for one of this wrong-punished sect:
 Imprisoned first, accusèd without cause,
 And done to death, no process had by laws.

Wherein I note how vengeance doth aquite
 Like ill for ill, how vices virtue quell: [170]

145. **pelf**: money. 152. **breres**: bribes. 159. **But**: but also. 161. **wracks**: disasters. 162. **while ... sought**: although some have too vigorously sought to come to such disasters. 165. **infect**: tainted, corrupt. 169. **aquite**: repay.

[154] 1563: have been quite

For as my marriage love did me excite
 Against the king my brother to rebel,
 So love to have his children prosper well
 Provokèd him, against both law and right,
 To murder me, his brother and his knight. [175]

For by his queen two goodly sons he had
 Born to be punished for their parents' sin,
 Whose fortunes calkèd made their father sad,
 Such woeful haps were found to be therein,
 Which to avouch, writ in a rotten skin, [180]
 A prophecy was found, which said a 'G'
 Of Edward's children should destruction be.³²³

Me to be G, because my name was George,
 My brother thought and therefore did me hate,
 But woe be to the wicked heads that forge [185]
 Such doubtful dreams to breed unkind debate,
 For God, a glaive, a gibbet, grate, or gate,
 A Grey, a Griffith, or a Gregory,
 As well as George are written with a G.

Such doubtful riddles are no prophecies, [190]
 For prophecies, in writing though obscure,
 Are plain in sense; the dark be very lies:
 What God foreshoweth is evident and pure.
 Truth is no herald nor no sophist sure.
 She noteth not men's names, their shields, nor crests, [195]
 Though she compare them unto birds and beasts.

But whom she doth foreshow shall rule by force
 She termeth a wolf, a dragon or a bear;
 A wilful prince: a reinless ranging horse;
 A bold: a lion; a coward much in fear: [200]

178. **calked**: reckoned astrologically. 180. **avouch**: prove. 186. **unkind**: unnatural. 187. **glaive**: lance, spear. 194. **herald**: a member of the Heralds' College, the official body tasked with deciding matters relating to armorial bearings; **sophist**: specious reasoner.

[176] 1563: two prince-like sons
 [178] 1563: made the father

[197] 1563: shall reign by

A hare or hart; a crafty: prickèd ear;
 A lecherous: a bull, a goat, a foal;
 An underminer: a moldwarp or a mole.

By knowen beasts thus truth doth plain declare
 What men they be of whom she speaks before. [205]
 And whoso can men's properties compare
 And mark what beast they do resemble more
 Shall soon discern who is the grisly boar,³²⁴
 For God by beasts expreseth men's conditions
 And not their badges, heralds' superstitions. [210]

And learnèd Merlin, whom God gave the sprite
 To know and utter princes' acts to come
 Like to the Jewish prophets, did recite
 In shade of beasts their doings all and some,
 Expressing plain by manners of the dumb [215]
 That kings and lords such properties should have
 As had the beasts whose name he to them gave.³²⁵

Which while the foolish did not well consider,
 And seeing princes gave, for difference
 And knowledge of their issues mixed together, [220]
 All manner beasts for badges of pretence,
 They took those badges to express the sense
 Of Merlin's mind and those that gave the same
 To be the princes noted by their name.

And hereof sprang the false-named prophecies [225]
 That go by letters, cyphers, arms, or signs,
 Which all be foolish, false, and crafty lies
 Devised by guess or guile's untrue divines:
 For when they saw that many of many lines
 Gave arms alike, they wist not which was he [230]
 Whom Merlin meant the noted beast to be.

201. **crafty**: a cunning, underhanded person. 204. **knowen**: familiar. 208. **grisly**: horrible, fearsome. 211. **sprite**: spirit, power.

[217] 1563: As have the

For all the brood of Warwicks give the bear;
The Buckinghames do likewise give the swan.
But which bear-bearer should the lion tear,
They were as wise as Goose the ferryman.³²⁶ [235]
Yet in their skill they ceasèd not to scan
And, to be deemèd of the people wise,
Set forth their glosses upon prophecies.

And whom they doubted openly to name
They darkly termed or by some letter meant, [240]
For so they mought, however the world did frame,
Preserve themselves from shame or being shent.
For howsoever contrary it went
They might expound their meaning otherwise,
As haps in things should newly still arise. [245]

And thus there grew of a mistaken truth
An art so false as made the true suspect,
Whereof hath come much mischief, more the ruth,
That errors should our minds so much infect.
True prophecies have foully been reject; [250]
The false, which breed both murder, war, and strife,
Believed to the loss of many a good man's life.³²⁷

And therefore, Baldwin, teach men to discern
Which prophecies be false and which be true,
And for a ground this lesson let them learn, [255]
That all be false which are devisèd new.
The age of things is judgèd by the hue:
All riddles made by letters, names, or arms
Are young and false, far worse than witches' charms.

I know thou musest at this lore of mine, [260]
How I, no student, should have learnèd it,
And dost impute it to the fume of wine

239. **doubted**: feared. 241. **mought**: might; **world did frame**: whatever might come to pass. 242. **shent**: disgraced. 257. **hue**: form.

[259] 1559: for worse (corrected in 1563 to 'far worse')

That stirs the tongue and sharpeneth up the wit.
 But hark! A friend did teach me every whit,
 A man of mine in all good knowledge rife, [265]
 For which he, guiltless, lost his learned life.³²⁸

This man abode my servant many a day
 And still in study set his whole delight,
 Which taught me more than I could bear away
 Of every art, and by his searching sight [270]
 Of things to come he could foreshow as right
 As I rehearse the pageants that were past:
 Such perfectness God gave him at the last.

He knew my brother Richard was the boar
 Whose tusks should tear my brother's boys and me [275]
 And gave me warning thereof long before,
 But wit nor warning can in no degree
 Let things to hap which are ordained to be.
 Witness the painted lioness, which slew
 A prince imprisoned, lions to eschew. [280]³²⁹

He told me too my yokefellow should die
 (Wherein would God he had been no divine)
 And, after her death, I should woo earnestly
 A spouse, whereat my brother should repine
 And find the means she should be none of mine, [285]
 For which such malice should among us rise
 As, save my death, no treaty should decide.³³⁰

And, as he said, so all things came to pass,
 For when King Henry and his son were slain
 And every broil so thoroughly quenched was [290]
 That the king my brother quietly did reign,

267. abode my servant: remained in residence as my servant. **278. Let things to hap:** Prevent things from happening. **281. yokefellow:** wife. **282. divine:** diviner. **287. save:** save for; **decise:** settle, resolve. **289. King Henry and his son:** Henry VI and his son Prince Edward (both d. 1471). **290. thoroughly:** thoroughly.

[271] *1563*: he would for show
 [281] *1563*: told me, eke, my

[285] *1563*: none mine

I, reconcilèd to his love again,
In prosperous health did lead a quiet life
For five years' space with honours laden rife.

And to augment the fullness of my bliss [295]
Two lovely children by my wife I had,
But froward hap, whose manner ever is
In chiefest joy to make the happy sad,
Bemixed my sweet with bitterness too bad,
For while I swam in joys on every side [300]
My loving wife, my chiefest jewel, died,

Whose lack, when sole I had bewailed a year,
The Duke of Burgoyne's wife, Dame Margaret
My loving sister, willing me to cheer,
To marry again did kindly me entreat [305]
And wished me matchèd with a maiden neat,
A step-daughter of hers, Duke Charles his heir,
A noble damsel, young, discreet, and fair,

To whose desire, because I did incline,
The king my brother, doubting my degree [310]
Through prophecies, against us did repine,
And at no hand would to our wills agree,
For which such rancour pierced both him and me
That face to face we fell to flat defiance,
But were appeased by friends of our alliance. [315]

Howbeit my marriage utterly was dashed,
Wherein, because my servant said his mind,
A mean was sought whereby he might be lashed
And, for they could no crime against him find,
They forged a fault, the people's eyes to blind [320]
And told he should by sorceries pretend
To bring the king unto a speedy end,

297. **froward hap**: perverse fortune. 303. **Duke of Burgoyne's**: Charles (d. 1477), duke of Burgundy's. 306. **neat**: comely. 308. **discreet**: tactful. 310–11. **The king ... repine**: My brother King Edward, led by prophecies to fear the status I would achieve (as the husband of the Duke of Burgundy's heir), complained about the marriage scheme. 317. **Wherein**: In respect of which. 321. **pretend**: intend, plan.

Of all which points he was as innocent
 As is the babe that lacketh kindly breath,
 And yet condemnèd by the king's assent [325]
 Most cruelly put to a shameful death.
 This fired my heart as fouldre doth the heath,
 So that I could not but exclaim and cry
 Against so great and open an injury.

For this I was commanded to the Tower, [330]
 The king my brother was so cruel hearted,
 And when my brother Richard saw the hour
 Was come, for which his heart so sore had smarted,
 He thought best take the time before it parted,
 For he endeavoured to attain the crown, [335]
 From which my life must needs have held him down,³³¹

For though the king within a while had died
 (As needs he must, he surfeited so oft),
 I must have had his children in my guide,
 So Richard should beside the crown have coft; [340]
 This made him ply the while the wax was soft
 To find a mean to bring me to an end,
 For realm-rape spareth neither kin nor friend.

And when he saw how reason can assuage [345]
 Through length of time my brother Edward's ire,
 With forgèd tales he set him new in rage,
 Till at the last they did my death conspire,
 And though my truth sore troubled their desire,
 For all the world did know mine innocence,
 Yet they agreed to charge me with offence. [350]

And covertly within the Tower they called
 A quest to give such verdict as they should,
 Who, what with fear and what with favour thralld,

324. **kindly breath**: natural breathing (as with a baby so newly born that it needs help to respire on its own).
 327. **fouldre**: lightning. 337. **though**: if. 338. **surfeited**: excessively indulged in food and drink. 339–40. **I ... coft**: I would have been obliged to have his children under my direction; otherwise, in that manner [i.e. control of the children] Richard should have acquired the crown. 343. **realm-rape**: seizure of a realm by force; plundering of the realm. 348. **truth**: loyalty; integrity. 352. **quest**: a body of men called to hold an inquest.

Durst nought pronounce but as my brethren would,
And, though my false accusers never could [355]
Prove ought they said, I, guiltless, was condemned:
Such verdicts pass where justice is contemned.³³²

This feat achieved, yet could they not for shame
Cause me be killed by any common way,
But like a wolf the tyrant Richard came [360]
(My brother, nay, my butcher I may say)
Unto the Tower, when all men were away
Save such as were provided for the feat,
Who in this wise did strangely me entreat.

His purpose was with a preparèd string [365]
To strangle me, but I bestirred me so
That by no force they could me thereto bring,
Which causèd him that purpose to forgo;
Howbeit, they bound me whether I would or no
And in a butt of malmsey standing by [370]
New christened me, because I should not cry.³³³

Thus drowned I was, yet for no due desert,
Except the zeal of justice be a crime,
False prophecies bewitched King Edward's heart,
My brother Richard to the crown would climb: [375]
Note these three causes in thy rueful rhyme
And boldly say they did procure my fall
And death, of deaths most strange and hard of all.

And warn all princes prophecies to eschew
That are too dark or doubtful to be known; [380]
What God hath said, that cannot but ensue,
Though all the world would have it overthrown.
When men suppose by fetches of their own
To fly their fate, they further on the same
Like quenching blasts, which oft revive the flame. [385]

371. **because:** so that. 383. **fetches:** schemes, stratagems.

[380] 1563: dark and doubtful

Will princes therefore not to think by murder
 They may avoid what prophecies behight,
 But by their means their mischiefs they may further
 And cause God's vengeance heavier to alight.
 Woe worth the wretch that strives with God's foresight! [390]
 They are not wise but wickedly do arr,
 Which think ill deeds due destinies may bar.

For if we think that prophecies be true,
 We must believe it cannot but betide
 Which God in them foreshoweth shall ensue, [395]
 For his decrees unchangèd do abide,
 Which, to be true, my brethren both have tried,
 Whose wicked works warn princes to detest
 That others' harms may keep them better blessed.

387. **behight**: promise, foretell. 391. **arr**: err. 392. **bar**: prevent. 394. **betide**: happen.

[Prose 19]

By that this tragedy was ended, night was so near come that we could not conveniently tarry together any longer, and therefore said Master Ferrers, 'it is best my masters to stay here, for we be come now to the end of Edward the Fourth his reign, for the last whom we find unfortunate therein was this duke of Clarence, in whose behalf I commend much that
 5 which hath be noted. Let us therefore for this time leave with him and this day seven nights hence, if your business will so suffer, let us all meet here together again. And you shall see that in the mean season I will not only devise upon this myself but cause divers other of my acquaintance
 10 which can do very well to help us forward with the rest.' To this every man gladly agreed; 'howbeit', quoth another, 'seeing we shall end at Edward the Fourth's end, let himself make an end of our day's labour with the same oration which Master Skelton made in his name, the tenor whereof, so far as I remember, is this':

1. **By that**: By the time that. 6. **leave**: leave off.

[3] 1563: be now come

[Tragedy 19]

How King Edward, through his Surfeiting and Untemperate Life,
suddenly Died in the Mids of his Prosperity³³⁴

Miseremini mei, ye that be my friends,³³⁵
This world hath formed me down to fall.
How may I endure when that everything ends?
What creature is born to be eternal?
Now there is no more but pray for me all. [5]
Thus say I, Edward, that late was your king,
And twenty-three years ruled this imperial,³³⁶
Some unto pleasure, and some to no liking;
Mercy I ask of my misdoing,
What availeth it, friends, to be my foe, [10]
Sith I cannot resist nor amend your complaining,
*Quia ecce nunc in pulvere dormio?*³³⁷

I sleep now in mould, as it is natural,
As earth unto earth has his reverture. [15]
What ordained God to be terrestrial
Without recourse to the earth by nature?
Who to live ever may himself assure?
What is it to trust on mutability,
Sith that in his world nothing may endure?
For now am I gone that was late in prosperity; [20]
To presume thereupon is but a vanity
Not certain, but as a cherry-fair, full of woe.

1. *Miseremini mei*: Have pity on me. 7. **imperial**: imperial realm. 11. **Sith**: since. 12. *Quia ecce nunc in pulvere dormio*: For behold, now I sleep in the dust. 13. **mould**: dirt, earth. 14. **earth unto earth**: the material of the human body to the soil (see Genesis 3:19); **reverture**: return. 16. **recourse**: return. 22. **cherry-fair**: an often boisterous fair held in a cherry orchard; in late medieval literature 'a frequent symbol of the shortness of life and the fleeting nature of its pleasures' (*OED*, 'cherry-fair, *n.*').

[1] 1563: *Siseremini mei* [an uncorrected error for '*Miseremini*']

[18] 1563: trust to mutability?

Reigned not I of late in great prosperity?
Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.

Where was in my life such an one as I, [25]
 While Lady Fortune with me had continuance?
 Granted not she me to have victory,
 In England to reign and to contribute France?³³⁸
 She took me by the hand and led me a dance,
 And with her sugared lips on me she smiled, [30]
 But what for her dissembled countenance
 I could not beware till I was beguiled.
 Now from this world she hath me exiled,
 When I was loathest hence for to go
 And am in age as who sayeth but a child.³³⁹ [35]
Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.

I had enough; I held me not content,
 Without remembrance that I should die,
 And, moreover, to encroach ready was I bent;
 I knew not how long I should it occupy. [40]
 I made the Tower strong, I wist not why;
 I knew not to whom I purchased Tattersall.
 I amended Dover on the mountain high
 And London I provoked to fortify the wall.
 I made Nottingham a place full royal, [45]
 Windsor, Eltham, and many other mo,
 Yet at the last, I went from them all,
*Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.*³⁴⁰

Where is now my conquest and victory,
 Where is my riches and royal array, [50]
 Where be my coursers and my horses high,
 Where is my mirth, my solace, and play?

24. *Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio*: And behold, now I sleep in the dust. 28. **contribute**: levy a tribute on. 39. **encroach**: take in an usurping manner the territory or possessions of others. 40. **occupy**: engage in. 41. **wist**: know. 42. **to**: for.

[31] 1563: for dissembled
 [43] 1563: I mended Dover

[52] 1563: my solace, and my play?

As vanity to nought all is withered away.
 Oh Lady Bess, long for me may you call,
 For I am departed until doomèsdai, [55]
 But love you that Lord that is sovereign of all.
 Where be my castles and buildings royal?
 But Windsor alone, now have I no mo,
 And of Eton the prayers perpetual,
*Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.*³⁴¹ [60]

Why should a man be proud or presume high?
 Saint Bernard thereof nobly doth treat,
 Saying a man is but a sack of stercory
 And shall return unto wormès' meat.³⁴²
 Why, what became of Alexander the Great [65]
 Or else of strong Samson – who can tell?
 Were not wormès ordained their flesh to freat?
 And of Solomon, that was of wit the well?
 Absalom proffered his hair for to sell,³⁴³
 Yet, for all his beauty, wormès eat him also, [70]
 And I but late in honour did excel,
Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.

I have played my pageant; now am I past.
 Ye wote well all, I was of no great eld.
 This all thing concluded shall be at the last; [75]
 When death approacheth, then lost is the field.
 Then, seeing this world me no longer upheld,
 For nought would conserve me here in my place,
In manus tuas, Domine, my spirit up I yield,³⁴⁴
 Humbly beseeching thee, oh God, of thy grace. [80]
 Oh you courteous commons, your hearts embrace
 Benignly now to pray for me also,
 For right well you know your king I was,
Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.

54. **Lady Bess:** Queen Elizabeth (d. 1492), Edward IV's wife. 63. **stercory:** excrement. 64. **wormès' meat:** food for worms. 67. **freat:** gnaw, devour. 73. **pageant:** part in life (lit. my dramatic performance). 74. **wote:** know. 79. *In manus tuas, Domine.* Into your hands, Lord. 81. **courteous commons:** politely respectful common people; **embrace:** undertake.

[77] 1563: lenger [**lenger:** longer]
 [78] 1563: in any place

[80] 1559: Humby [a misprint for 'Humbly'
 corrected in the 1563 edition]

[Prose 20]

When this was said, every man took his leave of other and departed, and I, the better to acquit my charge, recorded and noted all such matters as they had willed me.

FINIS.

[FINIS] 1563: Thus endeth the first part.

[Prose 21]

¶ The second Part of The Mirror for Magistrates

William Baldwin
to the Reader

The time being come when, according to our former appointment, we should meet together again to devise upon the tragical affairs of our English rulers, I, with such stories as I had procured and prepared, went to the place wherein we had debated the former part. There found I the printer and all the rest of our friends and furtherers assembled and tarrying for us, save Master Ferrers, who shortly after, according to his promise, came thither.³⁴⁵

When we had blamed him for his long tarrying, he satisfied us fully with this reasonable excuse: 'I have been letted', quoth he, 'divers ways, but chiefly in tarrying for such tragedies as many of our friends, at mine instance, undertook to discourse, whereof I am sure you will be right glad, for mo wits are better than one, and diversity of device is alway most pleasant. And although I have presently brought but a few because no mo are ready, yet shall you be sure hereafter to have all the rest, which notable men have undertaken, whereof some are half done, some more, some less, some scarce begun, which maketh me think that the diversity of brains in devising is like the sundriness of beasts in engendering, for some wits are ready and dispatch many matters speedily like the coney, which littereth every month; some other are slow like the elephant, scarce delivering any matter in ten years. I dispraise neither of these births, for both be natural, but I commend most the mean, which is neither too slow nor too swift, for that is lion-like and therefore most noble. For the right poet doth neither through haste bring forth swift, feeble rabbits, neither doth he weary men in looking for his strong, jointless elephants, but in reasonable time he bringeth forth a perfect and lively lion, not a bear-whelp that must be longer in licking than in breeding – and yet I know many that do highly like that lumpish delivery.³⁴⁶ But every man hath his gift, and the diversity of our minds maketh everything to be liked. And, therefore, while the elephants are in breeding (to whom I have therefore given the latter stories),

3. **stories**: historical narratives. 9. **letted**: hindered. 11. **instance**: entreaty.

30 I have brought you such as are already done, to be published in the mean season, wherein there needeth no further labour but to place them in due order.

‘Lo, you Baldwin, here is of mine own the duke of Somerset slain at St Albans with other, which I promised, whom I wish you should place last.³⁴⁷
 35 There is also Shore’s wife, trimly handled by Master Churchyard, which I pray you place where you think most convenient. Here are other also of other men’s, but they are rabbits: do with them as you think best. I would tarry with a good will and help you in the order, save that my business is great and weighty. But I know you can do it well enough and, therefore,
 40 till we meet again, I will leave you.’ Then delivered he the tragedies unto me and departed.

Divers of the rest, liking his device, used the like manner, for the printer delivered unto me the ‘Lord Hastings’, penned by Master Dolman, and ‘King Richard the Third’ compiled by Francis Segars. Then said I, ‘well,
 45 my masters, sith you think it good to charge me with the order, I am contented therewith, for as you have done so have I likewise procured some of my friends to aid us in our labour. For Master Sackville hath aptly ordered the duke of Buckingham’s oration, and Master Cavell the Blacksmith’s,
 50 and other.’ ‘I pray you’, quoth one of the company, ‘let us hear them.’ ‘Nay, soft’, quoth I; ‘we will take the chronicles and note their places and, as they come, so will we orderly read them all.’ To this they all agreed.

Then one took the chronicle, whom therefore we made and call the reader, and he began to read the story of Prince Edward called the fifth
 55 king of that name and, when he came to the apprehending of the Lord Rivers, ‘stay there, I pray you’, quoth I, ‘for here is his complaint. For the better understanding whereof, you must imagine that he was accompanied with the Lord Richard Grey and with Haute and Clapham, whose infortunes he bewaileth after this manner’:³⁴⁸

33. **duke of Somerset, slain at St. Albans**: (see Tragedy 26). 35. **Shore’s wife**: (see Tragedy 25); **trimly**: neatly, effectively. 36. **convenient**: suitable. 43. **Master Dolman**: John Dolman. 44. **Francis Segars**: Francis Seager. 45. **sith**: since. 47. **Master Sackville**: Thomas Sackville. 49. **the duke of Buckingham’s oration**: see Tragedy 22b; **Master Cavell**: Humphrey Cavell; **the Blacksmith**: see Tragedy 27. 51. **soft**: be silent. 53. **the chronicle**: Edward Hall’s *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Fanelies of Lancastre & Yorke* (see Prose 24, n. 502).

[Tragedy 20]

How Sir Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers and Scales, Governor of
Prince Edward, was with his Nephew Lord Richard Grey and other
Causeless Imprisoned and Cruelly Murdered

As silly suitors letted by delays
To show their prince the meaning of their mind,
That long have bought their brokers' yeas and nays
And, never the nigher, do daily wait to find
The prince's grace from weighty affairs untwined, [5]
Which, time attained by attending all the year,
The wearied prince will then no suitors hear:

My case was such not many days ago.
For after bruit had blazèd all abroad
That Baldwin, through the aid of other mo, [10]
Of fame or shame fallen princes would unload,
Out from our graves we got without abode
And pressèd forward with the rueful rout
That sought to have their doings bolted out.

But when I had long attended for my turn [15]
To tell my tale as divers others did,
In hope I should no longer-while sojourn
But from my suits have speedily been rid,
When course and place both orderly had bid
Me show my mind and I prepared to say – [20]
The hearers paused, arose, and went their way.³⁴⁹

These doubtful doings drave me to my dumps,
Uncertain what should move them so to do.
I fearèd lest affection's loathly lumps

3. **brokers'**: middlemen's, intermediaries'. 12. **abode**: delay. 14. **bolted out**: brought out (like an arrow from a bow); examined. 18. **suits**: pending supplications. 19. **course**: course of time. 22. **drave me to my dumps**: led me to muse; made me melancholy. 24. **affection's loathly lumps**: animosity's hateful excrescences.

Or inward grudge had driven them thereto, [25]
 Whose wicked stings all stories' truth undo,
 Oft causing good to be reported ill
 Or drowned in suds of Lethe's muddy swill.

For hitherto sly writers' wily wits,
 Which have engrossèd princes' chief affairs [30]
 Have been, like horses, snaffled with the bits
 Of fancy, fear, or doubt's full-deep despairs,
 Whose reins enchained to the chiefest chairs
 Have been so strained of those that bare the stroke
 That truth was forced to chew or else to choke. [35]

This causèd such as loathèd loud to lie
 To pass with silence sundry princes' lives:
 Less fault it is to leave than lead awry,
 And better drowned than ever bound in gyves, [40]
 For fatal fraud this world so fondly drives
 That whatsoever writers' brains may brew,
 Be it never so false, at length is tane for true.

What harm may hap by help of lying pens,
 How written lies may lewdly be maintained, [45]
 The loathly rites, the devilish idols' dens
 With guiltless blood of virtuous men bestained
 Is such a proof, as all good hearts have plained.
 The tally grounds of stories throughly tries;
 The death of martyrs vengeance on it cries.

Far better, therefore, not to write at all [50]
 Than stain the truth for any manner cause,

28. **suds**: muck; **Lethe's muddy swill**: the muddy, polluted water of the classical river of forgetfulness. 30. **engrossed**: written about. 31. **snaffled**: restrained. 32. **fancy**: imagination; arbitrary notions. 34. **bare the stroke**: bore rule. 36. **loud**: flagrantly. 38. **leave**: leave off. 39. **And ... gyves**: And it is better to be lost completely than to live ever in thrall to another's will. 43. **hap**: chance, come about. 48–9. **The ... cries**: The reckoning [of the harm caused by lying pens] thoroughly proves the bases of historical accounts; the death of martyrs cries vengeance on such harm. 51. **manner cause**: type of cause.

[39] 1563: that ever [apparently an uncorrected printer's error]

'For this they mean to let my story fall',
Thought I, 'and ere my time their volume close'.
But after I knew it only was a pause
Made purposely, most for the readers' ease, [55]
Assure thee, Baldwin, highly it did me please.³⁵⁰

For freshest wits I know will soon be weary
In reading long whatever book it be,
Except it be vain matter, strange or merry,
Well sauced with lies and glared all with glee. [60]
With which because no grave truth may agree,
The closest style for stories is the meetest;
In rueful moans the shortest form is sweetest.

And sith the complaints already by thee penned
Are brief enough, the number also small, [65]
The tediousness, I think, doth none offend,
Save such as have no lust to learn at all.
Regard none such, no matter what they brawl.
Warn thou the wary, lest they hap to stumble;
As for the careless, care not what they mumble. [70]

My life is such as (if thou note it well)
May cause the witty-wealthy to beware.
For their sakes, therefore, plainly will I tell
How false and cumbrous worldly honours are,
How cankered foes bring careless folk to care, [75]
How tyrants suffered and not quelled in time
Do cut their throats that suffer them to climb.

Neither will I hide the chiefest point of all,
Which wisest rulers least of all regard,
That was and will be cause of many a fall. [80]
This cannot be too earnestly declared,
Because it is so seld and slackly heard:
The abuse and scorning of God's ordinances
Is chiefest cause of care and woeful chances.

60. **glared**: burnished; **glee**: jests, mockery. 62. **closest**: most succinct. 64. **sith**: since. 68. **brawl**: clamour. 69. **hap**: chance. 72. **witty-wealthy**: those well supplied with wisdom, good judgement. 74. **cumbrous**: trouble filled. 75. **cankered**: malignant.

God's holy orders highly are abused [85]
 When men do change their ends for strange respects;
 They scornèd are when they be clean refused,
 For that they cannot serve our fond affects.
 The one our shame, the other our sin detects:
 It is a shame for Christians to abuse them, [90]
 But deadly sin for scorner to refuse them.

I mean not this all only of degrees
 Ordained by God for people's preservation,
 But of his law, good orders, and decrees
 Provided for his creatures' conservation. [95]
 And specially the state of procreation,
 Wherein we here the number of them increase
 Which shall in heaven enjoy eternal peace.

The only end why God ordainèd this
 Was for the increasing of that blessèd number [100]
 For whom he hath prepared eternal bliss;
 They that refuse it for the care or cumber,
 Being apt thereto, are in a sinful slumber.
 No fond respect, no vain-devisèd vows
 Can quit or bar what God in charge allows. [105]

'It is not good for man to live alone',
 Said God, and therefore made he him a make.
 'Sole life', said Christ, 'is granted few or none':³⁵¹
 All seed-shedders are bound like wives to take,
 Yet not for lust, for lands or riches' sake [110]
 But to beget and foster so their fruit
 That heaven and earth be storèd with the suit.³⁵²

But as this state is damnably refused
 Of many apt and able thereunto,

86. respects: aims, concerns. **88. For ... affects:** Because they cannot serve our foolish inclinations. **89. The ... sin:** Our abuse of God's decrees divulges our shame; our scorn of them exposes our sin. **92. all only:** solely; **degrees:** social ranks. **100. blessèd number:** the elect predestined for salvation. **102. They ... cumber:** Those who refuse to procreate because of its attendant burdens or trouble. **103. apt thereto:** able to procreate. **105. quit or bar:** abandon or obstruct; **in charge:** by command. **107. make:** mate. **109. seed-shedders:** sexually potent men; **like wives:** wives similar to them. **112. stored with the suit:** furnished with the offspring.

So is it likewise wickedly abused [115]
Of all that use it as they should not do.
Wherein are guilty all the greedy who
For gain, for friendship, lands, or honours wed,
And these pollute the undefiled bed.

And therefore God, through justice, cannot cease [120]
To plague those faults with sundry sorts of whips,
As disagreement, health's or wealth's decrease,
Or loathing sore the never-likèd lips.
Disdain also with rigour sometime nips
Presuming mates unequally that match: [125]
Some bitter leaven sours the musty batch.³⁵³

We worldly folk account him very wise
That hath the wit most wealthily to wed.
By all means, therefore, always we devise
To see our issue rich in spousals sped. [130]
We buy and sell rich orphans; babes scant bred
Must marry ere they know what marriage means;
Boys marry old trots; old fools wed young queans.³⁵⁴

We call this wedding, which in any wise
Can be no marriage, but pollution plain: [135]
A new-found trade of human merchandise,
The devil's net, a filthy, fleshly gain,
Of kind and nature an unnatural stain,
A foul abuse of God's most holy order,
And yet allowed almost in every border. [140]

Would God I were the last that shall have cause
Against this creeping canker to complain,
That men would so regard their maker's laws
That all would leave the lewdness of their brain,
That holy orders holy might remain, [145]

119. **And these:** And as a consequence these wicked people. 126. **Some ... batch:** Some disagreeable leaven ferments the batch of new dough. 133. **old trots:** old, decrepit women; **young queans:** young women (with the disparaging sense of 'young hussies'). 139. **God's most holy order:** that is, the order to Adam and Eve to populate the earth. 142. **canker:** cancer.

That our respects in wedding should not choke
The end and fruit of God's most holy yoke!

The sage King Solon, after that he saw
What mischiefs follow missought marriages,
To bar all baits established this law: [150]
No friend nor father shall give heritages,
Coin, cattle, stuff, or other carriages
With any maid for dowry or wedding sale
By any mean, on pain of banning bale.³⁵⁵

Had this good law in England been in force, [155]
My father had not so cruelly been slain,
My brother had not causeless lost his corpse,
Our marriage had not bred us such disdain,
Myself had lacked great part of grievous pain.
We wedded wives for dignity and lands [160]
And left our lives in envy's bloody hands.

My father hight Sir Richard Woodville; he
Espoused the duchess of Bedford and by her
Had issue males my brother John and me,
Called Anthony. King Edward did prefer [165]
Us far above the state wherein we were,
For he espoused our sister Elizabeth,
Whom Sir John Grey made widow by his death.³⁵⁶

How glad were we, think you, of this alliance,
So nearly coupled with so noble a king? [170]
Who durst with any of us be at defiance,
Thus made of might the mightiest to wring?
But fie! What cares do highest honours bring,
What carelessness ourselves or friends to know,
What spite and envy both of high and low! [175]

147. **yoke**: union. 150. **baits**: enticements. 152. **carriages**: pieces of moveable property. 154. **banning bale**: grievous interdiction. 165. **prefer**: promote. 172. **Thus ... wring?**: Thus made through might (of the king) able to harm even the mightiest?

Because the king had made our sister queen,
It was his honour to prefer her kin,
And, sith the readiest way, as wisest ween,
Was first by wedding wealthy heirs to win,
It pleased the prince by like mean to begin. [180]
To me he gave the rich Lord Scales his heir,
A virtuous maid, in mine eye very fair.³⁵⁷

He joinèd to my brother John the old
Duchess of Norfolk, notable of fame;
My nephew Thomas, who had in his hold [185]
The honour and rights of Marquess Dorset's name,
Espousèd Cicely, a right wealthy dame,
Lord Bonville's heir, by whom he was possessed
In all the rights wherethrough that house was blessed.³⁵⁸

The honours that my father attained were diverse: [190]
First chamberlain then constable he was.
I do omit the gainfulest, earl Rivers.³⁵⁹
Thus glistered we in glory clear as glass:
Such miracles can princes bring to pass
Among their lieges whom they mind to heave [195]
To honours false, who all their guests deceive.

Honours are like that cruel king of Thrace
With new-come guests that fed his hungry horses,
Or like the tyrant Busiris, whose grace
Offered his gods all strangers' strangled corpses.³⁶⁰ [200]
To foreigners so hard false honour's force is
That all her boarders, strangers, either guests
She spoils to feed her gods and greedy beasts.

Her gods be those whom God by law or lot
Or kind by birth doth place in highest rooms. [205]
Her beasts be such as greedily have got
Office or charge to guide the seely grooms.

189. **rights**: titles, claims, privileges. 196. **who**: which. 201. **foreigners**: outsiders, those not native born to honour. 202. **either**: or. 205. **kind**: naturally. 207. **seely grooms**: innocent or naive stable hands.

These officers in law or charge are brooms
 That sweep away the sweet from simple wretches
 And spoil the enriched by their crafty fetches. [210]

These pluck down those whom princes set aloft,
 By wresting laws and false conspiracies;
 Yea kings themselves by these are spoiled oft.
 When wilful princes carelessly despise
 To hear the oppressed people's heavy cries [215]
 Nor will correct their polling thieves, then God
 Doth make those reeves the reckless princes' rod.

The second Richard is a proof of this,
 Whom crafty lawyers by their laws deposed.³⁶¹
 Another pattern good King Henry is, [220]
 Whose right by them hath diversely been glosed:
 Good while he grew, bad when he was unrosed.
 And as they foaded these and divers other,
 With like deceit they used the king my brother.

While he prevailed they said he owed the crown; [225]
 All laws and rights agreed with the same.
 But when by drifts he seemed to be down,
 All laws and right extremely did him blame:
 Nought save usurping traitor was his name.
 So constantly the judges construe laws, [230]
 That all agree still with the stronger cause.

These, as I said, and other like in charge
 Are honour's horses, whom she feeds with guests;
 For all whom princes frankly do enlarge
 With dignities these bark at in their breasts. [235]

210. spoil the enriched: rob the wealthy; **fetches:** tricks. **213. spoiled:** despoiled. **217. Doth ... rod:** [Then God] makes those plundering officers rods with which to punish irresponsible monarchs (**reeves:** crown officers, with an echo of 'reave', meaning 'to rob, plunder'). **219. lawyers:** men versed in the law (not solely attorneys and solicitors). **220. King Henry:** Henry VI. **221. glosed:** glossed (with a suggestion of 'glose', n., 'flattery, deceit'). **222. unrosed:** Not in *OED*; the meaning perhaps is 'no longer in high esteem', derived from *OED* 'rose' n., 5: 'a peerless or matchless person'. There may be an allusion as well to the English rose as a symbol of the monarchy (cf. Tragedy 9, line 49). **223. foaded:** beguiled. **225. owed:** owned. **231. stronger:** mightier. **232. in charge:** in office; in authority. **234. frankly:** liberally.

Their spite, their might, their falsehood never rests
Till they devour them, sparing neither blood,
Ne limb, nor life, and all to get their good.

The earl of Warwick was a prancing courser;
That haughty heart of his could bear no mate. [240]
Our wealth through him waxed many a time the worsen,
So canker'dly he had our kin in hate.
He troubled oft the king's unsteady state
And that because he would not be his ward
To wed and work, as he should list award. [245]

He spited us because we were preferred
By marriage to dignities so great,
But craftily his malice he deferred
Till traitorously he found means to entreat
Our brother of Clarence to assist his feat. [250]
Whom, when he had by marriage to him bound,
Then wrought he straight our lin'age to confound.³⁶²

Through slanderous bruits he brewèd many a broil
Throughout the realm against the king my brother,
And raisèd traitorous rebels thirsting spoil [255]
To murder men, of whom among all other
One Robin of Redesdale many a soul did smother.
His rascal rabble, at my father wroth,
Took sire and son and quick beheaded both.³⁶³

This heinous act, although the king detested, [260]
Yet was he fain to pardon, for the rout
Of rebels all the realm so sore infested
That, every way assailed, he stood in doubt.
And though he were of courage high and stout,
Yet he assayed by fair means to assuage [265]
His enemies' ire, revealed by rebels' rage.

238. **good**: possessions, benefits. 240. **mate**: equal in status. 241. **wealth**: happiness, prosperity. 242. **canker'dly**: malignantly. 245. **To ... award**: To wed and act in whatever manner Warwick should be pleased to determine. 250. **our brother Clarence**: George (d. 1478), first duke of Clarence, our relative (considered such because of the marriage of Clarence's brother Edward IV to Rivers's sister Elizabeth). 265. **fair**: gentle. 266. **revealed**: made manifest.

But Warwick was not pacified thus;
 His constant rancour causeless was extreme.
 No mean could serve the quarrel to discuss,
 Till he had driven the king out of the realm. [270]
 Neither would he then be waked from his dream,
 For when my brother was come and placed again,
 He stinted not till he was stoutly slain.³⁶⁴

Then grew the king and realm to quiet rest,
 Our stock and friends still flying higher an higher; [275]
 The queen with children fruitfully was blessed;
 I governed them: it was the king's desire.
 This set their uncles furiously on fire
 That we, the queen's blood, were assigned to govern
 The prince, not they, the king's own blood and brethren.³⁶⁵ [280]

This caused the duke of Clarence so to chafe
 That with the king he brainless fell at bate.
 The council, warily for to keep him safe
 From raising tumults as he did of late
 Imprisoned him, wherethrough his brother's hate [285]
 He was condemned and murdered in such sort,
 As he himself hath truly made report.³⁶⁶

Was none abhorred these mischiefs more than I,
 Yet could I not be therewith discontented,
 Considering that his rancour touched me nigh, [290]
 Else would my conscience never have consented
 To wish him harm, could he have been contented.
 But fear of hurt, for safeguard of our state,
 Doth cause more mischief than desert or hate.

Such is the state that many wish to bear [295]
 That either we must with others' blood be stained
 Or lead our lives continually in fear.
 You mounting minds behold here what is gained
 By cumbrous honour painfully attained:

269. *discuss*: settle. 273. *stinted*: ceased. 275. *stock*: kindred; *an*: and. 282. *bate*: contention.

A damnèd soul for murd'ring them that hate you, [300]
Or doubtful life in danger lest they mate you.

The cause, I think, why some of high degree
Do deadly hate all seekers to ascend
Is this: the cloyne contented cannot be
With any state, till time he apprehend [305]
The highest top, for thereto climbers tend,
Which seldom is attained without the wrack
Of those between that stay and bear him back.

To save themselves, they therefore are compelled
To hate such climbers and with wit and power [310]
To compass means wherethrough they might be quelled
Ere they ascend, their honours to devour.
This caused the duke of Clarence frown and lour
At me and other whom the king promoted
To dignities, wherein he madly doted, [315]

For seeing we were his dear allied friends,
Our furtherance should rather have made him glad
Than en'my-like to wish our woeful ends.
We were the nearest kinsfolk that he had:
We joyed with him; his sorrow made us sad. [320]
But he esteemed so much his painted sheath
That he disdained the love of all beneath.

But see how sharply God revengeth sin:
As he malignèd me and many other
His faithful friends and kindest of his kin, [325]
So Richard, duke of Gloucester, his natural brother,
Malignèd him and beastly did him smother.
A devilish deed, a most unkindly part,
Yet just revenge for his unnatural heart.

301. *mate*: defeat. 304. *cloyne*: cloyner, grasping, greedy person. 313. *lour*: scowl. 315. *wherein he madly doted*: in which behaviour Clarence acted madly and foolishly. 321. *painted sheath*: outward show, ostentatious presentation. 328. *unkindly*: morally unnatural, especially in treatment of kin. 329. *unnatural*: lacking normal human feelings, especially in regard to family members.

Although this brother-queller, tyrant fell, [330]
 Envied our state as much and more than he,
 Yet did his cloaking flattery so excel
 To all our friends-ward, chiefly unto me,
 That he appeared our trusty stay to be,
 For outwardly he wrought our state to further, [335]
 Where inwardly he minded not save murder.

Thus in appearance who but I was blessed?
 The chiefest honours heapèd on my head.
 Beloved of all, enjoying quiet rest,
 The forward prince by me alone was led, [340]
 A noble imp to all good virtues bred.
 The king my liege without my counsel known
 Agreed nought, though wisest were his own.³⁶⁷

But quiet bliss in no state lasteth long
 Assailed still by mischief many ways, [345]
 Whose spoiling batt'ry, glowing hot and strong,
 No flowing wealth, no force nor wisdom stays.
 Her smokeless poulder beaten soldiers slays.
 By open force foul mischief oft prevails;
 By secret slight, she seld her purpose fails. [350]

The king was bent too much to foolish pleasure;
 In banqueting he had too great delight.
 This made him grow in grossness out of measure,
 Which as it kindleth carnal appetite
 So quencheth it the liveliness of sprite, [355]
 Whereof ensue such sickness and diseases
 As none can cure, save death that all displeases.³⁶⁸

Through this fault, furthered by his brother's fraud
 (Now God forgive me if I judge amiss),
 Or through that beast his ribald or his bawd [360]
 That larded still those sinful lusts of his,

330. **brother-queller**: brother-killer. 333. **To all our friends-ward**: toward all of our friends. 340. **forward**: precocious. 343. **Agreed nought**: assented to no course of action; **his own**: his own thoughts, counsel. 346. **spoiling batt'ry**: destructive bombardment. 348. **poulder**: explosive powder. 360. **ribald**: coarse companion; **bawd**: procurer. 361. **larded**: enriched.

He suddenly forsook all worldly bliss.
That loathèd leech, that never-welcome death,
Through spasmodic humours stoppèd up his breath.³⁶⁹

That time lay I at Ludlow, Wales his border, [365]
For with the prince the king had sent me thither,
To stay the robberies, spoil, and foul disorder
Of divers outlaws gathered there together,
Whose banding tended no man wist well whither.
When these by wisdom safely were suppressed, [370]
Came woeful news, our sovereign was deceased.

The grief whereof, when reason had assuaged,
Because the prince remainèd in my guide,
For his defend great store of men I waged,
Doubting the storms which at such times betide. [375]
But while I there thus warely did provide,
Commandment came to send them home again
And bring the king thence with his household train.

This charge sent from the council and the queen,
Though much against my mind I best obeyed. [380]
The devil himself wrought all the drift I ween,
Because he would have innocents betrayed,
For ere the king were half his way conveyed,
A sort of traitors falsely him betrayed –
I caught afore and close in prison clapped.³⁷⁰ [385]

The duke of Gloucester, that incarnèd devil,
Confedered with the Duke of Buckingham,
With eke Lord Hastings, hasty both to evil,
To meet the king in mourning habit came
(A cruel wolf, though clothèd like a lamb) [390]
And at Northampton, whereas then I bated,
They took their inn, as they on me had waited.

363. *leech*: physician. 365. *Wales his border*: on the Welsh border. 369. *Whose ... whither*: The end to which their joining in league tended no man certainly knew. 376. *warely*: prudently. 384. *sort*: band. 391. *bated*: stopped.

The king that night at Stony Stratford lay,
 A town too small to harbour all his train
 (This was the cause why he was gone away, [395]
 While I with other did behind remain).
 But will you see how falsely fiends can feign?
 Not Sinon sly, whose fraud best fame rebukes,
 Was half so subtle as these double dukes.³⁷¹

First to mine inn cometh in my brother false, [400]
 Embraceth me, 'Well met, good brother Scales!',
 And weeps withal. The other me enhalse
 With 'welcome cousin, now welcome out of Wales;
 Oh happy day, for now all stormy gales
 Of strife and rancour utterly are swaged, [405]
 And we your own to live or die unwaged'.

This proffered service, sauced with salutations
 Immoderate, might cause me to suspect:
 For commonly in all dissimulations
 The excess of glavering doth the guile detect. [410]
 Reason refuseth falsehood too direct;
 The will, therefore, for fear of being spied,
 Exceedeth mean, because it wanteth guide.

This is the cause why such as feign to weep
 Do howl outright, or, wailing, cry 'ah!', [415]
 Tearing themselves and straining sighs most deep;
 Why such dissemblers as would seem to laugh
 Breathe not 'tee hee!' but bray out 'hah hah hah!';
 Why beggars, feigning bravery, are the proudest;
 Why cowards bragging boldness wrangle loudest. [420]

For commonly all that do counterfeit
 In anything exceed the natural mean
 And that for fear of failing in their feat,
 But these conspirers couchèd all so clean

398. **best fame**: report of the best. 399. **double**: two; duplicitous. 400. **brother**: i.e. Gloucester. 402. **the other**: Buckingham; **enhalse**: clasps around the neck. 405. **swaged**: pacified. 410. **glavering**: flattery; **detect**: expose. 413. **mean**: moderation; **wanteth guide**: lacks guidance. 416. **Tearing themselves**: emitting piercing cries. 424. **couchèd**: expressed; **clean**: adroitly.

Through close demeanour that their wiles did wean [425]
 My heart from doubts, so many a false device
 They forgèd fresh to hide their enterprise.

They supped with me, propounding friendly talk
 Of our affairs, still giving me the praise,
 And ever among the cups to me-ward walk. [430]
 'I drink to you, good coz', each traitor says;
 Our banquet done, when they should go their ways,
 They took their leave, oft wishing me good night
 As heartily as any creature might.

A noble heart, they say, is lion-like: [435]
 It cannot couch, dissemble, crouch nor feign.
 How villainous were these and how unlike,
 Of noble stock the most ignoble stain?
 Their wolvis hearts, their traitorous foxly brain,
 Either prove them base, of rascal race engendered, [440]
 Or from haut lin'age bastard-like degenerated.

Such polling heads as praise for prudent policy
 False practices I wish were packed on poles.
 I mean the bastard law brood, which can mollify [445]
 All kind of causes in their crafty nolls.
 These undermine all virtue: blind as moles,
 They bolster wrong, they rack and strain the right
 And praise for law both malice, fraud, and might.

These quench the worthy flames of noble kind,
 Provoking best born to the basest vices; [450]
 Through crafts, they make the boldest courage blind,
 Disliking highly valiant enterprises
 And praising vilely villainous devices.
 These make the boar a hog, the bull an ox,
 The swan a goose, the lion a wolf or fox.³⁷² [455]

425. **close demeanour**: hidden practice; **wean**: draw, detach. 428. **propounding**: proposing. 430. **to me-ward**: toward me. 431. **coz**: friend (lit. cousin). 436. **couch**: hide; **crouch**: cower. 440. **rascal**: low born. 441. **degenerated**: degenerated. 443. **packed on poles**: placed closely together on poles, in the manner that heads of executed traitors were displayed as warnings to others. 444. **mollify**: represent in favourable terms. 445. **nolls**: heads. 448. **praise for**: proclaim as. 451. **crafts**: tricks.

The lawyer Catesby and his crafty feers,
 A rout that never did good in any realm,
 Are they that had transformed these noble peers:
 They turned their blood to melancholic phlegm,
 Their courage haut to cowardly extreme, [460]
 Their force and manhood into fraud and malice,
 Their wit to wiles, stout Hector into Paris.

These glaverers gone, myself to rest I laid
 And, doubting nothing, soundly fell asleep.
 But suddenly my servants, sore afraid, [465]
 Awakèd me and, drawing sighs full deep,
 'Alas', quoth one, 'my Lord, we are betrayed!
 'How so?' quoth I. 'The dukes are gone their ways;
 They have barred the gates and borne away the keys.'

While he thus spake, there came into my mind [470]
 This fearful dream, whereout I wakèd was:
 I saw a river stopped with storms of wind,
 Wherethrough a swan, a bull, and boar did pass,
 Franching the fish and fry with teeth of brass.
 The river dried up, save a little stream, [475]
 Which at the last did water all the realm.³⁷³

My thought this stream did drown the cruel boar
 In little space, it grew so deep and broad,
 But he had killed the bull and swan before.
 Besides all this, I saw an ugly toad [480]
 Crawl toward me, on which me thought I trode.
 But what became of her or what of me,
 My sudden waking would not let me see.³⁷⁴

These dreams considered with this sudden news,
 So divers from their doings overnight, [485]
 Did cause me not a little for to muse.
 I blessed me and rise in all the haste I might.

456. **feers**: men who take fees (lawyers). 459. **phlegm**: the bodily humour associated with apathy and indolence. 463. **glaverers**: flatterers. 474. **Franching**: devouring. 477. **My thought**: me thought. 479. **he**: the boar.

By this, Aurora spread abroad the light
Which fro the ends of Phoebus' beams she took,
Who then the Bull's chief gallery forsook.³⁷⁵ [490]

When I had opened the window to look out,
There might I see the streets each-where beset,
My inn on each side compassèd about
With armèd watchmen, all escapes to let,
Thus had these Neroes caught me in their net. [495]
But to what end I could not throughly guess,
Such was my plainness, such their doubleness.

My conscience was so clear I could not doubt
Their deadly drift, which less apparent lay,
Because they caused their men return the route [500]
That yode toward Stony Stratford, as they say,
Because the dukes will first be there today.
For this, thought I, they hinder me in jest,
For guiltless minds do eas'ly deem the best.³⁷⁶

By this the dukes were come into mine inn, [505]
For they were lodgèd in another by.
I got me to them, thinking it a sin
Within my chamber cowardly to lie,
And merrily I asked my brother why
He used me so. He, stern in evil sadness, [510]
Cried out 'I arrest thee, traitor, for thy badness!'

'How so?', quoth I. 'Whence riseth your suspicion?'
'Thou art a traitor', quoth he; 'I thee arrest.'
'Arrest?', quoth I, 'why, where is your commission?'
He drew his weapon, so did all the rest, [515]
Crying 'yield thee, traitor!' I was sore distressed,
Made no resistance, but was sent to ward,
None save their servants assignèd to my guard.

490. **the Bull's chief gallery**: the zodiacal sign of Taurus. 492. **each-where beset**: everywhere occupied to prevent passing. 496. **throughly**: thoroughly. 497. **plainness**: honesty. 498. **doubt**: feel doubt about. 501. **yode**: went. 509. **brother**: i.e. Richard of Gloucester. 510. **sadness**: gravity. 517. **sent to ward**: put into custody, incarcerated.

This done, they sped them to the king in post
 And, after their humble reverence to him done, [520]
 They traitorously began to rule the roast.
 They picked a quarrel to my sister's son
 Lord Richard Grey. The king would not be won
 To agree to them, yet they, against all reason,
 Arrested him (they said) for heinous treason. [525]

Sir Thomas Vaughàn and Sir Richard Haute,
 Two worthy knights, were likewise apprehended;³⁷⁷
 These were all guilty in one kind of fault:
 They would not like the practice then pretended.
 And, seeing the king was herewith sore offended, [530]
 Back to Northampton they brought him again,
 And thence dischargèd most part of his train.

There, lo, Duke Richard made himself protector
 Of king and realm by open proclamation,
 Though neither king nor queen were his elector. [535]
 Thus he presumed by lawless usurpation.
 But will you see his deep dissimulation?
 He sent me a dish of dainties from his board
 That day and, with it, this false friendly word:

'Commend me to him; all things shall be well. [540]
 I am his friend; bid him be of good cheer.'
 These news I prayed the messenger go tell
 My nephew Richard, whom I loved full dear.
 But what he meant by 'well', now shall you hear:
 He thought it well to have us quickly murdered, [545]
 Which not long after thoroughly he furthered.³⁷⁸

For straight from thence we closely were conveyed,
 From jail to jail northward we wist not whither,
 Where after we had a while in sunder strayed,

519. **in post**: quickly. 521. **rule the roast**: take on chief authority. 525. **him**: Richard Grey. 535. **his elector**: the one who chose him. 543. **My nephew Richard**: Sir Richard Grey.

At last we met at Pomfret all together. [550]
Sir Richard Ratcliffe had us welcome thither,
Who openly, all right and law contemned,
Beheaded us before we were condemned.³⁷⁹

My cousin Richard could not be content
To leave his life, because he wist not why [555]
(Good, gentle man that never harm had meant!);
Therefore he askèd wherefore he should die.
The priest, his ghostly father, did reply
With weeping eyes, 'I know one woeful cause:
The realm hath neither righteous lords nor laws.' [560]

Sir Thomas Vaughàn, chafing, crièd still
'This tryant Gloucester is the graceless "G"
That will his brother's children beastly kill!
And lest the people through his talk might see
The mischiefs toward and thereto not agree, [565]
Our tormentor, that false perjurèd knight,
Bade stop our mouths with words of high despise.³⁸⁰

Thus died we guiltless, process heard we none,
No cause alleged, no judge, nor yet accuser,
No quest empanelled passèd us upon. [570]
That murderer Ratcliffe, law and right's refuser,
Did all to flatter Richard, his abuser,
Unhappy both that ever they were born
Through guiltless blood that have their souls forlorn.

In part I grant I well deservèd this, [575]
Because I caused not speedy execution
Be done on Richard for that murder of his,
When first he wrought King Henry's close confusion,
Nor for his brother's hateful persecution.
These cruel murders painful death deserved, [580]
Which had he suffered, many had been preserved.

Warn therefore all that charge or office bear
To see all murderers speed'ly executed

565. **mischiefs toward**: coming acts of wickedness. 570. **No ... upon**: No empanelled jury passed judgement upon us. 572. **abuser**: misuser. 574. **forlorn**: brought to ruin.

And spare them not for favour or for fear.
 By guiltless blood the earth remains polluted; [585]
 For lack of justice kingdoms are transmuted.
 They that save murderers from deserved pain
 Shall through those murderers miserably be slain.³⁸¹

[Prose 22]

When I had read this, they liked it very well. One wished that the combat which he had with the Bastard of Burgoyne and the honour which he won both with spear and axe should not be forgotten.³⁸² Another moved a question about a great matter, and that is the variance of the chronicles
 5 about the Lord Thomas Grey, Marquess Dorset, whom Fabyan everywhere calleth the queen's brother. Sir Thomas More and Hall call him the queen's son. Fabyan sayeth he was governor of the prince and had the conveyance of him from Ludlow towards London. The other, whom we follow, say he was then at London with the queen providing for the king's coronation
 10 and took sanctuary with her as soon as he heard of the apprehending of his uncle.³⁸³ This disagreeing of writers is a great hindrance of the truth and no small cumbrance to such as be diligent readers, besides the harm that may happen in succession of heritages. It were therefore a worthy and a good deed for the nobility to cause all the records to be sought and a true and
 15 perfect chronicle thereout to be written, unto which we refer the deciding of this and of all other like controversies, giving this to understand in the meantime, that no man shall think his title either better or worse by anything that is written in any part of this treatise, for the only thing which is purposed herein is by example of others' miseries to dissuade all men
 20 from all sins and vices. If by the way we touch anything concerning titles, we follow therein Hall's chronicle. And where we seem to swerve from his reasons and causes of divers doings, there we gather upon conjecture such things as seem most probable, or at the least most convenient for the furtherance of our purpose.

25 When the reader would have proceeded in the chronicle, which straight entreateth of the villainous destruction of the Lord Hastings, I willed him to surcease, because I had there his tragedy very learnedly penned. 'For the better understanding whereof, you must imagine that you see him newly crept out of his grave and speaking to me as followeth':

2. **Burgoyne**: Burgundy. 7. **the prince**: Edward (d. c. 1483), prince of Wales, the future Edward V. 9. **king's**: that of Edward V. 13. **heritages**: inheritances.

[Tragedy 21]

How the Lord Hastings was Betrayed by Trusting too much to his
Evil Counsellor Catesby and Villainously Murdered in the Tower
of London by Richard, Duke of Gloucester

‘Hastings I am, whose hastened death who knew
My life with praise, my death with plaint, pursue.
With others, fearing lest my headless name
Be wronged by partial bruit of flattering fame,
Cleaving my tomb the way my fame forewent [5]
(Though bared of loans which body and Fortune lent
Erst my proud vaunt), present present to thee
My honour, fall, and forcèd destiny.

Ne fear to stain thy credit by my tale:
In Lethe’s flood, long since, in Stygian vale [10]
Self-love I drenched. What time hath fined for true
And ceaseth not, though stale, still to renew
Recount I will, whereof be this the proof:
That blaze I will my praise and my reproof.
We naked ghosts are but the very man, [15]
Ne of ourselves more than we ought we scan.

But doubt distracteth me, if I should consent
To yield mine honoured name a martyred saint.
If martyrdom rest in the miser’s life
Through torments wrongly reft by fatal knife, [20]

1–2. **whose ... pursue**: those who knew of my early death consider my life with praise and my demise with lamentation. 4. **partial bruit**: prejudicial report; **fame**: public talk. 5. **Cleaving ... forewent**: Breaking out of my tomb in the manner my public reputation went out into the world before me. 6. **bared of loans**: stripped of things loaned. 7. **present present to thee**: in thy presence present to thee. 9. **Ne**: do not; **credit**: trust, willingness to believe. 10. **Lethe**: the classical river of forgetting; **Stygian vale**: the underworld. 11. **drenched**: drowned; **fined for true**: purified to leave only the truth. 14. **blaze**: divulge. 15. **very man**: the man in himself, in his essence. 16. **Ne ... scan**: We do not judge of ourselves more than we should. 18. **yield**: acknowledge. 19. **the miser’s**: the miserable person’s. 20. **reft**: taken from life.

How Fortune's nursling, I, and dearest babe
 Ought thereto stoop none may me well persuade,
 For how may miser-martyrdom betide
 To whom in cradle Fortune was affied?

See how this grossest air infecteth me since: [25]
 Forgot have I of loyalty to my prince
 My happy meed is "martyr" to be named?
 And what the heavens embrace, the world ay blamed,
 For men's injustice wreaked but God's just ire,
 And, by wrong end, turned wreak to justice' hire. [30]
 Oh judgements just, by injustice justice dealt!
 Who doubteth of me may learn, the truth who felt.

So, therefore, as my fall may many stay,
 As well the prince from violent headlong sway
 Of noble peers from honour's throne to dust [35]
 As nobles less in tickle state to trust,
 Shunning those sins that shake the golden leaves
 Perforce from boughs, ere Nature bare the greaves,
 So, what my life professed my death here teacheth
 And, as with word, so with example preacheth. [40]

The hilly heavens and valley earth below
 Yet ring his fame, whose deeds so great did grow.
 Edward the Fourth ye know unnamed I mean,
 Whose noble nature so to me did lean
 That I his staff was, I his only joy, [45]
 And even what Pandare was to him of Troy,
 Which moved him first to create me chamberlain
 To serve his sweets to my most sour pain.³⁸⁴

21. **How**: how it is that. 22. **stoop**: lower myself. 23. **miser-martyrdom**: the martyrdom of a miserable, wretched person; **betide**: happen. 24. **affied**: bound to, committed to. 25. **grossest**: densest, thickest; **infecteth me since**: corrupts me, leads me to wrongful beliefs since the time of my death. 26–7. **Forgot ... name**: Have I forgotten that, because of my loyalty to my prince, my happy reward is to be named a martyr? (**happy**: fortunate; pleasant). 28. **ay**: ever. 29. **wreaked but**: only gave expression to. 30. **wreak**: punishment, harm; **to justice' hire**: to the service of justice. 31–2. **Oh ... felt**: Oh how just are those unjust judgements by which justice is actually done! Anyone who doubts this may learn it from me, who felt the statement's truth. 34. **sway**: forcing down. 36. **tickle**: uncertain, changeable. 38. **Perforce**: forcibly; **bare the greaves**: make bare the branches (subjunctive mood).

[26] 1563: foyaltye (an uncorrected misprint)

Wherein, too justly praised for secretness
 (For now my guilt with shrieking I confess), [50]
 To him too true, too untrue to the queen,
 Such hate I won as lasted long between
 Our families. Shore's wife was my nice cheat,
 The holy whore, and eke the wily peat:
 I fed his lust with lovely pieces, so [55]
 That God's sharp wrath I purchased, my just woe.³⁸⁵

See here of nobles new the divers source:
 Some virtue raiseth; some climb by sluttish sorts.
 The first, though only of themselves begun,
 Yet circlewise into themselves do run. [60]
 Within their fame their force united so
 Both endless is and stronger gainst their foe.
 For when endeth it that never hath begun?
 Or by what force may circled knot be undone?³⁸⁶

Th'òther, as by wicked means they grew [65]
 And reigned by flattery or violence, so soon rue.
 First tumbling step from honours old is vice,
 Which, once descended, some linger, none arise
 To former type but they catch virtue's spray,
 Which mounteth them that climb by lawful way. [70]
 Beware to rise by serving princely lust:
 Surely to stand, one mean is rising just.³⁸⁷

Which learn by me, whom let it help to excuse
 That, ruthful now, myself I do accuse
 And that my prince I ever pleased with such [75]
 As harmèd none and him contented much.
 In vice some favour or less hate let win
 That I ne wryed to worsè end my sin

53. **nice cheat**: my wanton paramour (lit. piece of plunder). 54. **peat**: young woman; sweetheart. 58. **sluttish sorts**: immoral methods. 59–64. **The ... undone**: see explanatory note 386. 62. **gainst**: against. 65–72. **Th'òther ... just**: see explanatory note 387 ('Th'òther' in line 65, though spelled 'Thother' in the original, is evidently meant to be pronounced as three syllables). 69. **spray**: slender branches. 70. **mounteth**: raise in honour or rank; cause to ascend. 73–6. **Which ... much**: Learn this by me, and let it help to excuse me that I, ruthful now, accuse myself and also that I pleased my prince ever with such things [i.e. concubines] as harmed no one and contented him greatly. 78. **wryed**: turned.

But used my favour to the safety of such
As fury of later war to live did grutch.³⁸⁸ [80]

For as on dirt, though dirty, shineth the sun,
So, even amidst my vice, my virtue shone.
Myself I spared with any his cheat to stain,
For love and reverence so I could refrain.
Gisippus' wife erst Titus would desire [85]
With friendship's breach; I quenched that brutish fire.³⁸⁹
Manly it is to loathe the fawning lust,
Small vaunt to fly what of constraint thou must.

These therefore raised, if thou mine office scan,
Lo, none I hurt but furthered every man. [90]
My chamber England was, my staff the law,
Whereby sauns rigour all I held in awe.³⁹⁰
So loving to all, so beloved of all
As what ensued upon my bloody fall,
(Though I ne felt, yet surely this I think) [95]
Full many trickling tear their mouths did drink.

Disdain not, princes, easy access, meek cheer;
We know than angels statelier port ye bear
Of God himself, too massy a charge for sprites.³⁹¹
But then, my lords, consider he delights [100]
To vail his grace to us poor earthly wants,
To simplest shrubs and to the dunghill plants.
Express him then in might and mercy's mean,
So shall ye win, as now you wield, the realm.

But all too long, I fear, I do delay [105]
The many means whereby I did bewray
My zealous will to earn my prince's grace,

80. **grutch**: begrudge. 83. **any his cheat**: any one of Edward IV's mistresses. 92. **sauns**: without; **held in awe**: inspired proper respect in. 93–6. **So ... drink**: Just as I was loving to all, so I was beloved by all, to the point that, at the time of my bloody death, many tasted their own tears (though I never experienced this posthumous reaction, I certainly believe it occurred). 97. **cheer**: countenance, disposition. 98–9. **We ... sprites**: We know that God himself has given you a bearing or rank more magnificent than that of the angels, too heavy a charge for spirits. 101. **vail**: lower; **wants**: moles. 103. **Express**: Be a likeness of; **mean**: instigation. 106. **bewray**: make manifest.

Lest thou differ to think me kind percase.
 As nought may last, so Fortune's weathery cheer
 With pouting looks gan lour on my sire [110]
 And on her wheel advanced high in his room
 The Warwick Earl, mace of Christendom.³⁹²

Besides the tempting prowess of the foe,
 His traitor brother did my prince forgo.
 The cause was liked; I was his linked ally. [115]
 Yet, nor the cause nor brother's treachery,
 Nor en'my's force, ne band of mingled blood
 Made Hastings bear his prince other mind than good.
 But tane and scaped from Warwick's gripping paws,
 With me he fled through Fortune's froward'st flaws.³⁹³ [120]

To London come, at large we might have seemed,
 Had we not then the realm a prison deemed.
 Each bush a bar, each spray a banner splayed,
 Each house a fort our passage to have stayed.
 To Lynn we leap, where while we await the tide, [125]
 My secret friends in secret I supplied
 In mouth to maintain Henry Sixth their king,
 By deed to devoir Edward to bring in.³⁹⁴

The restless tide to bare the empty bay
 With waltering waves roams wambling forth. "Away!", [130]
 The merry mariner hails. The bragging boy
 To mast's high top up hies. In sign of joy
 The wavering flag is vanced. The subtle seas
 Their swelling cease; to calmest even peace
 Sinketh down their pride. With drunkenness, gainst all care, [135]
 The seamen armed await their noble fare.

On board we come. The massy anchors weighed,
 One English ship, two hulks of Holland aid

108. *differ*: disagree; *percase*: perhaps. 109. *weathery*: changeable (like the weather). 113. *tempting*: afflicting. 115. *The cause was liked*: the people favoured Warwick's cause. 117. *ne band*: nor bond. 119. *tane*: taken by. 120. *froward'st flaws*: most contrary blasts of wind. 123. *splayed*: displayed. 126. *supplied*: begged. 127. *In mouth*: in their words. 128. *devoir*: endeavour. 130. *waltering*: rolling; *wambling*: unsteadily (with a sense of inducing nausea). 132. *hies*: climbs speedily. 133. *vanced*: upraised. 134. *to calmest even*: to their most calm, even state. 136. *fare*: passenger.

In such a pinch. So small, though, was the train,
 Such his constraint, that now that one with pain [140]
 Command he might, who erst mought many mo
 Than brought the ghastly Greeks to Tenedo.³⁹⁵
 So nought is ours that we by hap may lose;
 What nearest seems is farthest off in woes.

As banished wights, such joys we mought have made, [145]
 Eased of ay-threat'ning death that late we dread,
 But once our country's sight (not care) exempt,
 No harbour showing that mought our fear relent,
 No covert cave, no shrub to shroud our lives,
 No hollow wood, no flight that oft deprives [150]
 The mighty his prey, no sanctuary left
 For exiled prince, that shrouds each slave from theft.

In prison pent, whose woody walls to pass
 Of no less peril than the dying was,
 With ocean moated, battered with the waves [155]
 As, chained at oars, the wretched galley slaves
 At mercy sit of sea and en'mies' shot
 And shun with death what they with flight may not;
 But greenish waves and desert, louring skies,
 All comfort else foreclosed our exiled eyes. [160]

Lo, lo! From highest top the slavish boy,
 Sent up with sight of land our hearts to joy,
 Descries at hand whole fleet of Easterlings,
 As then hot en'mies of the British kings.³⁹⁶
 The mouse may sometime help the lion in need; [165]
 The beetle-bee once split the eagle's breed.³⁹⁷
 Oh princes, seek no foes; in your distress
 The earth, the seas conspire your heaviness.

140. **one:** i.e., the one English ship. 141. **erst mought many mo:** who earlier might command many more. 142. **Tenedo:** Tenedos. 143–4. **So ... woes:** So nothing is truly ours that may be lost by chance; what we once thought closest to us is proved farthest away when we are in woe. 147. **exempt:** cut off from. 153–4. **whose ... was:** i.e., to go beyond the wooden walls of the ship would bring about no less a danger than death. 159–60. **But ... eyes:** Our exiled eyes excluded all comfort save greenish waves and empty louring skies. **desert:** desolate, lonely. 163. **Easterlings:** ships belonging to the members of the Hanseatic League. 166. **beetle-bee:** humming beetle.

Our foe descried, by flight we shun in hast
 And lade with canvas now the bending mast. [170]
 The ship was racked to try her sailing then:
 As squirrels climb the troops of trusty men;
 The steersman seeks a readier course to run;
 The soldier stirs; the gunner hies to gun;
 The Flemings sweat; the English ship disdains [175]
 To wait behind to bear the Flemings' trains.³⁹⁸

Forth flyeth the bark, as from the violent gun
 The pellet pierceth all stays and stops eftsoon,
 And swift she swimmeth, as oft in sunny day
 The dolphin fleets in seas in merry May. [180]
 As we for lives, so th'Easterlings for gain
 Thwack on the sails and after make amain.
 Though laden they were and of burden great,
 A king to master yet, what swain nould sweat?

So mid the vale, the greyhound, seeing start [185]
 His fearful foe, pursueth before she flirteth
 And, where she turneth, he turneth her there to bear:
 The one prey pricketh, the other safety's fear.
 So were we chased, so fled we afore our foes:
 Bet flight than fight, in so uneven close. [190]
 I end. Some think, perhaps, "too long he stay'th
 In peril present, showing his fixèd faith".

This ventured I, this dread I did sustain
 To try my truth; my life I did disdain.
 But, lo!, like trial against his civil foe: [195]
 Faith's worst is trial, which is reserved to woe.
 I pass our scape and sharp returning home,

169. **hast**: haste. 172. **As ... men**: As squirrels climb so did the troops of trusty men. 178. **pellet**: bullet; **stays and stops**: all hindrances and impediments soon after (being fired). 180. **fleets**: swims. 181. **As ... lives**: In the same manner as we did to save our lives. 182. **Thwack on**: set quickly in place; **after make amain**: make after us at full speed. 184. **nould**: would be unwilling to. 186. **foe**: i.e. a hare; **flirteth**: darts. 188. **The ... fear**: The one is spurred in the chase by its desire for prey; fear of safety impels the other. 190. **Bet**: better; **close**: an encounter. 193. **dread**: proper awe or respect for a monarch. 194. **try my truth**: prove my loyalty. 195. **But ... foe**: But see a similar trial of my loyalty against a foe from Edward's own country. 196. **Faith's ... woe**: The most painful part of loyalty is the trying of it, a matter which is given over to woe. 197. **scape**: escape (from the pursuing ships).

Where we were welcomed by our wonted foen.
 To battle main descends the empire's right;
 At Barnet join the hosts in bloody fight.³⁹⁹ [200]

There joined three battles ranged in such array,
 As mought for terror Alexander fray.
 What should I stay to tell the long discourse?
 Who won the palm? Who bare away the worse?
 Sufficeth to say by my reservèd band [205]
 Our enemies fled; we had the upper hand.⁴⁰⁰
 My iron army held her steady place
 My prince to shield, his fearèd foe to chase.

The like success befell me in Tewkesbury field,
 My furious force there forced perforce to yield [210]
 The traitor foe and render to my king
 Her only son, lest he more bate might bring,⁴⁰¹
 Thus hast thou a mirror of a subject's mind,
 Such as perhaps is rare again to find:
 The carving cuts that cleave the trusty steel [215]
 My faith and due allegiance could not feel.

But out alas! what praise may I recount
 That is not spiced with spot that doth surmount
 My greatest vaunt? For bloody war too feat
 A tiger was I, all for peace unmeet. [220]
 A soldier's hands must oft be dyed with gore
 Lest, stark with rest, they finewed wax and hoar.
 Peace could I win by war, but peace not use;
 Few days enjoy he, who warlike peace doth choose.

When Crofts, a knight, presented Henry's heir [225]
 To this our prince, in furious mood enquire
 Of him he gan, what folly or frenzy vain
 With armès forced him to invade his realm?

199. **main:** mighty; **descends:** comes down, falls. 201. **battles:** battalions. 202. **Alexander:** Alexander the Great. 210. **perforce:** by force. 212. **bate:** discord. 213. **mirror:** model, exemplar. 219. **too feat:** all too fitting. 222. **Lest ... hoar:** Lest, made stiff with rest, they become decrepit (**finewed:** vinnied, decrepit). 228. **armes:** arms.

Whom answering that he claimed his father's right
 With gauntlet smit, commanded from his sight, [230]
 Clarence, Gloucester, Dorset, and I, Hastings, slew,
 The guilt whereof we shortly all did rue.⁴⁰²

Clarence, as Cyrus, drowned in blood-like wine;
 Dorset I furthered to his speedy pine.⁴⁰³
 Of me, myself am speaking precedent, [235]
 Nor easier fate the bristled boar is lent.
 Our bloods have paid the vengeance of our guilt;
 His fried bones shall broil for blood he hath spilt.
 Oh wlatsume murder that attaineth our fame!
 Oh horrible traitors wanting worthy name:⁴⁰⁴ [240]

Who more mischievously of all states deserve
 As better they who first did such preserve?
 If those for gifts we reckon heavenly wights,
 These may we well deem fiends and damnèd sprites
 And (while on earth they walk) disguisèd devils, [245]
 Sworn foes of virtue, factors for all evils,
 Whose bloody hands torment their gorèd hearts.
 Through bloodshed's horror, in soundest sleep he starts!

Oh happy world, were the lions men:
 All lions should at least be sparèd then.⁴⁰⁵ [250]
 No surety now, no lasting league is blood.
 A meacock is, who dreadeth to see bloodshed.
 Stale is the pattern; the fact must needs be rife.
 While two were armies two, the issues of first wife,
 With armèd heart and hand th'one bloody brother [255]
 With cruel chase pursueth and murd'reth th'other.

234. **pine**: torment; anguish. 235. **Of ... precedent**: I myself (in my ghostly state) am the speaking indication of the consequences of my guilty action (the killing of Prince Edward). 236. **boar**: Richard, duke of Gloucester (whose badge was the boar). 238. **fried bones**: cooked by frying (as the meat of a boar might be); tortured by fire (as Richard will be in hell). 239. **wlatsume**: loathsome (a Chaucerian archaism). 241–2. **Who ... preserve**: Who more appropriately deserves greater harm from members of all social classes than those who originally sought to preserve such people? 243. **those**: those who sought to protect the people. 246. **factors**: agents. 247. **their**: the referent is unclear: it is perhaps men and women of 'all states' (line 241) or 'those' who seek to aid such men and women (line 243); **gored**: pierced, stabbed. 248. **he**: he who sheds blood. 252. **meacock**: coward, weakling. 253. **Stale**: Old, worn out. 254. **While ... wife**: During the time that two armies were composed of two men only, the children of the world's first wife (i.e. Eve's sons Cain and Abel).

Which who defieth not? Yet who ceaseth to sue?
 The bloody Cains their bloody sire renew.
 The horror yet is like in common frays,
 For in each murder, brother brother slays. [260]
 Traitors to nature, country, kin and kind,
 Whom no band serveth in brothers' zeal to bind.
 Oh simple age, when slander slaughter was!
 The tongue's small evil how doth this mischief pass?

Hopest thou to cloak thy covert mischief wrought? [265]
 Thy conscience, caitiff, shall proclaim thy thought.
 A vision, Chaucer showeth, disclosed thy crime;⁴⁰⁶
 The fox descry the crows and chattering pyen.
 And shall thy fellow felons not bewray
 The guiltless death, whom guilty hands do slay? [270]
 Unpunished scaped for heinous crime some one,
 But unavenged in mind or body none.

Vengeance on mind the fretting furies take;
 The sinful corpse, like earthquake, agues shake.
 Their frowning looks their frouncèd minds bewray; [275]
 In haste they run and mids their race they stay,
 As gidded roe. Amidst their speech they whist;
 At meat they muse. Nowhere they may persist
 But some fear nettletth them. Ay hang they so:
 So never wanteth the wicked murderer woe. [280]

An infant rent with lion's ramping paws?
 Why slander I lions? They fear the sacred laws
 Of princes' blood. Ay me, more brute than beast
 With princes' sides – Lycaon's pie – to feast?⁴⁰⁷
 Oh tyrant tigers! Oh insatiable wolves! [285]

257. **Which ... sue?**: Who does not despise such a thing, yet who ceases to follow it? 261. **kind**: natural disposition; kindred. 262. **zeal**: ardent love. 263–4. **Oh ... pass?**: Oh innocent age, when slander was the only slaughter! How far does the wicked act of murder surpass the tongue's minor transgression? 268. **The ... pyen**: Crows and chattering magpies make known the presence of a fox (**pyen**: a pseudo-archaic plural for 'pies', magpies). 271. **some one**: a limited few. 273. **fretting**: gnawing, wasting. 274. **The ... shake**: Agues shake the sinner's body like an earthquake. 275. **frounced**: hostile (lit. frowning). 277. **gidded roe**: deer made suddenly giddy; **whist**: fall silent. 278. **meat**: a meal. 279. **Ay ... so**: They always remain in such an unsettled state. 281. **infant**: youth of noble birth; **ramping**: rampant, fiercely extended. 283. **more brute than beast**: you who are more brutish than a beast. 284. **sides**: both halves of a body prepared for eating (as in 'side of beef').

Oh English courtesy, monstrous maws and gulfs!
 My death shall forthwith preach my earned meed,
 If first to one like murder I proceed.

While Edward lived, dissembled discord lurked
 In double hearts, yet so his reverence worked. [290]
 But when succeeding tender feeble age
 Gave open gap to tyrants' rushing rage,
 I holp the Boar and Buck to captivate
 Lord Rivers, Grey, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Haute.
 If land would help the sea, well earned that ground [295]
 Itself to be with conquering waves surround.

Their speedy death by privy doom procured
 At Pomfret; though my life short while endured,
 Myself I slew, when them I damned to death.
 At once my throat I rived and reft them breath, [300]
 For that self day, afore or near the hour
 That withered Atropos nipped the springing flower
 With violent hand of their forth-running life,
 My head and body in Tower twinned like knife.⁴⁰⁸

By this my pattern all ye peers beware: [305]
 Oft hangeth he himself, who others weeneth to snare.
 Spare to be each other's butcher; fear the kite
 Who soareth aloft, while frog and mouse do fight,
 In civil combat grappling, void of fear
 Of foreign foe at once all both to bear,⁴⁰⁹ [310]
 Which plainer by my pitied plaint to see,
 Awhile anew your list'ning lend to me.

Too true it is two sundry assemblies kept
 At Crosby's Place and Baynard's Castle set.
 The dukes at Crosby's, but at Baynard's we: [315]

286. **gulfs**: voracious appetites. 288. **like**: similar. 290. **yet**: at that time. 293. **Boar and Buck**: Richard, duke of Gloucester, and Henry Stafford (d. 1483), second duke of Buckingham. 297. **privy**: secret. 300. **At ... breath**: At once I cut my own throat and took from them their breath. 302. **Atropos**: one of the classical fates; **springing**: growing. 304. **My ... knife**: A similar knife severed my head from my body in the Tower of London. 306. **weeneth**: intends. 310. **all both to bear**: both to bear away. 315. **the dukes**: Gloucester and Buckingham.

The one to crown a king, the other to be.
 Suspicious is secession of foul friends,
 When either's drift to other's mischief tends.
 I feared the end; my Catesby, being there,
 Discharged all doubts. Him held I most entire,⁴¹⁰ [320]

Whose great preferment by my means I thought
 Some spur to pay the thankfulness he ought.
 The trust he ought me made me trust him so
 That privy he was both to my weal and woe.
 My heart's one half, my chest of confidence, [325]
 My treasure's trust: my joy dwelt in his presence.
 I loved him, Baldwin, as the apple of mine eye;
 I loathed my life when Catesby would me die.⁴¹¹

Fly from thy channel, Thames, forsake thy streams!
 Leave the adamant iron; Phoebus lay thy beams! [330]
 Cease heavenly spheres at last your weary wark;
 Betray your charge, return to chaos dark.
 At least some ruthless tiger hang her whelp,
 My Catesby so with some excuse to help
 And me to comfort that I alone ne seem [335]
 Of all Dame Nature's works left in extreme.⁴¹²

A golden treasure is the trièd friend,
 But who may gold from counterfeits defend?
 Trust not too soon, ne all too light mistrust:
 With th'one thyself, with th'other thy friend thou hurt'st. [340]
 Who twineth betwixt and steereth the golden mean
 Nor rashly loveth nor mistrusteth in vain.⁴¹³
 For friendship poison, for safety mithridate,
 It is thy friend to love as thou wouldst hate.

Of tickle credit ne had been the mischief, [345]
 What needed Virbius miracle-doubled life?⁴¹⁴

323. **ought**: owed. 330. **adamant**: lodestone; **lay**: lay aside. 331. **wark**: work. 335. **ne**: do not. 336. **in extreme**: at the farthest point away from. 341–2. **Who ... vain**: He who proceeds between the two extremes of trust and mistrust and who is guided by the golden mean neither too rashly loves nor vainly mistrusts. 343. **mithridate**: a panacea. 345. **Of ... mischief**: Had it not been for the harm of facile trust.

Credulity surnamed first the Aegean seas;⁴⁴⁵
 Mistrust doth treason in the trustiest raise.
 Suspicious Romulus stained his walls first reared
 With brother's blood, whom for light leap he feared.⁴⁴⁶ [350]
 So not in brotherhood jealousy may be borne;
 The jealous cuckold wears the infamous horn.

A beast may preach by trial, not foresight.
 Could I have shunned this credit, ne'er had light
 The dreaded death upon my guilty head. [355]
 But fools ay wont to learn by after-rede:
 Had Catesby kept unstained the truth he plight,
 Yet had ye enjoyed me, and I yet the light.
 All Derby's doubts I cleared with his name;
 I knew no harm could hap us sauns his blame.⁴⁴⁷ [360]

But see the fruits of fickle light belief:
 The ambitious dukes corrupt the traitor thief
 To grope me if allured I would assent
 To been a partner of their cursed intent.
 Whereto, when neither force nor friendship vailed, [365]
 By tyrant force their purpose they assailed
 And summoned shortly a council in the Tower
 Of June the fifteenth, at appointed hour.⁴⁴⁸

Alas, are councils wryed to catch the good?
 Is no place now exempt from shedding blood, [370]
 Sith councils that were careful to preserve
 The guiltless good are means to make them starve?
 What may not mischief of mad man abuse?
 Religion's cloak someone to vice doth choose
 And maketh God protector of his crime: [375]
 Oh monstrous world, well ought we wish thy fine!

354. **light**: lighted. 356. **after-rede**: consideration, deliberation that only comes after an event. 357. **truth he plight**: loyalty he pledged. 358. **Yet ... light**: You would even now have been able to have the pleasure of having me present and I the enjoyment of the light (as someone who still lived). 360. **hap us**: happen to us. 361. **light**: unthinking. 363. **grope**: examine, sound out. 365. **vailed**: availed. 369. **hap us**: happen to us. 371. **that were**: that once were. 373. **mad man**: madman; crazed humankind. 374. **to vice**: to cover vice. 376. **fine**: end.

The fatal skies roll on the blackest day,
 When doubled bloodshed my blood must repay.
 Others none forceth; to me Sir Thomas Howard
 As spur is buckled to provoke me forward.⁴¹⁹ [380]
 Derby, who feared the parted sittings yore,
 Whether much more he knew by experience hoar
 Or, unaffected, clearer truth could see,
 At midnight dark this message sends to me:

“Hastings away! In sleep the gods foreshow [385]
 By dreadful dream fell fates unto us two.
 Me thought a boar with tusk so razed our throat
 That both our shoulders of the blood did smoke.
 Arise to horse, straight homeward let us hie,
 And sith our foe we may not mate, oh fly! [390]
 Of Chauntecleer you learn dreams’ sooth to know;
 Thence wisemen conster more than the cock doth crow”⁴²⁰

While thus he spake, I held within mine arm
 Shore’s wife, the tender piece, to keep me warm.
 Fie on adultery, fie on lecherous lust! [395]
 Mark in me, ye nobles all, God’s judgements just:
 A pander, murderer, and adulterer thus,
 Only such death I die, as I ne blush.
 Now, lest my dame mought fear appal my heart,
 With eager mood up in my bed I start. [400]

“And is this thy lord”, quoth I, “a sorcerer?
 A wise man now become? A dream reader?
 What though so Chauntecleer crowed? I reck it not.
 On my part pleadeth as well Dame Pertelote;
 Unjudged hang’th yet the case betwixt them tway, [405]
 Ne was his dream cause of his hap, I say.⁴²¹
 Shall dreaming doubts from prince my service slack?
 Nay, then mought Hastings life and living lack”.

378. **doubled bloodshed my blood must repay**: my own death must pay for my two acts of bloodshed (i.e. Hastings’s killing of Prince Edward and his hand in the condemnation of Rivers, Grey, Vaughn, and Haute). 383. **unaffected**: free from outside influence. 390. **mate**: defeat. 391. **sooth**: truth. 392. **conster**: construe. 397. **thus**: in this way. 398. **Only ... blush**: An obscure line, perhaps suggesting ‘It is this sort of death alone I die (one brought by God’s judgement), I am not ashamed to admit’. 399. **Now ... heart**: Now, lest my lady might fear my heart grow faint. 403. **I reck it not**: I don’t concern myself for it. 405. **tway**: two. 406. **his hap**: what befell him.

He parteth; I sleep, my mind, surcharged with sin
 As Phoebus' beams by misty clouds kept in, [410]
 Ne could misgive ne dream of my mishap;
 As block I tumbled to mine enemies' trap.
 Security causeless through my careless friend
 Reft me foresight of my approaching end.
 So Catesby clawed me, as when the cat doth play [415]
 Dallying with mouse, whom straight he minds to slay.

The morrow come, the latest light to me,
 On palfrey mounted to the Tower I hie,
 Accompanied with that Howard my mortal foe,
 To slaughter led – thou, God, wouldst have it so. [420]
 Oh deep dissemblers, honouring with your cheer,
 Whom in hid heart ye traitorously tear!
 Never had realm so open signs of wrack
 As I had showed me of my heavy hap.

The vision first of Stanley late descried, [425]
 Then mirth so extreme that near for joy I died – ⁴²²
 Were it that swan-like I foresung my death
 Or merry mind foresaw the loose of breath
 That long it coveted from this earth's annoy!
 But even as sicker as th'end of woe is joy, [430]
 And glorious light to obscure night doth tend,
 So extreme mirth in extreme moan doth end,

For why extremes are haps racked out of course
 By violent might far swungè forth perforce,
 Which as they are piercing'st while they violent'st move [435]
 (For near'st they cleave to cause that doth them shove),
 So soonest fall from that their highest extreme
 To th'other contrary that doth want of mean.

409–11. **my ... mishap**: my mind, overburdened by sin in the manner that the sun's beams are occluded by misty clouds, could neither have misgivings nor imagine in a dream my impending misfortune. 412. **block**: log, piece of wood; **tumbled**: fell helplessly. 413. **careless friend**: friend who did not care about me. 421. **cheer**: countenance. 428. **loose**: setting free from the body. 430. **sicker**: certain. 433. **For ... course**: Because extremes are occurrences pulled out of their normal course. 434. **swinged**: driven forcefully. 435. **piercing'st**: most intensely affecting. 436. **cleave**: adhere; **shove**: drive, propel. 438. **doth want of mean**: lacks any quality of moderation.

So laughed he erst, who laughèd out his breath;
 So laughed I, when I laughed myself to death. [440]

The pleasing'st means bode not the luckiest ends.
 Not ay found treasure to like pleasure tends.
 Mirth means not mirth all time; thrice happy hire
 Of wit to shun the excess that all desire.
 But this I pass; I hie to other like. [445]
 My palfrey in the plainest pavèd street
 Thrice bowed his bones, thrice kneelèd on the floor,
 Thrice shunned (as Balaam's ass) the dreaded Tower.⁴²³

What, should I think he had sense of after-haps,
 As beasts foreshow the drought or rainy drops [450]
 As humours in them want or else abound
 By influence from the heavens or change of ground?⁴²⁴
 Or do we interpret by success each sign
 And as we fancy of each hap divine,
 And make that cause that kin is to th'effect, [455]
 Not having ought of consequence respect?

Bucephalus kneeling only to his lord
 Showed only he was monarch of the world.⁴²⁵
 Why may not then the steed foreshow by fall
 What casual hap the sitter happen shall? [460]
 Darius' horse by braying brought a realm,⁴²⁶
 And what letteth why he ne is, as the ass, God's mean
 By speaking sign to show his hap to come
 Who is deaf hearer of his speaking dumb?

439. **So ... breath:** So at first laughed the man who eventually laughed so much that he lost all his breath (thus exchanging his extreme mirth for extreme sorrow). 443. **all time:** at all times; for one's entire life; **hire:** service. 445. **hie:** move quickly. 449–52. **What ... ground?:** see explanatory note 424. 453–4. **Or ... divine?:** Or do we interpret each sign by what succeeded it and explain the nature of each occurrence by the power of our imagination? 455–6. **And ... respect:** And make that which is related to the effect its cause, without having any respect to the actual working of cause and effect. 460. **What ... shall?:** What unplanned-for occurrence shall befall the sitter? 462–4. **And ... dumb?:** And what prevents a horse from being God's medium (as is the ass) for showing in the form of an expressive sign what will happen to him who is deaf to the horse's silent speaking?

But forward yet: in Tower Street I stayed, [465]
 Where (could I have seen), lo, Howard all bewrayed,
 For as I commoned with a priest I met,
 "Away my lord", quoth he; "your time ne is yet
 To take a priest". Lo, Sinon might be seen
 Had Trojans ears as they had hares' fool eyes.⁴²⁷ [470]
 But whom thou God allotted hast to die
 Some grace it is to die with wimpled eye.

Ne was this all, for even at Tower wharf,
 Near to those walls within whose sight I starfe,
 Where erst in sorrow soused and deep distress [475]
 I imparted all my pining pensiveness
 With Hastings (so my pursuivant men call),
 Even there the same to meet it did me fall,
 Who gan to me most dolefully renew
 The woeful conference had erst in that *lieu*. [480]

"Hastings", quoth I, "according now they fare
 At Pomfret this day dying, who caused that care.
 Myself have all the love now at my will,
 With pleasures cloyed, engorged with the fill".
 "God grant it so", quoth he. "Why doubtest thou though?", [485]
 quoth I. And all in chafe to him gan show
 In ample wise our drift with tedious tale
 And entered so the Tower, to my bale.⁴²⁸

What should we think of signs? They are but haps.
 How may they then be signs of afterclaps? [490]
 Doth every chance foreshow or cause some other

469–70. **Lo ... eyen**: Lo, Sinon's trickery might have been perceived by the Trojans had they the ears of hares in the same way they had hares' foolish eyes (hares are famously short sighted but have excellent hearing). 471. **whom**: to whom. 472. **wimpled**: veiled. 474. **starfe**: died. 477. **pursuivant**: a junior heraldic officer attendant on a nobleman. 480. **lieu**: place (French). 481. **according**: fittingly. 486. **chafe**: vexation. 489. **haps**: chance occurrences. 490. **afterclaps**: ensuing events.

Or, ending at itself, extendeth no further?
 As th'overflowing flood some mount doth choke,
 But to his aid some other flood it yoke,
 So, if with signs thy sins once join, beware, [495]
 Else whereto chances tend ne'er curious care.

Had not my sin deserved my death as wreak,
 What might my mirth have hurt? Or horse's beck?
 Or Howard's bitter scoff? Or Hastings' talk?
 What mean then fool astrologers to calk [500]
 That twinkling stars fling down the fixed fate
 And all is guided by the starry state?
 Pardie, a certain tax assigned they have
 To shine and times divide, not fate to grave!

But grant they somewhat give: is at one instant [505]
 Of every babe the birth in heaven so scanned
 That they that restless roll and never stay
 Should in his life bear yet so violent sway
 That not his actions only next his birth
 But even last fine and death be swayed therewith? [510]
 How may one motion make so sundry effects,
 Or one impression tend to such respects?

Some rule there is yet, else why were deferred
 Till now these plagues, so long ere now deserved?
 If for they are trifles they ne seem of care, [515]
 But toys with God the stateliest sceptres are.
 Yet in them too plain doth appear foreset
 The certain rule and fatal limits set.
 Yet think we not this sure foresetting fate,
 But God's fast providence for each princely state. [520]

493–6. **As ... care:** Perhaps: Just as an overflowing river smothers a hillock yet aids, through its flooding, another river by joining with it, so if signs conjoin with your sins, beware; otherwise, never be curious about where chances might tend. 498. **beck:** mute signal. 500. **calk:** reckon astrologically. 503. **Pardie:** without a doubt; **tax:** task. 504. **grave:** engrave, fix indelibly. 505. **But ... give:** But grant that the stars do play something of a role in human fate. 507. **they:** the heavenly bodies. 509. **next:** immediately succeeding. 510. **last fine:** extreme end of his life. 515. **for:** because. 517. **foreset:** determined beforehand. 519. **sure foresetting:** assured predetermination. 520. **fast:** firmly fixed.

And hath he erst restrained his providence?
Or is he niggard of his free dispense?
Or is he uncertain, foreset drifts to drive,
That not Dame Chance but he all goods may give?
A heathen god they hold, who fortune keep [525]
To deal them haps, while God they ween asleep.
Mock gods they are, and many gods induce,
Who fortune feign to father their abuse.

How so be it, it mought have warnèd me,
But what I could not, that in me see ye: [530]
Who run in race the honour like to win,
Whose fairest form nought may deform but sin.
Alas, when most I did defy all dread,
By single hair death's sword hung over my head,
For hark the end and listen now my fall: [535]
This is the last and this is the fruit of all.

To council chamber come, awhile we stayed
For him, without whom nought was done or said.⁴²⁹
At last he came and courteously excused
For he so long our patience had abused [540]
And pleasantly began to paint his cheer,
And said, "My lord of Ely, would we had here
Some of the strawberries whereof you have store.
The last delighted me as nothing more".

"Would what so ye wish, I mought as well command, [545]
My lord", quoth he, "as those". And out of hand
His servant sendeth to Ely Place for them.
Out goeth from us the restless devil again,
Belike, I think, scarce yet persuaded full
To work the mischief that thus maddeth his skull. [550]
At last determined of his bloody thought
And force ordained to work the wile he sought,

525. **keep**: maintain. 527. **induce**: introduce, bring in. 531. **the honour like to win**: apparently about to win the glory. 542. **my lord of Ely**: John Morton (d. 1500), bishop of Ely. 545–6. **Would ... those**: If only I could command to be done whatsoever you might wish, my lord, as well as I can command the supplying of those. 546. **out of hand**: immediately. 552. **force ordained**: i.e. armed men ordered.

Frowning he enters, with so changèd cheer
 As for mild May had chopped foul Januere. [555]
 And louring on me with the goggle eye,
 The whetted tusk, and furrowed forehead high,
 His crooked shoulder bristle-like set up,
 With frothy jaws, whose foam he chawed and sopped,
 With angry looks that flamèd as the fire,
 Thus gan at last to grunt the grimmest sire. [560]

“What earned they who me, the kingdom’s stay,
 Contrived have counsel traitorously to slay?”
 Abashed all sat. I thought I mought be bold
 For conscience’ clearness and acquaintance old.
 “Their hire is plain”, quoth I; “be death the least [565]
 To whoso seeketh your grace so to molest”.
 Withouten stay: “the queen and the whore Shore’s wife
 By witchcraft”, quoth he, “seek to waste my life.

“Lo here the withered and bewitchèd arm
 That thus is spent by those two sorceress’ charm”. [570]
 And bared his arm and showed his swinish skin:
 Such cloaks they use that seek to cloud their sin.
 But out, alas, it serveth not for the rain;⁴³⁰
 To all the house the colour was too plain.
 Nature had given him many a maimèd mark [575]
 And it amongs, to note her monstrous wark.

My doubtful heart distracted this reply:
 For th’one I cared not; th’other nipped so nigh
 That whist I could not but forthwith brake forth.
 “If so it be, of death they are doubtless worth”. [580]
 “If traitor?” quoth he. “Playest thou with ifs and ands?
 I’ll on thy body avow it with these hands!”
 And therewithal he mightily bounced the board.
 In rushed his billmen; one himself bestirred

554. **chopped**: exchanged itself for. 555. **goggle**: protuberant. 558. **sopped**: swallowed. 560. **sire**: lord; male parent of a quadruped (such as a boar). 561. **What earned they**: what sort of punishment do they deserve. 569. **Lo**: see. 574. **colour**: pretext. 576. **And ... wark**: And it among, to denote her monstrous work. 577. **My ... reply**: This reply drew my doubtful heart in two directions. 578. **th’one**: i.e. the queen. 582. **avow**: affirm. 583. **bounced the board**: thumped the table.

Laying at Lord Stanley, whose brain he had surely cleft [585]
Had not he down beneath the table crept.
But Ely, York, and I were taken straight:
Imprisoned they; I should no longer wait
But charged was to shrive me and shift with haste;
My lord must dine and now midday was past. [590]
The boar's first dish not the boar's head should be,
But Hastings' head the boarish beast would see.

Why stay I his dinner? Unto the chapel joineth
A greenish hill that body and soul oft twinneth.⁴³¹
There on a block my head was stricken off: [595]
John Baptist's dish for Herod, bloody gnoff.
Thus lived I, Baldwin; thus died I; thus I fell.
This is the sum which all at large to tell
Would volumes fill, whence yet these lessons note,
Ye noble lords, to learn and ken by rote. [600]

By filthy rising fear your names to stain,
If not for virtue's love, for dread of pain.
Whom so the mind's unquiet state upheaves,
Be it for love or fear, when fancy reaves
Reason his right by mocking of the wit, [605]
If once the cause of this affection flit
Reason prevailing on the unbridled thought,
Down trotteth who by fancy clomb aloft.

So hath the riser foul no stay of fall,
No, not of those that raised him first of all. [610]
His surety stands in maintaining the cause
That heaved him first, which reft by reason's saws,
Not only fall'th he to his former state
But liveth forever in his prince's hate.
And mark my lords: God for adultery slay'th, [615]
Though ye it think too sweet a sin for death.

587. **York**: Thomas Rotherham (d. 1500), archbishop of York. 589. **shift**: arrange my matters. 593. **dinner**: mid-day meal. 594. **twinneth**: separates. 596. **gnoff**: churl, lout. 598. **all at large**: fully. 600. **ken**: learn, become familiar with. 604. **reaves**: removes. 606–8. **If ... aloft**: If once the cause of this feeling [i.e. the upheaval occasioned by an unquiet mind] removes reason from controlling the unbridled thought, down trots he who by imagination climbed aloft. 609. **So ... fall**: So has the foul riser nothing to prevent his fall. 612. **reft by reason's saws**: taken away by the dictates of reason.

Serve truly your prince and fear no rebel's might:
 On princes' halves the mighty God doth fight.
 Oh, much more than foreswear a foreign foe
 Who seeketh your realm and country to undo! [620]
 Murder detest; have hands unstained with blood.
 Ay with your succour do protect the good;
 Chase treason where trust should be; wed to your friend
 Your heart and power to your lives' last end.

"Fly tickle credence; shun alike distrust": [625]
 Too true it is, and credit it you must.
 The jealous nature wanteth no stormy strife;
 The simple soul ay leadeth a sour life.
 Beware of flatterers, friends in outward show;
 Best is of such to make thine open foe. [630]
 What all men seek, that all men seek to feign;
 Some such to be, some such to seem, them pain.

Mark God's just judgements, punishing sin by sin
 And slippery state wherein aloft we swim.
 The proverb "all day up, if we ne fall" [635]
 Agreeeth well to us high-heaved worldlings all.
 From dunghill couch upstart in honour's weed
 We shine, while Fortune false – whom none erst feed
 To stand with stay and foreswear tickleness –
 Souseth us in mire of dirty brittleness. [640]

And learn ye princes by my wrongèd sprite
 Not to misconster what is meant aright.
 The wingèd words too oft prevent the wit,
 When silence ceaseth afore the lips to sit.
 Alas, what may the words yield worthy death? [645]
 The word's worst is, the speaker's stinking breath.
 Words are but wind; why cost they then so much?
 The guilty kick, when they too smartly touch.

618. On princes' halves: on the princes' side. **623. Chase:** drive away. **632. Some ... pain:** Some take pains to be such; some take pains to seem to be such. **637. couch:** bed, lounge; **weed:** clothing. **638–9. whom ... tickleness:** whom none before has bribed to stand without change and to foreswear inconstancy (**feed:** bribed; employed). **642. misconster:** misconstrue. **643. prevent:** act more quickly than. **645. Alas ... death?:** Alas, what might words produce that is worthy of the penalty of death? **648. they:** words; **touch:** reprove; 'hit' by some apt or smart saying.

Forth irreturnable flyeth the spoken word,
Be it in scoff, in earnest, or in bourd, [650]
Without return and unreceived it hangs
And at the taker's mercy or rigour stands.
Which, if he sourly wrest with wrathful cheer,
The shivering word turns to the speaker's fear.
If friendly courtesy do the word resolve, [655]
To the speaker's comfort sweetly it dissolveth.

Even as the vapour which the fire repels
Turns not to earth but in mid-air dwells,
Where, while it hangeth, if Boreas' frosty flaws
With rigour rattle it, not to rain it thaws [660]
But thunder, lightnings, rattling hail and snow
Sends down to earth, whence first it rose below,
But if fair Phoebus, with his countenance sweet,
Resolve it, down the dew or manna fleeteth

(The manna dew that in the eastern lands [665]
Excelleth the labour of the bees' small hands),
Else for her Memnon grey Aurora's tears
On the earth it stilleth, the partner of her fears,⁴³²
Or sendeth sweet showers to glad their mother earth,
Whence first they took their first inconstant birth, [670]
To so great griefs, ill-taken wind doth grow;
Of words well taken, such delights do flow.

This learnèd, thus be here at length an end;
What since ensued, to thee I will commend.
Now farewell, Baldwin, shield my torn name [675]
From scandalous tromp of blasting black defame.
But, ere I part, hereof thou record bear:
I claim no part of virtues reckoned here.
My vice myself but God my virtues take,
So hence depart I as I ent'red, naked.⁴³³ [680]

650. **bourd**: jest. 655. **resolve**: explain, make clear. 656. **it dissolveth**: it (i.e. the speaker's fear) vanishes. 657. **vapour**: steam. 659. **Boreas' frosty flaws**: the north wind's frosty squalls. 663–8. **The ... fears**: But if the fair sun with its sweet face condenses it, the vapour trickles to earth as the manna dew (which in eastern lands exceeds the work of bees) or it distils on earth – as partner to Aurora's fears – Aurora's tears for her son, grey Memnon. 674. **commend**: entrust.

Thus ended Hastings, both his life and tale,
 Containing all his bliss and world's bale.
 Happy he lived, too happy but for sin;⁴³⁴
 Happy he died, whom right his death did bring.
 Thus ever happy, for there rests no mean [685]
 Twixt blissful life's and baleful death's extreme.
 Yet fearèd not his foes to head his name
 And by these sclaunders to procure his shame.

In rusty armour as in extreme shift,
 They clad themselves to cloak their devilish drift [690]
 And forthwith for substantial citizens sent,
 Declaring to them Hastings' forged intent
 Was to have slain the duke and to have seized
 The king's young person, slaying whom he had pleased,
 But God of justice had withturned that fate, [695]
 Which, where it ought, light on his proper pate.⁴³⁵

Then fed they fame by proclamation spread
 Nought to forget that mought defame him dead,
 Which was so curious and so clerkly penned,
 So long withal, that when some did attend [700]
 His death so young they saw that long afore
 The shroud was shaped, then babe to die was bore.
 So wonteth God to blind the worldly wise
 That not to see that all the world espies.⁴³⁶

One hearing it cried out 'A goodly cast [705]
 And well contrived foul cast away for haste,'
 Whereto another gan in scoff reply,
 'First penned it was by inspiring prophecy.'
 So can God reap up secret mischiefs wrought
 To the confusion of the worker's thought. [710]

683. too: exceedingly. **684. whom right his death did bring:** to whom doing right (the defending of innocent women against Gloucester's false accusations) brought death. **687. foes:** i.e. Gloucester and Buckingham; **head his name:** kill his reputation. **688. sclaunders:** slanders. **699. curious:** carefully. **700. attend:** note. **701. young:** recent. **702. then:** at the time. **703. wonteth:** is accustomed. **705. cast:** device. **706. foul cast away:** badly squandered. **709. reap up:** rip up.

[686] 1563: Twice (apparently an uncorrected misprint for 'Twixt', to which it was altered in the edition of 1574)

My lords, the tub that drowned the Clarence duke
Drowned not his death ne yet his death's rebuke.

Your politic secrets guard with trusty loyalty,
So shall they lurk in most assurèd secrecy.
By Hastings' death and after-fame ye learn [715]
The earth for murder crieth out vengeance stern.
Fly from his faults and spare his quitted fame;
The eager hounds forbear their slainè game.
'Dead, dead! Avaunt, curs, from the conquered chase!';
Ill mought he live who loveth the dead to race. [720]

Thus lived this lord; thus died he; thus he slept,
Mids forward race when first to rest he stepped.
Envious Death, that bounceth as well with mace
At Caesar's courts, as at the poorest gates,
When nature seemed too slow, by art's slope mean [725]
Conveyed him sooner to his life's extreme.
Happy, in preventing woes that after happed,
In slumber sweet his living lights he lapped.

Whose thus untimely death, if any grieve,
Know he, he lived to die and died to live. [730]
Untimely never comes the life's last met:
In cradle death may rightly claim his debt.
Straight after birth due is the fatal bier;
By death's permission the agèd linger here.
Even in thy swath-bands out commission goeth, [735]
To loose thy breath, that yet but youngly bloweth.

Happy, thrice happy, who so loseth his breath,
As life he gaineth by his living death
As Hastings here, whom time and truth agree
To engrave by fame in strong eternity. [740]

717. **quitted fame**: exonerated reputation. 718. **slaine**: slain (disyllabic). 720. **race**: tear, lacerate. 722. **Mids forward race**: In the midst of rushing forward. 723. **bounceth**: knocks; **mace**: sceptre (showing death's ultimate power over all humans). 725. **slope**: sloped, slanting. 727. **preventing**: acting before. 728. **lights**: eyes; **lapped**: enfolded (with an echo of the phrase 'lap in lead': to entomb). 731. **met**: portion, measure. 735. **swath-bands**: swaddling clothes; **comission**: command, order.

Who spareth not spitting, if he spit but blood?
 Yet this our lord spared not, for others' good,
 With one sweet breath his present death to speak
 Against the usurper boar, that hellish freak.

Worthy to live, who lived not for himself [745]
 But prized his fame more than this worldly pelf;
 Whose name and line, if any yet preserve,
 We wish they live like honour to deserve.⁴³⁷
 Whether thou seek by martial prowess praise,
 Or Pallas' policy high thy name to raise, [750]
 Or trusty service just death to attain,
 Hastings forled: trace here his bloody train.

741. **Who ... blood?**: Who does not refrain from spitting, if he spits only blood? 746. **pelf**: junk, trash. 752. **forled**: led before.

[Prose 23]

When I had read this, one said it was very dark and hard to be understood, except it were diligently and very leisurely considered. 'I like it the better', quoth another, 'for that shall cause it to be the oftener read and the better remembered. Considering also that it is written for the learned (for all such
 5 magistrates are or should be), it cannot be too hard, so long as it is sound and learnedly written.'

Then said the reader, 'the next here whom I find miserable are King Edward's two sons, cruelly murdered in the Tower of London; have you their tragedy?' 'No, surely', quoth I; 'the Lord Vaux undertook to pen it,
 10 but what he hath done therein I am not certain, and therefore I let it pass till I know farther.⁴³⁸ I have here "The Duke of Buckingham", King Richard's chief instrument, written by Master Thomas Sackville.' 'Read it we pray you', said they. 'With a good will', quoth I, 'but first you shall hear his preface or induction.' 'Hath he made a preface?' quoth one; 'what
 15 meaneth he thereby, seeing none other hath used the like order?' 'I will tell you the cause thereof', quoth I, 'which is this: after that he understood that some of the council would not suffer the book to be printed in such order as we had agreed and determined, he purposed with himself to have gotten

8. **two sons**: King Edward V and Richard, first duke of York (both d. 1483?).

at my hands all the tragedies that were before the duke of Buckingham's,
20 which he would have preserved in one volume. And, from that time back-
ward even to the time of William the Conqueror, he determined to con-
tinue and perfect all the story himself, in such order as Lydgate, following
Bochas, had already used.⁴³⁹ And, therefore, to make a meet induction into
the matter, he devised this poesy, which in my judgement is so well penned
25 that I would not have any verse thereof left out of our volume.

'Now that you know the cause and meaning of his doing, you shall also
hear what he hath done. His induction beginneth thus':

The Induction

The wrathful winter, proaching on apace,
With blustering blasts had all ybared the treen,⁴⁴⁰
And old Saturnus with his frosty face
With chilling cold had pierced the tender green,⁴⁴¹
The mantles rent, wherin enwrappèd been [5]
The gladsome groves that now lay overthrown,
The tapets torn, and every bloom down blown.⁴⁴²

The soil that erst so seemly was to seen
Was all despoiled of her beauty's hue,
And soot fresh flowers (wherewith the summer's queen [10]
Had clad the earth) now Boreas' blasts down blew.
And small fowls flocking in their song did rue
The winter's wrath, wherewith each thing defaced
In woeful wise bewailed the summer past.

Hawthorne had lost his motley livery; [15]
The naked twigs were shivering all for cold
And, dropping down the tears abundantly,
Each thing, me thought, with weeping eye me told
The cruel season, bidding me withhold
Myself within, for I was gotten out [20]
Into the fields whereas I walked about.

1. **proaching on apace**: quickly approaching. 5. **mantles rent**: coverings (lit. cloaks) torn. 7. **tapets**: coverings (lit. ornamented tapestries). 10. **soot**: sweet.

[Title]: 1563 *setting 2*: Master Sackville's
Induction

[7]: 1563 *setting 2*: every tree down blown

When, lo, the night with misty mantles spread
Gan dark the day and dim the azure skies,
And Venus in her message Hermes sped
To bloody Mars, to will him not to rise, [25]
While she herself approached in speedy wise,
And Virgo, hiding her disdainful breast,
With Thetis now had laid her down to rest.⁴⁴³

Whiles Scorpio, dreading Sagittarius' dart,
Whose bow prest bent in sight the string had slipped, [30]
Down slid into the ocean flood apart.
The bear that in the Irish seas had dipped
His grisly feet with speed from thence he whipped,
For Thetis, hasting from the virgin's bed,
Pursued the bear that ere she came was fled.⁴⁴⁴ [35]

And Phaeton now near-reaching to his race,
With glistering beams, gold-streaming where they bent,
Was prest to enter in his resting place;
Erythius that in the cart first went [40]
Had even now attained his journey's stint
And fast declining hid away his head,
While Titan couched him in his purple bed.

And pale Cynthia, with her borrowed light
Beginning to supply her brother's place,
Was past the noonstead six degrees in sight [45]
When sparkling stars amid the heavens' face
With twinkling light shone on the earth apace,
That while they brought about the nightes' chair
The dark had dimmed the day ere I was ware.

And sorrowing I to see the summer flowers, [50]
The lively green, the lusty leas forlorn,
The sturdy trees so shattered with the showers,

23. **Gan dark**: began to darken. 24. **Hermes**: the planet Mercury. 28. **With Thetis**: In the ocean (**Thetis**: a sea nymph in Homer's *Iliad*). 29–30. **Whiles ... slipped**: While Scorpio, in fear of the arrow that had flown from the string of Sagittarius's ready-bent bow in sight. 38. **prest**: ready, eager. 40. **stint**: stopping point. 48. **nightes' chair**: night's chariot (here and elsewhere, 'nightes' is disyllabic). 51. **lusty leas**: pleasant meadows.

The fields so fade that flourished so before,
 It taught me well all earthly things be born
 To die the death, for nought long time may last: [55]
 The summer's beauty yields to winter's blast.

Then looking upward to the heavens' leams,
 With night's stars thick powdered everywhere,
 Which erst so glistened with the golden streams
 That cheerful Phoebus spread down from his sphere, [60]
 Beholding dark oppressing day so near,
 The sudden sight reduced to my mind
 The sundry changes that in earth we find.

That musing on this worldly wealth in thought,
 Which comes and goes more faster than we see [65]
 The flickering flame that with the fire is wrought,
 My busy mind presented unto me
 Such fall of peers as in this realm had be
 That oft I wished some would their woes describe
 To warn the rest whom fortune left alive. [70]

And straight forth stalking with redoubled pace,
 For that I saw the night drew on so fast,
 In black all clad there fell before my face
 A piteous wight, whom woe had all forwaste.
 Forth from her eyen the crystal tears outbrast, [75]
 And, sighing sore, her hands she wrung and fold,
 Tare all her hair, that ruth was to behold.

Her body small forwithered and forspent,
 As is the stalk that summer's drought oppressed,
 Her welked face, with woeful tears besprent, [80]
 Her colour pale and, as it seemed her best,
 In woe and plaint reposed was her rest,
 And, as the stone that drops of water wears,
 So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.

53. **fade**: withered. 57. **leams**: lights. 62. **reduced**: returned. 64. **That**: so that. 74. **forwaste**: enfeebled.
 77. **Tare**: tore. 78. **forwithered**: withered; **forspent**: worn out. 80. **welked**: withered, dried up; **besprent**: sprin-
 kled. 82. **reposed**: placed.

Her eyes swollen with flowing streams afloat, [85]
 Wherewith her looks thrown up full piteously,
 Her forceless hands together oft she smote,
 With doleful shrieks that echoed in the sky,
 Whose plaint such sighs did straight accompany
 That in my doom was never man did see [90]
 A wight but half so woebegone as she.

I stood aghast, beholding all her plight,
 Tween dread and dolour so distrained in heart
 That while my hairs upstart with the sight
 The tears outstreamed for sorrow of her smart. [95]
 But when I saw no end that could apart
 The deadly dool which she so sore did make,
 With doleful voice then thus to her I spake.

‘Unwrap thy woes whatever wight thou be
 And stint betime to spill thyself with plaint. [100]
 Tell what thou art and whence, for well I see
 Thou canst not dure with sorrow thus attaint.’
 And with that word of sorrow all forfaint
 She lookèd up and, prostrate as she lay,
 With piteous sound, lo, thus she gan to say: [105]

‘Alas, I, wretch, whom thus thou seest distrained
 With wasting woes that never shall aslake,
 Sorrow I am, in endless torments pained
 Among the Furies in the infernal lake,
 Where Pluto god of hell so grisly black [110]
 Doth hold his throne and Letheus’ deadly taste
 Doth reave remembrance of each thing forepast.⁴⁴⁵

Whence come I am, the dreary destiny
 And luckless lot for to bemoan of those
 Whom Fortune, in this maze of misery, [115]

90. **doom**: judgement. 93. **distrained**: distressed. 96. **apart**: set aside. 97. **dool**: mourning. 100. **And ... plaint**: And in good time leave off killing yourself with wailing. 102. **Thou ... attaint**: You cannot last long afflicted as you are by sorrow. 103. **forfaint**: very faint. 107. **aslake**: diminish. 112. **reave**: take away; **forepast**: that has previously occurred.

Of wretched chance most woeful mirrors chose,
 That when you seest how lightly they did lose
 Their pomp, their power, and that they thought most sure,
 Thou mayst soon deem no earthly joy may dure.’

Whose rueful voice no sooner had out-brayed [120]
 Those woeful words wherewith she sorrowed so
 But out, alas, she shrigh and never stayed,
 Fell down and all-to dashed herself for woe.
 The cold pale dread my limbs gan overgo,
 And I so sorrowed at her sorrows eft [125]
 That what with grief and fear my wits were reft.

I stretched myself, and straight my heart revives
 That dread and dolour erst did so appale.
 Like him that with the fervent fever strives
 When sickness seeks his castle health to scale, [130]
 With gathered spirits so forced I fear to avale,
 And, rearing her, with anguish all fordone,
 My spirits returned and then I thus begun:

‘Oh Sorrow, alas, sith Sorrow is thy name,
 And that to thee this drear doth well pertain, [135]
 In vain it were to seek to cease the same,
 But as a man himself with sorrow slain,
 So I, alas, do comfort thee in pain
 That here in sorrow art forsunk so deep
 That at thy sight I can but sigh and weep.’ [140]

I had no sooner spoken of a sike
 But that the storm so rumbled in her breast
 As Aeolus could never roar the like,
 And showers down rainèd from her eyen so fast
 That all bedrent the place, till at the last [145]
 Well easèd they the dolour of her mind,
 As rage of rain doth swage the stormy wind.

116. **most woeful mirrors chose**: chose to be the most woeful exemplars. 122. **shrigh**: shrieked. 123. **all-to dashed**: utterly beat. 125. **eft**: once more. 128. **appale**: make pale. 130. **castle health**: castle of his health. 131. **avale**: yield. 132. **rearing her**: raising her up; **fordone**: exhausted. 139. **forsunk**: submerged. 141. **sike**: sigh (an archaism). 145. **all bedrent**: completely drenched. 147. **swage**: pacify.

Far-forth she pacèd in her fearful tale:
 'Come, come', quoth she, 'and see what I shall show;
 Come, hear the plaining and the bitter bale [150]
 Of worthy men by Fortune overthrow.
 Come thou and see them rueing all in row.
 They were but shades that erst in mind thou rolled.
 Come, come with me; thine eyes shall them behold!'

What could these words but make me more aghast [155]
 To hear her tell whereon I mused whilere?
 So was I mazed therewith, till at the last,
 Musing upon her words and what they were,
 All suddenly well lessened was my fear,
 For to my mind returnèd how she telled [160]
 Both what she was and where her wone she held,

Whereby I knew that she a goddess was,
 And therewithal resorted to my mind
 My thought that late presented me the glass
 Of brittle state, of cares that here we find, [165]
 Of thousand woes to silly men assigned,
 And how she now bid me come and behold,
 To see with eye that erst in thought I rolled.

Flat down I fell and with all reverence
 Adorèd her, perceiving now that she, [170]
 A goddess sent by godly providence,
 In earthly shape thus showed herself to me
 To wail and rue this world's uncertainty,
 And while I honoured thus her godhead's might,
 With plaining voice these words to me she shright: [175]

'I shall thee guide first to the grisly lake
 And thence unto the blissful place of rest,
 Where thou shalt see and hear the plaint they make
 That whilom here bare swinge among the best.

148. **Far-forth**: To a great distance. 150. **bale**: mental suffering. 153. **They ... rolled**: Those you earlier recorded in your mind were but unreal images (see lines 67–8). 156. **whilere**: a while ago. 157. **mazed**: bewildered. 161. **wone**: dwelling-place. 164–5. **glass of brittle state**: the true description of unreliable standing, condition. 179. **bare swinge**: bore rule.

This shalt thou see, but great is the unrest [180]
 That thou must bide before thou canst attain
 Unto the dreadful place where these remain.'

And with these words as I upraisèd stood
 And gan to follow her that straight forth paced,
 Ere I was ware, into a desert wood [185]
 We now were come, where, hand in hand embraced,
 She led the way and through the thick so traced
 As but I had been guided by her might
 It was no way for any mortal wight.

But lo, while thus amid the desert dark [190]
 We passèd on with steps and pace unmeet,
 A rumbling roar confused with howl and bark
 Of dogs shook all the ground under our feet
 And stroke the din within our ears so deep
 As half distraught unto the ground I fell, [195]
 Besought return and not to visit hell.

But she forthwith, uplifting me apace,
 Removed my dread and with a steadfast mind
 Bade me come on, for here was now the place,
 The place where we our travail end should find, [200]
 Wherewith I arose and to the place assigned
 Astoynde I stalk, when straight we approached near
 The dreadful place that you will dread to hear.

An hideous hole all vast, withouten shape,
 Of endless depth, o'erwhelmed with ragged stone, [205]
 With ugly mouth and grisly jaws doth gape
 And to our sight confounds itself in one.
 Here entered we and, yeding forth, anon
 An horrible loathly lake we might discern,
 As black as pitch, that clepèd is Averde.⁴⁴⁶ [210]

185. **ware:** aware. 187. **thick:** dense forest. 188. **but:** except that. 191. **unmeet:** unevenly matched.
 202. **Astoynde:** astonished (dazed, bewildered). 207. **confounds itself in one:** makes its different elements difficult
 to distinguish from one another. 208. **yeding:** going (a pseudo-archaism).

A deadly gulf where nought but rubbish grows,
With foul black swelth in thickened lumps that lies,
Which up in the air such stinking vapours throws
That over there may fly no fowl but dies,
Choked with the pestilent savours that arise. [215]
Hither we come, whence forth we still did pace,
In dreadful fear amid the dreadful place.

And first within the porch and jaws of hell
Sat deep Remorse of Conscience, all besprent
With tears, and to herself oft would she tell [220]
Her wretchedness and, cursing, never stint
To sob and sigh but ever thus lament
With thoughtful care, as she that, all in vain,
Would wear and waste continually in pain.

Her eyes unsteadfast, rolling here and there, [225]
Whirled on each place as place that vengeance brought,
So was her mind continually in fear
Tossed and tormented with the tedious thought
Of those detested crimes which she had wrought.
With dreadful cheer and looks thrown to the sky, [230]
Wishing for death, and yet she could not die.

Next saw we Dread all trembling, how he shook
With foot uncertain proffered here and there,
Benumbed of speech, and with a ghastly look
Searched every place all pale and dead for fear. [235]
His cap borne up with staring of his hair,
Stoynde and amazed at his own shade for dreed
And fearing greater dangers than was need.

And next within the entry of this lake
Sat fell Revenge gnashing her teeth for ire, [240]
Devising means how she may vengeance take,
Never in rest till she have her desire,

211. **rubbish**: worthless matter. 212. **swelth**: foul water. 223. **as she that**: as she who. 224. **Would**: wished to.
228. **tedious**: wearying. 230. **dreadful cheer**: a visage expressing dread. 236. **staring**: the standing upright.
237. **Stoynde**: Stunned; **dreed**: dread.

But frets within so far-forth with the fire
 Of wreaking flames that now determines she
 To die by death, or venged by death to be. [245]

When fell Revenge with bloody foul pretence
 Had showed herself as next in order set,
 With trembling limbs we softly parted thence,
 Till in our eyes another sight we met:
 When fro my heart a sigh forthwith I fet, [250]
 Rueing, alas, upon the woeful plight
 Of Misery that next appeared in sight.

His face was lean and somedeal pined away,
 And eke his hands consumèd to the bone,
 But what his body was I cannot say, [255]
 For on his carcass raiment had he none,
 Save clouts and patches piecèd one by one,
 With staff in hand and scrip on shoulders cast,
 His chief defence against the winter's blast.

His food for most was wild fruits of the tree, [260]
 Unless sometime some crumbs fell to his share,
 Which in his wallet long, God wot, kept he,
 As on the which full daint'ly would he fare.
 His drink the running stream, his cup the bare
 Of his palm closed, his bed the hard, cold ground: [265]
 To this poor life was Misery ybound.

Whose wretched state when we had well beheld,
 With tender ruth on him and on his fears,
 In thoughtful cares forth then our pace we held
 And, by and by, another shape appears [270]
 Of Greedy Care, still brushing up the breres,
 His knuckles knobbed, his flesh deep dented in,
 With tawèd hands and hard ytannèd skin.

243. **so far-forth**: to such a degree. 244. **wreaking**: revenging. 246. **pretence**: ostentatious display. 250. **fet**: fetched. 257. **clouts**: bits of fabric. 258. **scrip**: beggar's bag. 262. **Which ... he**: Which he kept for long periods in his bag, God knows. 271. **breres**: briars. 273. **tawèd**: beaten (as if to be made into leather).

The morrow grey no sooner hath begun
To spread his light even peeping in our eyes, [275]
When he is up and to his work yrun,
But let the night's black misty mantles rise
And with foul dark never so much disguise
The fair bright day, yet ceaseth he no while
But hath his candles to prolong his toil. [280]

By him lay Heavy Sleep, the cousin of Death,
Flat on the ground and still as any stone,
A very corpse save yielding forth a breath.
Small keep took he whom Fortune frownèd on
Or whom she lifted up into the throne [285]
Of high renown; but as a living death
So, dead alive, of life he drew the breath.

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travail's ease, the still night's fere was he,
And of our life in earth the better part, [290]
Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide and oft that never be,
Without respect esteeming equally
King Croesus' pomp and Irus' poverty.⁴⁴⁷

And next in order sad Old Age we found, [295]
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground
As on the place where nature him assigned
To rest, when that the sisters had untwined
His vital thread and ended with their knife [300]
The fleeting course of fast-declining life.

There heard we him, with broken and hollow plaint,
Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
And all for nought his wretched mind torment
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past [305]
And fresh delights of lusty youth forwaste,

286. **but**: merely. 289. **fere**: companion. 291. **Reaver**: robber. 292. **tide**: happen. 299. **the sisters**: the Fates. 306. **forwaste**: used up.

Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek
And to be young again of Jove beseeke!

But and the cruel fates so fixèd be
That time forepassed cannot return again, [310]
This one request of Jove yet prayèd he:
That in such withered plight and wretched pain
As eld (accompanied with his loathsome train)
Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might awhile yet linger forth his lief [315]

And not so soon descend into the pit
Where death, when he the mortal corpse hath slain,
With reckless hand in grave doth cover it,
Thereafter never to enjoy again
The gladsome light but in the ground ylain [320]
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had never into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing, how he stood
Unto himself and how he would bemoan
His youth forepassed – as though it wrought him good [325]
To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone –
He would have mused and marvelled much whereon
This wretched Age should life desire so fain
And knows full well life doth but length his pain.

Crookbacked he was, toothshaken, and blear-eyed, [330]
Went on three feet and sometime crept on four,
With old lame bones that rattled by his side,
His scalp all pilled, and he with eld forlore.
His withered fist still knocking at death's door,
Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath: [335]
For brief, the shape and messenger of death.

308. **beseeke**: beseech. 309. **and**: if. 310. **forepassed**: that has previously passed. 313. **eld**: old age. 314. **all were**: even though. 315. **lief**: life. 318. **reckless**: indifferent, uncaring. 322. **as**: as if. 328. **fain**: eagerly. 330. **toothshaken**: afflicted with loosened teeth. 331. **Went ... four**: He travelled with a cane and sometimes crawled on all fours. 333. **pilled**: bereft of hair; **forlore**: brought to ruin.

And fast by him pale Malady was placed
Sore sick in bed, her colour all forgone,
Bereft of stomach, savour, and of taste,
Ne could she brook no meat but broths alone – [340]
Her breath corrupt, her keepers every one
Abhorring her, her sickness past recure,
Detesting physic and all physic's cure.

But, oh, the doleful sight that then we see!
We turned our look and on the other side [345]
A grisly shape of Famine mought we see,
With greedy looks and gaping mouth that cried
And roared for meat as she should there have died.
Her body thin and bare as any bone,
Whereto was left nought but the case alone, [350]

And that, alas, was gnawn on everywhere,
All full of holes, that I ne mought refrain
From tears to see how she her arms could tear
And with her teeth gnash on the bones in vain
When, all for nought, she fain would so sustain [355]
Her starven corpse, that rather seemed a shade
Then any substance of a creature made.

Great was her force whom stone wall could not stay,
Her tearing nails snatching at all she saw,
With gaping jaws that by no means ymay [360]
Be satisfied from hunger of her maw
But eats herself as she that hath no law,
Gnawing, alas, her carcass all in vain,
Where you may count each sinew, bone, and vein.

On her while we thus firmly fixed our eyes [365]
That bled for ruth of such a dreary sight,
Lo, suddenly she shrigh in so huge wise
As made hell gates to shiver with the might,
Wherewith a dart we saw how it did light

339. **stomach**: appetite; **savour**: relish (for something). 348. **meat**: food. 350. **case**: hide, skin.

Right on her breast, and therewithal pale Death [370]
 Enthrilling it to reave her of her breath.⁴⁴⁸

And by and by a dumb dead corpse we saw,
 Heavy and cold, the shape of Death aright,
 That daunts all earthly creatures to his law,
 Against whose force in vain it is to fight. [375]
 Ne peers, ne princes, nor no mortal wight,
 No towns, ne realms, cities, ne strongest tower,
 But all perforce must yield unto his power.

His dart anon out of the corpse he took,
 And in his hand, a dreadful sight to see, [380]
 With great triumph eftsoons the same he shook:
 That most of all my fears affrayèd me.
 His body dight with nought but bones pardie,
 The naked shape of man there saw I plain,
 All save the flesh, the sinew, and the vein. [385]

Lastly stood War in glittering arms yclad,
 With visage grim, stern looks, and blackly hued.
 In his right hand a naked sword he had
 That to the hilts was all with blood imbrued,
 And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued) [390]
 Famine and fire he held, and therewithal
 He razèd towns and threw down towers and all.

Cities he sacked, and realms that whilom flowered
 In honour, glory, and rule above the best
 He overwhelmed and all their fame devoured, [395]
 Consumed, destroyed, wasted, and never ceased
 Till he their wealth, their name, and all oppressed.
 His face forhewed with wounds, and by his side
 There hung his targe with gashes deep and wide,

In mids of which, depainted there we found [400]
 Deadly Debate all full of snaky hair

370. **therewithal**: with that. 371. **Enthrilling**: piercing; **reave**: rob. 374. **daunts**: subjects. 378. **perforce**: necessarily. 382. **affrayed**: terrified. 383. **His ... pardie**: His body arrayed with nothing but bones, by God. 398. **forhewed**: hewed. 399. **targe**: shield. 400. **depainted**: depicted. 401. **Deadly Debate**: Deadly Strife.

That with a bloody fillet was ybound,
Outbreathing nought but discord everywhere,
And round about were portrayed here and there
The huyg hosts, Darius and his power, [405]
His kings, princes, his peers, and all his flower,

Whom great Macedo vanquished there in sight
With deep slaughter, despoiling all his pride,
Pierced through his realms and daunted all his might.⁴⁴⁹
Duke Hannibal beheld I there beside, [410]
In Cannas field victor how he did ride,
And woeful Romans that in vain withstood
And Consul Paullus covered all in blood.⁴⁵⁰

Yet saw I more the fight at Trasimene
And Trebey field, and eke when Hannibal [415]
And worthy Scipio last in arms were seen
Before Carthago gate to try for all
The world's empire, to whom it should befall.⁴⁵¹
There saw I Pompey and Caesar clad in arms,
Their hosts allied and all their civil harms, [420]

With conquerors' hands forbathed in their own blood,
And Caesar weeping over Pompey's head.⁴⁵²
Yet saw I Scilla and Marius where they stood,
Their great cruelty and the deep bloodshed
Of friends.⁴⁵³ Cyrus I saw and his host dead, [425]
And how the queen with great despite hath flung
His head in blood of them she overcome.⁴⁵⁴

Xerxes the Persian king yet saw I there
With his huge host that drank the rivers dry,
Dismounted hills, and made the vales uprear. [430]
His host and all yet saw I slain, pardie;⁴⁵⁵
Thebès I saw all razed, how it did lie
In heaps of stones, and Tyrus put to spoil,
With walls and towers flat evened with the soil.⁴⁵⁶

402. *fillet*: head-band. 405. *huyg*: huge. 406. *flower*: choicest men. 410. *Duke*: General. 421. *forbathed*: fully bathed.

But Troy, alas (methought), above them all [435]
 It made mine eyes in very tears consume:
 When I beheld the woeful weird befall
 That by the wrathful will of gods was come,
 And Jove's unmovèd sentence and foredoom
 On Priam King and on his town so bent, [440]
 I could not lin but I must there lament,⁴³⁷

And that the more sith destiny was so stern
 As force perforce there might no force avail
 But she must fall, and by her fall we learn [445]
 That cities, towers, wealth, world, and all shall quail.
 No manhood, might, nor nothing mought prevail:
 All were there prest full many a prince and peer,
 And many a knight that sold his death full dear.

Not worthy Hector, worthiest of them all,
 Her hope, her joy: his force is now for nought. [450]
 Oh Troy, Troy, there is no boot but bale!
 The hugy horse within thy walls is brought,
 Thy turrets fall, thy knights that whilom fought
 In arms amid the field are slain in bed,
 Thy gods defiled, and all thy honour dead. [455]

The flames upspring and cruelly they creep
 From wall to roof, till all to cinders waste.
 Some fire the houses where the wretches sleep;
 Some rush in here, some run in there as fast:
 In everywhere or sword or fire they taste. [460]
 The walls are torn, the towers whirled to the ground;
 There is no mischief but may there be found.

Cassandra yet there saw I how they haled
 From Pallas' house with sparkled tress undone,

437. **weird**: fate. 439. **unmovèd**: fixed; **foredoom**: judgement establishing a later destiny. 440. **Priam King**: Priam, legendary king of Troy during the Trojan war. 441. **lin**: leave off. 443. **force perforce**: by force of circumstances. 447. **All ... peer**: Even though there had been many a prince and peer ready for action. 449. **Hector**: Troy's greatest defender in Homer's *The Iliad*. 451. **boot**: remedy. 460. **or sword or fire**: either sword or fire. 463. **Cassandra**: Trojan princess killed by the Greeks during the sack of Troy; **haled**: pulled. 464. **Pallas' house**: Minerva's temple; **sparkled**: dishevelled.

Her wrists fast bound and with Greeks' rout impaled, [465]
And Priam eke in vain how he did run
To arms, whom Pyrrhus with despite hath done
To cruel death and bathed him in the bain
Of his son's blood before the altar slain.⁴⁵⁸

But how can I describe the doleful sight [470]
That in the shield so lifelike fair did shine?
Sith in this world I think was never wight
Could have set forth the half not half so fine.
I can no more but tell how there is seen
Fair Ilium fall in burning red gleeds down [475]
And from the soil great Troy, Neptunus' town.⁴⁵⁹

Herefrom, when scarce I could mine eyes withdraw
That filled with tears as doth the springing well,
We passèd on so far forth till we saw
Rude Acheron, a loathsome lake to tell, [480]
That boils and bubs up swelth as black as hell,
Where grisly Charon at their fixèd tide
Still ferries ghosts unto the farther side.

The agèd god no sooner Sorrow spied
But, hasting straight unto the bank apace, [485]
With hollow call unto the rout he cried
To swerve apart and give the goddess place.
Straight it was done, when to the shore we pace,
Where, hand in hand as we then linkèd fast,
Within the boat we are together placed, [490]

And forth we launch full fraughted to the brink,
When with the unwonted weight the rusty keel
Began to crack as if the same should sink.
We hoise up mast and sail, that in a while
We fet the shore, where scarcely we had while [495]
For to arrive but that we heard anon
A three-sound bark confounded all in one.

465. **impaled**: surrounded. 468. **bain**: bath water. 475. **gleeds**: embers. 476. **soil**: face of the earth. 481. **bubs up swelth**: brings bubbling up foul water. 482. **tide**: time. 491. **fraughted**: laden. 492. **unwonted**: unaccustomed; **rusty keel**: decrepit boat. 494. **hoise**: raise aloft. 495. **fet**: arrived at; **while**: time.

We had not long forth passed but that we saw
 Black Cerberus the hideous hound of hell,
 With bristles reared and with a three-mouthed jaw [500]
 Fordinning the air with his horrible yell
 Out of the deep dark cave where he did dwell.
 The goddess straight he knew and, by and by,
 He peased and couched while that we passèd by.

Thence come we to the horror and the hell, [505]
 The large great kingdoms and the dreadful reign
 Of Pluto in his throne where he did dwell,
 The wide waste places and the hugy plain,
 The wailings, shrikes, and sundry sorts of pain,
 The sighs, the sobs, the deep and deadly groan, [510]
 Earth, air, and all resounding plaint and moan.

Here puled the babes, and here the maids unwed
 With folded hands their sorry chance bewailed;
 Here wept the guiltless slain and lovers dead
 That slew themselves when nothing else availed. [515]
 A thousand sorts of sorrows here that wailed
 With sighs and tears, sobs, shrikes, and all yfere
 That (oh alas!) it was a hell to hear.

We stayed us straight and with a rueful fear [520]
 Beheld this heavy sight, while from mine eyes
 The vapoured tears down stillèd here and there,
 And Sorrow eke in far more woeful wise
 Took on with plaint, upheaving to the skies
 Her wretched hands, that with her cry the rout
 Gan all in heaps to swarm us round about. [525]

‘Lo here’, quoth Sorrow, ‘princes of renown
 That whilom sat on top of Fortune’s wheel
 Now laid full low, like wretches whirlèd down
 Even with one frown that stayed but with a smile.

501. **Fordinning**: Filling with noise. 504. **peased and couched**: quieted and lay down. 509. **shrikes**: shrieks. 512. **puled**: whined, cried out plaintively. 513. **sorry chance**: misfortune. 517. **yfere**: together. 519. **We stayed us straight**: We stopped immediately. 521. **vapoured**: moist; **down stilled**: trickled down. 528–9. **Now ... smile**: Now fully laid low, brought down on Fortune’s wheel like wretches by a single frown from Fortune, who had once kept them in place solely by her smiling upon them.

And now behold the thing that thou, erewhile,
Saw only in thought, and what thou now shalt hear,
Recompt the same to kaiser, king, and peer.⁷ [530]

Then first came Henry, duke of Buckingham,
His cloak of black all pilled and quite forworn,⁴⁶⁰
Wringing his hands and Fortune oft doth blame, [535]
Which of a duke hath made him now her scorn.
With ghastly looks, as one in manner lorn,
Oft spread his arms, stretched hands he joins as fast,
With rueful cheer and vapoured eyes upcast.

His cloak he rent, his manly breast he beat, [540]
His hair all torn about the place it lay,
My heart so molt to see his grief so great,
As feelingly me thought it dropped away.
His eyes they whirled about withouten stay,
With stormy sighs the place did so complain [545]
As if his heart at each had burst in twain.

Thrice he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thrice the sighs did swallow up his voice,
At each of which he shrieked so withal
As though the heavens rived with the noise, [550]
Till at the last, recovering his voice,
Supping the tears that all his breast berained,
On cruel Fortune weeping thus he plained:

532. **Recompt**: recount; **kaiser**: emperor. 534. **pilled**: threadbare; **forworn**: worn out. 536. **of**: from. 537. **lorn**: lost, ruined. 542. **molt**: melted. 543. **feelingly**: with emotion. 545. **place did so complain**: did so fill with expressions of sorrow. 546. **each**: each sigh. 550. **rived**: split.

[Tragedy 22b]

The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham

‘Who trusts too much in honour’s highest throne
And warely watch not sly Dame Fortune’s snare,
Or who in court will bear the sway alone
And wisely weigh not how to wield the care,
Behold he me and by my death beware, [5]
Whom flattering Fortune falsely so beguiled
That, lo, she slew where erst full smooth she smiled.

And Sackville, sith in purpose now thou hast
The woeful fall of princes to describe,
Whom Fortune both uplift and gain down cast, [10]
To show thereby the unsurety in this life,
Mark well my fall, which I shall show believe,
And paint it forth that all estates may know:
Have they the warning and be mine the woe.

For noble blood made me both prince and peer, [15]
Yea peerless too, had reason purchased place,
And God with gifts endowed me largely here,
But what avails his gifts where fails his grace?
My mother’s sire, sprung of a kingly race,
And called was Edmund, duke of Somerset, [20]
Bereft of life ere time by nature set.⁴⁶¹

Whose faithful heart to Henry Sixth so wrought
That never he him in weal or woe forsook,
Till lastly he at Tewkesbury Field was caught

8. **sith**: since. 10. **gain**: back again. 12. **believe**: immediately. 16. **purchased place**: obtained its proper place.

Where with an axe his violent death he took.⁴⁶² [25]
He never could King Edward's party brook,
Till by his death he vouched that quarrel good
In which his sire and grandsire spilt their blood.⁴⁶³

And such was erst my father's cruel chance,
Of Stafford earl by name that Humphrey hight, [30]
Who, ever prest, did Henry's part advance
And never ceased till at St Albans' fight
He lost his life, as then did many a knight,
Where eke my grandsire duke of Buckingham
Was wounded sore and hardly scaped untane.⁴⁶⁴ [35]

But what may boot to stay the sisters three
When Atropos perforce will cut the thread?
The doleful day was come when you might see
Northampton field with armed men o'erspread, [40]
Where fate would algates have my grandsire dead.
So, rushing forth amidst the fiercest fight,
He lived and died there in his master's right.⁴⁶⁵

In place of whom, as it befell my lot,
Like on a stage so stepped I in straight way,
Enjoying there but woefully, God wot, [45]
As he that had a slender part to play,
To teach thereby in earth no state may stay,
But as our parts abridge or length our age,
So pass we all while others fill the stage.

For of myself the dreary fate to plain, [50]
I was sometime a prince withouten peer;
When Edward Fifth began his rueful reign,
Ay me!, then I began that hateful year
To compass that which I have bought so dear.
I bare the swinge, I and that wretched wight, [55]
The duke of Gloucèster that Richard hight.

27. **vouched**: certified. 35. **untane**: untaken. 36. **But ... three**: But what may avail to stop the three sisters (i.e. the Fates). 37. **Atropos**: one of the three mythological Fates; **perforce**: unavoidably. 40. **algates**: by all means. 51. **sometime**: once.

For when the Fates had reft that royal prince
 Edward the Fourth, chief mirror of that name,
 The duke and I fast joinèd ever since
 In faithful love, our secret drifts to frame. [60]
 What he thought best to me so seemed the same,
 Myself not bent so much for to aspire
 As to fulfil that greedy duke's desire,

Whose restless mind, sore thirsting after rule,
 When that he saw his nephews both to been [65]
 Through tender years as yet unfit to rule
 And rather rulèd by their mother's kin,
 There sought he first his mischief to begin,
 To pluck from them their mother's friends assigned,
 For well he wist they would withstand his mind.⁴⁶⁶ [70]

To follow which, he ran so headlong swift,
 With eager thirst of his desired draught,
 To seek their deaths that sought to dash his drift,
 Of whom the chief the queen's allies he thought,
 That bent thereto, with mounts of mischief fraught, [75]
 He knew their lives would be so sore his let,
 That in their deaths his only help he set.

And I, most cursèd caitiff that I was,
 Seeing the state unsteadfast how it stood,
 His chief complice to bring the same to pass, [80]
 Unhappy wretch, consented to their blood.⁴⁶⁷
 Ye kings and peers that swim in worldly good,
 In seeking blood the end advert you plain
 And see if blood ay ask not blood again.

Consider Cyrus in your cruel thought, [85]
 A makeless prince in riches and in might,
 And weigh in mind the bloody deeds he wrought

57. **reft**: taken. 58. **chief mirror of that name**: paragon of all who bore the name Edward. 59. **fast**: firmly. 72. **draught**: scheme. 75. **with mounts of mischief fraught**: laden with heaps of wickedness. 76. **sore his let**: so greatly his hindrance. 77. **That**: in consequence of which. 81. **Unhappy**: Unfortunate. 83. **the end advert you plain**: take clear notice of the result. 84. **ay**: always. 86. **makeless**: matchless.

In shedding which he set his whole delight.
But see the gerdon lotted to this wight:
He whose huge power no man might overthrow [90]
Tomyris Queen with great despite hath slowe.

His head dismembered from his mangled corpse
Herself she cast into a vessel fraught
With clotted blood of them that felt her force,
And with these words a just reward she taught: [95]
“Drink now thy fill of thy desired draught!”⁴⁶⁸
Lo, mark the fine that did this prince befall;
Mark not this one but mark the end of all.

Behold Cambyses and his fatal day,
Where murder’s mischief mirror-like is left: [100]
While he his brother Mergus cast to slay,
A dreadful thing, his wits were him bereft.
A sword he caught, wherewith he piercèd eft
His body gored, which he of life benooms:
So just is God in all his dreadful dooms.⁴⁶⁹ [105]

Oh bloody Brutus, rightly didst thou rue,
And thou, Cassius, justly came thy fall,
That with the sword wherewith thou Caesar slew
Murd’rest thyself and reft thy life withal.⁴⁷⁰
A mirror let him be unto you all [110]
That murderers be of murder to your meed,
For murder crieth out vengeance on your seed.

Lo Bessus, he that armed with murderer’s knife
And trait’rous heart against his royal king,
With bloody hands bereft his master’s life. [115]
Advert the fine his foul offence did bring
And, loathing murder as most loathly thing,
Behold in him the just deserved fall
That ever hath and shall betide them all!

91. **slowe**: slain. 94. **clotted**: clotted. 97. **fine**: end. 100. **mirror-like**: as an example. 101. **cast**: contrived. 103. **caught**: took hold of; **eft**: afterwards. 104. **gored**: stabbed; **benooms**: benims, deprives (an archaism). 113. **Lo**: behold. 116. **advert**: Take heed of.

What bootèd him his false, usurpèd reign, [120]
 Whereto by murder he did so ascend?
 When, like a wretch, led in an iron chain,
 He was presented by his chiefest friend
 Unto the foes of him whom he had slain,
 That even they should venge so foul a guilt [125]
 That rather sought to have his blood yspilt.⁴⁷¹

Take heed ye princes and ye prelates all
 Of this outrage, which though it sleep awhile
 And not disclosed, as it doth seld befall,
 Yet God that suff'reth silence to beguile [130]
 Such guilts, wherewith both earth and air ye file,
 At last descries them to your foul deface:
 You see the examples set before your face.

And deeply grave within your stony hearts
 The dreary dool that mighty Macedo [135]
 With tears unfolded, wrapped in deadly smarts,
 When he the death of Clitus sorrowed so,
 Whom erst he murdered with the deadly blow
 Wrought in his rage upon his friend so dear,
 For which, behold, lo!, how his pangs appear.⁴⁷² [140]

The lancèd spear he writhes out of the wound,
 From which the purple blood spins on his face:
 His heinous guilt when he returnèd found,
 He throws himself upon the corpse, alas, [145]
 And in his arms how oft doth he embrace
 His murdered friend? And, kissing him in vain,
 Forth flow the floods of salt repentant rain.

His friends, amazed at such a murder done,
 In fearful flocks begin to shrink away
 And he, thereat, with heaps of grief fordone, [150]

126. rather: earlier. 131. guilts: offences; file: pollute. 132. descries: reveals; deface: discredit. 135. dool: grief; Macedo: 'The Macedonian', i.e. Alexander the Great (d. 323 BC). 136. unfolded: displayed. 143. His ... found: When he discovered his heinous crime after returning to his senses. 147. salt repentant rain: salty tears of repentance. 150. fordone: overcome.

Hateth himself, wishing his latter day.
Now he himself perceivèd in like stay,
As is the wild beast in the desert bred,
Both dreading others and himself adread.

He calls for death and, loathing longer life, [155]
Bent to his bane, refuseth kindly food
And, plunged in depth of death and dolour's strife,
Had quelled himself, had not his friends withstood.⁴⁷³
Lo he that thus had shed the guiltless blood,
Though he were king and kaiser over all, [160]
Yet chose he death to guerdon death withal.

This prince whose peer was never under sun,
Whose glistening fame the earth did overglide,
Which with his power well-nigh the world had won,
His bloody hands himself could not abide [165]
But fully bent with famine to have died:
The worthy prince deemèd in his regard
That death for death could be but just reward.

Yet we that were so drownèd in the depth
Of deep despair to drink the guiltless blood, [170]
Like to the wolf with greedy looks that leap'th
Into the snare to feed on deadly food,
So we delighted in the state we stood,
Blinded so far in all our blinded train
That blind we saw not our destruction plain. [175]

We sparèd none whose life could aught forlet
Our wicked purpose to his pass to come:
Four worthy knights we headed at Pomfret
Guiltless, God wot, withouten law or doom.
My heart even bleeds to tell you all and some, [180]
And how Lord Hastings, when he fearèd least,
Dispiteously was murdered and oppressed.⁴⁷⁴

151. **latter**: ultimate. 152. **stay**: state of arrested motion. 154. **dreading**: terrifying; **adread**: overcome with fear. 156. **kindly**: proper, natural. 158. **quelled**: killed. 160. **kaiser**: Caesar, emperor. 161. **guerdon**: repay. 174. **train**: trickery. 176. **aught forlet**: to any extent hinder. 177. **his pass to come**: to come to pass. 180. **all and some**: one and all. 182. **Dispiteously**: Without pity.

These rocks upraught that threatened most our wreck
 We seemed to sail much surer in the stream.
 And Fortune, faring as she were at beck, [185]
 Laid in our lap the rule of all the realm.
 The nephews straight deposèd were by the eme,
 And we advanced to that we bought full dear:
 He crownèd king, and I his chiefest peer.⁴⁷⁵

Thus having won our long-desired prey, [190]
 To make him king that he might make me chief,
 Downthrow we straight his seely nephews tway
 From prince's pomp to woeful prisoner's life,
 In hope that now stint was all further strife.
 Sith he was king, and I chief stroke did bear, [195]
 Who joyed but we, yet who more cause to fear?

The guiltless blood which we unjustly shed,
 The royal babes divested from their throne,
 And we like traitors reigning in their stead,
 These heavy burdens pressèd us upon, [200]
 Tormenting us so by ourselves alone,
 Much like the felon that, pursued by night,
 Starts at each bush as his foe were in sight.⁴⁷⁶

Now doubting state, now dreading loss of life,
 In fear of wreck at every blast of wind, [205]
 Now start in dreams through dread of murd'rer's knife,
 As though even then revengement were assigned.
 With restless thought so is the guilty mind
 Turmoiled and never feeleth ease or stay,
 But lives in fear of that which follows ay. [210]

Well gave that judge his doom upon the death
 Of Titus Clelius that in bed was slain,
 When every wight the cruel murder layeth

183. **upraught**: drawn up. 184. **sail**: navigate. 185. **And ... beck**: And Fortune, behaving as if she were at our command. 187. **eme**: uncle. 190. **prey**: plunder, booty. 192. **seely**: innocent, helpless; **tway**: two. 194. **stint**: ceased. 195. **stroke**: influence. 203. **as**: as if. 209. **stay**: self-control.

To his two sons that in his chamber lain.
The judge, that by the proof perceiveth plain [215]
That they were found fast sleeping in their bed,
Hath deemed them guiltless of this blood yshed.

He thought it could not be, that they which brake
The laws of God and man in such outrage
Could so forthwith themselves to sleep betake; [220]
He rather thought the horror and the rage
Of such an heinous guilt could never swage
Nor never suffer them to sleep or rest
Or dreadless breathe one breath out of their breast.⁴⁷⁷

So gnaws the grief of conscience evermore, [225]
And in the heart it is so deep ygrave,
That they may neither sleep nor rest therefore,
Ne think one thought but on the dread they have.
Still to the death fortossèd with the wave
Of restless woe in terror and despair, [230]
They lead a life continually in fear.

Like to the deer that stricken with the dart
Withdraws himself into some secret place
And, feeling green the wound about his heart,
Startles with pangs till he fall on the grass [235]
And in great fear lies gasping there a space,
Forth braying sighs as though each pang had brought
The present death which he doth dread so oft,

So we, deep wounded with the bloody thought
And gnawing worm that grieved our conscience so, [240]
Never took ease but as our heart forth brought
The strained sighs in witness of our woe:
Such restless cares our fault did well beknow,
Wherewith of our deserved fall the fears
In every place rang death within our ears. [245]

222. *swage*: abate. 229. *fortossed*: painfully tossed. 234. *green*: greenly, naively. 243. *Such ... beknow*: Our restless cares well acknowledged our culpability. 244–5. *Wherewith ... ears*: by reason of which, the fears we harboured of our deserved fall repeatedly proclaimed death to us everywhere we went.

And as ill grain is never well ykept,
 So farèd it by us within a while.
 That which so long with such unrest we reaped
 In dread and danger by all wit and wile,
 Lo, see the fine! When once it felt the wheel [250]
 Of slipper Fortune, stay it mought no stowne:
 The wheel whirls up, but straight it whirleth down.

For having rule and riches in our hand
 Who durst gainsay the thing that we averred?
 Will was wisdom; our lust for law did stand, [255]
 In sort so strange that who was not afearèd
 When he the sound but of “King Richard” heard?
 So hateful waxed the hearing of his name
 That you may deem the residue by the same.

But what availed the terror and the fear, [260]
 Wherewith he kept his lieges under awe?
 It rather won him hatred everywhere
 And feignèd faces forced by fear of law,
 That but while Fortune doth with favour blow
 Flatter through fear, for in their heart lurks ay [265]
 A secret hate that hopeth for a day.

Recordeth Dionysius the king
 That with his rigour so his realm oppressed
 As that he thought by cruel fear to bring
 His subjects under as him likèd best.⁴⁷⁸ [270]
 But lo the dread wherewith himself was stressed
 And you shall see the fine of forcèd fear
 Most mirror-like in this proud prince appear.

All were his head with crown of gold ysprad,
 And in his hand the royal sceptre set, [275]
 And he with princely purple richly clad,

248. **That:** i.e., chief power in the realm. 251. **slipper:** wavering, deceitful; **stay it mought no stowne:** it could not remain in place even for a moment. 254. **Who ... averred?:** Who dared to contradict that which we asserted? 256. **sort so strange:** in a manner so extreme, abnormal. 259. **residue:** remainder. 264. **blaw:** blow. 266. **a day:** a time when it may exercise dominant power. 274. **ysprad:** covered.

Yet was his heart with wretched cares o'erfret
And inwardly with deadly fear beset
Of those whom he by rigour kept in awe
And sore oppressed with might of tyrant's law. [280]

Against whose fear no heaps of gold and glee,
Ne strength of guard, nor all his hired power,
Ne proud high towers that pressèd to the sky
His cruel heart of safety could assure
But, dreading them whom he should deem most sure, [285]
Himself his beard with burning brand would sear,
Of death deserved so vexèd him the fear.⁴⁷⁹

This might suffice to represent the fine
Of tyrants' force, their fears, and their unrest,
But hear this one, although my heart repine [290]
To let the sound once sink within my breast,
Of fell Phereus, that above the rest
Such loathsome cruelty on his people wrought
As (oh, alas!) I tremble with the thought.

Some he encasèd in the coats of bears, [295]
Among wild beasts devoured so to be,
And some for prey unto the hunters' spears
Like savage beasts withouten ruth to die.
Sometime to increase his horrible cruelty,
The quick with face to face ingravèd he, [300]
Each other's death that each mought living see.⁴⁸⁰

Lo, what more cruel horror mought be found
To purchase fear, if fear could stay his reign?
It bootèd not; it rather strake the wound
Of fear in him to fear the like again, [305]
And so he did full oft and not in vain,
As in his life his cares could witness well,
But most of all his wretched end doth tell.

277. *o'erfret*: worn down. 279. *awe*: fear. 281. *glee*: exalted state. 300. *The ... he*: He buried the living face to face. 301. *mought*: might. 303. *stay*: prop up. 305. *again*: in return.

His own dear wife, whom as his life he loved,
 He durst not trust, nor proach unto her bed, [310]
 But, causing first his slave with naked sword
 To go before, himself with trembling dread
 Straight followeth fast and, whorling in his head
 His rolling eyen, he searcheth here and there
 The deep danger that he so sore did fear.⁴⁸¹ [315]

For not in vain it ran still in his breast
 Some wretched hap should hale him to his end,
 And therefore alway by his pillow prest
 Had he a sword, and with that sword he wend [320]
 In vain, God wot, all perils to defend,
 For, lo, his wife, forirkèd of his reign,
 Sleeping in bed this cruel wretch hath slain.⁴⁸²

What should I more now seek to say in this
 Or one jot farther linger forth my tale
 With cruel Nero or with Phalaris, [325]
 Caligula, Domitian, and all
 The cruel rout, or of their wretched fall?⁴⁸³
 I can no more but in my name advert
 All earthly powers beware of tyrant's heart.

And as our state endured but a throw, [330]
 So best in us the stay of such a state
 May best appear to hang on overthrow
 And better teach tyrants' deservèd hate
 Than any tyrant's death tofore or late.
 So cruel seemed this Richard Third to me, [335]
 That, lo, myself now loathed his cruelty.

For when, alas, I saw the tyrant king
 Content not only from his nephews twain
 To rive world's bliss but also all world's being,
 Sauns earthly guilt ycausing both be slain, [340]

317. **hap**: unlucky event; **hale**: hasten. 319. **wend**: supposed. 321. **forirked of**: disgusted by. 328. **advert**: warn. 330. **a throw**: a brief while. 331. **stay**: support. 332. **hang on**: adhere closely to. 334. **tofore or late**: earlier or recently. 339. **rive**: tear.

My heart agrised that such a wretch should reign,
Whose bloody breast so savaged out of kind
That Phalaris had never so bloody a mind.⁴⁸⁴

Ne could I brook him once within my breast,
But with the thought my teeth would gnash withal, [345]
For though I erst were his by sworn behest,
Yet when I saw mischief on mischief fall
So deep in blood to murder prince and all,
Ay then thought I, “alas and wellaway!”,
And to myself thus mourning would I say: [350]

“If neither love, kindred, ne knot of blood,
His own allegiance to his prince of due,
Nor yet the state of trust wherein he stood,
The world’s defame, nor nought could turn him true,
Those guiltless babes – could they not make him rue? [355]
Nor could their youth nor innocence withal
Move him from reaving them their life and all?”

Alas, it could not move him any jot
Ne make him once to rue or wet his eye,
Stirred him no more than that that stirreth not, [360]
But as the rock or stone that will not ply,
So was his heart made hard to cruelty
To murder them. Alas, I weep in thought,
To think on that which this fell wretch hath wrought!

That now when he had done the thing he sought [365]
And, as he would, compelled and compassed all
And saw and knew the treason he had wrought
To God and man to slay his prince and all,
Then seemed he first to doubt and dread us all

341. **agrised**: shuddered with horror. 342. **Whose ... kind**: Whose bloody breast was so unnaturally cruel.
344. **Ne ... breast**: Nor could I endure the idea of him even once in my private thoughts. 349. **Ay**: continually.
352. **of due**: as a matter of duty. 354. **true**: loyal. 357. **reaving**: robbing from. 360. **Stirred ... not**:
Moved him no more than it could an inanimate object. 361. **ply**: bend, yield. 366. **compelled and compassed**:
accomplished and achieved.

And me in chief, whose death all means he might [370]
 He sought to work by malice and by might.⁴⁸⁵

Such heaps of harms upharboured in his breast,
 With envious heart my honour to deface
 (As knowing he that I, which wotted best
 His wretched drifts and all his cursèd case, [375]
 If ever sprang within me spark of grace
 Must needs abhor him and his hateful race)
 Now more and more can cast me out of grace,

Which sudden change, when I by secret chance
 Had well perceived by proof of envious frown [380]
 And saw the lot that did me to advance
 Him to a king that sought to cast me down,
 Too late it was to linger any stowne,
 Sith present choice lay cast before mine eye:
 To work his death or I myself to die. [385]

And as the knight in field among his foes
 Beset with swords must slay or there be slain,
 So I, alas, lapped in a thousand woes,
 Beholding death on every side so plain,
 I rather chose by some sly secret train [390]
 To work his death and I to live thereby
 Than he to live and I of force to die.

Which heavy choice so hastened me to choose
 That I in part aggrieved at his disdain,
 In part to wreak the doleful death of those [395]
 Two tender babes, his silly nephews twain,
 By him, alas, commanded to be slain,
 With painted cheer humbly before his face
 Straight took my leave and rode to Brecknock place.⁴⁸⁶

372. **upharboured**: stored. 374. **wotted**: knew. 375. **case**: condition. 378. **can**: did. 381–2. **And ... down**: And saw the destiny that caused me to advance to the kingship him who sought to cast me down. 383. **stowne**: stound, moment. 384. **cast**: thrown; calculated. 392. **of force**: by necessity. 395. **wreak**: avenge. 398. **painted cheer**: feigned cheerfulness; false countenance.

And there, as close and covert as I might, [400]
My purposed practice to his pass to bring,
In secret drifts I lingered day and night,
All how I might depose this cruel king.
That seemed to all so much desired a thing,
As thereto trusting I emprised the same, [405]
But too much trusting brought me to my bane,

For while I now had Fortune at my beck,
Mistrusting I no earthly thing at all,
Unwares, alas, least looking for a check,
She mated me in turning of a ball; [410]
When least I feared, then nearest was my fall,
And when whole hosts were prest to stroy my foen,
She changed her cheer and left me post alone.

I had upraised a mighty band of men
And marchèd forth in order of array, [415]
Leading my power amid the forest Dean
Against that tyrant banner to display,
But, lo, my soldiers cowardly shrank away,
For such is Fortune, when she list to frown:
Who seems most sure, him soonest whirls she down.⁴⁸⁷ [420]

Oh let no prince put trust in commonty,
Nor hope in faith of giddy people's mind,
But let all noble men take heed by me
That by the proof too well the pain do find. [425]
Lo, what is truth or trust, or what could bind
The vain people but they will swerve and sway
As chance brings change to drive and draw that way?

Rome, thou that once advancèd up so high
Thy stay, patron, and flower of excellence,
Hast now thrown him to depth of misery, [430]

405. **thereto trusting**: i.e. trusting to the desire of all for Richard's deposition; **emprised**: undertook. 407. **beck**: absolute command. 409. **Unwares**: Unwary; **check**: evil turn (with a concomitant sense of 'check' in chess). 410. **mated**: defeated; checkmated; **turning of a ball**: in an instant. 413. **cheer**: disposition; **post alone**: entirely alone. 421. **commonty**: the common people. 425. **truth**: loyalty. 429. **stay**: prop.

Exilèd him that was thy whole defence,
 Ne comptest it not an horrible offence
 To riven him of honour and of fame
 That won it thee when thou hadst lost the same.⁴⁸⁸

Behold Camillus, he that erst revived [435]
 The state of Rome that dying he did find,
 Of his own state is now, alas, deprived,
 Banished by them whom he did thus debt-bind,
 That cruel folk, unthankful and unkind,
 Declarèd well their false inconstancy [440]
 And Fortune eke her mutability.⁴⁸⁹

And thou, Scipio, a mirror mayst thou be
 To all nobles, that they learn not too late
 How they once trust the unstable commonty.
 Thou that recured'st the torn, dismembered state, [445]
 Even when the conqueror was at the gate,
 Art now exiled, as though thou not deserved
 To rest in her, whom thou hadst so preserved.

Ingrateful Rome hast showed thy cruelty
 On him by whom thou livest yet in fame, [450]
 But not thy deed nor his desert shall die,
 But his own words shall witness ay the same,
 For, lo, his grave doth thee most justly blame
 And with disdain in marble says to thee,
 "Unkind country, my bones shalt thou not see".⁴⁹⁰ [455]

What more unworthy than this his exile?
 More just than this the woeful plaint he wrote.
 Or who could show a plainer proof the while
 Of most false faith than they that thus forgot
 His great deserts that so deserved not? [460]
 His cinders yet, lo, doth he them deny
 That him denied amongst them for to die.⁴⁹¹

432. **Ne comptest it not:** Nor regards it. 433. **riven:** have robbed. 438. **debt-bind:** bind by obligation (a nonce-word). 444. **How they once trust:** To what extent they at any time have confidence in. 445. **recured'st:** restored. 458. **the while:** in time.

Milciades, oh happy hadst thou be
And well rewarded of thy countrymen,
If in the field, when thou hadst forced to flee [465]
By thy prowess three hundred thousand men,
Content they had been to exile thee then
And not to cast thee in depth of prison so,
Laden with gyves to end thy life in woe.

Alas, how hard and steely hearts had they [470]
That, not contented there to have thee die
With fettered gyves in prison where thou lay,
Increased so far in hateful cruelty
That burial to thy corpse they eke deny,
Ne will they grant the same till thy son have [475]
Put on thy gyves to purchase thee a grave.⁴⁶²

Lo, Hannibal, as long as fixèd fate
And brittle Fortune had ordainèd so,
Whoever more advanced his country state
Than thou that lived'st for her and for no mo? [480]
But when the stormy waves began to grow,
Without respect of thy deserts erewhile,
Art by thy country thrown into exile.⁴⁹³

Unfriendly Fortune, shall I thee now blame,
Or shall I fault the fates that so ordain? [485]
Or art thou, Jove, the causer of the same,
Or cruelty herself doth she constrain?
Or on whom else, alas, shall I complain?
Oh trustless world, I can accusen none
But fickle faith of commonty alone. [490]

The polypus nor the chameleon strange
That turn themselves to every hue they see,
Are not so full of vain and fickle change
As is this false, unsteadfast commonty.

463. **Milciades**: Miltiades (d. 489 BC), Athenian military leader. **be**: been. 469. **gyves**: shackles. 479. **country state**: country's condition, standing. 482. **erewhile**: some time ago. 491. **polypus**: cuttlefish.

Lo, I, alas, with mine adversity [495]
 Have tried it true, for they are fled and gone,
 And of an host there is not left me one.

That I, alas, in this calamity
 Alone was left and to myself mought plain
 This treason and this wretched cowardy, [500]
 And eke with tears beweepeen and complain
 My hateful hap, still looking to be slain,
 Wand'ring in woe and to the gods on high
 Cleping for vengeance of this treachery.

And as the turtle that hath lost her mate, [505]
 Whom gripping sorrow doth so sore attaint,
 With doleful voice and sound which she doth make,
 Mourning her loss, fills all the grove with plaint,
 So I, alas, forsaken and forfeint,
 With restless foot the wood roam up and down, [510]
 Which of my dole all shivering doth resowne.

And being thus alone and all forsake
 Amid the thick, forwandered in despair
 As one dismayed, ne wist what way to take
 Until at last gan to my mind repair [515]
 A man of mine named Humphrey Bannister,
 Wherewith me feeling much recomforted,
 In hope of succour to his house I fled.⁴⁹⁴

Who being one whom erst I had upbrought
 Even from his youth and loved and likèd best, [520]
 To gentry state advancing him from nought,
 And had in secret trust above the rest,
 Of special trust now being thus distressed,
 Full secretly to him I me conveyed,
 Not doubting there but I should find some aid. [525]

502. **still looking**: always expecting. 504. **Cleping**: Calling. 505. **turtle**: turtle-dove. 506. **attaint**: affect. 509. **forfeint**: very weak. 510. **wood**: forest. 511. **dole**: grief; **resowne**: resound. 513. **thick**: densest part of the forest; **forwandered in despair**: wandering far and wide in my despairing state. 515. **repair**: return. 522. **had in secret trust**: held in trust of my most private affairs. 523. **Of ... distressed**: Now thus robbed of all in whom I might have close trust.

But out, alas, on cruel treachery!
When that this caitiff once an inkling heard
How that King Richard had proclaimed that he
Which me descried should have for his reward
A thousand pounds and farther be preferred, [530]
His truth so turned to treason all distained
That faith quite fled, and I by trust was trained.

For by this wretch I being straight betrayed
To one John Mytton, sheriff of Shropshire then,
All suddenly was taken and conveyed [535]
To Salisbury with rout of harnessed men,
Unto King Richard, there encampèd then,
Fast by the city with a mighty host,
Withouten doom where head and life I lost.⁵²⁹

And with these words, as if the axe even there [540]
Dismembered had his head and corpse apart,
Dead fell he down, and we in woeful fear
Stood mazèd when he would to life revert,
But deadly griefs still grew about his heart
That still he lay, sometime revived with pain, [545]
And with a sigh becoming dead again.

Midnight was come, and every vital thing
With sweet, sound sleep their weary limbs did rest.
The beasts were still; the little birds that sing
Now sweetly slept besides their mothers' breast; [550]
The old and all were shrouded in their nest.
The waters calm, the cruel seas did cease;
The woods, the fields, and all things held their peace.

The golden stars were whirled amid their race
And on the earth did laugh with twinkling light, [555]
When each thing nestled in his resting place

529. **Which me descried:** Who treacherously revealed me. 530. **preferred:** raised in rank or status. 531. **distained:** sullied. 532. **faith:** loyalty; **trained:** trapped. 534. **John Mytton:** Hall's error for the historical Thomas Mytton. 536. **harnessed:** armed, in armour. 542. **we:** i.e. Sackville and his guide, Sorrow. 543. **mazed:** confused; **to life revert:** regain consciousness.

Forgot day's pain with pleasure of the night.
 The hare had not the greedy hounds in sight;
 The fearful deer of death stood not in doubt;
 The partridge dreamt not of the falcon's foot. [560]

The ugly bear now minded not the stake
 Nor how the cruel mastiffs do him tear;
 The stag lay still, unroustèd from the brake;
 The foamy boar feared not the hunter's spear.
 All thing was still in desert, bush, and brear; [565]
 With quiet heart now from their travails rest,
 Soundly they slept in midst of all their rest.

When Buckingham, amid his plaint oppressed
 With surging sorrows and with pinching pains,
 In sort thus sound, and with a sigh he ceased [570]
 To tellen forth the treachery and the trains
 Of Bannister, which him so sore distrains,
 That from a sigh he falls into a sound,
 And from a swound lieth raging on the ground.

So twitching were the pangs that he assayed, [575]
 And he so sore with rueful rage distraught
 To think upon the wretch that him betrayed,
 Whom erst he made a gentleman of naught,
 That more and more aggrievèd with this thought
 He storms out sighs and, with redoubled sore, [580]
 Stroke with the Furies, rageth more and more.

Whoso hath seen the bull chasèd with darts
 And with deep wounds forgalled and gorèd so,
 Till he, oppressèd with the deadly smarts,

563. **brake**: thicket. 565. **desert**: wilderness; **brear**: briar. 570. **In sort**: In this company (of other resting creatures); **sound**: fell into a swoon. 572. **distrains**: distresses. 573. **sound**: swoon. 574. **from**: coming out of. 575. **assayed**: had experience of. 580. **sore**: suffering. 581. **Stroke with**: blasted by. 583. **forgalled**: thoroughly harassed by arrows.

[560] 1563: drept (an uncorrected error for 'dreampt')

Fall in a rage and run upon his foe, [585]
Let him, I say, behold the raging woe
Of Buckingham, that in these grips of grief
Rageth gainst him that hath betrayed his life!

With blood-red eyen he stareth here and there,
Frothing at mouth, with face as pale as clout, [590]
When, lo, my limbs were trembling all for fear,
And I, amazed, stood still in dread and doubt,
While I mought see him throw his arms about
And gainst the ground himself plunge with such force
As if the life forthwith should leave the corpse. [595]

With smoke of sighs sometime I might behold
The place all dimmed, like to the morning mist,
And, straight again, the tears how they down rolled
Alongst his cheeks, as if the rivers hissed,
Whose flowing streams ne were no sooner whist [600]
But to the stars such dreadful shouts he sent
As if the throne of mighty Jove should rent.

And I the while with spirits well-nigh bereft
Beheld the plight and pangs that did him strain
And how the blood his deadly colour left [605]
And straight returned with flaming red again,
When, suddenly amid his raging pain,
He gave a sigh, and with that sigh he said
'Oh Bannister!', and straight again he stayed.

Dead lay his corpse, as dead as any stone, [610]
Till swelling sighs storming within his breast
Upraised his head, that downward fell anon
With looks upcast and sighs that never ceased.
Forth streamed the tears, records of his unrest,
When he with shrikes thus grovelling on the ground, [615]
Ybrayed these words with shrill and doleful sound:

590. **clout**: cloth. 592. **amazed**: terrified, lost in wonder. 596. **smoke**: vapour; **sometime**: at times. 600. **whist**: quieted.

‘Heaven and earth and ye eternal lamps
 That, in the heavens wrapped, will us to rest,
 Thou, bright Phoebe, that clearest the nightès’ damp,
 Witness the plaints that, in these pangs oppressed, [620]
 I, woeful wretch, unlade out of my breast,
 And let me yield my last words ere I part –
 You, you, I call to record of my smart.

And thou, Allecto, feed me with thy food,
 Let fall thy serpents from thy snaky hair, [625]
 For such relief well sits me in this mood
 To feed my plaint with horror and with fear
 While rage afresh thy venomèd worm arear.
 And thou, Sibylla, when thou seest me faint,
 Address thyself the guide of my complaint.⁴⁹⁶ [630]

And thou, oh Jove, that with thy deep foredoom
 Dost rule the earth and reign above the skies,
 That wreckest wrongs and givest the dreadful doom
 Against the wretch that doth thy throne despise,
 Receive these words and wreak them in such wise [635]
 As heaven and earth may witness and behold
 Thy heaps of wrath upon this wretch unfold.

Thou Bannister, gainst thee I clepe and call
 Unto the gods that they just vengeance take
 On thee, thy blood, thy stainèd stock and all. [640]
 Oh Jove, to thee above the rest I make
 My humble plaint; guide me that what I speak
 May be thy will upon this wretch to fall,
 On thee Bannister, wretch of wretches all.

Oh would to God that cruel dismal day [645]
 That gave me light first to behold thy face
 With foul eclipse had reft my sight away;
 The unhappy hour, the time, and eke the place,

619. **Phoebe**: i.e. the moon; **nights'**: night's (disyllabic). 621. **unlade**: unload. 628. **worm**: serpent; **arear**: stirs up. 630. **Address thyself**: Devote yourself to being. 631. **foredoom**: judgement pronounced before an event; creation of destiny. 633. **wreckest**: avenges. 635. **wreak**: carry out (in the form of punishment). 638. **clepe**: appeal.

The sun and moon, the stars, and all that was
In their aspects helping in ought to thee, ⁴⁹⁷ [650]
The earth, the air, and all accursèd be.

And thou, caitiff, that like a monster swerved
From kind and kindness, hast thy master lorn,
Whom neither truth nor trust wherein thou served,
Ne his deserts could move nor thy faith sworn. [655]
How shall I curse but wish that thou unborn
Had been, or that the earth had rent in tway
And swallowed thee in cradle as thou lay?

To this did I even from thy tender youth
Witsafe to bring thee up? Did I herefore [660]
Believe the oath of thy undoubted truth,
Advance thee up and trust thee evermore,
By trusting thee that I should die therefore?
Oh wretch and worse than wretch, what shall I say,
But clepe and curse gainst thee and thine for ay. [665]

Hated be thou, disdained of every wight,
And pointed at wherever that thou go;
A traitorous wretch unworthy of the light
Be thou esteemed, and, to increase thy woe,
The sound be hateful of thy name also, [670]
And in this sort with shame and sharp reproach,
Lead thou thy life till greater grief approach.

Dole and despair, let those be thy delight,
Wrappèd in woes that cannot be unfold
To wail the day and weep the weary night [675]
With rainy eye and sighs cannot be told,
And let no wight thy woe seek to withhold
But compt thee worthy, wretch, of sorrow's store
That, suff'ring much, oughtest still to suffer more.

650. **aspects**: relative positions at Bannister's nativity; **helping in ought**: favourable in anything. 653. **kind**: nature; **lorn**: doomed, abandoned. 660. **Witsafe**: vouchsafe, agree graciously. 665. **ay**: ever. 676. **told**: counted. 678. **compt**: count.

Deserve thou death, yea be thou deemed to die [680]
 A shameful death, to end thy shameful life:
 A sight longed for, joyful to every eye,
 When thou shalt be arraignèd as a thief,
 Standing at bar and pleading for thy life,
 With trembling tongue in dread and dolour's rage, [685]
 Lade with white locks and fourscore years of age.⁴⁹⁸

Yet shall not death deliver thee so soon
 Out of thy woes, so happy shalt thou not be,
 But to the eternal Jove this is my boon,
 That thou may live thine eldest son to see [690]
 Reft of his wits and in a foul boar's sty
 To end his days in rage and death distressed:
 A worthy tomb where one of thine should rest.

And after this, yet pray I more, thou may
 Thy second son see drownèd in a dike [695]
 And in such sort to close his latter day,
 As heard or seen erst hath not been the like,
 Ystrangled in a puddle not so deep
 As half a foot, that such hard loss of life
 So cruelly chanced may be thy greater grief. [700]

And not yet shall thy hugy sorrows cease;
 Jove shall not so withhold his wrath fro thee
 But, that thy plagues may more and more increase,
 Thou shalt still live that thou thyself mayst see [705]
 Thy dear daughter strocken with leprosy,
 That she that erst was all thy whole delight
 Thou now mayst loath to have her come in sight.

And after that, let shame and sorrow's grief
 Feed forth thy years continually in woe,
 That thou mayest live in death and die in life [710]

686. Lade: Laden. 695. dike: ditch. 698. Ystrangled: Drowned. 701. hugy: great. 705. strocken: stricken.

And, in this sort forwailed and wearied so,
At length thy ghost to part thy body fro:
This pray I, Jove, and with this latter breath
Vengeance I ask upon my cruel death.’

This said, he flung his reckless arms abroad [715]
And grovelling flat upon the ground he lay,
Which with his teeth he all-to gnashed and gnawed.
Deep groans he fet, as he that would away,
But, lo, in vain he did the death assay,
Although I think was never man that knew [720]
Such deadly pains where death did not ensue.

So strove he thus a while as with the death,
Now pale as lead and cold as any stone,
Now still as calm, now storming forth a breath
Of smoky sighs, as breath and all were gone, [725]
But everything hath end, so he anon
Came to himself, when, with a sigh outbrayed,
With woeful cheer these woeful words he said:

‘Ah, where am I? What thing or whence is this?
Who reft my wits, or how do I thus lie? [730]
My limbs do quake; my thought aghasted is.
Why sigh I so, or whereunto do I
Thus grovel on the ground?’ And by and by
Upraised he stood, and with a sigh hath stayed,
When to himself returnèd, thus he said, [735]

‘Sufficeth now this plaint and this regret,
Whereof my heart his bottom hath unfraught,
And of my death let peers and princes weet
The world’s untrust, that they thereby be taught.
And in her wealth, sith that such change is wrought, [740]
Hope not too much, but in the mids of all
Think on my death and what may them befall.

711. **forwailed**: overwhelmed with wailing. 717. **all-to**: thoroughly. 718. **fet**: drew forth; **would away**: would die. 719. **assay**: endeavour after. 725. **as breath and all were gone**: as if breath and life were completely forced out. 737. **unfraughted**: unloaded. 738. **weet**: know. 739. **untrust**: untrustworthiness.

So long as Fortune would permit the same,
 I lived in rule and riches with the best
 And passed my time in honour and in fame [745]
 That of mishap no fear was in my breast,
 But false Fortune, when I suspected least,
 Did turn the wheel and with a doleful fall
 Hath me bereft of honour, life, and all.

Lo, what avails in riches' floods that flows, [750]
 Though she so smiled as all the world were his?
 Even kings and kaisers biden Fortune's throws,
 And simple sort must bear it as it is.
 Take heed by me that blithed in baleful bliss:
 My rule, my riches, royal blood, and all, [755]
 When Fortune frowned the feller made my fall.

For hard mishaps that happens unto such
 Whose wretched state erst never felt no change
 Aggrieve them not in any part so much,
 As their distress to whom it is so strange, [760]
 That all their lives ne passèd pleasure's range:
 Their sudden woe that ay wield wealth at will
 Algates their heart more piercingly must thrill.

For of my birth, my blood was of the best,
 First born an earl, then duke by due descent: [765]
 To swing the sway in court among the rest.
 Dame Fortune me her rule most largely lent,
 And kind with courage so my corpe had blent
 That, lo, on whom but me did she most smile?
 And whom but me, lo, did she most beguile? [770]

Now hast thou heard the whole of my unhap,
 My chance, my change, the cause of all my care:

750. **Lo ... flows**: an obscure line. Perhaps, 'Lo, what avails him who flows in riches' floods'. 752. **biden**: endure, suffer; **throws**: turns (of her wheel). 754. **blithed**: made merry (an archaism). 756. **feller**: more terrible. 761. **ne passed pleasure's range**: never went beyond the boundaries of a pleasurable life. 763. **Algates**: Altogether; **thrill**: pierce. 767. **rule**: power. 768. **kind**: nature; **blent**: mixed. 771. **unhap**: misfortune.

[758] 1563: fell (an uncorrected error for 'felt')

In wealth and woe how Fortune did me wrap
 With world at will to win me to her snare.
 Bid kings, bid kaisers, bid all states beware, [775]
 And tell them this from me that tried it true:
 Who reckless rules, right soon may hap to rue.’

777. **reckless**: heedlessly; **hap**: chance.

[775] 1563: by all (an uncorrected error for ‘bid’)

[Prose 24]

‘How like you this, my masters?’ quoth I. ‘Very well’, said one. ‘The tragedy excelleth, the invention also of the induction, and the descriptions are notable. But whereas he feigneth to talk with the princes in hell, that I’m sure will be disliked, because it is most certain that some of their souls
 5 be in heaven. And, although he herein do follow allowed poets in their description of hell, yet it savoureth so much of purgatory, which the papists have digged thereout, that the ignorant may thereby be deceived.’⁴⁹⁹ ‘Not a whit, I warrant you’, quoth I. ‘For he meaneth not by his hell the place either of damned souls or of such as lie for their fees,⁵⁰⁰ but rather the
 10 grave, wherein the dead bodies of all sorts of people do rest till time of the resurrection, and in this sense is hell taken often in the scriptures and in the writings of learned Christians. And so, as he himself hath told me, he meaneth and so would have it taken.’⁵⁰¹ ‘Tush’, quoth another, ‘what stand we here upon? It is a poesy and no divinity, and it is lawful for poets to
 15 feign what they list, so it be appertinent to the matter. And, therefore, let it pass even in such sort as you have read it.’

‘With a good will’, quoth I. ‘But whereas you say a poet may feign what he list, in deed my think it should be so and ought to be well taken of the hearers, but it hath not at all times been so allowed.’ ‘Ye say troth’,
 20 quoth the reader, ‘for here followeth in the story that after the death of this duke, one called Collingbourne was cruelly put to death for making of a rhyme.’⁵⁰² ‘I have his tragedy here’, quoth I; ‘for the better perceiving whereof, you must imagine that you see him a marvellous well-favoured man, holding in his hand his own heart, newly ripped out of his breast
 25 and smoking forth the lively spirit and, with his other hand, beckoning to and fro, as it were to warn us to avoid, and with his faint tongue and voice saying as courageously as he may these words that follow’:

18. **my think**: methinks. 23. **well-favoured**: handsome. 25. **smoking**: steaming. 27. **courageously**: bravely (but with a pun on the noun ‘courage’, meaning ‘heart’).

[Tragedy 23]

How Collingbourne was Cruelly Executed for Making a Foolish
Rhyme

Beware, take heed, take heed, beware, beware,
You poets you that purpose to rehearse
By any art what tyrants' doings are!
Erinys' rage is grown so fell and fierce
That vicious acts may not be touched in verse.⁵⁰³ [5]
The Muses' freedom, granted them of eld,
Is barred; sly reasons treasons high are held.

Be rough in rhyme and then they say you rail –
Though Juvenal so be, that makes no matter.⁵⁰⁴
With Jeremy you shall be had to jail [10]
Or forced with Martial Caesar's faults to flatter.⁵⁰⁵
Clerks must be taught to claw and not to clatter:
Free Helicon and frank Parnassus' hills
Are helly haunts and rank pernicious ills.⁵⁰⁶

Touch covertly in terms and then you taunt, [15]
Though praised poets alway did the like.
'Control us not, else traitor vile avaut;
What pass we what the learned do mislike?
Our sins we see, wherein to swarm we seek;
We pass not what the people say or think. [20]
Their shittle hate maketh none but cowards shrink.

'We know', say they, 'the course of Fortune's wheel,
How constantly it whirlth still about,
Arrearing now, while elder headlong reel,

5. **touched**: reproved, censured. 7. **reasons**: remarks. 12. **Clerks**: Learned men; **claw**: flatter; **clatter**: chatter. 15. **Touch covertly in terms**: Reprove allusively. 21. **shittle**: inconstant, flighty. 24. **Arrearing**: Drawing back; **elder**: older persons.

How all the riders always hang in doubt. [25]
But what for that? We count him but a lout
That sticks to mount and, basely like a beast,
Lives temperately for fear of blockham feast.

Indeed, we would of all be deemèd gods,
Whatever we do, and, therefore, partly hate [30]
Rude preachers that dare threaten us plagues and rods
And blaze the blots whereby we stain our state,
But nought we pass what any such do prate:
Of course and office they must say their pleasure,
And we, of course, must hear and mend at leisure.⁵⁰⁷ [35]

But when these pelting poets in their rhymes
Shall taunt and jest or paint our wicked works
And cause the people know and curse our crimes,
This ugly fault no tyrant lives but irks.
And therefore loathe we taunters worse than Turks: [40]
They mind thereby to make us know our miss
And so to amend, but they but dote in this.

We know our faults as well as any other,
We also doubt the dangers for them due,
Yet still we trust so right to guide the rother [45]
That scape we shall the surges that ensue.
We think we know mo shifts than other knew;
In vain, therefore, for us are counsels writ:
We know our faults and will not mend a whit.'

These are the affections of the wicked sort [50]
That press for honours, wealth, and pleasure vain.
Cease, therefore, Baldwin, cease thee I exhort,
Withdraw thy pen, for nothing shalt thou gain
Save hate, with loss of paper, ink, and pain.⁵⁰⁸
Few hate their sins; all hate to hear them touched, [55]
How covertly soever they be couched.

27. **sticks**: scruples. 28. **blockham feast**: execution. 32. **blaze**: make known. 34. **Of course**: As a matter of due order. 35. **of course**: as might be expected. 36. **pelting**: contemptible; passionate. 42. **dote**: act foolishly. 44. **doubt**: fear. 45. **rother**: rudder.

Thy intent I know is godly, plain, and good:
 To warn the wise, to fray the fond fro ill.
 But wicked worldlings are so witless wood
 That to the worst they all things construe still. [60]
 With rigour oft they recompense good will;
 They rack the words till time their sinews burst
 In doubtful senses, straining still the worst.

A painful proof taught me the truth of this,
 Through tyrant's rage and Fortune's cruel turn. [65]
 They murdered me for met'ring things amiss.
 For wott'st thou what? I am that Collingbourne
 Which rhymèd that which made full many mourn:
 'The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell our Dog,
 Do rule all England under a Hog.'⁵⁰⁹ [70]

Whereof the meaning was so plain and true
 That every fool perceivèd it at first.
 Most likèd it, for most that most things knew
 In hugger-mugger muttered what they durst.
 The king himself of most was held accursed, [75]
 Both for his own and for his faultors' faults,
 Of whom were three, the naughtiest of all naughts.

The chief was Catesby, whom I called a cat,
 A crafty lawyer catching all he could.
 The second, Ratcliffe, whom I named a rat, [80]
 A cruel beast to gnaw on whom he should.
 Lord Lovell barked and bit whom Richard would,
 Whom therefore rightly I did term our dog,
 Wherewith to rhyme I cleped the king a hog.⁵¹⁰

Till he usurped the crown, he gave the boar, [85]
 In which estate would God he had deceased!
 Then had the realm not ruinèd so sore,

58. **the fond**: the foolish. 59. **worldlings**: people devoted to worldly pleasure. 62. **rack**: stretch (as on a rack); **time**: the time. 63. **straining still the worst**: ever construing the meaning of words to the worst. 66. **met'ring things amiss**: constructing a metrical poem in a faulty manner; putting into metre things that are amiss. 67. **wott'st**: wottest, know. 74. **hugger-mugger**: secrecy. 76. **faultors**: fautors, adherents. 77. **naughtiest of all naughts**: wickedest of all wicked people. 84. **cleped**: called. 85. **gave**: bore as his armorial device. 86. **estate**: rank (i.e. duke of Gloucester, in which rank he displayed the boar as his badge).

His nephew's reign should not so soon have ceased,
 The noble blood had not been so decreased.
 His Rat, his Cat, and Bloodhound had not noyed [90]
 So many thousands as they have destroyed.⁵¹¹

Their lawless dealings all men did lament,
 And so did I, and therefore made the rhymes
 To show my wit, how well I could invent,
 To warn withal the careless of their crimes. [95]
 I thought the freedom of the ancient times
 Stood still in force. *Ridentem dicere verum*
*Quis vetat?*⁵¹² None, save climbers still in *ferrum*.

Belike no tyrants were in Horace' days,
 And therefore poets freely blamèd vice. [100]
 Witness their satire sharp and tragic plays,
 With chiefest princes chiefly had in price.
 They name no man; they mix their gall with spice.
 No more do I: I name no man outright
 But, riddle-wise, I mean them as I might.⁵¹³ [105]

When bruit had brought this to their guilty ears
 Who rudely named were noted in the rhyme,
 They all conspired like most greedy bears
 To charge me with most heinous, trait'rous crime
 And damnèd me the gallow-tree to climb [110]
 And, strangled first, in quarters to be cut,
 Which should on high over London gates be put.

This wicked judgement vexèd me so sore
 That I exclaimed against their tyranny.
 Wherewith incensed, to make my pain the more, [115]
 They practisèd a shameful villainy:
 They cut me down alive and cruelly
 Ripped up my paunch and bulk to make me smart
 And lingered long ere they took out my heart.

90. noyed: troubled. 97–8. *Ridentem ... vetat?*: Who prevents me from speaking truth with a laugh? 98. None ... *ferrum* [properly 'ferro']: None excepting the ambitious, who are ever in iron shackles. 102. price: esteem. 118. bulk: torso.

Here tyrant Richard played the eager hog: [120]
 His grashing tusks my tender gristles shore.
 His bloodhound Lovell played the ravening dog:
 His wolvisch teeth my guiltless carcass tore.
 His Rat and Cat did what they might and more:
 Cat Catesby clawed my guts to make me smart; [125]
 The Rat Lord Ratcliffe gnawed me to the heart.

If Jews had killed the justest king alive,
 If Turks had burned up churches, gods, and all,
 What greater pain could cruel hearts contrive
 Than that I suffered for this trespass small? [130]
 I am not prince nor peer, but yet my fall
 Is worthy to be thought upon for this,
 To see how cankered tyrants' malice is,

To teach also all subjects to take heed
 They meddle not with magistrates' affairs [135]
 But pray to God to mend them if it need,
 To warn also all poets that be strayers
 To keep them close in compass of their chairs
 And, when they touch things which they wish amended,
 To sauce them so, that few need be offended, [140]

And so to mix their sharp rebukes with mirth
 That they may pierce, not causing any pain,
 Save such as followeth every kindly birth,
 Requited straight, with gladness of the gain. [145]
 A poet must be pleasant, not too plain,
 No flatterer, no bolsterer of vice,
 But sound and sweet, in all things ware and wise.

The Greeks do paint a poet's office whole
 In Pegasus, their feignèd horse with wings,
 Whom, shapèd so, Medusa's blood did foal, [150]
 Who with his feet strake out the Muses' springs

121. **His ... shore:** His gnashing tusks sheared my tender cartilage. 133. **cankered:** depraved. 136. **mend them if it need:** to correct them, if they need correcting. 138. **compass:** due limits; **chairs:** proper seats or situations of authority. 140. **To sauce them so:** To prepare them in such a way as to reduce their severity. 143. **kindly:** natural. 147. **ware:** prudent. 148. **office:** set of duties; official position with defined duties.

Fro flinty rocks to Helicon that clings
And then flew up unto the starry sky
And there abides among the heavens high.⁵¹⁴

For he that shall a perfect poet be [155]
Must first be bred out of Medusa's blood.
He must be chaste and virtuous as was she,
Who, to her power, the Ocean god withstood.⁵¹⁵
To th'end also his doom be just and good,
He must, as she had, have one only eye, [160]
Regard of truth, that nought may lead awry.⁵¹⁶

In courage eke he must be like a horse;
He may not fear to register the right.
And, that no power or fancy do him force,
No bit nor rein his tender jaws may twight. [165]
He must be armed with strength of wit and sprite
To dash the rocks, dark causes and obscure,
Till he attain the springs of truth most pure.

His hooves must also pliant be and strong,
To rive the rocks of lust and errors blind [170]
In brainless heads that always wander wrong.
These he must bruise with reasons plain and kind,
Till springs of grace do gush out of the mind,
For till affections from the fond be driven,
In vain is truth told or good counsel given. [175]

Like Pegasus, a poet must have wings
To fly to heaven, thereto to feed and rest.
He must have knowledge of eternal things;
Almighty Jove must harbour in his breast.
With worldly cares he may not be oppressed; [180]
The wings of skill and hope must heave him higher
That all the joys which worldly wits desire.

He must be also nimble, free, and swift,
To travel far to view the trades of men –

158. **to her power:** to the best of her ability. 165. **twight:** jerk, pull at. 170. **rive:** split. 172. **bruise:** crush. 182. **That:** Than.

Great knowledge oft is gotten by the shift. [185]
 Things notable he must be quick to pen,
 Reproving vices sharply now and then.
 He must be swift when touchèd tyrants chafe,
 To gallop thence to keep his carcass safe.

These properties, if I had well considered, [190]
 Especially that which I touchèd last,
 With speedy flight my feet should have delivered
 My feeble body from the stormy blast.
 They should have caught me, ere I had be cast.
 But, trusting vainly to the tyrant's grace, [195]
 I never shrunk nor changèd port or place.

I thought the poet's ancient liberties
 Had been allowèd plea at any bar.
 I had forgot how newfound tyrannies
 With right and freedom were at open war, [200]
 That lust was law, that might did make and mar,
 That with the lewd save this no order was,
*Sic volo, sic iubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas.*¹⁷

Where this is law, it booteth not to plead:
 No privilege or liberties avail. [205]
 But with the learned whom law and wisdom lead,
 Although through rashness poets hap to rail,
 A plea of dotage may all quarrels quail.
 Their liberties their writings to expound
 Doth quit them clear from faults by Momus found. [210]

This ancient freedom ought not be debarred
 From any wight that speaketh ought or writeth.
 The author's meaning should of right be heard;
 He knoweth best to what end he inditeth.
 Words sometime bear more than the heart behighteth. [215]

185. shift: movement from one place to another. **194. caught:** hastened; **had be cast:** had been condemned. **203. Sic... voluntas:** Thus I will, thus I command: let will stand for a reason. **207. hap:** chance. **208. dotage:** foolishness. **209–10. Their ... found:** Their liberty to interpret their own writings' meanings excuses them fully from any faults found in their work by Momus (**Momus:** an epithet for a carping critic, derived from the name of the Greek God of censure and ridicule). **214. inditeth:** writes. **215. behighteth:** lit. promises, but evidently used here as a synonym of 'highteth' in its meaning of 'intends'.

Admit, therefore, the author's exposition:
If plain, for truth; if forced, for his submission.

Of slanderers, just laws require no more
Save to amend that seemèd evil said,
Or to unsay the slanders said afore [220]
And ask forgiveness for the hasty braid.
To heretics no greater pain is laid
Than to recant their errors or retract:
And worse than these can be no writer's act.⁵¹⁸

'Yes', quoth the Cat, 'thy railing words be treason, [225]
And treason is far worse than heresy.'
Then must it follow by this foolish reason
That kings be more than God in majesty,
And souls be less than bodies in degree,
For heretics both souls and God offend; [230]
Traitors but seek to bring man's life to end.⁵¹⁹

I speak this not to abase the heinous fault
Of trait'rous acts, abhorred of God and man,
But to make plain their judgement to be naught
That heresy for lesser sin do ban. [235]
I curse them both as deep as any can
And alway did, yet, through my foolish rhyme,
They arraigned and stained me with that shameful crime.

I never meant the king or counsel harm,
Unless to wish them safety were offence. [240]
Against their power I never lifted arm,
Neither pen nor tongue for any ill pretence.
The rhyme I made, though rude, was sound in sense,
For they therein whom I so fondly named
So rulèd all that they were foul defamed. [245]

This was no treason but the very troth.
They rulèd all; none could deny the same.

216. **exposition**: interpretation. 232. **abase**: diminish. 235. **That ... ban**: Who curse heresy as a lesser sin (than treason).

What was the cause then why they were so wroth?
 What, is it treason in a rhyming frame
 To clip, to stretch, to add or change a name? [250]
 And this reserved, there is no rhyme or reason
 That any craft can clout to seem a treason,

For where I meant the king by name of hog,
 I only alluded to his badge, the boar;
 To Lovell's name I added more 'our dog', [255]
 Because most dogs have born that name of yore.
 These metaphors I use with other more,
 As cat and rat, the half names of the rest
 To hide the sense which they so wrongly wrest.

I pray you now, what treason find you here? [260]
 'Enough: you rubbed the guilty on the gall;
 Both sense and names do note them very near.'
 I grant that was the chief cause of my fall,
 Yet can you find therein no treason at all.
 There is no word against the prince or state [265]
 Nor harm to them whom all the realm did hate.

But sith the guilty always are suspicious
 And dread the ruin that must sue by reason,
 They cannot choose but count their counsel vicious
 That note their faults and therefore call it treason: [270]
 All grace and goodness with the lewd is geason.
 This is the cause why they good things detest,
 Whereas the good take ill things to the best.

And therefore, Baldwin, boldly to the good
 Rebuke thou vice, so shalt thou purchase thanks. [275]
 As for the bad, thou shalt but move his mood,
 Though pleasantly thou touch his sinful pranks.
 Warn poets, therefore, not to pass the banks
 Of Helicon but keep them in the streams;
 So shall their freedom save them from extremes. [280]

252. **clout**: join awkwardly together. 261. **gall**: sore point. 268. **sue**: follow. 271. **geason**: scarce. 277. **touch**: write about; censure; **pranks**: tricks.

[Prose 25]

‘God’s blessing on his heart that made this’, said one, ‘specially for reviving our ancient liberties, and I pray God it may take such place with the magistrates that they may ratify our old freedom.’

‘Amen’, quoth another, ‘for that shall be a mean both to stay and uphold
 5 themselves from falling, and also to preserve many kind, true, zealous,
 and well-meaning minds from slaughter and infamy. If King Richard and
 his counsellors had allowed or at the least but winked at some such wits,
 what great commodities might they have taken thereby? First, they should
 10 have known what the people misliked and grudged at (which no one of
 their flatterers either would or durst have told them) and so mought have
 found mean, either by amendment, which is best, or by some other policy
 to have stayed the people’s grudge, the forerunner commonly of rulers’
 destructions. *Vox populi, vox Dei*: in this case is not so famous a proverb as
 true.⁵²⁰ The experience of all times doth approve it. They should also have
 15 been warned of their own sins, which call continually for God’s vengeance,
 which never faileth to fall on their necks suddenly and horribly, unless it
 be stayed with hearty repentance. These weighty commodities mought
 they have taken by Collingbourne’s vain rhyme. But, as all things work
 20 to the best in them that be good, so best things heap up mischief in the
 wicked, and all to hasten their utter destruction, for after this poor wretch’s
 lamentable persecution (the common reward of best endeavours) straight
 followed the eternal destruction both of this tyrant and of his tormenters,
 which I wish might be so set forth, that they might be a warning forever to
 all in authority to beware how they usurp or abuse their offices.’

25 ‘I have here’, quoth I, ‘King Richard’s tragedy.’ ‘Read it we pray you’,
 quoth they. ‘With a good will’, quoth I: ‘for the better understanding
 whereof, imagine that you see him tormented with Dives⁵²¹ in the deep pit
 of hell and thence howling this that followeth’:

4. **stay**: support. 7. **winked at**: pretended not to notice. 10. **mought**: might. 13. *vox populi, vox Dei*: the voice of the people is the voice of God (a familiar saying).

[Tragedy 24]

How Richard Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, Murdered his
Brother's Children, Usurping the Crown and, in the third Year of
his Reign, was Most Worthily Deprived of Life and Kingdom in
Bosworth Plain by Henry, Earl of Richmond, after called King
Henry the Seventh

What heart so hard but doth abhor to hear
The rueful reign of me, the third Richard?
King unkindly called, though I the crown did wear,
Who entered by rigour but right did not regard,
By tyranny proceeding in killing King Edward, [5]
Fifth of that name, right heir unto the crown,
With Richard his brother, princes of renown.

Of trust they were committed unto my governance,
But trust turned to treason, too truly it was tried,
Both against nature, duty, and allegiance, [10]
For through my procurement most shamefully they died.⁵²²
Desire for a kingdom forgeteth all kindred,
As after by discourse it shall be showed here,
How cruelly these innocents in prison murdered were.

The Lords and Commons all with one assent [15]
Protector made me both of land and king,⁵²³
But I therewith, alas, was not content,
For, minding mischief, I meant another thing,
Which to confusion in short time did me bring.
For I, desirous to rule and reign alone, [20]
Sought crown and kingdom, yet title had I none.

To all peers and princes a precedent I may be,
The like to beware how they do enterprise,
And learn their wretched falls by my fact to foresee,

3. **unkindly**: unnaturally. 18. **minding mischief**: turning my mind to evil-doing; **meant**: intended. 19. **confusion**: ruin.

Which rueful stand, bewailing my chance before their eyes, [25]
As one clean bereft of all felicities,
For right through might I cruelly defaced,
But might helped right and me again displaced.

Alas, that ever prince should thus his honour stain
With blood of innocents, most shameful to be told, [30]
For these two noble imps I caused to be slain,
Of years not full ripe as yet to rule and reign,
For which I was abhorred both of young and old.
But as the deed was odious in the sight of God and man,
So shame and destruction in the end I wan. [35]

Both God, nature, duty, allegiance all forgot:
This vile and heinous act unnaturally I conspired,
Which horrible deed done, alas, alas, God wot,
Such terrors me tormented and my spirits fired,
As unto such a murder and shameful deed required. [40]
Such broil daily felt I breeding in my breast,
Whereby more and more increased my unrest.⁵²⁴

My brother's children were right heirs unto the crown,
Whom nature rather bound to defend than destroy, [45]
But I, not regarding their right nor my renown,
My whole care and study to this end did employ,
The crown to obtain and them both to put down,
Wherein I God offended, provoking just his ire
For this my attempt and most wicked desire.

To cruel cursèd Cain compare my careful case, [50]
Which did unjustly slay his brother just Abel.
And did I not in rage make run that rueful race
My brother duke of Clarence, whose death I shame to tell,
For that so strange it was, as it was horrible?
For sure he drenchèd was and yet no water near, [55]
Which strange is to be told to all that shall it hear.⁵²⁵

40. **required:** were fittingly called forth. 48. **just his ire:** his just wrath.

The butt he was not whereat I did shoot,
 But yet he stood between the mark and me,
 For had he lived, for me it was no boot
 To tempt the thing that by no means could be, [60]
 For I third was then of my brethren three,
 But yet I thought the elder being gone,
 Then needs must I bear the stroke alone.⁵²⁶

Desire to rule made me, alas, to rue;
 My fatal fall, I could not it foresee. [65]
 Puffed up in pride so haughty then I grew
 That none my peer I thought now could be,
 Disdaining such as were of high degree.
 Thus daily rising and pulling other down,
 At last I shot how to win the crown.⁵²⁷ [70]

And daily devising which was the best way
 And mean how I might my nephews both devour,
 I secretly then sent without further delay
 To Brackenbury, then lieutenant of the Tower,
 Requesting him by letters to help unto his power [75]
 For to accomplish this, my desire and will,
 And that he would secretly my brother's children kill.⁵²⁸

He answered plainly with a flat nay,
 Saying that to die he would not do that deed,
 But finding then a proffer ready for my prey, [80]
 'Well worth a friend', quoth I, 'yet in time of need.'
 James Tyrell hight his name, whom with all speed
 I sent again to Brackenbury, as you heard before,
 Commanding him to deliver the keys of every door.⁵²⁹

The keys he rendered but partaker would not be [85]
 Of that flagitious fact. 'Oh happy man!', I say,
 And as you heard before, he rather chose to die

59. **boot**: good. 60. **tempt**: attempt. 63. **the stroke**: rule. 70. **shot**: suddenly thought. 80. **proffer**: means (not listed as a definition in the *OED*, but cf. Seager's inspiration for this line, *Tragedy 10*, line 22). 81. **yet**: now. 86. **flagitious fact**: heinous, wicked action; **happy**: fortunate.

Than on those silly lambs his violent hands to lay.
His conscience him pricked, his prince to betray:
Oh constant mind, that wouldst not condescend, [90]
Thee may I praise and myself discommend!

What though he refused, yet be sure you may,
That other were as ready to take in hand the thing,
Which watched and waited as duly for their prey
As ever did the cat for the mouse-taking, [95]
And how they might their purpose best to pass bring,
Where Tyrell he thought good to have no bloodshed,
Becast them to kill by smothering in their bed.⁵³⁰

The wolves at hand were ready to devour
The silly lambs in bed, whereas they lay, [100]
Abiding death and looking for the hour,
For well they wist they could not scape away.
Ah, woe is me that did them thus betray
In assigning this vile deed to be done
By Miles Forrest and wicked John Dighton, [105]

Who privily into their chamber stale
In secret-wise somewhat before midnight
And gan the bed together tug and hale,
Bewrapping them, alas, in rueful plight,
Keeping them down by force, by power and might, [110]
With haling, tugging, turmoiling, torn and tossed
Till they of force were forcèd yield the ghost.

Which when I heard, my heart I felt was eased
Of grudge, of grief, and inward deadly pain.
But with this deed the nobles were displeased [115]
And said, 'Oh God, shall such a tyrant reign
That hath so cruelly his brother's children slain?'
Which bruit, once blown in the people's ears,
Their dolour was such that they brast out in tears.⁵³¹

89. **His ... betray:** The thought of betraying his prince (i.e. Edward V) caused Brackenbury's conscience to trouble him. 90. **constant:** steadfast. 94. **Which:** Who. 108. **And ... hale:** And together began to tug and pull on the bed. 119. **brast:** burst.

But what thing may suffice unto the bloody man? [120]
 The more he bathes in blood, the bloodier he is alway.
 By proof I do this speak, which best declare it can,
 Which only was the cause of this prince's decay:
 The wolf was never greedier than I was of my prey,
 But who so useth murder, full well affirm I dare, [125]
 With murder shall be quit, ere he thereof be ware.

And mark the sequel of this begun mischief,
 Which shortly after was cause of my decay,
 For high and low conceivèd such a grief
 And hate against me, which sought day by day [130]
 All ways and means that possible they may
 On me to be revengèd for this sin,
 For cruel murdering unnaturally my kin.⁵³²

Not only kin but king the truth to say,
 Whom unkindly of kingdom I bereft, [135]
 His life also from him I raught away
 With his brother's, which to my charge were left.
 Of ambition, behold the work and weft,
 Provoking me to do this heinous treason
 And murder them against all right and reason. [140]

After whose death thus wrought by violence,
 The lords, not liking this unnatural deed,
 Began on me to have great diffidence,
 Such brinning hate gan in their hearts to breed,
 Which made me in doubt and sore my danger dread, [145]
 Which doubt and dread proved not in vain
 By that ensued, alas, unto my pain.

For I supposing all things were as I wished
 When I had brought these silly babes to bane,
 But yet in that my purpose far I missed, [150]

123. **Which ... decay:** Who alone was the cause of Edward V's downfall. 126. **With ... ware:** He will be requited with murder himself, before he is aware of it. 136. **raught:** took. 138. **work and weft:** the woven product and the pattern of its weaving. 143. **diffidence:** doubt, misgiving. 144. **brinning:** burning. 145. **sore:** pain.

For as the moon doth change after the wane,
So changed the hearts of such as I had tane
To be most true, to troubles did me turn,
Such rage and rancour in boiling breasts do burn.

And suddenly a bruit abroad was blown [155]
That Buckingham, the duke both stern and stout,
In field was ready with divers to me known
To give me battle if I durst come out,
Which daunted me and put me in great doubt,
For that I had no army then prepared, [160]
But after that, I little for it cared.

But yet remembering that oft a little spark
Suffered doth grow unto a great flame,
I thought it wisdom wisely for to wark,
Mustered then men in every place I came, [165]
And marching forward daily with the same
Directly towards the town of Salisbury,
Where I gat knowledge of the duke's army.

And as I passed over Salisbury down,
The rumour ran the duke was fled and gone, [170]
His host dispersed besides Shrewsbury town
And he dismayed was left there post alone,
Bewailing his chance and making great moan,
Towards whom I hasted with all expedition,
Making due search and diligent inquisition.⁵³³ [175]

But at the first I could not of him hear,
For he was scaped by secret byways
Unto the house of Humphrey Bannister,
Whom he had much preferred in his days
And was good lord to him in all assays, [180]
Which he full evil requited in the end,
When he was driven to seek a trusty friend,

168. *gat*: got. 169. *down*: plain. 172. *post alone*: completely alone. 173. *chance*: bad luck, misfortune. 180. *all assays*: everything he endeavoured to do.

For it so happened to his mishap, alas,
 When I no knowledge of the duke could hear,
 A proclamation by my commandment was [185]
 Published and cried through every shire
 That whoso could tell where the duke were
 A thousand mark should have for his pain:
 What thing so hard but money can obtain?

But were it for money, meed or dread, [190]
 That Bannister thus betrayed his guest.
 Divers have diversely divined of this deed,
 Some deem the worst and some judge the best,
 The doubt not dissolved nor plainly expressed,
 But of the duke's death he doubtless was the cause, [195]
 Which died without judgment or order of laws.

Lo, this noble duke I brought thus unto the bane,
 Whose doings I doubted and had in great dread;
 At Bannister's house I made him to be tane
 And without judgement be shortened by the head, [200]
 By the shrive of Shropshire to Salisbury led,
 In the marketplace upon the scaffold new,
 Where all the beholders did much his death rue.⁵³⁴

And after this done, I broke up my host,
 Greatly applauded with this happy hap, [205]
 And forthwith I sent to every sea coast
 To foresee all mischiefs and stop every gap
 Before they should chance and light in my lap,
 Giving them in charge to have good regard
 The sea coast to keep with good watch and ward, [210]

Directing my letters unto every shrive,
 With straight commandment under our name
 To suffer no man in their parts to arrive
 Nor to pass forth of the same,

187. were: might be (subjunctive mood). **188. mark:** marks (a monetary unit worth two-thirds of a pound sterling). **201. shrive:** sheriff. **205. Greatly ... hap:** Receiving great approval with this fortunate event.

As they tendered our favour and void would our blame, [215]
Doing therein their pain and industry
With diligent care and vigilant eye.⁵³⁵

And thus setting things in order as you hear
To prevent mischiefs that might then betide,
I thought myself sure and out of all fear [220]
And for other things began to provide.
To Nottingham castle straight did I ride,
Where I was not very long space,
Strange tidings came, which did me sore amaze.

Reported it was, and that for certainty, [225]
Th'earl of Richmond landed was in Wales,
At Milford Haven, with an huge army,
Dismissing his navy, which were many sails,
Which at the first I thought fleeing tales,
But in the end did otherwise prove, [230]
Which not a little did me vex and move.⁵³⁶

Thus fawning Fortune began on me to frown
And cast on me her scornful louring look.
Then gan I fear the fall of my renown;
My heart it fainted, my sinews sore they shook, [235]
This heavy hap a scourge for sin I took,
Yet did I not then utterly despair,
Hoping storms passed, the weather should be fair.

And then, with all speed possible I might,
I caused them muster throughout every shire, [240]
Determining with the earl speedily to fight
Before that his power much increased were
By such as to him great favour did bear
(Which were no small number, by true report made,
Daily repairing him for to aid), [245]

215. void: avoid. 229. fleeing tales: rumours.

Directing my letters to divers noble men,
 With earnest request their power to prepare
 To Nottingham castle whereas I lay then,
 To aid and assist me in this weighty affair.
 Where straight to my presence did then repair [250]
 John, duke of Norfolk, his eldest son also,
 With th'earl of Northumberland and many other mo.⁵³⁷

And thus being furnished with men and munition,
 Forward we marched in order of battle-ray,
 Making by scouts every way inquisition [255]
 In what place the earl with his camp lay,
 Towards whom directly we took then our way,
 Evermore minding to seek our most avail,
 In place convenient to give to him battayle.

So long we laboured, at last our armies met [260]
 On Bosworth plain besides Leicester town,
 Where sure I thought the garland for to get
 And purchase peace or else to lose my crown,
 But fickle Fortune, alas, on me did frown,
 For when I was encampèd in the field [265]
 Where most I trusted I soonest was beguiled.⁵³⁸

The brand of malice, thus kindling in my breast
 Of deadly hate which I to him did bear,
 Pricked me forward and bade me not desist
 But boldly fight and take at all no fear [270]
 To win the field and the earl to conquer.
 Thus hoping glory great to gain and get,
 My army then in order did I set.

Betide me life or death, I desperately ran
 And joined me in battle with this earl so stout, [275]
 But Fortune so him favoured that he the battle wan;

247. **prepare**: make ready to go. 248. **whereas**: where. 254. **battle-ray**: arrangement for battle. 268. **him**: Henry, earl of Richmond. 274. **Betide**: Befall.

With force and great power I was beset about,
Which when I did behold in mids of the whole rout,
With dent of sword I cast me on him to be revengèd,
Where in the midst of them my wretched life I ended.⁵³⁹ [280]

My body it was hurried and tugged like a dog
On horseback, all naked and bare as I was born.
My head, hands, and feet down hanging like a hog,
With dirt and blood besprent, my corpse all-to torn,
Cursing the day that ever I was born, [285]
With grievous wounds bemangled most horrible to see,
So sore they did abhor this, my vile cruelty.⁵⁴⁰

Lo, here you may behold the due and just reward
Of tyranny and treason, which God doth most detest,
For if unto my duty I had taken regard, [290]
I might have lived still in honour with the best,
And had I not attempt the thing that I ought lest.
But desire to rule, alas, did me so blind,
Which caused me to do against nature and kind.

Ah cursed caitiff! Why did I climb so high, [295]
Which was the cause of this my baleful thrall?
For still I thirsted for the regal dignity,
But hasty rising threateneth sudden fall.
Content yourselves with your estates all
And seek not right by wrong to suppress, [300]
For God hath promised each wrong to redress.

See here the fine and fatal fall of me
And guerdon due for this my wretched deed,
Which to all princes a mirror now may be
That shall this tragical story after read, [305]
Wishing them all by me to take heed
And suffer right to rule as it is reason,
For time trieth out both truth and also treason.

278. **rout**: crowd. 279. **dent**: blow, strike. 284. **besprent**: besprinkled; **all-to**: completely. 292. **And ... lest**: And I would not have attempted that which I least should have done. 296. **baleful thrall**: hateful distress. 302. **fine**: end. 303. **guerdon**: recompense.

[Prose 26]

When I had read this, we had much talk about it, for it was thought not vehement enough for so violent a man as King Richard had been. The matter was well-enough liked of some, but the metre was misliked almost of all. And when divers therefore would not allow it, 'what', quoth one,
 5 'you know not whereupon you stick, else you would not so much mislike this because of the uncertain metre. The comeliness called by the rhetoricians decorum is specially to be observed in all things. Seeing, then, that King Richard never kept measure in any of his doings, seeing also that he speaketh in hell, whereas is no order, it were against the decorum of his
 10 personage to use either good metre or order. And, therefore, if his oration were far worse, in my opinion it were more fit for him. Mars and the muses did never agree; neither is it to be suffered that their mild, sacred art should seem to proceed from so cruel and profane a mouth as his, seeing they themselves do utterly abhor it, and although we read of Nero that
 15 he was excellent both in music and in versifying, yet do not I remember that I ever saw any song or verse of his making – Minerva justly providing that no monument should remain of any such unjust usurpation.⁵⁴ And, therefore, let this pass even as it is, which the writer I know both could and would amend in many places, save for keeping the decorum, which he
 20 purposely hath observed therein.'

'Indeed', quoth I, 'as you say, it is not meet that so disorderly and unnatural a man as King Richard was should observe any metrical order in his talk, which, notwithstanding, in many places of his oration is very well kept. It shall thus pass therefore even as it is, though too good for so ill
 25 a person. And to supply that which is lacking in him, here I have Shore's wife, an eloquent wench, which shall furnish out both in metre and matter that which could not comelily be said in his person. Mark, I pray you, what she sayeth and tell me how you like it.'

9. **whereas**: where there. 27. **comelily**: in a comely, attractive manner.

[Tragedy 25]

How Shore's Wife, Edward the Fourth's Concubine, was by
King Richard Despoiled of all her Goods and Forced to Do
Open Penance

Among the rest by Fortune overthrown,
I am not least that most may wail her fate.
My fame and bruit abroad the world is blown;
Who can forget a thing thus done so late?
My great mischance, my fall and heavy state, [5]
Is such a mark whereat each tongue doth shoot
That my good name is plucked up by the root.

This wand'ring world bewitchèd me with wiles
And won my wits with wanton sugared joys.
In Fortune's freaks, who trusts her when she smiles [10]
Shall find her false and full of fickle toys.
Her triumphs all but fill our ears with noise;
Her flattering gifts are pleasures mixed with pain;
Yea, all her words are thunders threat'ning rain.

The fond desire that we in glory set [15]
Doth thirl our hearts to hope in slipper hap.
A blast of pomp is all the fruit we get
And, under that, lies hid a sudden clap.
In seeking rest, unwares we fall in trap;
In groping flowers, with nettles stung we are; [20]
In labouring long, we reap the crop of care.

Oh dark deceit, with painted face for show!
Oh poisoned bait that makes us eager still!
Oh feignèd friend deceiving people so!

10. **freaks**: sudden changes of mind. 11. **toys**: acts of toying (with someone); tricks. 16. **thirl**: subject, bind;
slipper hap: unstable chance. 18. **clap**: stroke of misfortune (lit. a stroke of lightning).

Oh world, of thee we cannot speak too ill, [25]
 Yet fools we are that bend so to thy skill.
 The plague and scourge that thousands daily feel
 Should warn the wise to shun thy whirling wheel.

But who can stop the stream that runs full swift
 Or quench the fire that crept is in the straw? [30]
 The thirsty drinks: there is no other shift.
 Perforce is such that need obeys no law.
 Thus bound we are in worldly yokes to draw
 And cannot stay nor turn again in time,
 Nor learn of those that sought too high to climb. [35]

Myself for proof, lo, here I now appear,
 In woman's weed with weeping, watered eyes,
 That bought her youth and her delights full dear,
 Whose loud reproach doth sound unto the skies
 And bids my corpse out of the grave to rise, [40]
 As one that may no longer hide her face
 But needs must come and show her piteous case.

The sheet of shame wherein I shrouded was
 Did move me oft to plain before this day,
 And in mine ears did ring the trump of brass, [45]
 Which is defame that doth each vice bewray.
 Yea, though full dead and low in earth I lay,
 I heard the voice of me what people said,
 But then to speak, alas, I was afraid.

And now a time for me I see prepared; [50]
 I hear the lives and falls of many wights.
 My tale, therefore, the better may be heard,
 For at the torch the little candle lights.
 Where pageants be, small things fill out the sights.
 Wherefore give ear, good Baldwin, do thy best [55]
 My tragedy to place among the rest.

26. **skill**: art, practice. 32. **Perforce is such**: It is inevitable. 45. **trump**: trumpet. 46. **bewray**: expose. 48. **voice of**: words about.

Because that truth shall witness well with thee,
I will rehearse in order as it fell
My life, my death, my doleful destiny,
My wealth, my woe, my doing everydeal, [60]
My bitter bliss, wherein I long did dwell.
A whole discourse of me, Shore's wife by name,
Now shalt thou hear as thou hadst seen the same.⁵⁴²

Of noble blood I cannot boast my birth,
For I was made out of the meanest mould. [65]
Mine heritage but seven foot of earth;
Fortune ne gave to me the gifts of gold,
But I could brag of nature if I would,
Who filled my face with favour fresh and fair,
Whose beauty shone like Phoebus in the air. [70]

My shape, some said, was seemly to each sight,
My countenance did show a sober grace,
Mine eyes in looks were never provèd light,
My tongue in words were chaste in every case. [75]
Mine ears were deaf and would no lovers place,
Save that (alas!) a prince did blot my brow:
Lo, there the strong did make the weak to bow.

The majesty that kings to people bear,
The stately port, the awful cheer they show, [80]
Doth make the mean to shrink and couch for fear,
Like as the hound that doth his master know.
What then? Since I was made unto the bow,
There is no cloak can serve to hide my fault,
For I agreed the fort he should assault.

The eagle's force subdues each bird that flies; [85]
What metal may resist the flaming fire?
Doth not the sun dazzle the clearest eyes
And melt the ice and make the frost retire?

60. **everydeal**: in every respect. 65. **made out of the meanest mould**: came from the lowest of origins. 73. **proved light**: judged to be wanton. 75. **place**: put in place; assign a place to. 76. **blot**: sully. 79. **awful cheer**: awe-inspiring countenance. 80. **couch**: crouch. 82. **made unto the bow**: led into the yoke.

Who can withstand a puissant king's desire?
 The stiffest stones are piercèd through with tools; [90]
 The wisest are with princes made but fools.

If kind had wrought my form in common frames
 And set me forth in colours black and brown,
 Or beauty had been parched in Phoebus' flames,
 Or shamefast ways had plucked my feathers down, [95]
 Then had I kept my name and good renown,
 For nature's gifts was cause of all my grief;
 A pleasant prey enticeth many a thief.

Thus, woe to thee that wrought my peacock's pride
 By clothing me with nature's tapestry! [100]
 Woe worth the hue wherein my face was dyed,
 Which made me think I pleasèd every eye.
 Like as the stars make men behold the sky,
 So beauty's show doth make the wise full fond
 And brings free hearts full oft to endless bond. [105]

But clear from blame my friends cannot be found;
 Before my time, my youth they did abuse:
 In marriage a prentice was I bound,
 When that mere love I knew not how to use.⁵⁴³
 But wellaway, that cannot me excuse: [110]
 The harm is mine, though they devised my care,
 And I must smart and sit in sland'rous snare.

Yet give me leave to plead my case at large.
 If that the horse do run beyond his race,
 Or anything that keepers have in charge [115]
 Do break their course, where rulers may take place,
 Or meat be set before the hungry's face,
 Who is in fault – the offender, yea or no,
 Or they that are the cause of all this woe?

92. **kind:** nature. 116. **Do ... place:** an uncertain line, meaning perhaps 'cross the path of rulers presumptuously during a hunt' or 'proceed to tear apart their prey (rather than simply bring it to bay), wherever rulers have precedence in killing a hunted beast'.

Note well what strife this forcèd marriage makes, [120]
What loathèd lives do come where love doth lack,
What scratting briers do grow upon such brakes,
What commonweals by it are brought to wrack.
What heavy load is put on patience's back,
What strange delights this branch of vice doth breed, [125]
And mark what grain springs out of such a seed.

Compel the hawk to sit that is unmanned,
Or make the hound untaught to draw the deer,
Or bring the free against his will in band,
Or move the sad a pleasant tale to hear: [130]
Your time is lost, and you are never the near.
So love ne learns of force the knot to knit;
She serves but those that feel sweet fancy's fit.

The less defame redounds to my dispraise:
I was enticed by trains and trapped by trust. [135]
Though in my power remainèd yeas and nays,
Unto my friends yet needs consent I must
In everything, yea, lawful or unjust.
They brake the boughs and shaken the tree by sleight
And bent the wand that might have grown full straight. [140]

What help in this? The pale thus broken down,
The deer must needs in danger run astray.
At me, therefore, why should the world so frown?
My weakness made my youth a prince's prey. [145]
Though wisdom should the course of nature stay,
Yet, try my case who list, and they shall prove,
The ripest wits are soonest thralls to love.

What need I more to clear myself too much?
A king me won and had me at his call.
His royal state, his princely grace was such, [150]
The hope of will (that women seek for all),

122. **scratting**: scratching; **brakes**: bushes. 127. **unmanned**: untamed. 128. **draw**: search out. 134. **The ... dispraise**: The lesser disgrace contributes to my disparagement. 135. **trains**: tricks, stratagems. 140. **wand**: branch. 141. **pale**: fence. 145. **stay**: restrain. 147. **ripest**: must mature in judgement. 151. **will**: undue assertion of one's own will.

The ease and wealth, the gifts which were not small
Besieged me so strongly round about,
My power was weak; I could not hold him out.

Duke Hannibal in all his conquest great, [155]
Or Caesar yet, whose triumphs did exceed,
Of all their spoils which made them toil and sweat
Were not so glad to have so rich a meed
As was this prince, when I to him agreed
And yielded me a prisoner willingly, [160]
As one that knew no way away to flee.

The nightingale, for all his merry voice,
Nor yet the lark that still delights to sing,
Did never make the hearers so rejoice
As I with words have made this worthy king. [165]
I never jarred; in tune was every string:
I tempered so my tongue to please his ear
That what I said was current everywhere.⁵⁴⁴

I joined my talk, my gestures, and my grace
In witty frames that long might last and stand, [170]
So that I brought the king in such a case
That to his death I was his chiefest hand.
I governed him that ruled all the land.
I bare the sword, though he did wear the crown;
I strake the stroke that threw the mighty down. [175]

If justice said that judgement was but death,
With my sweet words I could the king persuade
And make him pause and take therein a breath,
Till I with suit the faulters' peace had made;
I knew what way to use him in his trade. [180]
I had the art to make the lion meek;
There was no point wherein I was to seek.⁵⁴⁵

155. **Duke**: General; **Hannibal**: Hannibal Barca (d. c. 182 BC), Carthaginian conqueror of much of Italy in the Second Punic War. 156. **Caesar**: Julius Caesar. 170. **frames**: forms. 172. **to**: up to the time of; **hand**: agent. 179. **suit**: supplication; **the faulters'**: the offender's. 182. **was to seek**: at a loss.

If I did frown, who then did look awry?
If I did smile, who would not laugh outright?
If I but spake, who durst my words deny? [185]
If I pursued, who would forsake the flight?
I mean my power was known to every wight.
On such a height good hap had built my bower,
As though my sweet should never have turned to sour.

My husband then, as one that knew his good, [190]
Refused to keep a prince's concubine,
Foreseeing the end and mischief as it stood,
Against the king did never much repine.
He saw the grape whereof he drank the wine,
Though inward thought his heart did still torment, [195]
Yet outwardly he seemed he was content.

To purchase praise and win the people's zeal,
Yea, rather bent of kind to do some good,
I ever did uphold the commonweal;
I had delight to save the guiltless blood. [200]
Each suitor's cause, when that I understood,
I did prefer as it had been mine own
And helped them up that might have been o'erthrown.

My power was prest to right the poor man's wrong;
My hands were free to give where need required. [205]
To watch for grace I never thought it long;
To do men good I need not be desired,
Nor yet with gifts my heart was never hired.
But when the ball was at my foot to guide,
I played to those that Fortune did abide. [210]

My want was wealth, my woe was ease at will,
My robes were rich and braver than the sun,
My fortune then was far above my skill,
My state was great, my glass did ever run,

198. **bent of kind**: naturally disposed. 204. **prest**: ready. 206. **watch for grace**: to wait for the king to offer favour, benevolence. 207. **desired**: asked. 210. **fortune did abide**: did await (the judgement or decree of) fortune. 212. **braver**: more splendid.

My fatal thread so happily was spun [215]
 That then I sat in earthly pleasures clad,
 And for the time a goddess' place I had.

But I had not so soon this life possessed
 But my good hap began to slip aside,
 And fortune then did me so sore molest [220]
 That unto plaints was turnèd all my pride.
 It bootèd not to row against the tide:
 Mine oars were weak, my heart and strength did fail,
 The wind was rough; I durst not bear a sail.

What steps of strife belong to high estate? [225]
 The climbing up is doubtful to endure,
 The seat itself doth purchase privy hate,
 And honour's fame is fickle and unsure.
 And all she brings is flow'rs that be unpure,
 Which fall as fast as they do sprout and spring, [230]
 And cannot last, they are so vain a thing.

We count no care to catch that we do wish,
 But what we win is long to us unknown.
 Till present pain be servèd in our dish,
 We scarce perceive whereon our grief hath grown. [235]
 What grain proves well that is so rashly sown?
 If that a mean did measure all our deeds,
 Instead of corn we should not gather weeds.

The settled mind is free from Fortune's power;
 They need not fear who look not up aloft, [240]
 But they that climb are careful every hour,
 For when they fall they light not very soft.
 Examples hath the wisest warnèd oft
 That where the trees the smallest branches bear,
 The storms do blow and have most rigour there. [245]

215. **happily**: fortunately. 219. **hap**: fortune, lot in life. 232. **We ... wish**: We think on no trouble to attain that which we wish. 237–8. **If ... weeds**: If a happy medium regulated all our deeds, we would not reap weeds instead of wheat.

Where is it strong but near the ground and root?
Where is it weak but on the highest sprays?
Where may a man so surely set his foot
But on those boughs that groweth low always?
The little twigs are but unsteadfast stays: [250]
If they break not, they bend with every blast.
Who trusts to them shall never stand full fast.

The wind is great upon the highest hills;
The quiet life is in the dale below.
Who treads on ice shall slide against their wills; [255]
They want no care that curious arts would know.
Who lives at ease and can content him so
Is perfect wise and sets us all to school.
Who hates this lore may well be called a fool.

What greater grief may come to any life [260]
Than after sweet to taste the bitter sour?
Or after peace to fall at war and strife,
Or after mirth to have a cause to lour?
Under such props false Fortune builds her bower;
On sudden change her flitting frames be set, [265]
Where is no way for to escape her net.

The hasty smart that Fortune sends in spite
Is hard to brook where gladness we embrace.
She threatens not but suddenly doth smite.
Where joy is most, there doth she sorrow place. [270]
But sure, I think, this is too strange a case
For us to feel such grief amid our game
And know not why until we taste the same.

As erst I said, my bliss was turned to bale;
I had good cause to weep and wring my hands [275]
And show sad cheer with countenance full pale,
For I was brought in sorrow's woeful bands.

247. **sprays**: twigs. 256. **want no care**: lack no mental suffering; **curious arts**: matters that one does not have a right to know.

A pirrie came and set my ship on sands.
 What should I hide or colour care and noye?
 King Edward died, in whom was all my joy. [280]

And when the earth receivèd had his corpse,
 And that in tomb this worthy prince was laid,
 The world on me began to show his force:
 Of troubles then my part I long assayed,
 For they, of whom I never was afraid, [285]
 Undid me most and wrought me such despite
 That they bereft from me my pleasure quite.

As long as life remained in Edward's breast,
 Who was but I? Who had such friends at call?
 His body was no sooner put in chest [290]
 But well was him that could procure my fall.
 His brother was mine enemy most of all,
 Protector then, whose vice did still abound
 From ill to worse till death did him confound.⁵⁴⁶

He falsely feigned that I of counsel was [295]
 To poison him, which thing I never meant,⁵⁴⁷
 But he could set thereon a face of brass,
 To bring to pass his lewd and false intent.
 To such mischief this tyrant's heart was bent.
 To God ne man he never stood in awe, [300]
 For in his wrath he made his will a law.

Lord Hastings' blood for vengeance on him cries
 And many mo that were too long to name,
 But most of all, and in most woeful wise,
 I had good cause this wretched man to blame. [305]
 Before the world I suffered open shame:
 Where people were as thick as is the sand,
 I penance took with taper in my hand.⁵⁴⁸

278. **pirrie**: squall, storm. 279. **noye**: distress. 284. **assayed**: had proof of. 289. **Who was but I?**: Who else was there but I? 290. **chest**: coffin. 297. **But ... brass**: He could be insensible to shame. 300. **To ... awe**: He never stood in awe of either God or man.

Each eye did stare and look me in the face;
As I passed by, the rumours on me ran. [310]
But patience then had lent me such a grace,
My quiet looks were praised of every man.
The shamefast blood brought me such colour then
That thousands said, which saw my sober cheer,
'It is great ruth to see this woman here.' [315]

But what prevailed the people's pity there?
This raging wolf would spare no guiltless blood.
Oh wicked womb that such ill fruit did bear!
Oh cursèd earth that yieldeth forth such mud!
The hell consume all things that did thee good; [320]
The heavens shut their gates against thy sprite;
The world tread down thy glory under feet!

I ask of God a vengeance on thy bones;
Thy stinking corpse corrupts the air, I know.
Thy shameful death no earthly wight bemoans, [325]
For in thy life thy works were hated so
That every man did wish thy overthrow.
Wherefore I may, though partial now I am,
Curse every cause whereof thy body came.

Woe worth the man that fathered such a child; [330]
Woe worth the hour wherein thou were begat;
Woe worth the breasts that have the world beguiled
To nourish thee that all the world did hate!
Woe worth the gods that gave thee such a fate
To live so long, that death deserved so oft; [335]
Woe worth the chance that set thee up aloft!

Ye princes all and rulers everychone,
In punishment beware of hatred's ire.
Before you scourge, take heed, look well thereon:
In wrath's ill will, if malice kindle fire, [340]

314. **sober cheer**: solemn expression. 317. **this raging wolf**: i.e. Richard of Gloucester. 332. **beguiled**: cheated. 337. **everychone**: everyone.

Your hearts will burn in such a hot desire
 That in those flames the smoke shall dim your sight;
 Ye shall forget to join your justice right.

You should not judge till things be well discerned;
 Your charge is still to maintain upright laws. [345]
 In conscience' rules ye should be throughly learned,
 Where clemency bids wrath and rashness pause
 And further sayeth 'strike not without a cause'.
 And when ye smite, do it for justice' sake,
 Then in good part each man your scourge will take. [350]

If that such zeal had moved this tyrant's mind
 To make my plague a warning for the rest,
 I had small cause such fault in him to find:
 Such punishment is used for the best.
 But by ill will and power I was oppressed; [355]
 He spoiled my goods and left me bare and poor,
 And causèd me to beg from door to door.⁵⁴⁹

What fall was this: to come from prince's fare
 To watch for crumbs among the blind and lame?
 When alms was dealt, I had a hungry share, [360]
 Because I knew not how to ask for shame,
 Till force and need had brought me in such frame
 That starve I must or learn to beg an alms
 With book in hand and say St. David's psalms.⁵⁵⁰

Where I was wont the golden chains to wear, [365]
 A pair of beads about my neck was wound,
 A linen cloth was lapped around my hair,
 A ragged gown that trailed on the ground.
 A dish that clapped and gave a heavy sound,
 A staying staff and wallet therewithal [370]
 I bear about as witness of my fall.

346. **throughly**: thoroughly. 366. **beads**: prayer beads. 369. **A dish that clapped**: A clap-dish, i.e. a wooden dish with a lid that beggars would clatter to gain the attention of potential alms-givers. 370. **staying staff and wallet**: a staff to keep her up and a beggar's bag.

I had no house wherein to hide my head;
 The open street my lodging was perforce.
 Full oft I went all hungry to my bed:
 My flesh consumed, I lookèd like a corpse, [375]
 Yet in that plight who had on me remorse?⁵⁵¹
 Oh God, thou knowest my friends forsook me then;
 Not one holp me, that succoured many a man.

They frowned on me that fawned on me before,
 And fled from me that followed me full fast. [380]
 They hated me, by whom I set much store;
 They knew full well my fortune did not last.
 In every place I was condemned and cast:
 To plead my cause at bar it was no boot,
 For every man did tread me under foot. [385]

Thus long I lived, all weary of my life,
 Till death approached and rid me of that woe.
 Example take by me both maid and wife,
 Beware, take heed, fall not to folly so!
 A mirror make of my great overthrow. [390]
 Defy this world and all his wanton ways;
 Beware by me that spent so ill her days.

380. full fast: very closely. **383. cast:** rejected. **384. To ... boot:** It availed me nothing to plead openly my case.

[Prose 27]

This was so well liked that all together exhorted me instantly to procure Master Churchyard to undertake and to pen as many mo of the remainder as might by any means be attained at his hands.⁵⁵²

5 And when I had promised I would do my diligence therein, they asked me if I had any mo tragedies yet unread, for the evening was now at hand and there were enough already read to make a handsome volume.⁵⁵³ 'Indeed', quoth I, 'I purpose here to end the second part of this volume, for here endeth the cruel reign of King Richard the Third, and, in another volume hereafter, to discourse the residue from the beginning of King

3. attained at: attained from.

- 10 Henry the Seventh to the end of this king and queen's reign (if God so long will grant us life). And I beseech you all that you will diligently perform such stories as you have undertaken and procure your friends such as be learned to help us with the rest, for there is in this part matter enough to set all the poets in England in work, and I would wish that every fine, apt
- 15 wit would at the least undertake one, for so would it be a notable volume. For my part, I intend to be so impudent and importunate a suitor to so many as I knew or may hereafter be acquainted with, that no excuse shall serve to shake me off, and I desire you all to be as earnest.
- 20 'And to occupy the time while we now be together, I will read unto you "Edmund the Duke of Somerset", which must be placed in the first part, and then "The Blacksmith", which must serve for the third volume, to the end I may know your judgement therein.' 'Do so, we pray you', quoth they.

[21] 1563: for third volume

[Tragedy 26]

The Tragedy of Edmund, Duke of Somerset, Slain at the First
Battle at Saint Albans, in the Time of Henry VI

Some, I suppose, are born unfortunate,
Else good endeavours could not ill succeed.
What shall I call it, ill fortune or fate,
That some men's attempts have never good speed,
Their travail thankless, all bootless their heed, [5]
Where other unlike in working or skill
Outwrestle the world and wield it at will?

Of the first number I count myself one,
To all mishap, I ween, predestinate.
Believe me, Baldwin, there be few or none [10]
To whom Fortune was ever more ingrate.
Make thou, therefore, my life a caveat,
That whoso with force will work against kind
Sailleth, as who sayeth, against the stream and wind.

For I of Somerset, which Duke Edmund hight, [15]
Extract by descent from Lancaster line,
Were it by folly or Fortune's fell despite
Or by ill aspect of some crooked sign,
Of my works never could see a good fine.
Whatso I began did seldom well end. [20]
God from such fortune all good men defend!

Where I sought to save most part did I spill,
For good hap with me was always at war.

6. **working or skill:** actions or ability. 13. **whoso:** whoever; **against kind:** contrary to one's nature or natural quality derived from birth; against one's kinsmen. 14. **as who sayeth:** as they say. 18. **ill aspect of some crooked sign:** the unfavourable placement in the heavens of a perverse astrological sign (at the time of my birth). 20. **whatso:** whatever. 23. **hap:** luck.

The lin'age of York, whom I bare so ill,
 By my spite became bright as the morning star. [25]
 Thus somewhiles men make when fain they would mar.
 The more ye lop trees, the greater they grow;
 The more ye stop streams, the higher they flow.

By malice of me, his glory grew the more,
 And mine, as the moon in the wane, waxed less. [30]
 For having the place which he had before,
 Governor of France, needs I must confess,
 That lost was Normandy without redress.
 Yet wrought I all ways that wit might contrive,
 But what doth it boot with the stream to strive?⁵⁵⁴ [35]

Born was I neither to war nor to peace,
 For Mars was malign to all my whole trade.
 My birth, I believe, was in Jove's decrease,
 When Cancer in his course being retrograde⁵⁵⁵
 Declined from Sol to Saturnus' shade. [40]
 Where aspects were good, opposites did mar,
 So grew mine unhap both in peace and war.⁵⁵⁶

A strange nativity in calculation,
 As all my life's course did after declare,
 Whereof, in a brief to make relation [45]
 That other by me may learn to beware,
 Overlight credence was cause of my care,
 And want of foresight in giving assent
 To condemn Humphrey, the duke innocent.⁵⁵⁷

Humphrey I mean that was the protector, [50]
 Duke of Gloucester of the royal blood.
 So long as he was England's director,
 King Henry's title to the crown was good.

24. **lin'age of York**: descendants of Richard (d. 1460), third duke of York. 26. **Thus ... mar**: Thus sometimes men help that which they desired to harm. 29. **his**: the duke of York's. 38. **Jove's decrease**: the period when the planet Jupiter is moving south from its northernmost latitude in the heavens (measured with reference to the supposed orbit of the sun). 41. **Where ... mar**: Wherever the relative positions of heavenly bodies were favourable at my birth, the planets in opposition to them countered their effect. 42. **unhap**: misfortune. 43. **A ... calculation**: A strange, exceptional birth, when judged according to astrology.

This prince as a pillar most steadfastly stood,
Or like to a prop set under a vine, [55]
In state to uphold all Lancaster's line.⁵⁵⁸

Oh heedless trust, unaware of harm to come!
Oh malice, headlong swift to serve fond will!
Did ever madness man so much benumb
Of prudent forecast, reason, wit, and skill, [60]
As me, blind Bayard, consenting to spill
The blood of my cousin, my refuge and stay,
To my destruction making open way?⁵⁵⁹

So long as the duke bore the stroke and sway,
So long no rebels' quarrels durst begin. [65]
But when that the post was once pulled away
Which stood to uphold the king and his kin,
York and his banders proudly pressèd in
To challenge the crown and title of right,
Beginning with law and ending with might.⁵⁶⁰ [70]

Abroad went bruits in country and in town
That York of England was the heir true,
And how Henry usurpèd had the crown
Against all right, which all the realm may rue. [75]
The people then, embracing titles new,
Irksof of present and longing for a change,
Assented soon, because they love to range.⁵⁶¹

True is the text which we in scripture read,
Ve terrae illi cuius rex est puer,
'Woe to the land whereof a child is head!'⁵⁶² [80]
Whether child or childish, the case is one sure.
Where kings be young we daily see in ure
The people, aweless, wanting one to dread,
Lead their lives lawless by weakness of the head.

60. skill: the power of discrimination. **61. blind Bayard:** a byword in early modern England for someone who does not assess the probable consequences before acting. **64. bore the stroke and sway:** held chief authority. **79. *Vé* ... *puer*:** translated in the next line.

And no less true is this text again, [85]
Beata terra cuius rex est nobilis:
 Blessed is the land where a stout king doth reign,
 Where in good peace each man possesseth his,
 Where ill men fear to fault or do amiss,
 Where the prince prest hath always sword in hand, [90]
 At home and abroad his enemies to withstand.⁸⁶

In case King Henry had been such a one,
 Hardy and stout as his fathers afore,
 Long mought he have sat in the royal throne,
 Without any fear of common uproar. [95]
 But daily his weakness showed more and more,
 And that gave boldness to the adverse band
 To spoil him at last both of life and land.^{86a}

His humble heart was nothing unknown
 To the gallants of York and their retinue; [100]
 A ground lying low is soon overflown,
 And shored houses cannot long continue.
 Joints cannot knit whereas is no sinew,
 And so a prince, not dread as well as loved,
 Is from his place by practice soon removed. [105]

Well mought I see, had I not wanted brain,
 The work begun to undermine the state,
 When the chief link was loosed fro the chain,
 And that men durst upon blood royal grate,
 How tickle a hold had I of mine estate? [110]
 When the head post lay flat upon the floor,
 Mought not I think my staff next the door?

So mought also Dame Margaret the queen,
 By mean of whom this mischief first began.

86. *Beata ... nobilis*: Blessed is the land in which the king is of noble birth. 90. *prest*: prepared, ready for action. 94. *mought*: might. 102. *shored*: propped up. 103. *whereas*: where there. 104. *dread*: feared; held in awe. 105. *practice*: scheming; conspiracy. 109. *grate*: strike against. 110. *tickle*: insecure. 111. *head post*: most important support (i.e. Duke Humphrey). 112. *my staff next the door*: I would be the next to succumb (a reference to the proverbial saying 'when thy neighbour's house is afire, thy staff standeth next the door').

Did she, trow ye, herself not overween, [115]
Death to procure to such a noble man,
Which she and hers afterward did ban,
On whom did hang, as I before have said,
Her husband's life, his honour and his aid?⁵⁶⁵

For whilst he lived which was our stable stay, [120]
York and his imps were kept as under yoke.
But when our post removèd was away,
Then burst out flame that late before was smoke.
The traitor covert then cast off his cloak,
And he that lay hid came forth in open light, [125]
With titles blind which he set forth for right.⁵⁶⁶

Which thing to compass, him first behooved
The king and his kin asunder to set,
Who being per force or practice removed,
Then had they avoided the principal let [130]
Which kept the sought prey so long from the net.
The next point after was themselves to place
In highest authority about his grace.

Therefore, he wrought straight me to displace, [135]
No cause pretending but the commonweal.
The crown of England was the very case
Why to the commons they burnèd so in zeal.
My faults were cloaks their practice to conceal.
In counsel hearing, consider the intent,
For by pretence of truth treason oft is meant.⁵⁶⁷ [140]

So their pretence was only to remove
Counsel corrupt from place about the king.
But, oh ye princes, you it doth behoove
This case to construe as no feignèd thing,
That never traitor did subdue his king [145]

115. **Did ... overween:** Did she not, do you believe, think too highly of herself. 117. **Which ... ban:** Which action she and those allied with her later cursed. 121. **imps:** malicious allies. 126. **titles blind:** false claims of entitlement (to the crown). 128. **his kin:** i.e. Somerset, the king's first cousin once removed. 130. **avoided:** cleared away. 134. **straight:** immediately. 145–7. **That ... made:** No traitor ever sought to overthrow his king without commencing his plot with an attack on the king's allies.

But for his plat, ere he would further wade,
Against his friends the quarrel first he made.

And if by hap he could so bring about
Them to subdue at his own wish and will,
Then would he wax so arrogant and stout, [150]
That no reason his outrage might fulfil
But to proceed upon his purpose still,
Till king and counsel brought were in one case:
Lo to a rebel what it is to give place!

So for the fish casting forth his net, [155]
The next point was in driving out his plat:
Common dolts to cause furiously to fret
And to rebel, I cannot tell for what,
Requiring redress of this and of that,
Who, if they speed, he, standing at receipt, [160]
Grasp would the prey that long he did await.¹⁶⁸

Then by surmise of something pretended
Such to displace as they may well suspect
Like to withstand their practices intended
And in their rooms their banders to elect, [165]
The adverse party proudly to reject,
And then with reports the simple to abuse,
And when these helps fail, open force to use.

So this duke's trains were covert and not seen,
Which nought less meant than he most pretended, [170]
Like to a serpent covert under green,
To the weal public he seemed wholly bended.
Zealous he was and would have all thing mended,
But by that mendment nothing else he meant
But to be king: to that mark was his bent. [175]

148. **hap**: chance. 154. **Lo**: see. 156. **driving out his plat**: forwarding his plot. 165. **rooms**: offices, places at court. 168. **when**: if. 170. **Which ... pretended**: Which were nonetheless what he meant rather than that which he offered as a pretext.

For had he been plain, as he meant indeed,
Henry to depose from the royal place,
His haste had been waste and much worse his speed,
The king then standing in his people's grace.
This duke, therefore, set forth a goodly face, [180]
As one that meant no quarrel for the crown;
Such as bear rule he only would put down.

But all for nought, so long as I bear stroke,
Servèd these drifts and provèd all vain.
Then did he attempt the people to provoke [185]
To make commotion and uproars amain,
Which to appease, the king himself was fain
From Blackheath in Kent to send me to the Tower,
Such was the force of rebels that hour.⁵⁶⁹

The tempest yet therewith was not ceased, [190]
For York was bent his purpose to pursue,
Who seeing how soon I was released
And ill success of sufferance to ensue,
Then, like a Judas unto his lord untrue,
Esteeming time lost longer to defer, [195]
By Warwick's aid proclaimed open war.⁵⁷⁰

At St Albans town both our hosts did meet,
Which to try a field was no equal place:
Forced we were to fight in every lane and street;
No fear of foes could make me shun the place. [200]
There I and Warwick fronted face to face
At an inn door – The Castle was the sign –
Where with a sword was cut my fatal line.

Oft was I warned to come in castle none
But thought no whit of any common sign. [205]
I did imagine a castle built with stone,
For of no inn I could the same divine.

193. **sufferance**: forbearance. 200. **try a field**: attempt a battle. 205. **no whit**: not at all.

In prophet's skill my wit was never fine:
 A fool is he that such vain dreams doth dread
 And more fool of both that will by them be led.⁵⁷¹ [210]

My life I lost in that unlucky place,
 With many lords that leanèd to my part.
 The Earl Percy had there no better grace;
 Clifford, for all his courage, could not shun the dart.
 Stafford, although stout, free went not from this mart; [215]
 Babthorpe the attorney for all his skill in law,
 In this point of pleading was found very raw.⁵⁷²

So thus this poor king, disarmed of his bands,
 His friendès slain, wanting all assistance,
 Was made a prey unto his enemies' hands, [220]
 Privèd of power and princely reverence,
 And as a pupil void of all experience,
 Innocent plain, and simply witted,
 Was as a lamb to the wolf committed.⁵⁷³

A parliament then was called with speed. [225]
 A parliament? Nay, a plain conspiracy.
 When all in post it was by act decreed
 That after the death of the sixth Henry
 York should succeed unto the regaly
 And, in his life, the charge and protection [230]
 Of king and realm at the duke's discretion.⁵⁷⁴

And thus was York declarèd protector.
 Protector, said I? Nay, proditor plain,
 A rank rebel the prince's director,
 A liege to lead his lord and sovereign. [235]
 What honest heart would not conceive disdain
 To see the foot appear above the head?
 A monster is in spite of nature bred.

213. Earl Percy: Henry Percy, second earl of Northumberland. **214. Clifford:** Thomas, eighth Baron Clifford; **the dart:** death's dart (proverbial). **219. friendès:** friends. **223. plain:** entirely. **227. in post:** in haste. **230. his:** Henry VI's. **233. proditor:** traitor.

Some haply here will move a farther doubt
 And for York's part allege an elder right. [240]

Oh brainless heads, that so run in and out!
 When length of time a state hath firmly pight,
 And good accord hath put all strife to flight,
 Were it not better such titles should sleep
 Than all a realm for their trial to weep? [245]

From the heir female came York and his lede,
 And we of Lancaster from the heir male.
 Of whom three kings in order did succeed
 By just descent: this is no feignèd tale.
 Who would have thought that any storm or gale [250]
 Our ship could shake, having such anchor hold?
 None, I think sure, unless God so would.⁵⁷⁵

After this hurl, the king was fain to flee
 Northward in post for succour and relief.
 Oh blessèd God, how strange it was to see [255]
 A rightful prince pursuèd as a thief!⁵⁷⁶
 To thee, oh England, what can be more reproof
 Than to pursue thy prince with armèd hand?
 What greater shame may be to any land?

Traitors did triumph; true men lay in the dust; [260]
 Reaving and robbing roisted everywhere.
 Will stood for skill, and law obeyèd lust;
 Might trod down right: of king there was no fear.
 All thing was tried only by shield and spear.
 All which unhaps, that they were not foreseen, [265]
 I was in fault, or some about the queen.

Thou lookest, Baldwin, I should myself accuse
 Of some subtle drift or other like thing,

239. **haply**: perhaps. 242. **state**: particular state of affairs; claim to right of possession; **pight**: fixed. 245. **trial**: testing, determination. 246. **lede**: people, race. 253. **hurl**: tumult; **fain**: glad under the circumstances. 257. **more reproof**: a greater cause for censure. 261. **Reaving ... everywhere**: Unrestrained pillaging and robbing occurred everywhere. 262. **Will ... lust**: Wilfulness took the place of reason; law obeyed illicit desire. 265. **All ... foreseen**: For all these mishaps, because they were not foreseen.

Wherein I should my prince's ears abuse,
 To the duke's foes overmuch adhering. [270]
 Though some men's practice did me thereto bring,
 My fault only consisted in consent:
 Forgive it me, for sore I did repent.

If I, at first, when brands began to smoke,
 The sparks to quench by any way had sought, [275]
 England had never felt this mortal stroke,
 Which now, too late lamenting, helpeth nought.
 Two points of wit too dearly have I bought:
 The first, that better is timely to foresee
 Than after over-late a counsellor to be. [280]

The second point, not easily to assent
 To advice given against thy faithful friend,
 But of the speaker ponder the intent,
 The meaning full, the point, and final end.
 A saint in show in proof is found a fiend; [285]
 The subtle man, the simple to abuse,
 Much pleasant speech and eloquence doth use.

And so was I abused, and other mo,
 By Suffolk's slights, who sought to please the queen,
 Forecasting not the misery and woe [290]
 Which thereof came and soon was after seen.
 With glozing tongue he made us fools to ween
 That Humphrey did to England's crown aspire,
 Which, to prevent, his death they did conspire.⁵⁷⁷

What should I more of mine unhaps declare, [295]
 Whereof my death at last hath made an end?
 Not I alone was cause of all this care;
 Some besides me there were that did offend.
 None I accuse, nor yet myself defend:
 Faults I know I had, as none lives without; [300]
 My chief fault was folly, I put thee out of doubt.

270. **the duke's foes:** Duke Humphrey's foes. 292. **glozing:** lying but persuasive.

Folly was the chief; the naughty time was next,
Which made my fortune subject to the chief.
If England then with strife had not been vexed,
Glory might have grown whereas ensued grief. [305]
Yet one thing to me is comfort and relief,
Constant I was in my prince's quarrel
To die or live and spared for no peril.

What though Fortune envious was my foe?
A noble heart ought not the sooner yield [310]
Nor shrink aback for any weal or woe,
But for his prince lie bleeding in the field.
If privy spite at any time me held,
The price is paid, and grievous is my guerdon.
As for the rest, God, I trust, will pardon. [315]

303. the chief: i.e. my own folly. **307–8. Constant ... peril:** I remained constant in my decision to live or die in my prince's cause, and no peril ever led me to abandon that constancy. **314. guerdon:** recompense.

[Prose 28]

When they had said their minds herein, allowing it very well, they willed me also to read 'The Blacksmith'. 'With a good will', quoth I, 'but first you must imagine that you see him standing on a ladder, overshrined with the Tyburn, a meet throne for all such rebels and traitors, and there courageously saying as follows':

3. overshrined with: covered over by. **4. the Tyburn:** the gallows at Tyburn, London. **4–5. courageously:** boldly.

[Tragedy 27]

The Wilful Fall of Blacksmith, and the Foolish
End of the Lord Audley

Who is more bold than is the blind Bayard?
Where is more craft than in the clouted shoen?
Who catch more harm than such as nothing feared?
Where is more guile than where mistrust is none?
No plasters help before the grief be known: [5]
So seems by me, who could no wisdom lere,
Until such time I bought my wit too dear.

Who, being boisterous stout and brainless bold,
Puffed up with pride, with fire and furies fret,
Incensed with tales so rude and plainly told, [10]
Wherein deceit with double knot was knit,
I trappèd was as seely fish in net,
Who, swift in swimming, not doubtful of deceit,
Is caught in gin wherein is laid no bait.

Such force and virtue hath this doleful plaint, [15]
Set forth with sighs and tears of crocodile.⁵⁷⁸
Who seems in sight as simple as a saint
Hath laid a bait the wareless to beguile
And, as they weep, they work deceit the while,
Whose rueful cheer the rulers so relent [20]
To work in haste that they at last repent.

1. **blind Bayard**: the proverbial impetuous bay horse whose name was used as a byword for someone who acts without considering the consequences. 2. **craft**: guile; **clouted shoen**: shoes soled with an iron plate or studded with iron nails (worn by rural commoners). 3. **catch**: could receive. 5. **plasters**: medicines. 6. **lere**: learn. 12. **seely**: naive, thoughtless. 14. **gin**: trap. 17. **Who**: he who. 18. **wareless**: unwary. 20-1. **Whose ... repent**: Whose rueful demeanour so softens rulers that they act without deliberation, which they end up regretting.

Take heed, therefore, ye rulers of the land,
Be blind in sight and stop your other ear,
In sentence slow till skill the truth hath scanned,
In all your dooms both love and hate forbear, [25]
So shall your judgement just and right appear:
It was a soothfast sentence long ago
That hasty men shall never lack much woe.

Is it not truth? Baldwin, what sayest thou?
Say on thy mind, I pray thee, muse no more. [30]
Me think thou starest and lookest I wote not how,
As though thou never sawest a man before.
Belike thou musest why I teach this lore
Else what I am that here so boldly dare
Among the press of princes to compare. [35]

Though I be bold, I pray thee blame not me,
Like as men sow, such corn needs they must reap,
And nature hath so planted in each degree
That crabs like crabs will kindly crawl and creep,
The subtle fox unlike the silly sheep. [40]
It is according to mine education
Forward to press in rout and congregation.

Behold my coat burnt with the sparks of fire,
My leather apron filled with horseshoe nails,
Behold my hammer and my pincers here, [45]
Behold my looks, a mark that seldom fails:
My cheeks declare I was not fed with quails.
My face, my clothes, my tools with all my fashion,
Declare full well a prince of rude creation.

A prince, I said; a prince, I say again, [50]
Though not by birth, by crafty usurpation.

24. **sentence**: official judgement; **skill**: reason. 35. **princes**: governors, men of high standing (the Blacksmith employs the rhetoric of the title under which Baldwin's collection was originally conceived, *A Memorial of Such Princes*). 39. **kindly**: according to their kind, nature. 41. **according**: in accordance with; **education**: upbringing. 42. **rout**: mob; **congregation**: assemblage. 47. **quails**: game birds usually consumed only by the upper classes.

Who doubts but some men princehood do obtain
 By open force and wrongful domination,
 Yet while they rule are had in reputation.
 Even so by me, the while I wrought my feat, [55]
 I was a prince – at least in my conceit.

I dare the bolder take on me the name,
 Because of him whom here I lead in hand,
 Tuchet, Lord Audley, a lord of birth and fame,
 Which with his strength and power served in my band.⁵⁷⁹ [60]
 I was a prince while that I was so manned:
 His butterfly still underneath my shield
 Displayèd was from Wells to Blackheath field.

But now behold, he doth bewail the same,
 Thus after-wits their rashness do deprave. [65]
 Behold, dismayed, he dare not speak for shame;
 He looks like one that late came from the grave,
 Or one that came forth of Trophonius' cave,⁵⁸⁰
 For that in wit he had so little pith,
 As he, a lord, to serve a traitor smith. [70]

Such is the courage of the noble heart,
 Which doth despise the vile and baser sort:
 He may not touch that savours of the cart.
 Him listeth not with each Jack lout to sport;
 He lets him pass for pairing of his port. [75]
 The jolly eagles catch not little fleas;
 The courtly silks match seld with homely frieze.

But surely Baldwin, if I were allowed
 To say the truth, I could somewhat declare,
 But clerks will say, 'this smith doth wax too proud, [80]
 Thus in precepts of wisdom to compare.'

62. **butterfly**: the badge of the Lords Audley. 65. **after-wits**: those who gain wisdom only after an event has occurred, when it is too late to benefit from it; **deprave**: decay. 69. **pith**: substance. 74. **Jack lout**: common lout. 75. **pairing of his port**: diminishing his dignity. 76. **jolly**: high-hearted; large. 77. **homely frieze**: humble coarse-spun wool cloth. 80. **clerks**: learned men.

But smiths must speak that clerks for fear ne dare.
It is a thing that all men may lament,
When clerks keep close the truth lest they be shent.

The hostler, barber, miller and the smith [85]
Hear of the saws of such as wisdom ken
And learn some wit, although they want the pith
That clerks pretend, and, yet, both now and then,
The greatest clerks prove not the wisest men.
It is not right that men forbid should be [90]
To speak the truth, all were he bond or free.

And for because I have used to fret and foam,
Not passing greatly whom I should displeas,
I dare be bold a while to play the mome, [95]
Out of my sack some others' faults to lease
And let my own behind my back to peas,
For he that hath his own before his eye
Shall not so quick another's fault espy.

I say, was never no such woeful case [100]
As is when honour doth itself abuse.
The noble man that virtue doth embrace
Represseth pride and humbleness doth use,
By wisdom works and rashness doth refuse.
His wanton will and lust that bridle can
Indeed is gentle both to God and man. [105]

But where the nobles want both wit and grace,
Regard no rede, care not but for their lust,
Oppress the poor, set will in reason's place,
And in their words and dooms be found unjust, [110]
Wealth goeth to wrack till all lie in the dust.
There Fortune frowns and spite beginn'th to grow,
Till high and low and all be overthrow.

82. **that**: that which. 84. **shent**: reproached, harmed. 88. **pretend**: profess to have. 92. **foam**: vent vehement rage. 94. **mome**: carping critic. 95. **lease**: gather. 96. **to peas**: to become silent. 104. **that**: who. 105. **gentle**: noble in spirit; of high social rank. 107. **rede**: counsel, advice.

Then, sith that virtue hath so good reward
 And after vice so duly waiteth shame,
 How happ'th that princes have no more regard [115]
 Their tender youth with virtue to inflame?
 For lack whereof their wit and will is lame,
 Infect with folly, prone to lust and pride,
 Not knowing how themselves or theirs to guide.

Whereby it happen'th to the wanton wight [120]
 As to a ship upon the stormy seas,
 Which lacking stern to guide itself aright
 From shore to shore the wind and tide do tease,
 Finding no place to rest or take his ease,
 Till at the last it sink upon the sand: [125]
 So fare they all that have not virtue canned.

The ploughman first his land doth dress and turn
 And makes it apt or ere the seed be sow,
 Whereby he is full like to reap good corn,
 Where otherwise no seed but weed would grow. [130]
 By which example men may easily know,
 When youth have wealth before they can well use it,
 It is no wonder though they do abuse it.

How can he rule well in a commonwealth
 Which knoweth not himself in rule to frame? [135]
 How should he rule himself in ghostly health,
 Which never learned one lesson for the same?
 If such catch harm, their parents are to blame,
 For needs must they be blind and blindly led
 Where no good lesson can be taught or read. [140]

Some think their youth discreet and wisely taught
 That brag and boast and wear their feather brave,
 Can roist and rout, both lour and look aloft,
 Can swear and stare and call their fellows knave,

115. **happ'th**: does it happen. 122. **stern**: rudder and helm. 123. **tease**: pull. 126. **canned**: come to know. 127. **dress**: prepare. 136. **ghostly**: spiritual. 141. **discreet**: marked by sound judgement. 143. **roist**: behave uproariously; **rout**: roar.

Can pill and poll and catch before they crave, [145]
Can card and dice, both cog and foist at fare,
Play on unthrifty, till their purse be bare.

Some teach their youth to pipe, to sing and dance,
To hawk, to hunt, to choose and kill their game,
To wind their horn and with their horse to prance, [150]
To play at tennis, set the lute in frame,
Run at the ring and use other such game,
Which feats, although they be not all unfit,
Yet cannot they the mark of virtue hit.

For noble youth, there is nothing so meet [155]
As learning is, to know the good from ill,
To know the tongues and perfectly indite,
And of the laws to have a perfect skill,
Things to reform as right and justice will,
For honour is ordainèd for no cause [160]
But to see right maintainèd by the laws.⁵⁸¹

It spites my heart to hear when noblemen
Cannot disclose their secrets to their friend
In safeguard sure with paper, ink, and pen,
But first they must a secretary find, [165]
To whom they show the bottom of their mind,
And be he false or true, a blab or close,
To him they must their counsel needs disclose.

And where they rule that have of law no skill,
There is no boot; they needs must seek for aid. [170]
Then ruled are they and rule as others will,
As he that on a stage his part hath played,
But he was taught nought hath he done or said.
Such youth, therefore, seek science of the sage,
As think to rule when that ye come to age. [175]

145. **pill and poll**: rob and plunder; **catch before they crave**: take before they ask. 146. **cog**: attempt to throw dice unfairly so that certain numbers come up; **foist**: replace a true die with a hidden false one immediately before making one's throw; **fare**: a dice game. 151. **set in frame**: put in proper order. 152. **Run at the ring**: a game in which horsemen attempt to carry off a small hanging ring by taking it with a lance. 157. **indite**: write. 160. **honour**: office; exalted status. 167. **close**: a keeper of secrets. 173. **hath he**: (that) he has. 174. **science**: knowledge.

Where youth is brought up in fear and obedience,
 Kept from ill company, bridled of their lust,
 Do serve God duly and know their allegiance,
 Learn godly wisdom, which time nor age can rust,
 There prince, people, and peers needs prosper must, [180]
 For happy are the people and blessed is that land
 Where truth and virtue have got the overhand.

I speak this Baldwin of this rueful lord,
 Whom I perforce do here present to thee.
 He faints so sore he may not speak a word; [185]
 I plead his cause without reward or fee
 And am enforced to speak for him and me.
 If in his youth he had been wisely taught,
 He should not now his wit so dear have bought.

For what is he that hath but half a wit [190]
 But may well know that rebels cannot speed?
 Mark well my tale and take good heed to it;
 Recount it well and take it for good rede.
 If it prove untrue, I will not trust my creed.
 Was never rebel before the world nor since [195]
 That could or shall prevail against his prince.

For ere the subject beginneth to rebel,¹⁸²
 Within himself let him consider well,
 Foresee the danger and beat well in his brain
 How hard it is his purpose to obtain, [200]
 For if he once be entered to the briers
 He hath a raging wolf fast by the ears.

And when he is once entered to rule the beastly rout,
 Although he would, he can no way get out;
 He may be sure none will to him resort [205]
 But such as are the vile and rascal sort.
 All honest men, as well the most as lest,
 To taste of treason will utterly detest.

182. **overhand**: mastery. 193. **rede**: counsel. 201. **entered to the briers**: entered into trouble. 207. **lest**: least.

Then let him weigh how long he can be sure,
Where faith nor friendship may no while endure. [210]
He whom he trusteth most, to gain a groat,
Will fall him from and assay to cut his throat.
Among the knaves and slaves where vice is rooted,
There is no other friendship to be lookèd.

With slashers, slaves, and snuffers, so falsehood is in price [215]
That simple faith is deadly sin and virtue counted vice.
And where the quarrel is so vile and bad,
What hope of aid then is there to be had?
Thinks he that men will run at this or that,
To do a thing they know not how or what [220]

Nor yet what danger may thereof betide,
Where wisdom would they should at home abide
Rather than seek and know not what to find?
Wise men will first debate this in their mind:
Full sure they are if that they go to wreck, [225]
Without all grace they lose both head and neck,

They lose their lands and goods, their child and wife⁵⁸³
With sorrow and shame shall lead a woeful life.
If he be slain in field, he dieth accursed,
Which of all wrecks we should accompt the worst, [230]
And he that dieth defending his liege lord
Is blessed and blessed again by God's own word.⁵⁸⁴

And where the soldiers' wages is unpaid,
There is the captain slenderly obeyed,
And where the soldier is out of fear and dread, [235]
He will be lack when that there is most need,
And privately he seeks his ease and leisure,
And will be ruled but at his will and pleasure.

215. **snuffers**: those who scorn others; **in price**: held in esteem. 230. **wrecks**: disasters. 235. **out of fear and dread**: without proper fear and respect of authority. 236. **lack**: wanting.

And where some draw forth, and other do draw back,
 There in the end must needs be woe and wrack: [240]
 To hope for aids of lords, it is but vain,
 Whose foretaught wit of treason knoweth the pain.
 They know what power a prince hath in his land
 And what it is with rebels for to stand.⁵⁸⁵

They know by treason honour is defaced, [245]
 Their offspring and their progeny disgraced,
 They know to honour is not so worthy a thing
 As to be true and faithful to their king.
 Above cognizance or arms or pedigree afar,
 An unspotted coat is like a blazing star.⁵⁸⁶ [250]

Therefore the rebel is accursed and mad
 That hopeth for that which rebel never had,
 Who trusting still to tales doth hang in hope,
 Till at the last he hang fast by the rope,
 For though that tales be told that hope might feed, [255]
 Such foolish hope hath still unhappy speed.

It is a custom that never will be broken:
 In broils the bag of lies is ever open.
 Such lying news men daily will invent
 As can the hearers' fancy best content, [260]
 And as the news do run and never cease,
 So more and more they daily do increase.

And as they increase, they multiply as fast,
 That ten is ten hundred, ten thousand at the last.
 And though the rebel had once got the field, [265]
 Thinks he thereby to make his prince to yield?
 A prince's power within his own region
 Is not so soon brought unto confusion,

242. **pain:** painful consequences. 247. **is not:** nothing is. 249. **cognizance:** heraldic crest or badge; **arms:** heraldic insignia. 250. **coat:** coat of arms. 258. **broils:** tumults.

For kings by God are strong and stoutly hearted,
That they of subjects will not be subverted; [270]
If kings would yield, yet God would them restrain,
Of whom the prince hath grace and power to reign,⁵⁸⁷
Who straightly chargeth us above all thing
That no man should resist against his king.

Who that resisteth his dread sovereign lord [275]
Doth damn his soul by God's own very word.
A Christian subject should with honour due
Obey his sovereign though he were a Jew.
Whereby assured when subjects do rebel,
God's wrath is kindled and threateneth fire and hell. [280]

It is soon known when God's wrath is kindled,
How they shall speed with whom he is offended.
If God give victory to whom he liketh best,
Why look they for it whom God doth most detest?
For treason is hateful and abhorred in God's sight, [285]
(Example of Judas, that most wicked wight),

Which is the chief cause no treason prevails,
For ill must he speed whom God's wrath assails.
Let traitors and rebels look to speed then,
When God's mighty power is subject to men. [290]
Much might be said that goeth more near the pith,
But this suffiseth for a rural smith.

Baldwin, when thou hearest my reason in this case,
Belike thou thinkest I was not very wise
And that I was accursed or else lacked grace, [295]
Which, knowing the end of my fond enterprise
Would thus presume against my prince to rise.
But as there is a cause that moveth every woe,
Somewhat there was whereof this sore did grow.

And to be plain and simple in this case, [300]
The cause why I such matter took in hand

286. **Example of:** Exemplified by.

Was nothing else but pride and lack of grace,
 Vain hope of help and tales both false and fond,
 By mean whereof my prince I did withstand,
 Denied the tax assessed by convocation [305]
 To maintain war against the Scottish nation,⁵⁸⁸

Whereat the Cornishmen did much repine
 For they of gold and silver were full bare
 And livèd hardly digging in the mine.
 They said they had no money for to spare, [310]
 Began first to grudge and then to swear and stare,
 Forgot their due obeisance and rashly fell to raving
 And said they would not bear such polling and such shaving.⁵⁸⁹

They first accused the king as author of their grief
 And then the Bishop Morton and Sir Reynold Bray, [315]
 For they then were about the king most chief.
 Because they thought the whole fault in them lay,
 They did protest to rid them out of the way.
 Such thank have they that rule about a prince:
 They bear the blame of others men's offence.⁵⁹⁰ [320]

When I perceived the commons in a roar,
 Then I and Flamoke consulted both together,
 To whom the people resorted more and more,
 Lamenting and crying 'help us now or never!
 Break this yoke of bondage; then are we free forever!' [325]
 Whereat we, enflamed in hope to have us a fame,
 To be their captains took on us the name.⁵⁹¹

Then might you hear the people make a shout
 And cry 'God save the captains and send us all good speed!',
 Then he that fainted was counted but a lout, [330]
 The ruffians ran abroad to sow seditious seed,
 To call for company then there was no need,
 For every man laboured another to entice
 To be partaker of his wicked vice.

305. **convocation**: parliament. 309. **hardly**: with hardship. 313. **shaving**: complete stripping of funds.

Then all such news as made for our avail [335]
Was brought to me, but such as sounded ill
Was none so bold to speak or yet bewail.
Everich was so wedded unto his will
That 'forth!' they cried with bowès, sword and bill.
And what the ruffler spake, the lout took for a verdict, [340]
For there the best was worst, the worst was best regarded,

For when men go a-madding, there still the viler part
Conspire together and will have all the sway,
And be it well or ill they must have all the port
As they will do; the rest must needs obey. [345]
They prattle and prate as doth the popinjay;
They cry and command the rest to keep th'array,
Whiles they may range and rob for spoil and prey.

And when we had preparèd everything,
We went to Taunton with all our provision, [350]
And there we slew the provost of Penryn,
For that on the subsidy he sat in commission.³⁹²
He was not wise nor yet of great discretion
That durst approach his enemies in their rage,
When wit nor reason could their ire assuage. [355]

From thence we went to Wells, where we were received
Of this Lord Audley as of our chief captain –
And so had the name, but yet he was deceived,
For I indeed did rule the clubbish train. [360]
My cartly knights true honour did disdain,
For like doth love his like, it will be none other,
A churl will love a churl before he will his brother.

Then from Wells to Winchester and so to Blackheath field,
And there we encamped, looking for more aid,
But when none came, we thought ourselves beguiled. [365]

338. **Everich**: everybody. 339. **bowes**: bows. 340. **ruffler**: swaggering braggart; **verdit**: authoritative pronouncement. 344. **port**: high rank. 346. **popinjay**: parrot. 347. **th'array**: the proper arrangement in military formation. 348. **prey**: plunder. 352. **subsidy**: i.e., the tax granted by parliament. 357. **as of**: as if by. 359. **clubbish**: boorish, rough. 360. **cartly knights**: knights more fit for the cart than for battle (a play, perhaps, on 'carpet knights').

Such Cornishmen as knew they were betrayed
 From their fellows by night away they strayed;
 There might we learn how vain it is to trust
 Our feignèd friends in quarrels so unjust.

But we the sturdy captains that thought our power was strong [370]
 Were bent to try our fortune, whatever should betide;
 We were the bolder, for that the king so long
 Deferrèd battle, which so increased our pride
 That sure we thought the king himself did hide
 Within the city; therefore, with courage hault, [375]
 We did determine the city to assault.

But he, working contrary to our expectation,
 Was fully minded to let us run our race,
 Till we were from our domestical habitation
 Where that of aid or succour was no place, [380]
 And then to be plagued as it should please his grace.
 But all doubtful points, however they did sound,
 To our best vail we alway did expound.

When that the king saw time, with courage bold
 He sent a power to circumvent us all, [385]
 Where we, enclosed as simple sheep in fold,
 Were slain and murdered as beasts in butcher's stall.
 The king himself, whatever chance might fall,
 Was strongly encamped within Saint George's Field,
 And there abode till that he heard us yield.³⁷³ [390]

Then down we kneeled and cried to save our life;
 It was too late our folly to bewail:
 There we were spoiled of armour, coat, and knife,
 And we, which thought with pride the city to assail,
 Were led in prisoners, naked as my nail. [395]
 But of us two thousand they had slain before,
 And we of them three hundred and no more.

371. **betide**: happen. 375. **hault**: high, haughty. 380. **Where ... place**: To a location at which there was no opportunity to receive aid or succour from our homeland. 383. **vail**: profit. 389. **Saint George's Field**: St George's Fields, near London in Southwark.

This my lord and we, the captains of the west,
Took our inn at Newgate, fast in fetters tied,
Where after trial we had but little rest: [400]
My lord through London was drawn on a slide
To Tower Hill, where with axe he died,
Clad in his coat armour painted all in paper,
All torn and reversed in spite of his behaviour.⁵⁹⁴

And I, with Thomas Flamoke and other of our bent, [405]
As traitors at Tyburn our judgement did obey;
The people looked I should my fault lament,
To whom I boldly spake that for my fond assay
I was sure of fame that never should decay,
Whereby ye may perceive vainglory doth inflame [410]
As well the meaner sort as men of greater name.

But as the sickly patient, sometime hath desire
To taste the things that physic hath denied,
And hath both pain and sorrow for his hire,
The same to me right well might be applied, [415]
Which, while I wrought for fame, on shame did slide
And, seeking fame, brought forth my bitter bane,
As he that fired the temple of Diane.⁵⁹⁵

I tell thee, Baldwin, I muse right oft to see [420]
How every man for wealth and honour gapeth,
How every man would climb above the sky,
How every man th'assurèd mean so hateth,
How froward Fortune oft their purpose mateth,
And, if they hap their purpose to attain,
Their wealth is woe, their honour care and pain. [425]

We see the servant more happy than his lord,
We see him live, when that his lord is dead,
He sleepeth sound, is merry at his board,
No sorrow in his heart doth vex his head;

401. **slide**: sled, a conveyance traditionally used to drag prisoners to execution. 404. **in spite of**: to spite. 406. **Tyburn**: the site of execution for common criminals in London. 414. **hire**: recompense. 416. **wrought**: worked. 422. **mean**: middle way. 424. **hap**: chance.

Happy then is he that poverty can wed. [430]
 What gain the mighty conquerors, when they be dead,
 By all the spoil and blood that they have shed?

The terrible tower, where honour hath his seat
 Is high on rocks more slipper than the ice,
 Where still the whirling wind doth roar and beat, [435]
 Where sudden qualms and pirries still arise,
 And is beset with many sundry vice
 So strange to men when first they come thereat,
 They be amazed and do they wot not what.

He that prevails and to the tower can climb [440]
 With trouble and care must needs abridge his days,
 And he that slides may curse the hour and time
 He did attempt to give so fond assays,
 And all his life to sorrow and shame obeys.
 Thus slide he down or to the top ascend, [445]
 Assure himself repentance is the end.

Wherefore, good Baldwin, do thou record my name
 To be ensample to such as credit lies,
 Or thirst to suck the sugared cup of fame,
 Or do attempt against their prince to rise [450]
 And charge them all to keep within their size.
 Who doth assay to wrest beyond his strength,
 Let him be sure he shall repent at length.

And at my request admonish thou all men
 To spend well the talent which God to them hath lent, [455]
 And he that hath but one, let him not toil for ten,
 For one is too much, unless it be well spent.⁵⁹⁶
 I have had the proof; therefore I now repent.
 And happy are those men, and blessed and blissed is he,
 As can be well content to serve in his degree. [460]

432. **spoil**: plunder. 433. **terrible**: awe-inspiring. 436. **qualms**: disasters; **pirries**: blasts of wind. 444. **obeys**: subjects himself. 448. **credit**: believe. 451. **size**: proper limits. 455. **talent**: biblical coin.

[Prose 29]

‘It is pity’, quoth one, ‘that the metre is no better, seeing the matter is so good; you may do very well to help it, and a little filing would make it formal.’ ‘The author himself’, quoth I, ‘could have done that, but he would not and hath desired me that it may pass in such rude sort as you have
5 heard it, for he observeth therein a double decorum, both of the Smith and of himself, for he thinketh it not meet for the Smith to speak nor for himself to write in any exact kind of metre.’

‘Well’, said another, ‘the matter is notable to teach all people, as well officers as subjects, to consider their estates and to live in love and obedience
10 to the highest powers, whatsoever they be, whom God, either by birth, law, succession, or universal election, doth or shall authorize in his own room to execute his laws and justice among any people or nation, for by all these means God placeth his deputies.⁵⁹⁷ And in my judgement, there is no mean so good either for the common quiet of the people or for God’s free choice
15 as the natural order of inheritance by lineal descent, for so it is left in God’s hands to create in the womb what prince he thinketh meetest for his purposes. The people also know their princes, and therefore the more gladly and willingly receive and obey them. And although some realms more careful than wise have entailed their crown to the heir male, thinking it not meet
20 for the feminine sex to bear the royal office, yet, if they consider all circumstances and the chiefest uses of a prince in a realm, they shall see how they are deceived, for princes are God’s lieutenants or deputies to see God’s laws executed among their subjects, not to rule according to their own lusts or desires but by the prescript of God’s laws.⁵⁹⁸ So that the chiefest point of a prince’s office consisteth in obedience to God and to his ordinances, and what should let but that a woman may be as obedient unto God as a man?
25

‘The second point of a prince’s office is to provide for the impotent, needy, and helpless, as widows, orphans, lame and decrepit persons, and seeing women are by nature tender hearted, mild, and pitiful, who may
30 better than they discharge the duty? Yea, but a woman lacketh courage, boldness, and stomach to withstand the adversary, and so are her subjects an open spoil to their enemies – Deborah, Jael, Judith, Tomyris, and other

11. universal election: general agreement to elect by those eligible to vote; **room:** office. **19. entailed their crown:** established that the office of monarch may be passed on only to a specific class or set of persons. **26. let but:** prevent it.

[17–18] 1563: thefore (an uncorrected error); obey thr (an uncorrected error for ‘the[m]’)

do prove the contrary.⁵⁹⁹ But grant it were so: what harm were that, seeing
 35 victory consisteth not in wit or force but in God's good pleasure? I am sure
 that whatsoever prince doth his duty in obeying God and causing justice to
 be ministered according to God's laws shall not only lack war (be he man,
 woman or child) but also be a terror to other princes. And if God suffer any
 at any time to be assailed, it is for the destruction of the assailer, whether he
 40 be rebel or foreign foe, and to the honour and profit of the virtuous prince,
 in whose behalf, rather than he shall miscarry, God himself will fight with
 infections and earthquakes from the land and waters, and with storms and
 lightnings from the air and skies. Mo wars have been sought through the
 wilful and haughty courages of kings and greater destructions happened to
 realms thereby, than by any other means. And as for wisdom and policy,
 45 seeing it consisteth in following the counsel of many godly, learned and
 long-experienced heads, it were better to have a woman who, considering
 her own weakness and inability, should be ruled thereby, than a man which,
 presuming upon his own fond brain, will hear no advice save his own.

'You muse, peradventure, wherefore I say this. The frantic heads which dis-
 50 able our queen because she is a woman and our king because he is a stranger
 to be our princes and chief governors hath caused me to say thus much. For
 whatsoever man, woman, or child is by the consent of the whole realm estab-
 lished in the royal seat, so it have not been injuriously procured by rigour of
 sword and open force but quietly by title, either of inheritance, succession,
 55 lawful bequest, common consent, or election, is undoubtedly chosen by God
 to be his deputy. And whosoever resisteth any such, resisteth against God
 himself and is a rank traitor and rebel, and shall be sure to prosper as well as
 this blacksmith and other such have done. All resist that wilfully break any
 law, not being against God's law, made by common consent for the wealth
 60 of the realm and commanded to be kept by the authority of the prince, or
 that deny to pay such duties as by consent of the high court of parliament are
 appointed to the prince for the defence and preservation of the realm.'

'You have said very truly herein', quoth I, 'and I trust this terrible example
 of the Blacksmith will put all men in mind of their duties and teach them
 65 to be obedient to all good laws and lawful contributions. The scriptures do
 forbid us to rebel or forcibly to withstand princes, though they command
 unjust things. Yet, in any case, we may not do them but receive quietly at the

49–50. **disable**: disparage; **our queen**: Mary I; **our king**: Philip of Spain. 61. **duties**: taxes, charges on transactions owed to the crown. 65. **contributions**: taxes or other government-imposed levies.

prince's hand whatsoever punishment God shall suffer to be laid upon us for our refusal. God will suffer none of his to be tempted above their strength.⁶⁰⁰

70 'But, because the night is come, I will trouble you no longer. I have certain rabbits here, but they are not worth the reading. I will cause these which you have allowed to be printed as soon as I may conveniently.'⁶⁰¹

This said, we take leave each of other and so departed.

71. **rabbits**: Baldwin's term for the hastily and poorly composed tragedies he received from some would-be contributors (see Prose 21).

A Mirror for Magistrates: 1578 Additions

[Prose 30, First Version]⁶⁰²

When this was said, 'let King Jamie go', said Master Ferrers, 'and return we to our own story and see what broils were among the nobility in the king's minority: how the Cardinal Beaufort maligneth the state of Duke Humphrey, the king's uncle and protector of the realm, and by what drifts
5 he first banisheth his wife from him, and, lastly, how the said duke is murderously made away through conspiracy of Queen Margaret and other – both whose tragedies I have here joined together, for they be notable.' 'That will do very well', said another, 'but take heed ye stay not too long upon them.' 'I warrant you', quoth I,⁶⁰³ 'and, therefore, I would that first
10 of all ye give ear what the duke himself doth say, as followeth':⁶⁰⁴

1. **King Jamie:** James I (d. 1437), king of Scots, the speaker of the previous tragedy in the 1578 *Mirror* (Tragedy 10).
1–2. **our own story:** i.e. English history.

[Prose 30, Second Version]⁶⁰⁵

When this was said, quod one of the company, 'let pass those Scottish matters and return we to our English stories, which minister matter enough of tragedy without seeking or travelling to foreign countries. Therefore, return we to the rest of the tragical troubles and broils which happened in
5 this realm during the minority of King Henry VI, and the sundry falls and overthrowes of great princes and other noble persons happening thereby.' 'Well said', quoth Master Ferrers, 'and, as it happeneth, I have here ready penned two notable tragedies, the one of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, the other of the Duchess Eleanor his wife, which as, me seemeth, be two of
10 the most memorable matters fortunuing in that time. But whether of them is first to be placed in the order of our book, I somewhat stand in doubt, for, albeit the said duke's death happened before the decease of the duchess, yet was her fall first, which finally was cause of overthrow to both.' 'Why should you doubt then?', quod the rest of the company. 'For seeing
15 the cause doth always go before the effect and sequel of anything, it is good reason you should begin with the first. And, therefore, we pray you let us hear first what she hath to say, for all this while we have not heard the complaint of any lady or other woman.'

1–2. **quod:** quoth; **Scottish matters:** i.e. the life and death of James I (d. 1437), king of Scots, the speaker of the previous poem in the 1578 *Mirror* (Tragedy 10). 10. **whether:** which.

[Tragedy 28]

How Dame Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, for
Practising Witchcraft and Sorcery Suffered Open Penance and
After was Banished the Realm into the Isle of Man

If a poor lady, damnèd in exile,
Amongst princes may be allowèd place,
Then, gentle Baldwin, stay thy pen awhile
And of pure pity ponder well my case:
How I, a duchess, destitute of grace, [5]
Have found by proof, as many have and shall,
The proverb true, that pride will have a fall.⁶⁰⁶

A noble prince, extract of royal blood,
Humphrey sometime Protector of this land,
Of Gloucester duke, for virtue called 'the good'⁶⁰⁷ – [10]
When I but base beneath his state did stand,
Vouchsafed with me to join in wedlock's band,
Having in court no name of high degree
But Eleanor Cobham as parents left to me.

And though by birth of noble race I was, [15]
Of barons' blood, yet was I thought unfit
So high to match, yet so it came to pass,
Whether by grace, good fortune, or by wit,
Dame Venus' lures so in mine eyes did sit,
As this great prince, without respect of state, [20]
Did worthy me to be his wedded mate.⁶⁰⁸

His wife I was and he my true husband,
Though for a while he had the company
Of Lady Jaquet, the duchess of Holland,
Being an heir of ample patrimony, [25]

5. *grace*: favour. II. *state*: estate, rank.

But that fell out to be no matrimony,
For after war, long suit in law, and strife,
She provèd was the duke of Brabant's wife.⁶⁰⁹

Thus of a damsel a duchess I became,
My state and place avancèd next the queen, [30]
Whereby me thought I felt no ground but swam,
For in the court mine equal was not seen,
And so possessed with pleasure of the spleen
The sparks of pride so kindled in my breast,
As I in court would shine above the rest.⁶¹⁰ [35]

Such gifts of nature God in me hath graft,
Of shape and stature, with other graces mo,
That by the shot of Cupid's fiery shaft,
Which to the heart of this great prince did go,
This mighty duke with love was linkèd so [40]
As he, abasing the height of his degree,
Set his whole heart to love and honour me.

Grudge who so would, to him I was most dear
Above all ladies advanced in degree;
The queen except, no princess was my peer [45]
But gave me place, and lords with cap and knee
Did all honour and reverence unto me.
Thus hoisted high upon the rolling wheel,
I sat so sure me thought I could not reel,

And weening least that fortune hath a turn, [50]
I looked aloft and would not look a-low,
The brands of pride so in my breast did burn
As the hot sparks burst forth in open show,
And more and more the fire began to glow
Without quenching and daily did increase, [55]
Till Fortune's blasts with shame did make it cease,

For, as 'tis said, pride passeth on afore
And shame follows for just reward and meed.

33. **pleasure of the spleen:** amusement, delight (the spleen was understood to be the producer of laughter and mirth). 48. **wheel:** the wheel of Fortune. 56. **blasts:** blasts of wind; pernicious actions.

Would God ladies, both now and evermore,
 Of my hard hap which shall the story read [60]
 Would bear in mind and trust it as their creed,
 That pride of heart is a most hateful vice
 And lowliness a pearl of passing price,⁶¹¹

Namely in queens and ladies of estate,
 Within whose minds all meekness should abound, [65]
 Since high disdain doth always purchase hate,
 Being a vice that most part doth redound
 To their reproach in whom the same is found,
 And seldom gets good favour or good fame
 But is, at last, knit up with worldly shame. [70]

The proof whereof I found most true indeed,
 That pride afore hath shame to wait behind.
 Let no man doubt, in whom this vice doth breed
 But shame for pride by justice is assigned,
 Which well I found, for truly, in my mind, [75]
 Was never none whom pride did more inflame,
 Nor never none received greater shame,

For not content to be a duchess great,
 I longèd sore to bear the name of queen,
 Aspiring still unto a higher seat [80]
 And with that hope myself did overween,
 Since there was none which that time was between
 Henry the king and my good duke his eme,
 Heir to the crown and kingdom of this realm.⁶¹²

So near to be was cause of my vain hope [85]
 And long await when this fair hap would fall.
 My studies all were tending to that scope;
 Alas the while!, to counsel I did call
 Such as would seem by skill conjectural
 Of art magic and wicked sorcery [90]
 To deem and divine the prince's destiny,⁶¹³

60. **hap**: lot, fortune. 63. **lowliness**: humility; **passing**: surpassing. 67. **redound**: contribute greatly. 72. **wait**: attend. 74. **But**: nought but. 81. **did overween**: think too highly. 83. **eme**: uncle. 89. **skill conjectural**: skill in interpreting signs and making prognostications.

Among which sort of those that bare most fame,
There was a beldame called the witch of Eye,
Old Mother Madge her neighbours did her name,
Which wrought wonders in countries. By hearsay, [95]
Both fiends and fairies her charming would obey,
And dead corpses from grave she could uprear;
Such an enchantress as that time had no peer.⁶¹⁴

Two priests also, the one hight Bolingbroke,
The other Southwell, great clerks in conjuration: [100]
These two chaplains were they that undertook
To cast and calk the king's constellation
And then to judge by deep divination
Of things to come and who should next succeed
To England's crown, all this was true indeed.⁶¹⁵ [105]

And further sure they never did proceed,
Though I confess that this attempt was ill.
But for my part, for anything indeed
Wrought or else thought by any kind of skill,
God is my judge I never had the will [110]
By any enchantment, sorcery or charm
Or otherwise to work my prince's harm.⁶¹⁶

Yet, nonetheless, when this case came to light,
By secret spies to Caiphas our cardinal,
Who long in heart had borne a privy spite [115]
To my good duke, his nephew natural,
Glad of the chance so fitly forth to fall
His long-hid hate with justice to colour,
Usèd this case with most extreme rigour,⁶¹⁷

And causèd me with my complices all [120]
To be cited by process peremptory,
Before judges, in place judicial,

93. **Eye**: Ebury, a village near Westminster. 95. **countries**: rural areas. 100. **clerks**: scholars. 101. **chaplains**: chapel priests, often used specifically for those who minister privately to high-ranking persons. 102. **calk the king's constellation**: reckon astrologically the position of the heavenly bodies at Henry VI's birth (the 'stars' which were believed to influence the course of his life). 114. **Caiphaz**: Caiaphas, the high priest who antagonized Christ and urged that he be turned over to the Roman authorities for execution; **our cardinal**: Cardinal Henry Beaufort (d. 1447). 116. **natural**: by nature (but not by law, since Beaufort was born a bastard). 121. **cited**: ordered to appear; **process peremptory**: summons that allows no resistance or delay.

Whereas Caiphas, sitting in his glory,
 Would not allow my answer dilatory,
 Ne doctor or proctor to allege the laws [125]
 But forcèd me to plead in mine own cause.⁶¹⁸

The king's counsel were callèd to the case,
 My husband then shut out for the season,
 In whose absence I found but little grace,
 For lawyers turned our offence to treason. [130]
 And so with rigour, without ruth or reason,
 Sentence was given that I for the same
 Should do penance and suffer open shame.⁶¹⁹

Nay, the like shame had never wight I ween –
 Duchess, lady, ne damsel of degree – [135]
 As I that was a princess next the queen,
 Wife to a prince, and none so great as he,
 A king's uncle, Protector of his country,
 With taper burning, shrouded in a sheet,
 Three days a row to pass in open street [140]

Bare legg'd and bare foot, to all the world's wonder,⁶²⁰
 Yea, and as though such shame did not suffice,
 With more despite then to part asunder
 Me and my duke, which traitors did devise [145]
 By statute law in most unlawful wise,
 First sending me with shame into exile,
 Then murd'ring him by treachery and guile.⁶²¹

Yea, and besides this cruel banishment –
 Far from all friends to comfort me in care – [150]
 And husband's death, there was by parliament
 Ordained for me a mess of coarser fare.
 For they to bring me to beggar's state most bare,
 By the same act from me did then withdraw
 Such right of dower as widows have by law.⁶²²

124. answer dilatory: plea to delay legal proceedings. **125. Ne doctor or proctor:** Neither a doctor of laws nor a canon-law attorney; **allege the laws:** cite the law as an authority (on Eleanor's behalf). **128. for the season:** for this occasion. **136. princess:** wife of a prince (Duke Humphrey was the son of a king, Henry IV). **145. devise:** separate; order. **151. mess:** meal. **154. dower:** the portion of a husband's estate that the law allows to be enjoyed by his widow during her lifetime.

Death, as 'tis said, doth set all things at rest, [155]
Which fell not so in mine unhappy case,
For since my death, mine en'mies made a jest
In minstrels' rhyme, mine honour to deface,
And then to bring my name in more disgrace,
A song was made in manner of a lay [160]
Which old wives sing of me unto this day.⁶²³

Yet with these spites their malice did not end,
For shortly after, my sorrows to renew,
My loyal lord, which never did offend,
Was called in haste, the cause he little knew, [165]
To a parliament, without summons due,
Whereas his death was cruelly contrived,
And I, his wife, of earthly joys deprived.⁶²⁴

For all the while my duke had life and breath,
So long I stood in hope of my restore, [170]
But when I heard of his most causeless death,
Then the best salve for my recureless sore
Was to despair of cure for evermore
And, as I could, my careful heart to cure
With patience most painful to endure. [175]

Oh traitors fell, which in your hearts could find
Like fiends of hell the guiltless to betray!
But ye chiefly his kinsmen most unkind,
Which gave consent to make him so away
That unto God with all my heart I pray [180]
Vengeance may light on him that caused all:
Beaufort, I mean, that cursèd cardinal,⁶²⁵

Which bastard priest of the house of Lancaster,
Son to Duke John, surnamèd John of Gaunt,
Was first create bishop of Winchester, [185]
For no learning whereof he might well vaunt
Ne for virtue, which he did never haunt,

158. *minstrels' rhyme*: likely tail rhyme, a stanza form frequently employed by medieval minstrels for narrative verse. 172. *recureless*: incurable. 184. *Duke John*: John of Gaunt (d. 1399), first duke of Lancaster; *surnamed*: also called.

But for his gold and sums that were not small
Paid to the pope, was made a cardinal.⁶²⁶

Proud Lucifer, which from the heavens on high [190]
Down to the pit of hell below was cast,
And, being once an angel bright in sky,
For his high pride in hell is chainèd fast
In deep darkness that evermore shall last,
More haut of heart was not before his fall [195]
Than was this proud and pompous cardinal,

Whose life, good Baldwin, paint out in his pickle,
And blaze this Baal and belly-god most blind
An hypocrite, all faithless and fickle, [200]
A wicked wretch, a kinsmen most unkind,
A devil incarnate, all devilishly inclined,
And, to discharge my conscience all at once,
The devil him gnaw both body, blood, and bones!⁶²⁷

The spiteful priest would needs make me a witch,
As would to God I had been for his sake! [205]
I would have clawed him where he did not itch;
I would have played the Lady of the Lake
And, as Merlin was, closed him in a brake,
Yea, a meridian to lull him by daylight
And a nightmare to ride on him by night.⁶²⁸ [210]

The fiery fiends with fevers hot and frenzy,
The airy hags with stench and carrion savours,
The watery ghosts with gouts and with dropsy,
The earthly goblins with aches at all hours,
Furies and fairies with all infernal powers [215]
I would have stirred from the dark dungeon
Of hell centre, as deep as Demogorgon.

197. **pickle**: condition, situation. 198. **blaze**: describe; **belly-god**: glutton. 200. **unkind**: unnatural; cruel.
207. **Lady of the Lake**: Nynveve (or Nymue), the chief Lady of the Lake in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*.
208. **brake**: cage; trap. 209. **meridian**: midday nap. 210. **nightmare**: female spirit said to alight on sleepers
and to cause feelings of suffocation and distress. 211. **frenzy**: crazy. 212. **hags**: evil spirits in female form.
217. **Demogorgon**: a mythological god or demon of the underworld.

Or had I now the skill of Dame Erichto,
Whose dreadful charms, as Lucan doth express,
All fiends did fear, so far forth as Prince Pluto [220]
Was at her call for dread of more distress,⁶²⁹
Then would I send of hellhounds more and less
A legion at least at him to cry and yell,
And with that chirm harry him down to hell,

Which need not, for sure I think that he [225]
Who here in earth leads Epicurus' life
As far from God as possible may be,
With whom all sin and vices are most rife,
Using at will both widow, maid, and wife,
But that some devil his body doth possess: [230]
His life is such, as men can judge no less.

And God forgive my wrath and wreakful mind,
Such is my hate to that most wicked wretch;
Die when he shall, in heart I could well find
Out of the grave his corpse again to fetch [235]
And rack his limbs as long as they would stretch,
And take delight to listen every day,
How he could sing a mass of 'wellaway'!

The Isle of Man was the appointed place
To penance me forever in exile. [240]
Thither in haste they posted me apace
And, doubting scape, they pinned me in a pile
Close by myself in care, alas the while!
There felt I first poor prisoner's hungry fare:
Much want, things scant, and stone walls hard and bare.⁶³⁰ [245]

The change was strange, from silk and cloth of gold
To rugged frieze my carcass for to clothe,
From princes' fare and dainties hot and cold

223. **A legion**: A multitude. 224. **chirm**: noise, din. 226. **Epicurus' life**: a life devoted to personal indulgence. 232. **wreakful**: vengeful. 240. **to penance**: to punish; to impose a penance on. 241. **they posted me apace**: they swiftly dispatched me. 242. **doubting scape**: fearing I might escape; **pinned me in a pile**: imprisoned me in a stronghold.

To rotten fish and meats that one would loathe.
 The diet and dressing were much alike both, [250]
 Bedding and lodging were all alike fine:
 Such down it was, as servèd well for swine.

Neither do I mine own case thus complain,
 Which I confess came partly by desert.
 The only cause which doubleth all my pain, [255]
 And that which most near goeth now unto my heart,
 Is that my fault did finally revert
 To him that was least guilty of the same,
 Whose death it was, though I abode the shame.⁶³¹

Whose fatal fall when I do call to mind, [260]
 And how by me his mischief first began,
 So oft I cry on fortune most unkind,
 And my mishap most bitterly do ban
 That ever I to such a noble man,
 Who from my crime was innocent and clear, [265]
 Should be a cause to buy his love so dear.

Oh, to my heart how grievous is the wound,
 Calling to mind this dismal, deadly case!
 I would I had been dolven underground,
 When he first saw or lookèd on my face, [270]
 Or took delight in any kind of grace
 Seeming in me that did him stir or move
 To fancy me or set his heart to love.

Farewell Greenwich, my palace of delight,
 Where I was wont to see the crystal streams [275]
 Of royal Thames, most pleasant to my sight!
 And farewell Kent, right famous in all realms,
 A thousand times I mind you in my dreams
 And, when I wake, most grief it is to me
 That never more again I shall see you.⁶³² [280]

250. **dressing**: clothing; items of culinary seasoning, such as a sauce. 257. **revert**: return. 263. **ban**: curse. 266. **so dear**: at such a high cost. 269. **dolven**: buried. 274. **Greenwich**: Humphrey and Eleanor's palace *Plesauce* in Greenwich, Kent (now London).

In the night time when I should take my rest,
I weep, I wail, I wet my bed with tears
And, when dead sleep my spirits hath oppressed,
Troubled with dreams I fantasy vain fears.
Mine husband's voice then ringeth at mine ears [285]
Crying for help, 'Oh, save me from the death!
These villains here do seek to stop my breath!'

Yea, and sometimes methinks his dreary ghost
Appears in sight and shows me in what wise
Those fell tyrants with torments had embossed [290]
His wind and breath to abuse people's eyes,
So as no doubt or question should arise
Among rude folk which little understand
But that his death came only by God's hand.

I plain in vain, where ears be none to hear [295]
But roaring seas and blust'ring of the wind,
And of redress am ne'er a whit the near
But with waste words to feed my mournful mind,
Wishing full oft, the Parcas had untwined
My vital strings, or Atropos with knife [300]
Had cut the line of my most wretched life.⁶³³

Oh that Neptune and Aeolus also,
Th'one god of seas, the other of weather,
Ere mine arrival into that isle of woe
Had sunk the ship wherein I sailed thither [305]
(The shipmen saved), so as I together
With my good duke mought have been dead afore
Fortune had wroken her wrath on us so sore,

Or else that God, when my first passage was
Into exile along Saint Albans town, [310]
Had never let me further for to pass
But in the street with death had struck me down.

289. wise: manner. **290. embossed:** made short (apparently an unusual use of **emboss:** to run a hunted animal until it is desperately short of breath or foaming from the mouth from exhaustion). **299. Parcas:** Parcae, the three Fates of Roman mythology. **300. vital strings:** the natural cords (ligaments, nerves) that compose a human body; **Atropos:** one of the three Fates who in mythology draw out (and eventually cut off) the thread that determines an individual's lifespan. **307. mought:** might. **308. wroken:** wreaked. **310. along:** by way of.

Then had I sped of my desired boon,
 That my poor corpse mought there have lyen with his
 Both in one grave, and so have gone to bliss.⁶³⁴ [315]

But I – alas, the greater is my grief! –
 Am passed that hope to have my sepulchre
 Near unto him, which was to me most lief,
 But in an isle and country most obscure
 To pine in pain, whilst my poor life will dure, [320]
 And, being dead, all honourless to lie
 In simple grave, as other poor that die.⁶³⁵

My tale is told and time it is to cease
 Of troubles past, all which have had their end.
 My grave, I trust, shall purchase me good peace [325]
 In such a world where no wight doth contend
 For highest place, whereto all flesh shall wend.
 And so I end, using one word for all,
 As I begin, that pride will have a fall.⁶³⁶

FINIS, quod G. F.

313. *sped of*: achieved. 318. *lief*: beloved. 328. *word*: statement.

[Prose 31, 1578 Cancel Edition]

‘Surely’, said one of the company, ‘this lady hath done much to move the hearers to pity her and hath very well knit up the end of her tragedy according to the beginning, but I marvel much where she learned all this poetry touched in her tale, for in her days learning was not common but a rare thing, namely in women.’ ‘Yes’, quod Master Ferrers, ‘that might she
 5 very well learn of the duke her husband, who was a prince so excellently learned as the like of his degree was nowhere to be found, and not only so, but was also a patron to poets and orators much like as Maecenas was in the time of Augustus Caesar. This duke was founder of the divinity school in
 10 Oxford, whereas he caused Aristotle’s works to be translated out of Greek into Latin and caused many other things to be done for advancement of

8. **Maecenas**: Gaius Maecenas (d. 8 BC), patron of Virgil and other Roman poets.

learning, having always learned men near about him.⁶³⁷ No marvel, therefore, though the duchess brought some piece away.'

15 'Methinks', quod another, 'she passeth bounds of a lady's modesty to inveigh so cruelly against the Cardinal Beaufort.' 'Not a whit', quod another, 'having such cause as she had, and somewhat ye must bear with women's passions. Therefore, leave we her to eternal rest, and let us hear what
20 Master Ferrers will say for the duke her husband, whose case was the more lamentable, in that he suffered without cause. And, surely, though the Cardinal against nature was the duke's mortal foe,⁶³⁸ yet the chief causers of his confusion was the queen and William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk and afterwards duke, whose counsel was chiefly followed in the contriving of this noble man's destruction: she through ambition to have sovereignty and rule, and he through flattery to purchase honour and promotion, which
25 as he in short time obtained, so in as short time he lost again and his life withal by the just judgement of God, receiving such measure as he before mete to this good prince. This drift of his turned to the utter overthrow of the king himself, the queen his wife, and Edward their son, a most goodly prince, and to the subversion of the whole house of Lancaster, as you may
30 see at large in the chronicles.⁶³⁹ But now, let us hear what the duke will say.'

13. **though:** if. 15. **Cardinal Beaufort:** Henry Beaufort (d. 1447), cardinal and bishop of Winchester.
28. **Edward:** Edward (d. 1471), Lancastrian Prince of Wales.

[Tragedy 29]

How Humphrey Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, Protector of
England During the Minority of his Nephew King Henry the
Sixth, Commonly Called the good Duke, by the Practice of his
Enemies was Brought to Confusion⁶⁴⁰

As highest hills with tempests been most touched,
And tops of trees most subject unto wind,
And as great towers with stone strongly couched
Have heavy falls when they be undermined,
Even so, by proof, in worldly things we find [5]
That such as climb the top of high degree
From peril of falling never can be free.

To prove this true, good Baldwin, hearken hither,
See and behold me, unhappy Humphrey,
England's Protector and duke of Gloucester, [10]
Who, in the time of the sixth King Henry,
Rulèd this realm yearès mo than twenty.⁶⁴¹
Note well the cause of my decay and fall
And make a mirror for magistrates all

In their most weal to beware of unhap [15]
And not to sleep in slumb'ring sickness,
Whilst Fortune false doth lull them in her lap,
Drownèd in dreams of brittle blessedness,
But then to fear her freaks and fickleness,
Accompting still the higher they ascend [20]
More nigh to be to danger in the end,

And that vain trust in blood or royal race
Abuse them not with careless assurance
To trust Fortune but, weighing well my case,

1. **been:** are. 3. **couched:** laid in place. 9. **unhappy:** unfortunate. 15. **most weal:** greatest happiness; **unhap:** misfortune. 16. **sickness:** sense of security. 19. **freaks:** sudden changes of mind. 20. **Accompting still:** Ever considering.

When she most smileth, to have in remembrance [25]
My sudden fall, who, in all appearance
Having most stays which man in state maintain,
Have found the same untrusty and most vain.

Better than I none may the same affirm,
Who, trusting all in height of high estate, [30]
Led by the ears with false flattery's chirm,
Which never prince could banish from his gate,
Did little think on such a sudden mate,
Not heeding, less dreading, all unaware,
By foes least feared was trapped into a snare. [35]

If noble birth or high authority,
Number of friends, kindred or alliance,
If wisdom, learning or worldly policy
Mought have been stayers to Fortune's variance, [40]
None stood more strong in worldly countenance,
For all these helps had I to avail me
And yet, in fine, all the same did fail me.

Of King Henry the Fourth, fourth son I was,
Brother to King Henry the fifth of that name,
And uncle to Henry the Sixth but, alas, [45]
What cause had I to presume on the same
Or, for vainglory advancing my fame,
Myself to call in records and writings
The son, brother and uncle unto kings?

This was my boast, which lastly was my bane, [50]
Yet not this boast was it that brought me down.
The very cause which made my weal to wane,
So near of kin that I was to the crown:
That was the rock that made my ship to drown.
A rule there is not failing but most sure: [55]
Kingdom no kin doth know ne can endure.

27. **stays**: supports. 31. **chirm**: chatter. 33. **mate**: checkmate, defeat. 38. **policy**: shrewdness; political prudence. 39. **Mought**: Might. 40. **countenance**: estimation, credit. 42. **in fine**: in the end.

For after my brother the fifth Henry
 Won by conquest the royal realm of France
 And of two kingdoms made one monarchy,
 Before his death, for better obeisance [60]
 To his young son, not ripe to governance,
 Protector of England I was by testament
 And John my brother in France made regent,⁶⁴²

To whom if God had lent a longer life
 Our house to have kept from storms of inward strife, [65]
 Or it had been the Lord Almighty's will,
 Plantagenet's name in state had standen still,
 But deadly discord, which kingdoms great doth spill,
 Bred by desire of high domination,
 Brought our whole house to plain desolation. [70]

It is for truth in an history found
 That Henry Plantagenet, first of our name,⁶⁴³
 Who callèd was King Henry the Second,
 Son of Dame Maud, the empress of high fame,
 Would oft report that his ancient grandam, [75]
 Through seeming in shape a woman natural
 Was a fiend of the kind that *succubae* some call.⁶⁴⁴

Which old fable, so long time told before,
 When the king's sons against him did rebel,⁶⁴⁵
 He called to mind and, being grievèd sore, [80]
 'Lo!, now', quoth he, 'I see and prove full well
 The story true, which folk of old did tell,
 That from the devil descended all our race,
 And now my children do verify the case.'⁶⁴⁶

Whereof to leave a long memorial [85]
 In mind of man evermore to rest,
 A picture he made and hung it in his hall
 Of a pelican sitting on his nest

62. testament: formal declaration (not necessarily in writing) of a dying person's wishes for his or her property; a will. **63. John my brother:** John (d. 1435), first duke of Bedford. **67. Plantagenet's ... still:** The Plantagenet name would have remained in high place. **74. Maud:** Maud (or Matilda) of England (d. 1167), wife first of Emperor Heinrich V and then of Count Geoffrey of Anjou. **75. ancient grandam:** female ancestor from long past. **77. succubae:** Latin plural of *succuba*; demons in female form that were said to have sexual intercourse with sleeping men.

With four young birds, three pecking at his breast
With bloody beaks and, further, did devise [90]
The youngest bird to peck the father's eyes.⁶⁴⁷

Meaning hereby his rebel children three,
Henry and Richard, who beat him on the breast
(Geoffrey only from that offence was free).⁶⁴⁸
Henry died of England's crown possessed; [95]
Richard lived his father to molest;
John the youngest pecked still his father's eye,
Whose deeds unkind the sooner made him die.⁶⁴⁹

This king, some write, in his sickness last
Said, as it were by way of prophecy, [100]
How that the devil a darnel grain had cast
Among his kin to increase enmity,
Which should remain in their posterity
Till mischief and murder had spent them all,
Not leaving one to piss against the wall.⁶⁵⁰ [105]

And yet from him in order did succeed
In England here of crownèd kings fourteen
Of that surname and of that line and seed,
With dukes and earls and many a noble queen,
The number such as all the world would ween [110]
So many imps could never so be spent
But some heir male should be of that descent.

Which to be true, if any stand in doubt,
Because I mean not further to digress,
Let him peruse the stories throughout [115]
Of English kings whom practice did oppress,
And he shall find the cause of their distress
From first to last unkindly to begin
Always by those that next were of the kin.

Was not Richard, of whom I spake before, [120]
A rebel plain until his father died,

113. **Which**: evidently a reference to the prophecy of lines 101–5. 118. **unkindly**: unnaturally, cruelly.

And John likewise an en'my evermore
 To Richard again and for a rebel tried?⁶⁵¹
 After whose death, it cannot be denied,
 Against all right this John most cruelly [125]
 His brother's children causèd for to die,

Arthur and Isabel, I mean, that were
 Geoffrey's children, then duke of Britaine,
 Henry's third son, by one degree more near
 Than was this John, as stories show most plain, [130]
 Which two children were famished or else slain
 By John their eme, called *Sans-terre* by name,
 Of whose foul act all countries speak great shame.⁶⁵²

Edward and Richard, second both by name,
 Kings of this land, fell down by fatal fate. [135]
 What was the cause that princes of such fame
 Did leese at last their honour, life, and state?
 Nothing at all but discord and debate,
 Which when it haps in kindred or in blood,
 Erynis' rage was never half so wood. [140]⁶⁵³

Be sure, therefore, ye kings and princes all,
 That concord in kingdoms is chief assurance
 And that your families do never fall,
 But where discord doth lead the doubtful dance [145]
 With busy brawls and turns of variance,
 Where malice is minstrel, the pipe ill report,
 The masque mischief, and so ends the sport.

But now to come to my purpose again,
 Whilst I my charge applied in England,
 My brother in France long time did remain. [150]
 Cardinal Beaufort took proudly in hand
 In causes public against me to stand,
 Who of great malice so much as he might
 Sought in all things to do me despite.⁶⁵⁴

123. **for a rebel tried**: submitted to judgement on a charge of rebellion. 128. **Britaine**: Brittany. 132. **eme**: uncle; *Sans-terre*: the French version of Prince John's familiar cognomen 'Lackland'. 137. **leese**: lose. 139. **haps**: chances. 140. **Erynis' rage**: A fury's rage; the rage of Erynis, a vengeful goddess in some Roman writings. 146. **the pipe ill report**: the (metaphoric) musical instrument is slander, ill repute. 147. **The masque mischief**: The entertainment is evil-doing, injury; **sport**: entertainment.

Which proud prelate to me was bastard eme, [155]
Son to Duke John of Gaunt, as they did feign,⁶⁵⁵
Who, being made high chancellor of the realm,
Not like a priest but like a prince did reign,
Nothing wanting which might his pride maintain.
Bishop besides of Winchester he was, [160]
And cardinal of Rome, which angels brought to pass.

Not God's angels but angels of old gold
Lift him aloft, in whom no cause there was
By just desert so high to be extolled
(Riches except), whereby this golden ass [165]
At home and abroad all matters brought to pass,
Namely at Rome, having no mean but that
To purchase there his crimson cardinal hat.

Which thing the king my father him forbad,
Plainly saying that he could not abide [170]
Within his realm a subject to be had
His prince's peer, yet such was this man's pride
That he forthwith, after my father died,
The king then young, obtained of the pope
That honour high, which erst he could not hope.⁶⁵⁶ [175]

Whose proud attempts, because that I withstood,
My bounden duty the better to acquite,
This holy father waxèd well near wood,
Of mere malice devising day and night
To work to me dishonour and despite, [180]
Whereby there fell between us such a jar,
As in this land was like a civil war.

My brother John, which lay this while in France,
Heard of this hurl and passed the seas in haste,
By whose travail this troublesome distance [185]
Ceased for a while, but nethless in waste,
For rooted hate will hardly be displaced

156. **feign**: make out, fable. 161. **angels**: English coins worth about 10 shillings each in the mid-Tudor period.
165. **golden ass**: wealthy fool, with a reference to the ancient Roman author Apuleius's famous prose narrative *The Golden Ass*. 171. **to be had**: to be brought into the state of. 177. **acquite**: fulfil. 184. **hurl**: strife.
185. **distance**: dissension. 186. **nethless**: nevertheless. 187. **hardly**: not easily.

Out of high hearts and namely where debate
Happeneth amongst great persons of estate.⁶⁵⁷

For like as a match doth lie and smoulder [190]
Long time before it commeth to the train,
But yet when fire hath caught in the poulder,
No art is able the flames to restrain,
Even so the sparks of envy and disdain
Out of the smoke burst forth in such a flame [195]
That France and England yet may rue the same.

So when of two realms the regiment royal
Between brothers was parted equally,
One placed in France for affairs martial
And I at home for civil policy, [200]
To serve the state we both did so apply
As honour and fame to both did increase:
To him for the war, to me for the peace.

Whence envy sprang and specially because
This proud prelate could not abide a peer [205]
Within the land to rule the state by laws,
Wherefore, sifting my life and acts most near,
He never ceased until, as you shall hear,
By practice foul of him and his allies
My death was wrought in most unworthy wise.⁶⁵⁸ [210]

And first he sought my doings to defame
By rumours false, which he and his did sow:
Letters and bills to my reproach and shame
He did devise and all about bestow,
Whereby my troth in doubt should daily grow, [215]
In England first and afterward in France,
Moving all means to bring me to mischance.⁶⁵⁹

One quarrel was that where by common law
Murder and theft been punished all alike,

190. **match**: fuse. 191. **train**: line of gunpowder. 192. **poulder**: gunpowder.

So as manslears, which bloody blades do draw, [220]
 Suffer no more than he that doth but pick.
 Me thought the same no order politic
 In setting pains to make no difference
 Between the lesser and greater offence.

I, being seen somewhat in civil law, [225]
 The rules thereof reputed much better,
 Wherefore to keep offenders more in awe
 Like as the fault was smaller or greater,
 So set I pains more easier or bitter,
 Weighing the quality of every offence [230]
 And so according prounounced sentence.⁶⁶⁰

Amongst my other *delicta juventutis*,
 Whilst rage of youth my reason did subdue,
 I must confess as the very truth is,
 Driven by desire fond fancies to ensue, [235]
 A thing I did whereof great trouble grew,
 Abusing one to my no small rebuke,
 Which wife was then to John of Brabant, duke.

Callèd she was Lady Jaquet the Fair,
 Delightful in love like Helen of Troy, [240]
 To the duke of Bavier sole daughter and heir.
 Her did I marry to my great annoy,
 Yet, for a time, this dame I did enjoy
 With her whole lands, withholding them by force,
 Till Martin the pope between us made divorce.⁶⁶¹ [245]

Yet all these blasts not able were to move
 The anchor strong, whereby my ship did stay;
 Some other shift to seek him did behove,
 Whereto ere long ill fortune made the way,
 Which finally was cause of my decay [250]
 And cruel death, contrivèd by my foes,
 Which fell out thus, as now I shall disclose.

220. *manslears*: man-slayers, murderers. 221. *pick*: steal. 222. *politic*: judicious, sensible. 225. *seen*: versed.
 232. *delicta juventutis*: youthful offences. 235. *ensue*: follow. 241. *Bavier*: Bavaria.

Eleanor my wife, my duchess only dear,
 I know not how, but as the nature is
 Of women all, ay curious to enquire [255]
 Of things to come (though I confess in this
 Her fault not small and that she did amiss),
 By witches' skill, which sorcery some call,
 Would know of things which after should befall.⁶⁶²

And for that cause made herself acquainted [260]
 With Mother Madge, called the witch of Eye,
 And with a clerk that after was attained
 (Bolingbroke he hight) that learnèd was that way,
 With other mo, which famous were that day,
 As well in science, called mathematical, [265]
 As also in magic and skill supernatural.

These cunning folks she set on work to know
 The time how long the king should live and reign,
 Some by the stars and some by devils below,
 Some by witchcraft sought knowledge to attain [270]
 With like fancies, frivolous, fond, and vain,
 Whereof, though I knew least of any man,
 Yet by that mean my mischief first began.⁶⁶³

Yet besides this there was a greater thing,
 How she in wax by counsel of the witch [275]
 An image made, crownèd like a king,
 With sword in hand, in shape and likeness such
 As was the king, which daily they did pitch
 Against a fire, that as the wax did melt
 So should his life consume away unfelt.⁶⁶⁴ [280]

My duchess thus accusèd of this crime
 As she that should such practice first begin,
 My part was then to yield unto the time,
 Giving her leave to deal alone therein.
 And since the cause concernèd deadly sin [285]

255. **ay**: ever. 261. **Mother**: used here as a term of address for an elderly woman; **Madge**: the reputed witch Margery Jourdemayne (d. 1441). 262. **attainted**: condemned. 265. **mathematical**: astrological.

Which to the clergy only doth pertain,
To deal therein I plainly did refrain⁶⁶⁵

And suffered them her person to accite
Into their courts to answer and appear,
Which to my heart was sure the greatest spite [290]
That could be wrought and touchèd me most near,
To see my wife, my lady lief and dear,
To my reproach and plain before my face
Entreated so, as one of sort most base.

The clergy, then examining her cause, [295]
Convincèd her as guilty in the same
And sentence gave according to their laws
That she and they whom I before did name
Should suffer death or else some open shame,
Of which penance my wife by sentence had [300]
To suffer shame – of both the two more bad.

And first she must by days together three
Through London streets pass all along in sight
Barelegg'd and barefoot that all the world might see,
Bearing in hand a burning taper bright [305]
And, not content with this extreme despite,
To work me woe, in all they may or can,
Exiled she was into the Isle of Man.⁶⁶⁶

This heinous crime and open worldly shame,
With such rigour showed unto my wife, [310]
Was a fine fetch further things to frame
And nothing else but a preparative
First from office and finally from life
Me to deprive and, so passing further
What law could not, to execute by murder, [315]

Which by sly drifts and windlasses aloof
They brought about, persuading first the queen

288. *accite*: summon. 292. *lief*: beloved. 296. *Convincèd*: Convicted. 301. *of both the two more bad*: the worst of the two. 311. *fetch*: contrivance, trick. 316. *windlasses aloof*: round-about actions performed at a distance or apart (from their victim Humphrey).

That in effect it was the king's reproof
 And hers also to be exempted clean
 From princely rule, or that it should be seen [320]
 A king of years still governèd to be
 Like a pupil that nothing could foresee.⁶⁶⁷

The danger more, considering the king
 Was without child, I being his next heir
 To rule the realm as prince in everything [325]
 Without restraint and all the sway to bear
 With people's love, whereby it was to fear
 That my haut heart, unbridled in desire,
 Time would prevent and to the crown aspire.⁶⁶⁸

These with such like were put into her head, [330]
 Who, of herself, was thereto soon inclined.
 Other there were that this ill humour fed,
 To neither part which had good will or mind:
 The duke of York, our cousin most unkind,
 Who, keeping close a title to the crown, [335]
 Lancaster's house did labour to pull down.⁶⁶⁹

The stay whereof he took to stand in me,
 Seeing the king of courage nothing stout,
 Neither of wit great peril to foresee.
 So, for purpose, if he could bring about [340]
 Me to displace, then did he little doubt
 To gain the goal for which he drove the ball:
 The crown I mean, to catch ere it should fall.

This hope made him against me to conspire
 With those which foes were to each other late. [345]
 The queen did ween to win her whole desire,
 Which was to rule the king and all the state
 If I were rid, whom therefore she did hate,
 Forecasting not, when that was brought to pass,
 How weak of friends the king her husband was. [350]

328–9: That ... aspire: My haughty heart, unchecked in its desire, would lead me to act as if the time of King Henry's death had already come and spur me to seek the crown. **334. unkind:** wicked, unnatural. **340. for purpose:** for his ultimate intention. **342. for which he drove the ball:** for which he aimed (a turn of phrase derived from the medieval game of football).

The dukès two, of Exeter and Buckingham,
With the Marquis Dorset therein did agree,
But namely the marquis of Suffolk, William,
Contriver chief of this conspiracy,
With other mo that sat still and did see [355]
Their mortal foes on me to whet their knives,
Which turned at last to loss of all their lives.⁶⁷⁰

But vain desire of sovereignty and rule,
Which otherwise ambition hath to name,
So stirred the queen that, wilful as a mule, [360]
Headlong she runs from smoke into the flame,
Driving a drift, which after did so frame
As she, the king, with all their line and race,
Deprivèd were of honour, life and place.⁶⁷¹

So for purpose she thought it very good [365]
With former foes in friendship to confeder;
The duke of York and other of his blood
With Nevilles all knit were then together,
And de la Pole, friend afore to neither.
The cardinal also came within this list, [370]
As Herod and Pilate to judge Jesu Christ.⁶⁷²

This cursèd league too late discovered was
By Bayards blind, that, linkèd in the line,
The queen and cardinal brought it so to pass,
With Marquis Suffolk, master of this mine, [375]
Whose ill advice was counted very fine,
With other mo which finely could disguise
With false visors my mischief to devise.

Concluding thus, they point without delay
Parliament to hold in some unhaunted place [380]
Far from London, out of the common way,
Where few or none should understand the case
But whom the queen and cardinal did embrace,

352. **Marquis**: Marquess. 366. **confeder**: ally. 373. **Bayards blind**: 'blind as Bayard' was a proverbial expression that could denote someone ignorant of the true circumstances surrounding him or her. 375. **mine**: act designed to undermine. 378. **visors**: masks; outward appearances. 379. **point**: appoint, fix.

And so for place they chose St. Edmundsbury,
 Since when, some say, England was never merry.⁶⁷³ [385]

Summons was sent this company to call,
 Which made me muse that in so great a case
 I should no whit of counsel be at all,
 Who yet had rule and next the king in place;
 Me thought nothing my state could more disgrace [390]
 Than to bear name and in effect to be
 A cipher in algrim, as all men mought see.

And though just cause I had for to suspect
 The time and place appointed by my foes,
 And that my friends most plainly did detect [395]
 The subtle train and practice of all those
 Which against me great treasons did suppose,
 Yet trust of truth, with a conscience clear,
 Gave me good heart, in that place to appear.⁶⁷⁴

Upon which trust, with more haste than good speed, [400]
 Forward I went to that unlucky place,
 Duty to show and no whit was in dread
 Of any train but bold to show my face
 As a true man, yet so fell out the case
 That after travail, seeking for repose, [405]
 An armèd band my lodging did enclose.

The Viscount Beaumont, who for the time supplied
 The office of high constable of the land,
 Was with the queen and cardinal allied,
 By whose support he stoutly took in hand [410]
 My lodging to enter with an armèd band
 And for high treason my person did arrest
 And laid me that night where him seemèd best.⁶⁷⁵

Then shaking and quaking for dread of a dream,
 Half waked, all naked in bed as I lay, [415]

392. **cipher in algrim**: a zero in algorism (the decimal system of numbering); the phrase was a byword for a person of no consequence. 396. **train**: trickery. 397. **suppose**: allege. 403. **train**: treachery.

What time strake the chime of mine hour extreme.
Oppressed was my rest with mortal affray;
My foes did unclose, I know not which way,
My chamber doors and boldly they in brake
And had me fast before I could awake. [420]

Thou lookest now that of my secret murder
I should at large the manner how declare.
I pray thee, Baldwin, ask of me no further,
For speaking plain, it came so at unware
As I myself, which caught was in the snare, [425]
Scarcely am able the circumstance to show,
Which was kept close and known but unto few.

But be thou sure by violence it was
And no whit bred by sickness or disease
That felt it well before my life did pass, [430]
For when these wolves my body once did seize,
Usèd I was but smally to mine ease,
With torments strong, which went so near the quick
As made me die before that I was sick.

A palsy, they said, my vital sprites oppressed, [435]
Bred by excess of melancholy black.
This for excuse to lay them seemèd best,
Lest my true friends the cause might further rack
And so perhaps discover the whole pack
Of the conspirers, whom they might well suspect [440]
For causes great, which after took effect.

Dead was I found by such as best did know
The manner how the same was brought to pass,
And then my corpse was set out for a show
By view whereof nothing perceivèd was, [445]
Whereby the world may see as in a glass
The unsure state of them that stand most high,
Which then dread least when danger is most nigh.⁶⁷⁶

416. **What ... extreme:** When the chime marking my last hour struck. 417. **affray:** terror. 433. **the quick:** the central part of someone's being. 436. **melancholy black:** deep sadness; the humour black bile, believed to cause melancholy.

And also see what danger they live in
 Which next their king are to succeed in place, [450]
 Since kings, most part, be jealous of their kin,
 Whom I advise, forewarnèd by my case,
 To bear low sail and not too much embrace
 The people's love, for as Senec saith truly,
*O quam funestus est favor populi!*⁶⁷⁷ [455]

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455. *O quam funestus est favor populi!*: Oh how fatal is the favour of the people!

[Prose 32]

The good duke having ended his woeful tragedy, after much talk had concerning dissension among those that be magistrates, 'Good Lord', quoth one, 'what mischief and destruction doth privy grudge and malice raise among all sorts of people, both high and low, but especially among magistrates, being the head and guide of the commonwealth? For what mischief

5 did the dissension between these two persons, being both of high estate, bring afterward to both the realms, yea, and the utter ruin of most part of them that were the chief workers of this duke's death?'

'You say troth', quoth I,⁶⁷⁸ 'and now for that, if I may crave your patience

10 awhile, you shall hear what I have noted in the duke of Suffolk's doings, one of the chief procurers of Duke Humphrey's destruction, who by the providence of God came shortly after in such hatred of the people that the king himself could not save him from a strange and notable death.⁶⁷⁹

15 For being banished the realm for the term of five years to appease the continual rumours and inward grudges that not only the commons but most part of the nobility of England bare towards him for the death of the said duke,⁶⁸⁰ he, sailing toward France, was met with a ship of Devonshire and beheaded forthwith the first day of May, Anno 1450, and the dead corpse thrown up at Dover upon the sands, which may lament his death after this

20 manner':⁶⁸¹

3. **privy**: personal; secret. 6. **these two persons**: Duke Humphrey of Gloucester and Cardinal Henry Beaufort (see Tragedy 29). 10. **duke of Suffolk's doings**: the actions of William de la Pole (d. 1450), first duke of Suffolk (whose tragedy follows Prose 32 in the 1578 edition).