Ben Jonson's
Every Man in His Humor:
A Retelling

David Bruce

DEDICATED TO MOM AND DAD

Dedicated to Carl Eugene Bruce and Josephine Saturday Bruce

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Educate Yourself

Read Like A Wolf Eats

Be Excellent to Each Other

Books Then, Books Now, Books Forever

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In this retelling, as in all my retellings, I have tried to make the work of literature accessible to modern readers who may lack some of the knowledge about mythology, religion, and history that the literary work's contemporary audience had.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

KNOWELL *an old gentleman*

EDWARD KNOWELL *his son*

BRAINWORM *the father's (Old Knowell's) serving-man*

MASTER STEPHEN *a country gull, Old Knowell's nephew and Edward's cousin. A gull is a simpleton.*

GEORGE DOWNRIGHT *a plain squire. A squire is a gentleman. Half-brother to Wellbred. Squire Downright is the older half-brother.*

WELLBRED *Squire Downright's half-brother and Dame Kitely's brother*

JUSTICE CLEMENT *an old merry magistrate*

ROGER FORMAL *his clerk, a young man*

THOMAS KITELY *a merchant*

DAME KITELY *Kitely's wife and Wellbred's sister and Squire Downright's sister. She must be half-sister to either Wellbred or Squire Downright, but the play doesn't identify which one.*

MISTRESS BRIDGET *Kitely's sister*

MASTER MATTHEW *the town gull*

THOMAS CASH *Kitely's serving-man*

OLIVER COB *a water-bearer. Water-bearers carried water from conduits to individual houses.*

TIB *his wife.*

CAPTAIN BOBADILL *a St. Paul's man. St. Paul's was a place to loiter and to meet people.*

SERVANTS *and* ATTENDANTS

THE SCENE: LONDON

NOTES:

This society believed that the mixture of four humors in the body determined one's temperament. One humor could be predominant. The four humors are blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. If blood is predominant, then the person is sanguine (active, optimistic). If yellow bile is predominant, then the person is choleric (bad-tempered). If black bile is predominant, then the person is melancholic (sad). If phlegm is predominant, then the person is phlegmatic (calm, apathetic, indolent).

A humor can be a personal characteristic. For example, Edward, Old Knowell's son, has the humor of being devoted to the acquisition of impractical knowledge such as poetry.

A humor can also be a fancy or a whim.

The word “humor” was an in-vogue word in Ben Jonson’s day. He may have used it in his title for that reason.

According to Wikipedia, “Humorism began to fall out of favor in the 1850s with the advent of germ theory, which was able to show that many diseases previously thought to be humoral were in fact caused by pathogens.”

Humorism has no part in modern medicine.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humorism#

In this society, a person of higher rank would use “thou,” “thee,” “thine,” and “thy” when referring to a person of lower rank. (These terms were also used affectionately and between equals.) A person of lower rank would use “you” and “your” when referring to a person of higher rank.

“Sirrah” was a title used to address someone of a social rank inferior to the speaker. Friends, however, could use it to refer to each other.

The year the play *Every Man in His Humor* was first performed was 1598, and that is likely the year that the play is set.

The reference to Tilley in 4.8 is to this book:

Tilley, M.P. *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Centuries*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1950.

CHAPTER 1

— 1.1 —

Old Knowell and Brainworm talked together outside his house in Hoxton. Knowell was an old gentleman, and Brainworm was his serving-man.

“A goodly — fair — day is coming, and a fresh morning!” Old Knowell said. “Brainworm, call up your young master. Bid him rise, sir. Tell him I have some business to employ him.”

The young master was Edward, Old Knowell’s son.

“I will, sir, at once,” Brainworm said.

“But listen, sirrah,” Old Knowell said. “If he is studying, don’t disturb him.”

“Very well, sir,” Brainworm said.

He exited to carry out his errand.

Alone, Old Knowell said to himself:

“How happy now I should esteem myself if I could by any means wean the boy from one vain course of study he is devoted to! He is a scholar, if a man may trust the liberal, generous voice of reputation in her report. He is of good reputation in both our universities, Oxford and Cambridge, both of which have favored him with degrees. But their indulgence must not produce in me a foolish, doting opinion that he cannot err.

“I myself was once a student and, indeed, I was fed with the self-same humor he is now, dreaming on nothing but idle poetry, that fruitless and unprofitable art, good to none, but least of all to its professors and practitioners, which then I thought the mistress and reigning authority of all knowledge.

“But since then, time and the truth have awakened my judgment, and reason has taught me better to distinguish the vain from the useful learnings.”

Like many people, Old Knowell wanted knowledge to be practical. He did not believe in *ars gratia artis*: art for the sake of art. His son, Edward, however, reveled in art.

Master Stephen, who was Old Knowell's nephew and Edward's first cousin, entered the scene. This society, however, used the word "cousin" to mean a close relative. For example, Old Knowell now used the word to refer to Master Stephen, who was his nephew.

"Cousin Stephen!" Old Knowell said. "What is the news with you that brings you here so early?"

"Nothing but only to come to see how you are, uncle," Master Stephen said.

"That's kindly done," Old Knowell said. "You are welcome, coz."

The word "coz" meant "cousin" and "relative" and sometimes "close friend."

"Aye, I know that, sir," Master Stephen said. "I would not have come otherwise. How is my cousin Edward, uncle?"

"Oh, he is well, coz," Old Knowell said. "Go in and see him. I suspect he is barely stirring yet."

"Uncle, before I go in, can you tell me whether he has any book of the sciences of hawking and hunting?" Master Stephen said. "I would like to borrow it."

"Why, I hope you will not be a-hawking now, will you?" Old Knowell said.

The hunting season was almost over.

"No, wusse — of course — but I'll practice in preparation for next year, uncle," Master Stephen said. "I have bought myself a hawk and a hood and bells and all. I lack nothing but a book to teach me how to train and care for it."

Hawks were blindfolded with a hood that was taken off so they could hunt. Bells attached to their legs made sounds to help hunters keep track of the hawk's location.

"Oh, that is most ridiculous!" Old Knowell said.

"Nay, look now, you are angry, uncle," Master Stephen said. "Why, you know, if a man does not have knowledge of the hawking and hunting terminology nowadays, I'll not give a rush for him."

A rush is a reed; it is of little worth.

Master Stephen continued, "The hawking and hunting terminology is more studied than the Greek or the Latin. He is qualified for no gallant's company without that knowledge; and, by gad's lid, I scorn, aye, so I do, to be a consort for every humdrum, commonplace fellow."

"Gad's lid" means "By God's eyelid." It is an oath.

Soon Master Stephen would say, "'Slid," which means "By God's eyelid." It is another oath.

This society was against blasphemy and therefore invented these oaths.

Master Stephen continued:

"Hang them, the scoundrels! There's nothing worthwhile in them in the world.

"Why do you talk about it? Because I dwell at Hoxton, shall I keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury, or the citizens who come hunting ducks with water-spaniels to Islington Ponds?

"A fine jest, in faith! 'Slid, a gentleman must show himself like a gentleman. Uncle, I hope that you are not angry. I know what I have to do, I trust. I am no novice."

He wanted to be a fashionable young fellow.

Old Knowell replied:

"You are a prodigal, absurd coxcomb — a fool. Bah! Nay, never look at me with that expression; it's I who am speaking.

"Take it as you will, sir. I'll not flatter you. Haven't you yet found means enough to waste that which your friends have left you, but you must go and cast away your money on a kite and

don’t know how to keep it when you have purchased it?”

A kite is a bird of prey that was regarded as having less worth than a hawk. A proverb stated, “It is impossible to make a good hawk of a kite.”

Old Knowell continued:

“Oh, it’s ‘comely’! This will make you a gentleman!

“Well, cousin, well, I see you are completely past hope of all reclaim.

“Aye, so, now you are told of it, you look another way.”

“What would you have me do?” Master Stephen asked.

Old Knowell replied:

“What would I have you do? I’ll tell you, kinsman:

“Learn to be wise and practice how to thrive, I would have you do that, and not to spend your money on every bauble — trifle — that you fancy, or every foolish brain-notion that humors you.

“I would not have you invade each place, nor thrust yourself on all societies, until men’s affections or your own desert and merit would worthily invite you to your social rank.

“He who is so heedless in his behavior often sells his reputation at a cheap market.

“Nor would I have you melt away yourself in flashy, showy finery, lest, while you affect to make a blaze of gentlemanly behavior to the world, a little puff of scorn would extinguish it and leave you like an ill-smelling wick, whose property — its essential quality — is only to offend.”

Master Stephen was melting away his wealth by spending it on flashy, showy clothing like a candle melting away by spending its wick and wax on a blaze of light.

Knowell continued:

“I’d have you sober and contain yourself, so that your sail isn’t bigger than your boat.

“I would have you instead moderate your expenses now at first, so that you may keep the same proportion always.

“Nor would I have you stand so much on and assert your gentility, which is an airy and mere borrowed thing from dead men’s dust and bones, and none of yours unless you make or hold it.”

Old Knowell did not want his nephew, Master Stephen, to spend all his money now on acting like a wealthy gentleman. Rather, it would be best to moderate his expenses now so that he would have money to live on throughout his life.

Hearing a noise, Old Knowell asked, “Who is coming here?”

— 1.2 —

A servant entered the scene and said, “God save you, gentlemen.”

Master Stephen said:

“Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend.”

“Yet you are welcome, and I assure you that my uncle here is a man with an income of a thousand pounds a year, his income from Middlesex land. He has but one son in all the world; I am his next heir after his son, according to the common law, Master Stephen, as simple as I stand here, if my cousin should die, as there’s hope he will.”

By “simple,” Master Stephen meant “a direct inheritor,” but readers may be forgiven if they think that Master Stephen is simple-minded.

Most people would not talk about the hope of a cousin dying, and certainly not in the presence of the cousin’s father.

Master Stephen continued, “I have a pretty considerable living of my own, too, besides, close by here.”

A living is property from which the owner receives income.

The servant replied, “In good time, sir.”

“In good time” means “certainly,” but the phrase can be used ironically, as if saying, “Yeah, whatever.”

Master Stephen thought that the servant was saying the phrase ironically and therefore mocking him.

“‘In good time, sir’?” Master Stephen said. “Why, and in very good time, sir. You do not flout and mock me, friend, do you?”

“Not I, sir,” the servant said.

“Not you, sir?” Master Stephen said. “You had best not be, sir. If you should, here are those who can perceive it, and that quickly, too. Bah. And they can give it again soundly, too, if need be.”

“Why, sir, let this satisfy you,” the servant said. “In good faith, I had no such intent to mock you.”

“Sir, if I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that immediately,” Master Stephen said.

The “talking” would consist of insults.

“Good Master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure,” the servant said.

“And so I would, sir, my ‘good,’ saucy fellow, if you were outside of my uncle’s grounds, I can tell you — though I do not stand upon my gentility, neither, in it,” Master Stephen said.

If Master Stephen were to challenge the servant to a fight while the servant was a visitor on Old Knowell’s property, that would be an insult to Old Knowell.

“Cousin, cousin, will this never be left off?” Old Knowell said. “Will it never end?”

Master Stephen said, “Whoreson, base fellow! A menial serving-man! By this cudgel, if it were not for shame, I would —”

It would be a disgrace for a young gentleman such as Master Stephen to fight a servant. Higher-born people did not fight lower-born people — they were too proud to do so.

Old Knowell said:

“What would you do, you peremptory gull — you utter fool? If you cannot be quiet, get away from here! You see that the honest man conducts himself modestly towards you, giving no reply to your unseasonable, immature quarrelling and rude name-calling. And still you are in a huff, with a kind of bearing as void of intelligence as of humanity.

“Go, get yourself inside! Before heaven, I am ashamed that thou have a kinsman’s claim on me — I am ashamed that thou have a share of my family’s identity.”

His nephew was disgracing the family.

Master Stephen exited.

The servant said, “I ask you, sir, is this Master Knowell’s house?”

“Yes, by the Virgin Mary, it is, sir,” Old Knowell replied.

“I should inquire for a gentleman here, one Master Edward Knowell,” the servant said. “Do you know any such person, sir, I ask you?”

“I should forget myself else, sir,” Knowell replied.

“Are you the gentleman?” the servant asked, removing his hat. “I ask your pardon, sir. I was required by a gentleman in the City, as I rode out at this end of the town, to deliver to you this letter, sir.”

He gave Old Knowell a letter.

“To me, sir?” Old Knowell said. “What do you mean? Please, remember your courtesy.”

The servant's courtesy was delivering the letter. By "Please, remember your courtesy," Old Knowell was saying "Please, remember who asked you to deliver the letter."

Old Knowell read out loud:

"*To his most selected friend, Master Edward Knowell*."

He then asked, "What might the gentleman's name be, sir, who sent it?"

Looking up and seeing that the servant had taken off his hat, he said, "Nay, please, be covered — put your hat on."

In this society, people customarily wore hats indoors.

"One Master Wellbred, sir," the servant said, putting on his hat.

"Master Wellbred!" Old Knowell said. "He is a young gentleman, isn't he?"

The servant replied, "The same, sir. Master Kitely married his sister — Kitely is a rich merchant in the Old Jewry."

The Old Jewry was a street in the City — central London — where many well-off Jews had lived before the 1290 expulsion of Jews from England.

"You say very true," Old Knowell said.

He then called for his own servant, "Brainworm!"

Brainworm entered the scene and said, "Sir?"

"Make this honest friend a drink here," Old Knowell said.

Giving a visitor a drink before he left was good etiquette.

He said to the servant who had brought him the letter, "Please, go inside."

The servant and Brainworm went inside Old Knowell's house.

Alone, Old Knowell said to himself:

"This letter is directed to my son. Yet I am Edward Knowell, too, and may with the safe conscience of good manners use the fellow's error to my satisfaction.

"Well, I will break open the seal of the letter and read it — old men are curious — if only for the sake of the style and the phrase, to see if both live up to the praises of my son, who has almost become the idolater of this young Wellbred."

He opened the letter and said, "What have we here? What's this?"

The letter was written with much slang of the time. It also referred to Edward Knowell by the nickname "Ned."

Old Knowell read the letter out loud:

"*Why, Ned, I ask thee, have thou forsworn all thy friends in the Old Jewry, or do thou think us all still Jews who inhabit there?*"

This society was anti-Semitic.

Old Knowell continued reading the letter out loud:

"*If thou do, come over and just see our frippery; exchange an old shirt for a whole smock with us.*"

A frippery is a secondhand clothes shop.

Literally, the letter invited Edward Knowell to change his clothes.

Figuratively, the "old shirt" was Old Knowell, and the "whole smock" was a healthy woman with no venereal disease.

Old Knowell continued reading the letter out loud:

"*Do not conceive that antipathy between us and Hoxton as was between Jews and hogs' flesh.*"

An earlier version of the name "Hoxton" was "Hogs-den."

Old Knowell continued reading the letter out loud:

"*Leave thy vigilant father alone, to number and count over his green apricots of the north-west wall evening and morning. If I had been his son, I would have saved him the labor long*

since, if taking in all the young wenches who pass by at the back door, and coddling every kernel of the fruit for them, would have served."

The writer of the letter, Wellbred, would have used the apricots to entice young wenches passing by to let him know or "know" (Biblically) them better. The word "coddling" meant stewing, but he was punning on "cuddling" and on "codling," which means a scrotum. "Cod" means "bag" or scrotum.

Old Knowell continued reading the letter out loud:

"*But prithee come over to me quickly, this morning; I have such a present for thee (our Turkey Company never sent the like to the Grand Signor)!*"

The Turkey Company traded with the Turkish Empire and sent lavish gifts to the Sultan.

Old Knowell continued reading the letter out loud, which described the present, which was a couple of fools:

"*One is a rhymer, sir, of your own batch of loaves, your own yeast, but who does think himself poet-major of the town, willing to be shown and worthy to be seen. The other — I will not venture his description with you until you come because I would have you make your way hither with an appetite.*"

Events would show that he was talking about Master Matthew (a wanna-be poet) and Captain Bobadill (a boastful soldier who spent much time loitering at St. Paul's).

Old Knowell continued reading the letter out loud:

"*If the worst of them be not worth your journey, draw your bill of charges as unconscionable as any Guildhall verdict will give it to you, and you shall be allowed your* viaticum."

A *viaticum* is money for traveling expenses. Guildhall legal verdicts were often unjust, and so the *viaticum* would be a greater sum than was reasonable.

Old Knowell read the close of the letter out loud:

"*From the Windmill.*"

The Windmill is a tavern in Old Jewry.

Old Knowell then said to himself:

"From the bordello, the Spital, or Pict-hatch, this letter might have come as well as from a tavern!"

A bordello is a brothel.

"Spital" meant a hospital that treated venereal disease.

Pict-hatch was a place of low repute with many prostitutes in London.

The letter's content was about leaving the old man Knowell and instead chasing skirts and laughing at fools.

Old Knowell continued:

"Is this Wellbred the man my son has so sung his praises as having the happiest and most felicitous intelligence and the choicest brain the times have sent forth to us?

"I don't know what he may be in the arts, nor what in schools and studies, but surely for his manners I judge him to be a profane and dissolute wretch, worse by possession of such great good gifts, yet being the master of so loose a spirit.

"Why, what unhallowed ruffian would have written in such a scurrilous manner to a friend?

"Why should he think I count my apricots, or play the Hesperian dragon with my fruit, to watch over it so that it is not stolen?"

Golden apples grew in the garden of the Hesperides, mythological immortal nymphs who lived in the west and took care of the garden. A dragon guarded the apples.

Old Knowell continued:

“Well, my son, I would have thought you would have had better judgment in making your selection of your companions than to have taken on trust such petulant, jeering gamesters who can spare no argument or subject from their jest. Such gamesters mock everyone and everything. But I perceive affection makes a fool of any man too much the father.”

Fathers love their sons and for that reason often think too highly of the sons — they often think that their sons are better than their sons really are.

Old Knowell called, “Brainworm!”

Brainworm entered the scene and said, “Sir?”

“Has the fellow who brought this letter gone?” Old Knowell asked.

“Yes, sir, a pretty while ago,” Brainworm replied.

“And where’s your young master?”

“In his bedchamber, sir.”

“Did he speak with the fellow?”

“No, sir, he didn’t see him.”

Old Knowell gave Brainworm the letter and said, “Take this letter and deliver it to my son, but don’t tell him that I have opened it, on your life.”

“Oh, Lord, sir, if I were to tell him, that would be a jest indeed!” Brainworm said.

Indeed, it could lead to comedy.

He exited, carrying the letter.

Alone again, Old Knowell said to himself:

“I am resolved I will not stop my son’s journey into the City, nor practice any violent way to hinder the unbridled course of youth in him, because, when restrained, the course of youth grows more impatient, and in its nature, similar to the eager greyhound of good breed and high spirits, which, even just a little while kept from its game, turns its head and leaps up at its holder’s throat.”

Keeping youths from doing what youths do makes them rebel, sometimes violently.

Old Knowell continued:

“There is a way of winning more by love, and urging of the modesty, than fear. Force works on servile natures, not the free. Those who are compelled to goodness may be good, but they are good only because they are compelled, whereas others, drawn by softness and example, form a habit of acting correctly.

“Then, if they stray, simply warn them, and the same thing they should have done for virtue, they’ll do for shame.”

— 1.3 —

Edward Knowell, holding the letter, which he had not yet read, talked with Brainworm.

“Did he open it, do thou say?” Edward Knowell asked.

“Yes, I give you my word, sir, and he read the contents,” Brainworm answered.

“That scarcely contents me — it hardly makes me happy,” Edward Knowell said. “What expression, I ask thee, did he make while reading it? Was he angry or pleased?”

“Nay, sir,” Brainworm said. “I didn’t see him read it, nor open it, I assure Your Worship.”

“No?” Edward Knowell said. “How do thou know then that he did either?”

Brainworm answered, “By the Virgin Mary, sir, because he charged me on my life to tell nobody that he opened it. If he had not told me that, I would not have known that to tell you.”

“That’s true,” Edward Knowell said. “Well, I thank thee, Brainworm.”

Edward Knowell began to read the letter.

Master Stephen entered the room, unnoticed by Edward Knowell.

Master Stephen said, “Oh, Brainworm, didn’t thou see a fellow here in a what-sha’-call-him jacket? He brought my uncle a letter just now.”

“Yes, I did, Master Stephen,” Brainworm said. “What about him?”

“Oh, I have such a mind — a desire — to beat him! Where is he? Can thou tell me?”

Brainworm said to himself, “In faith, he is not of that mind — opinion.”

Master Stephen wanted to beat the servant, but Brainworm knew, of course, that the servant would not want to be beaten. Or, perhaps, he knew that Master Stephen liked to talk about fighting but not actually fight.

Brainworm said out loud, “He has gone, Master Stephen.”

“Gone?” Master Stephen said. “Which way? When did he go? How long ago?”

“He has ridden away from here,” Brainworm said. “He got on a horse at the street door.”

“And I stayed in the fields!” Master Stephen said. “Whoreson scanderbag — swaggering — rogue! Oh, I wish that I just had a horse to fetch him back again!”

“Scanderbag” was a reference to Albanian nobleman George Castriot’s Turkish name: Iscander Beg, aka Alexander the Governor, a complimentary reference to Alexander the Great. Master Stephen regarded him as swaggering, but the Albanians regarded him as a heroic patriot who successfully led a rebellion against the Turks.

“Why, you may have my mistress’ gelding to serve your longing, sir,” Brainworm said.

“But I have no boots,” Master Stephen said. “That’s the spite of it.”

Riding boots are long to protect the legs from chafing. Lack of riding boots was also an excuse for Master Stephen to avoid riding after the servant and fighting him.

Brainworm began, “Why, a fine wisp of hay rolled hard, Master Stephen —”

Bundled hay could be tied to the inside of a leg to protect it while riding without riding boots. Farmers sometimes did this.

“No, in faith, it’s no boot — no avail — to follow him now. Let him just go, and let him hang,” Master Stephen said. “I ask thee, help to truss me a little. He does so vex me —”

Master Stephen had loosened the laces connecting his tights to his jacket. Now he needed to be trussed — laced — up again.

“You’ll be worse vexed when you are trussed, Master Stephen,” Brainworm said.

A fowl’s legs and wings are trussed — tied — so it can be cooked without drying out those parts of the meat.

Brainworm continued, “You had best stay unlaced, and walk around until you have cooled off. Your choler may founder you else.”

“Choler” is “anger.”

The word “choler” sounded much like “collar,” aka yoke. An unproperly yoked animal could founder, aka stumble.

“By my faith, and so I will, now thou tell me that,” Master Stephen said.

Thinking about boots made him think of legs, and so he asked, “How do thou like my leg, Brainworm?”

Were his legs attractive?

“A very good leg, Master Stephen,” Brainworm said, “but the woolen stocking does not commend it so well.”

“Foh!” Master Stephen said, out of patience. “The stockings are good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust. I’ll have a pair of silk stockings in preparation for winter, for when I go to dwell in the town. I think my leg would show well in a silk hose.”

“Believe me, Master Stephen, they would, rarely well,” Brainworm said.

“Rarely” can mean 1) splendidly, or 2) seldomly.

“Seriously, I think it would,” Master Stephen said. “I have a reasonably good leg.”

“You have an excellent good leg, Master Stephen, but I cannot stay to praise it longer now, and I am very sorry for it,” Brainworm said.

He could be very sorry for the lack of time to praise the leg, or he could be very sorry for the leg, despite having politely praised it.

“Another time will serve, Brainworm,” Master Stephen said. “Gramercy for this.”

Grand merci is French for “many thanks.”

Brainworm exited.

Having read the letter, Edward Knowell laughed.

Master Stephen said to himself, “By God’s eyelid, I hope he isn’t laughing at me. If he is —”

Still unaware of Master Stephen’s presence, Edward Knowell said to himself, “Here was a letter indeed, to be intercepted by a man’s father, and do him good with him! He cannot but think most ‘virtuously’ both of me and the sender, surely, who makes the painstaking costermonger — fruit seller — of him in our ‘Familiar Epistles.’”

Some collections of published letters by such ancient writers as Cicero and Pliny the Younger were titled *Epistolae ad Familiares*, or *Letters to Friends*, aka *Familiar Epistles*.

Edward Knowell knew that after reading the letter, his father must have a poor opinion of the letter-writer.

Edward Knowell continued talking to himself:

“Well, if my father read this with patience, I’ll be gelt, and troll ballads for the music seller Master John Trundle, yonder, the rest of my mortality.”

Italian boys were sometimes gelt — castrated — before puberty to preserve their high singing voices.

The rest of Edward Knowell’s mortality was the rest of his life.

Edward Knowell continued talking to himself:

“It is true and likely my father may have as much patience as another man, for he takes much medicine, and often taking medicine makes a man very patient — and a patient.

“But I wish that your packet, Master Wellbred, had arrived at him in such a minute of his patience; then we would have known the end of it, which now is doubtful, and threatens —”

He noticed the presence of Master Stephen and said to himself:

“My ‘wise’ cousin! So then, I’ll furnish our feast with one gull more toward the mess — a group of four. He writes to me of a brace, aka pair, of fools, and here’s another fool in my room — that’s three fools. Oh, for a fourth!

“Lady Fortune, if ever thou shall use thine eyes, I entreat thee —”

Lady Fortune is often depicted as being blindfolded. Edward Knowell wanted her help in finding a fourth fool. If Edward Knowell were to find a fourth fool, that would be worth her seeing.

Master Stephen said to himself, “Oh, now I see who he laughed at: He laughed at somebody in that letter. By this good light, if he had laughed at me —”

Edward Knowell said out loud, “How are you now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?”

“Yes, a little,” Master Stephen said. “I thought you had laughed at me, cousin.”

“Why, what if I had, coz?” Edward Knowell said. “What would you have done?”

“I swear by this light, I would have told my uncle,” Master Stephen said.

“If you would have told your uncle, then I say that I did laugh at you, coz,” Edward Knowell said.

“Did you, indeed?” Master Stephen asked.

“Yes, indeed,” Edward Knowell said.

“Why, then —” Master Stephen began.

“What, then?” Edward Knowell asked.

“I am satisfied,” Master Stephen said. “It is sufficient.”

“Why, be so, gentle coz,” Edward Knowell said. “And, I ask you, let me entreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for this morning by a friend in the Old Jewry to come to him; to get there is just crossing over the fields to Moorgate.”

Moorgate was a gate in the City wall. Hoxton was close to Moorgate, just across some fields.

Edward Knowell asked, “Will you keep me company? I protest, it is not to draw you into bond, or any plot against the state, coz.”

“I protest” meant “I assure you.”

Being drawn into bond meant assuming someone’s debt. In this instance, it could mean paying Edward Knowell’s and his friend’s bar tab, something that Edward was saying would not happen.

Master Stephen answered, “Sir, that doesn’t matter, as it were; you shall command me to go twice as far as Moorgate to do you good in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest —”

Moorgate was perhaps a mile away. Master Stephen was saying that he would walk to Moorgate and back even if it were two miles away.

“No, no, you shall not protest, coz,” Edward Knowell said.

“By my fackins, but I will, by your leave,” Master Stephen said. “I’ll protest more to my friend than I’ll speak of at this time.”

“Fackins” was a rustic word for “faith.” Master Stephen was a rural fellow who had come to London.

“You speak very well, coz,” Edward Knowell said.

“Nay, not so, neither, you shall pardon me,” Master Stephen said, “but I speak to serve my turn.”

By “my turn,” he meant “my purpose,” but Edward Knowell now punned on the word “turn.”

A trip to and from a water conduit was a turn. Water-bearers filled their tankards with water and carried them to houses. They were paid by the turn. Gentlemen such as Edward Knowell and Master Stephen did not work as water-bearers.

“Your turn, coz?” Edward Knowell said. “Do you know what you say? A gentleman of your social rank, talents, bearing, and consequence, to talk of your ‘turn’ in this company, and to me alone, like a tankard-bearer at a conduit?”

“This company” refers to you, the readers of this book.

Edward Knowell continued:

“Fie! You are a wight — a person — who hitherto his every step has left the stamp of a great foot behind him, as every word has left the savor of a strong spirit behind him!”

“A strong spirit” could mean 1) “much courage,” or 2) “strong breath or mouth odor,” such as alcoholic bad breath.

Edward Knowell continued:

“And he, this man, by whom I mean you, Master Stephen, is so graced, gilded, or, to use a more fitting metaphor, so tin-foiled by nature, as not ten housewives’ pewter made ready for a good time — a celebration — shows more bright to the world than he! And is he — as I said last, so I say again, and still shall say it — is this man to conceal such real ornaments as these, and shadow their glory and obscure their brilliance as a milliner’s wife does her wrought stomacher with a smoky lawn or a black cyprus?”

“Foil” is a piece of metal placed under a diamond to increase its brilliance. Some people deserve to have precious-metal foil to set off their brilliance; for Master Stephen, tin foil would do.

A milliner sold fancy fabrics such as lawn and cypress as well as such items as wrought stomachers — embroidered coverings for the chest.

Edward Knowell was saying that Master Stephen ought not to hide his talents the way that a milliner’s wife could hide her embroidered stomacher with fabric such as smoky lawn or black cyprus.

Edward Knowell continued:

“Oh, coz, it cannot be justified; don’t try to do it! Drake’s old ship at Deptford may sooner circle the world again. “

Sir Francis Drake’s ship *The Golden Hind* was anchored at Deptford. In 1580, it had returned to England after circumnavigating the world.

Edward Knowell continued:

“Come, don’t wrong the quality of your desert and merit with looking downward, coz, but hold up your head, so; and let the Idea — the perfect pattern — of what you are be portrayed in your face, so that men may read in your physiognomy, aka face: ‘Here within this place is to be seen the true, rare, and accomplished monster, or miracle, of nature’ — which is all one. What do you think of this, coz?”

Actually, to be the true, rare, and accomplished *monster* of nature is not a good thing.

“Why, I do think of it, and I will be more proud and melancholy and gentleman-like than I have been, I’ll guarantee you,” Master Stephen said.

“Why, that’s resolute, Master Stephen,” Edward Knowell replied.

Having “praised” Master Stephen and puffed up his pride, Edward Knowell said to himself, “Now, if I can but hold him up to his height of pride, as it is happily begun, it will do well for an example of suburb humor.”

Pride goes before a fall. People with undeserved pride fall easily.

Edward Knowell continued talking to himself:

“We may perhaps have a match with the city and play Master Stephen against a city gull for forty pounds.”

Edward Knowell wanted to compare a country fool with a city fool (who would turn out to be Master Matthew). He could even make a wager and bet forty pounds that Master Stephen, the country fool, would prove to be a bigger fool than the city fool.

Edward Knowell said out loud, “Come, coz.”

“I’ll follow you,” Master Stephen said.

“Follow me?” Edward Knowell said. “You must go before me.”

The person with the higher social standing had precedence — that is, he would go first.

Edward Knowell and Master Stephen were both young gentlemen, but Edward Knowell was continuing to puff up Master Stephen’s pride.

“If I must, I will,” Master Stephen said.

He then said, “I ask you to show me the way, good cousin.”

The person who knew the way to Moorgate should be the one to go first and lead the way. Young Stephen should have insisted that Edward Knowell go first.

— 1.4 —

Standing in front of a building and holding a book, Master Matthew said to himself, “I think this is the house.”

He knocked and called, “What ho!”

Cob, the water-carrier whose house it was, opened the door and said, “Who’s there? Oh, Master Matthew! I give Your Worship good morning.”

“What, Cob?” Master Matthew said, surprised to see him. “How are thou, good Cob? Do thou live here, Cob?”

“Aye, sir, I and my lineage have kept a poor house here in our days.”

“To keep a good house” means “to have lots of food and drink.” It also means to rent rooms.

“Thy lineage, Monsieur Cob?” Master Matthew said. “What lineage, what lineage?”

“Why, sir, an ancient lineage and a princely one,” Cob said. “My ancestry came from a king’s belly, no worse man; and yet no man neither — by Your Worship’s leave, I did lie in that — but Herring, the king of fish (I proceed from his belly), one of the monarchs of the world, I assure you. I fetch my pedigree from the first red herring that was broiled in Adam and Eve’s kitchen, by the harrots’ books.”

Red herring is smoked herring.

By “harrots’ books,” Cob meant “heralds’ books.”

Cob continued, “The herring’s cob was my great-great-mighty-great grandfather.”

A “cob” is a head.

Cob was saying that according to the heraldry books, the head of Cob’s family was the head of the first herring Adam and Eve broiled and ate. In fact, it was his “great-great-mighty-great grandfather.”

“Why mighty?” Master Matthew asked. “Why mighty, I ask thee?”

“Oh, it was a mighty while ago, sir, and a mighty great cob,” Cob said.

“How do thou know that?” Matthew asked.

“How do I know that?” Cob said. “Why, I smell his ghost every once in a while.”

“Smell a ghost?” Matthew said. “Oh, unsavory jest! And the ghost of a herring cob!”

“Aye, sir,” Cob said. “With favor of Your Worship’s nose, Master Matthew, why not the ghost of a herring cob as well as the ghost of rasher bacon?”

Rasher bacon is bacon that is thinly sliced for broiling.

“Roger Bacon, would thou say?” Mathew said, thinking of the ghost of Roger Bacon.

“I say rasher bacon,” Cob said. “They were both broiled on the coals; and a man may smell broiled meat, I hope?”

Cob probably meant “they” to mean red herring and rasher bacon, but readers may be forgiven for thinking that “they” meant Roger Bacon and rasher bacon.

Roger Bacon was suspected of practicing black magic, and he was imprisoned because of it. He was not burned at a stake, although that was a punishment for practicing the black arts.

Cob said, “You are a scholar; upsolve me that, now.”

One upsolution would presumably be this:

P1: Rasher Bacon was broiled, and Roger Bacon was burned at the stake.

P2: A man can smell broiled meat.

C: A man can smell rasher bacon and Roger Bacon.

According to Cob, people can smell the ghosts of rasher bacon and of Roger Bacon.

Cob’s “upsolve” was a word of his own invention, one that Master Matthew took exception to.

“Oh, raw ignorance!” Matthew said.

“Raw ignorance” is “unschooled ignorance,” and it is ignorance that has not been broiled.

Matthew then asked, “Cob, can thou tell me about a gentleman, one Captain Bobadill, where his lodging is?”

“Oh, my guest, sir, you mean?” Cob asked.

“Thy guest?” Matthew said. “Alas!”

He laughed. He did not expect a gentleman to take residence in the home of a water-carrier.

“Why do you laugh, sir?” Cob asked. “Don’t you mean Captain Bobadill?”

“Cob, please, advise thyself well; do not wrong the gentleman and thyself, too. I dare be sworn he scorns thy house. He! He lodge in such a base, obscure place as thy house? Tut, I know his disposition so well: He would not lie in thy bed if thou should give it to him.”

“I will not give it to him, though, sir,” Cob said. “By the Mass, I thought something was in it; we could not get him to bed all night. Well, sir, although he does not lie on my bed, he lies on my bench. If it will please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head and his cloak wrapped about him as though he had neither won nor lost.”

A person who fights hard but neither wins nor loses a fight is likely to be thoroughly tired at the end of the fight.

Cob continued, “And yet I guarantee he never cast better in his life than he has done last night.”

One can cast dice or cast — vomit — excessive alcohol.

“Why, was he drunk?” Matthew asked.

“Drunk, sir?” Cob said. “You do not hear me say so. Perhaps he swallowed a tavern token or some such device, sir.”

Tavern keepers gave tokens rather than coins as change.

Possibly, Captain Bobadill had been drinking so eagerly that he had swallowed a token along with the alcohol.

Cob continued, “I have nothing to do with alcohol; I deal with water and not with wine.”

He called to his wife inside his house, “Give me my tankard there, ho!”

He used the tankard to carry water.

In this context, “ho” is an exclamation. He was not calling his wife a ’ho’ or whore.

He was going to go to work.

Cob then said to Master Matthew, “God be with you, sir. It’s six o’clock in the morning; I should have carried two turns by this time.”

He again called to his wife, “What! Ho! My stopple, come!”

A stopple is a stopper for the tankard in which he carried water.

Master Matthew said to himself about Captain Bobadill, “Lie in a water-bearer’s house, a gentleman of his havings? Well, I’ll tell him my mind.”

Captain Bobadill’s “havings” are 1) his deportment, and/or 2) his possessions.

Tib, Cob’s wife, appeared at the door with a tankard and stopple for Cob.

“What, Tib, show this gentleman up to the Captain,” Cob said, taking the tankard and stopple from her.

Master Matthew exited with Tib.

Alone now, Cob said to himself:

“Oh, if my house were the Brazen Head now! In faith, it would even speak, ‘More fools yet!’”

Roger Bacon was supposed to have created a speaking head out of brass or bronze. The Brazen Head makes an appearance in Robert Greene’s play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.*

Cob continued:

“You should have some people now who would take this Master Matthew to be a gentleman at the least. His father’s an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth. He was a member of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers.”

Mongers are sellers.

Cob continued:

“And now Master Matthew creeps and wriggles into acquaintance with all the fine gallants about the town, such as my guest is — oh, my guest is a fine man! — and they flout him invincibly — without mercy.”

“To flout someone” means “to jeer at him.”

Cob continued:

“Master Matthew goes every day to a merchant’s house where I serve water, one Master Kitely’s, in the Old Jewry; and here’s the jest, he is in love with my master’s sister, Mistress Bridget, and calls her ‘mistress.’”

In this society, a mistress is a woman to whom a man is devoted. The man who loves her is known as her servant.

Cob continued:

“And there he will sit a whole afternoon sometimes, reading of these same abominable, vile — a pox on them, I cannot abide them! — rascally verses, poyetry, poyetry, and speaking of interludes; it will make a man burst to hear him.”

He had an odd way of pronouncing “poetry.”

Interludes are performances.

Interludes are also comic plays. Master Matthew’s reading out loud of his love poems caused people to burst into laughter.

Cob continued:

“And the wenches, they do so jeer and tee-hee at him! Well, if they should do so much to me, I’d forswear them all, by the foot of Pharaoh.

“There’s an oath! How many water bearers shall you hear swear such an oath?”

It was an educated oath. Many water-carriers would not be so learnéd in their swearing. So said Cob.

Learnéd swearing can be regarded as legible swearing, as much learning requires reading.

“Oh, I have a guest, he teaches me, he does swear the legiblest of any man christened: ‘by Saint George,’ ‘by the foot of Pharaoh,’ ‘by the body of me,’ ‘as I am a gentleman and a soldier’ — such dainty oaths!

“In addition, he does take this same filthy, roguish — rascally — tobacco, the finest and cleanliest tobacco. It would do a man good to see the fumes of smoke come forth at his tunnels.”

His tunnels are his nostrils.

Cob continued:

“Well, he owes me forty shillings my wife lent him out of her purse by sixpence a time, besides his lodging. I wish I had it.”

“Sixpence at a time”? Eighty loans of sixpence each make a total of forty shillings.

Cob continued:

“I shall have it, he says, the next action.”

The action could be a military action, aka campaign, or a legal action, aka lawsuit — actually, the lawsuit could be instituted by Cob against his guest.

Or it could be Captain Bobadill getting out of bed and working rather than being a parasite.

Cob continued:

“Helter skelter, hang sorrow, care’ll kill a cat, uptails all, and a louse for the hangman!”

“Up tails all” means “topsy turvy,” often in a risqué way.

A hangman was entitled to the clothing of those whom he executed. Much of that clothing would be infested with lice.

Some of these then-common sayings made as much sense as thinking that Captain Bobadill would ever repay his debt.

— 1.5 —

Captain Bobadill was in his room, lying on a bench.

He called, “Hostess! Hostess!”

Tib entered his room and asked, “What do you say, sir?”

“A cup of thy small beer, sweet hostess,” Captain Bobadill answered.

Small beer is weak beer. People of the time drank much small beer, which was regarded as healthful. In fact, the alcohol killed bad germs, the existence of which had not yet been discovered.

In this case, Captain Bobadill was ordering some hair of the dog that bit him. A little alcohol might take the edge off his hangover.

“Sir, there’s a gentleman below who wants to speak with you,” Tib said.

“A gentleman!” Captain Bobadill said. “’Ods so, I am not in.”

“’Ods so” was a euphemism for “Godso,” which is an oath or an exclamation.

He was not eager to talk to gentlemen. He had too many debts, and he was probably ashamed of where he was living.

“My husband told him you were in, sir,” Tib said.

“What the plague!” Captain Bobadill said. “What did he mean by doing that?”

Master Matthew called from outside the room, “Captain Bobadill!”

Captain Bobadill called back, “Who’s there?”

He then said to Tib, “Take away the basin, good hostess.”

The basin’s purpose was to be vomited in.

He then called, “Come up, sir!”

Tib went to the door and called down to Master Matthew, “He wants you to come up, sir.”

Master Matthew entered the room, carrying his book. Tib exited.

Captain Bobadill said, “You come into a clean house here.”

“God save you, sir,” Master Matthew said. “God save you, Captain.”

“Gentle Master Matthew, is it you, sir?” Captain Bobadill said. “Please, sit down.”

“Thank you, good Captain,” Master Mathew said.

He looked around but saw no stool, and then he said, “You may see I am somewhat audacious in seeking you out.”

“Not so, sir,” Captain Bobadill said. “I was invited to supper last night by a company of gallants, where you were wished for and drunk to, I assure you.”

“Do me the favor of telling me by whom, good Captain,” Master Matthew requested.

“By the Virgin Mary, by young Wellbred and others,” Captain Bobadill said.

Noticing that there was no seat, he then called to Tib, “Why, hostess, bring a stool here for this gentleman.”

Matthew said, “No haste, sir. All is very well.”

“Body of me!” Captain Bobadill said. “It was so late when we parted last night that I can scarcely open my eyes yet; I was but newly risen when you came in. How passes the day abroad, sir? You can tell.”

“In faith, it is about a half hour to seven,” Master Matthew said. “Now trust me, you have an exceedingly fine lodging here, very neat and private.”

Tib brought in a bench.

“Aye, sir, sit down, I bid you,” Captain Bobadill said.

Tib exited.

Captain Bobadill continued, “Master Matthew, in any case possess no gentlemen of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging. Do not give them that information.”

“Who, I, sir?” Master Matthew said. “No.”

“Not that I need to care who knows it, for the cabin is convenient, but because I would not be too popular and generally visited, as some are.”

A cabin is a temporary lodging for a soldier; literally, it is a tent.

Captain Bobadill did not want to be too popular and generally visited, no doubt because he wished to avoid creditors.

“True, Captain, I conceive — understand — you,” Master Matthew said.

“For do you see, sir, by the heart of valor in me, except it be to some peculiar — special — and choice spirits to whom I am extraordinarily engaged, such as yourself or so, I could not extend my hospitality thus far,” Captain Bobadill said.

“Oh, Lord, sir! I am convinced of that,” Master Matthew said.

“I confess I love a cleanly and quiet privacy above all the tumult and roar of fortune,” Captain Bobadill said.

Seeing the book Master Matthew was holding, he asked, “What new book have you there? What! ‘Go by, Hieronimo!’”

“Go by, Hieronimo!” was a famous line from Thomas Kyd’s play *The Spanish Tragedy*. The play was popular, but old-fashioned. Playwrights such as Ben Jonson mocked it in their own plays.

“Aye, did you ever see it acted?” Master Matthew asked. “Isn’t it well penned?”

“Well penned?” Captain Bobadill said. “I would like to see all the poets of these times pen another such play as that was!”

One of the poets of “these times” was Ben Jonson.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“They’ll prate and swagger and keep a stir of art and devices, but when I, as I am a gentleman, read them, I find that they are the most shallow, pitiful, barren fellows who live upon the face of the earth once more as before.”

Master Matthew said:

“Indeed, here are a number of fine speeches in this book:

“‘*O eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears!’*

“There’s a poetic conceit! There’s a poetic metaphor!

“‘*Fountains fraught with tears!’*

“‘*O life, no life, but lively form of death!’* Another!

“‘*O world, no world, but mass of public wrongs!’* A third!

“‘*Confused and filled with murder and misdeeds.*’ A fourth!

“O the muses!

“Isn’t it excellent? Isn’t it simply the best that you ever heard, Captain? Huh? How do you like it?”

“It is good,” Captain Bobadill said.

Matthew recited a poem while Captain Bobadill got dressed:

“*To thee, the purest object to my sense,*

“*The most refinèd essence heaven covers,*

“*Send I these lines, wherein I do commence*

“*The happy state of turtle-billing lovers.*

“*If they prove rough, unpolished, harsh, and rude,*

“*Haste made the waste — thus mildly I conclude.*”

“Turtle-billing lovers” are lovers who kiss like turtle-doves.

Master Matthew stopped reciting.

Captain Bobadill said, “Nay, proceed, proceed. Where’s this poem from?”

Master Matthew said:

“This, sir? It’s a trifle of my own in my nonage, aka minority and immaturity, the infancy of my muses.

“But when will you come and see my study? In good faith, I can show you some very good things I have done recently.”

He then said as Captain Bobadill put on his boots:

“That boot becomes your leg surpassingly well, Captain, I think.”

“So, so,” Captain Bobadill replied. “It’s the fashion gentlemen now use.”

Master Matthew said:

“In truth, Captain, now you speak of the fashion, Master Wellbred’s elder brother and I have fallen out and have quarreled exceedingly.

“This other day I happened to enter into some discourse about a hanger, which, I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship was most peremptory-beautiful and gentleman-like; yet he condemned and called it the most pied and ridiculous hanger that he ever saw.”

A hanger is a loop from which a sword hangs from a sword-belt. Hangers were often decorated.

“Peremptory-beautiful” was a pretentious phrase that meant “utterly beautiful.”

“Pied” meant “parti-colored.” Fools wore motley — parti-colored clothing.

Captain Bobadill said, “Squire Downright is the half-brother to Wellbred, isn’t he?”

“Aye, sir, he is,” Master Matthew said.

“Hang him, the rook,” Captain Bobadill said.

A rook is a simpleton.

“He!” Captain Bobadill said. “Why, he has no more judgment than a malt-horse.”

A malt-horse is a cart-horse that pulled wagons loaded with alcoholic beverages. Proverbially, it was regarded as stupid. (Alcoholics may have regarded it as stupid because it pulled wagons loaded with alcohol but drank none of it.)

Captain Bobadill continued:

“By Saint George, I marvel that you’d lose a thought upon such an animal; he is held to be the most peremptory, absurd clown of Christendom this day. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I never exchanged words with his like. Judging from his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay. He was born for the manger, pannier, or pack-saddle. He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly, but all old iron and rusty proverbs — a good commodity for some blacksmith to make hobnails of.”

Hobnails were used in the making of heavy boots, and so they were associated with rusticity.

Master Matthew said, “Aye, and he thinks to carry it away and sweep all away before him with his manhood and manly valor always wherever he comes. He brags he will give me the *bastinado*, as I hear.”

A *bastinado* is a beating with a cudgel.

“What!” Captain Bobadill said. “He the *bastinado*? How came he by that word, do you think?”

“Nay, indeed, he said he would ‘cudgel’ me,” Master Matthew said. “I termed it *bastinado* for my greater credit.”

“That may be, for I was sure *bastinado* was not in his vocabulary,” Captain Bobadill said. “But when? When did he say this?”

“In faith, yesterday, they say,” Master Matthew said. “A young gallant, a friend of mine, told me so.”

Captain Bobadill said, “By the foot of Pharaoh, if it were my case now and I were in your position, I would send him a *chartel* immediately.”

A *chartel* is a challenge to a duel. Two men would fight with swords, often to the death.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“The *bastinado*? A most proper and sufficient *dépendence*, warranted by the great Carranza.”

A *dépendence* is the pretext for a duel.

Jerónimo Sánchez de Carranza wrote a famous treatise on dueling.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“Come hither. You shall *chartel* him. I’ll show you a trick or two you shall use to kill him with at your pleasure: the first *stoccata*, if you will, by this air.”

A *stoccata* is a thrust with a dueling sword.

Master Matthew said, “Indeed, you have absolute knowledge in the mystery, I have heard, sir.”

A mystery is an art. It is a mystery to those who have not learned it. Captain Bobadill had studied the art of dueling. Possibly.

“Heard it from whom?” Captain Bobadill asked. “From whom have you heard it, I ask you?”

“In truth, I have heard it spoken from various people that you have very rare and un-in-one-breath-utterable skill, sir,” Master Matthew said.

“By heaven, no, not I, no skill in the earth,” Captain Bobadill said. “I have some small rudiments in the science of dueling, such as to know my time, distance, or so. I have made myself expert in it more for noblemen’s and gentlemen’s use than for my own practice, I assure you.”

“No skill” but “expert”? Hmm.

Dueling had a bad reputation because it often resulted in the death of a promising young man.

Captain Bobadill said, “Hostess, accommodate us with another bed-staff here quickly.”

A bed-staff was a staff used in making up the bed.

Tib, who had been eavesdropping outside the door, entered the room and Captain Bobadill said, “Lend us another bed-staff!”

Tib exited.

Captain Bobadill said, “The woman does not understand the words of action.”

The words of action included the names of various kinds of swords and dueling terms, such as poniards (daggers). It also included the word “accommodate,” which meant “equip” and which was a fancy term for the times. Ben Jonson considered it a “perfumed” term.

Captain Bobadill, however, may simply have meant that Tib was slow in executing orders. After all, she had been slow in getting a stool for Master Matthew.

Captain Bobadill flourished a bed-staff as if it were a sword and said, “Look you, sir, exalt not your point above this state — position — at any hand (whatever you do), and let your poniard maintain your defense thus.”

Duelists fought with a sword and a dagger; they used the sword to attack and the dagger to deflect thrusts. A poniard is a slim dagger.

Tib returned with another bed-staff.

Captain Bobadill said, “Give it to the gentleman, and leave us.”

She handed the bed-staff to Master Matthew and then exited.

Captain Bobadill said, “So, sir, come on.”

They engaged in fencing practice.

Captain Bobadill said, “Oh, twine your body more about, so that you may fall to a more sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard.”

They made another pass.

Captain Bobadill said, “So, indifferent. Hollow your body more, sir, thus.”

He demonstrated and then said, “Now stand fast on your left leg. Note your distance; keep your due proportion of time.”

Matthew tried it.

Captain Bobadill said, “Oh, you disorder your point most irregularly!”

Master Matthew was holding his “sword” incorrectly.

He tried again and asked, “How is the bearing of it now, sir?”

Captain Bobadill answered, “Oh, out of measure ill! Extremely bad! A well-experienced hand would pass upon you at pleasure.”

By “pass upon you,” he meant “make a successful pass at you,” but Master Matthew wondered whether “pass upon you” meant “pass judgment upon you.”

“What do you mean, sir, by ‘pass upon me’?” Master Matthew asked.

Captain Bobadill answered, “Why, thus, sir, make a thrust at me. Come in upon the answer, control your point, and make a full career at the body. The best-practiced gallants of the time name it the *passada*: a most desperate thrust, believe it.”

He was using dueling terms. “Answer” means “answering thrust,” and “career” means “lunge.”

“Well, come, sir,” Master Matthew said.

They fenced again.

Captain Bobadill said, “Why, you do not manage your weapon with any facility or grace to invite me. I have no spirit to play with you; your dearth of judgment renders you tedious.”

Fencing using a bed-staff rather than a sword will do that. For some people, however, using a sword rather than a bed-staff won’t much help.

“But one *venue*, sir,” Master Matthew said.

A *venue* is a bout of fencing. It was an out-of-fashion French term.

Captain Bobadill said:

“‘*Venue*’? Fie! Most gross denomination as ever I heard. Oh, the *stoccata*, while you live, sir. Note that.

“Come, put on your cloak, and we’ll go to some private place where you are acquainted, some tavern or so, and have a bite.

“I’ll send for one of these fencers, and he shall breathe — exercise — you by my direction, and then I will teach you your trick. You shall kill him — Squire Downright — with it at the first pass, if you please.

“Why, I will teach you, by the true judgment of the eye, hand, and foot, to control any enemy’s sword-point in the world.

“Should your adversary confront you with a pistol, it would be nothing, by this hand; you should, by the same rule, control his bullet in a line, unless it were buck-shot and spread.”

Captain Bobadill claimed he would teach Master Matthew to deflect a bullet with his sword.

He then asked, “How much money do you have about you, Master Matthew?”

“In faith, I have not more than two shillings or so,” Master Matthew said.

“It is somewhat with the least — it’s not much money,” Captain Bobadill said. “But come. We will have a bunch of radish and salt to add relish to our wine, and a pipe of tobacco to close

the orifice of the stomach, and then we'll call upon young Wellbred. Perhaps we shall meet the Corydon his half-brother there and put him to the question — we will call him to account."

Corydon was a shepherd in Virgil's *Eclogues*, and so the word meant a rustic fellow here: a yokel.

CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

Thomas Kitely, Thomas Cash, and Squire Downright stood together in front of Kitely's place of business in Old Jewry. Kitely was a merchant, and Cash was his serving-man. Kitely was married to Squire Downright's sister, and so they were brothers-in-law.

"Thomas, come here," Kitely said. "There lies a note inside upon my desk. Here, take my key."

He held out the key to Thomas Cash, who took it.

Squire Downright looked at him, questioning this display of trust in a servant: Kitely had much money in the building.

Kitely said, "It doesn't matter, either."

He then asked Thomas Cash, "Where is the boy?"

"Inside, sir, in the warehouse," Cash said.

"Let him count immediately that Spanish gold and weigh it with the pieces of eight," Kitely said.

Pieces of eight are a kind of money.

Kitely added, "Make sure to see to the delivery of those silver fabrics to Master Lucre."

These fabrics had threads of silver woven into them.

Kitely continued, "Tell him, if he will, he shall have the grogran fabrics at the rate I told him, and I will meet him on the Royal Exchange soon."

Grogran fabric was made of mohair, wool, and silk.

"Very well, sir," Cash said as he exited.

"Do you see that fellow, brother-in-law Downright?" Kitely asked.

That fellow was Thomas Cash.

"Aye, what about him?" Squire Downright said.

"He is a jewel, brother-in-law," Kitely said. "I took him as a child up at my door and I christened him — I gave him my own name: Thomas. Since then I brought him up and had him educated at Christ's Hospital, the orphanage, from where when he proved to be a promising imp, I called him home and taught him so much that I have made him my treasurer, and I have given him, who had none, a surname: Cash. And I find him in his place so full of faith and loyalty that I dare to entrust my life into his hands."

"So would I not put that kind of trust in any bastards, brother-in-law," Squire Downright said, "as it is likely he is, even if I knew that I myself was his father. But you said you had something to tell me, gentle brother-in-law. What is it? What is it?"

"In faith, I am very loath to utter it," Kitely said, "as fearing it may hurt your patience, except that I know your judgment is of strength against the nearness of affection —"

"The nearness of affection" means "the bias of personal feelings."

Kitely was going to criticize someone close to Squire Downright.

"What is the need for this round-about approach to what you have to say?" Squire Downright complained. "Please, be direct. Say plainly what you have to say."

Kitely, who was married to Squire Downright's sister, said, "I will not say how much I ascribe and consider due unto your friendship, nor in what regard I hold your love; but let my past behavior and treatment of your sister simply confirm how well I've been affected and disposed to your —"

"You are too tedious," Squire Downright interrupted. "Come to the matter. Get to the point."

Kitely was married to the sister of Squire Downright and Wellbred, who were half-brothers and who were his brothers-in-law.

Kitely said:

"Then, without further ceremony, thus:

"My brother-in-law Wellbred, sir, I know not how, recently has much declined in what he was and has greatly altered in his disposition.

"When he came first to lodge here in my house, never trust me if I were not proud of him.

"It seemed to me that he bore himself in such a fashion, so full of manliness and sweetness in his bearing, and — what was chief — it seemed not borrowed, assumed, or acted in him, but all that he did became him as his own, and seemed as perfect, proper, and possessed as breath is by life or color is by the blood.

"But now his course of life is so irregular, so licentious, pretentious, and deprived of grace, and he himself in addition so far fallen off from that first place, as scarcely any sign remains to tell men's judgments where he lately stood.

"He's grown a stranger to all due respect, forgetful of his friends, and now he is not content just to cheapen himself and make himself over-familiar in all societies, and so he makes my house here as common as a marketplace, a theater, a public receptacle for giddy humor and diseased riot.

"And here in my house, as in a tavern or a brothel, he and his wild associates spend their hours in repetition of lascivious jests, swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night, control my servants, and indeed what don't they do?"

Leaping consisted of acrobatic leaps, but it also referred to the sexual act.

Realizing that Kitely wanted him to speak to Wellbred, Squire Downright said:

"'Sdeynes, I don't know what I should say to him in the whole world!"

"'Sdeynes" means "By God's dignesse," aka "By God's dignity."

Squire Downright continued:

"He values me at a cracked three-farthings, for anything I see."

A three-farthings coin was thin and easily cracked.

Squire Downright continued:

"What is bred in the bone will never get out of the flesh.

"I have told him enough, one would think, if that would serve. But counsel to him is as good as a shoulder of mutton to a sick horse."

A shoulder of mutton is of no use to a sick horse.

Squire Downright continued:

"Well, he knows what to trust to, I swear before St. George. Let him spend, and spend, and domineer and lord it until his heart aches. If he thinks to be relieved by me when he is put into one of your city prisons for debtors — the Counters — he has the wrong sow by the ear, in faith, and he claps his dish at the wrong man's door."

Beggars had begging bowls with lids that they clapped against the bowl to make noise and attract attention. Squire Downright was saying that Wellbred would be begging the wrong man for favors if he came to him for money.

Squire Downright continued:

"I'll lay my hand on my halfpenny before I part with it to fetch him out, I'll assure him."

Squire Downright meant that he would keep a tight hold on his money. He certainly would give none of it to his half-brother — Wellbred — to fetch him out of trouble.

Kitely said, "Nay, good brother-in-law, let it not trouble you thus."

Squire Downright said:

"By God's death, he maddens me! I could eat my very spur-leathers out of anger."

Spurs-leathers are leather straps for tying spurs to one's feet.

Squire Downright continued:

"But why are you so tame? Why don't you speak to him and tell him how he disquiets your house?"

Kitely said:

"Oh, many reasons dissuade me from doing that, brother-in-law.

"But if you yourself would consent to undertake it, though just with plain and temperate manner of speech, it would both come much better to his sense and savor less of resentment or of passion.

"You are his elder brother, and that title both gives and warrants you authority, which, backed up by your presence and personal qualities, must breed a kind of duty in him and regard, whereas if I should hint at the least complaint, it would but add contempt to his neglect, heap worse on ill, make up an edifice of hatred, that in the rearing would come tottering down and in the ruin bury all our love.

"Nay, more than this, brother-in-law:

"If I should speak, he would be ready from his heat of chloric humor and overflowing of the vapor in him to whisper into the ears of his close friends the false breath of telling what disgraces and low disparagements I had put upon him, while they, sir, to back him up in creating the false fable, would make their loose comments upon every word, gesture, or look I use. And they would mock me all over, from my flat cap to my shining, blackened shoes."

Shopkeepers and traders dressed in flat caps and shining, blackened shoes.

Kitely continued:

"And out of all their impetuous riotous fantasies his close friends would beget some slander that shall stick to me.

"And what would that be, do you think?

"By the Virgin Mary, it would be this:

"They would give out, because my wife is pretty, I myself just lately married, and my sister here sojourning a virgin in my house, that I am jealous!"

Kitely's sister was Mistress Bridget.

Kitely continued:

"Nay, as sure as death, that is what they would say; and they would say that I had found fault with and quarreled with my brother-in-law Wellbred on purpose, in order to find an apt pretext to banish them — his close friends — from my house."

"By the Mass, perhaps so," Squire Downright said. "They're likely enough to do it."

Kitely said:

"Brother-in-law, they would, believe it.

"So would I, like one of these penurious quack doctors who sell cure-all medicines, just set the advertisements up to my own disgrace and try experiments upon myself, lend scorn and envy the opportunity to stab my reputation and good name —"

He was interrupted by the entry of guests.

We can wonder whether the characterization of Wellborn by Kitely and Squire Downright is correct.

— 2.2 —

Master Matthew and Captain Bobadill entered the scene.

Master Matthew said to Captain Bobadill about Squire Downright, "I will speak to him —"

Squire Downright was the person with whom Master Matthew had fallen out.

Captain Bobadill interrupted, "— speak to him? Away, by the foot of Pharaoh! You shall not, you shall not do him that grace."

He then said to Kitely, "The time of day to you, gentleman of the house. Is Master Wellbred up and stirring?"

"What about it then?" Squire Downright said. "What else should he be doing?"

Captain Bobadill said to Kitely, "Gentleman of the house, it is to you whom I address myself. Is he within, sir?"

"He came not to his lodging last night, sir, I assure you," Kitely said.

Angry at being ignored, Squire Downright said to Captain Bobadill, "Why, do you hear me? You!"

Captain Bobadill said, "The gentleman-citizen has satisfied me with his answer. I'll talk to no scavenger."

He started to leave.

A scavenger is a street-cleaner. In this society, horses were a major means of transportation and so scavengers cleaned up horse dung.

Squire Downright said, "What, 'scavenger'? Stay, sir, stay!"

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew exited.

Restraining Squire Downright, Kitely said, "Nay, brother-in-law Downright."

"By God's heart!" Squire Downright said. "Stand away from me, if you love me."

"You shall not follow him now, please, brother-in-law," Kitely said. "In good faith, you shall not. I will overrule you."

"Ha!" Squire Downright said.

He called after Captain Bobadill, "'Scavenger'? Well, go to …. I say little, but by this good day — God forgive me that I should swear — if I put up with it so and sheathe my sword, then say I am the rankest cow that ever pissed! By God's dignity, if I swallow this, I'll never draw my sword in the sight of Fleet Street, that place of brawls, again while I live. I'll sit in a barn with Madge Owlet and catch mice first. 'Scavenger'? By God's heart, I'll go near to fill that huge tumbrel slop of yours with something, if I have good luck; your Gargantua breech cannot carry it away so."

Slops are baggy trousers, and a tumbrel is a cart for hauling away dung. Gargantua was a giant whom Rabelais wrote about in comic novels.

Squire Downright wanted to frighten Captain Bobadill so much that he filled his trousers with a stinky substance so voluminous that even the giant Gargantua's trousers could not hold it all.

"Oh, do not fret yourself like this!" Kitely said. "Never think about it."

"These are my half-brother's consorts, these are!" Squire Downright said. "These are Wellbred's *cam'rades*, his walking mates! He's a gallant, a *cavaliero*, too, and dressed in a style just right for the hangman!"

A cam-rade is a crooked ray. Wellbred was like the sun, and his comrades were like crooked rays emanating from him.

Hangmen were permitted to keep the clothing of the people they hanged, but perhaps Squire Downright meant that Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew wore clothing that exposed the throat, making it easy for a noose to do its work.

Squire Downright said, "Let me not live if I could not find it in my heart to swinge — thrash — the whole gang of them, one after another, and begin with him — Wellbred — first. I am aggrieved it should be said that he is my half-brother and takes these courses of action. Well, as he brews so he shall drink — he'll get his just deserts, by Saint George, again. Yet he shall hear about it, and that roundly, too, if I live, in faith."

Kitely said, “But brother-in-law, let your rebuke then run in an easy current, not over-high carried with rashness or devouring choler and anger, but rather use the soft, persuading way, whose powers will work more gently, and compose the imperfect thoughts you labor to reclaim, thereby more winning than enforcing the consent.”

Squire Downright said, “Aye, aye, let me alone for that, I assure you. I’ll take care of it.”

A bell rang, and Kitely said, “What is that now? Oh, the bell rings to call us to breakfast. Brother-in-law, please go in and keep my wife company until I come. I’ll just give orders for some dispatch of business to my servants.”

Squire Downright exited.

— 2.3 —

Cob entered the scene. He was carrying his tankard, and he was late in delivering the water.

“What! Cob?” Kitely said. “Our maids will have you by the back, in faith, for coming so late this morning.”

“Have you by the back” can mean “by the scruff of the neck,” but a strong back is a sign of sexual prowess.

“Perhaps so, sir,” Cob said. “Take heed somebody have not them by the belly for walking so late in the evening.”

A current proverb stated, “The back of a herring, the belly of a wench are best.”

Both are bodily pleasures.

Cob exited.

Alone, Kitely said to himself:

“Well, yet my troubled spirit’s somewhat eased, though not so reposed in that security as I could wish. But I must be content.

“Howsoever I set a face on it and try to look good and comfortable to the world, I would prefer that I had lost this finger by chance, than Wellbred had ever lodged within my house!

“Why, it cannot be, where there is such visitation of wanton gallants and young revelers, that any woman should long be virtuous and chaste.

“Is it likely that factious, rebellious Beauty will preserve the public weal — the commonwealth and common good — of Chastity unshaken when such strong motives muster and make head” — a double entendre — “against Beauty’s and Chastity’s single peace?”

“Make head” means 1) make way, 2) make war, 3) raise an army, and/or 4) raise an erection.

“Single” means 1) lone, 2) weak, and/or 3) unmarried.

“Peace” means 1) opposite of war, 2) tranquility of mind, and/or 3) piece (of ass).

Kitely continued:

“No, no. Beware when two mutual appetites meet to negotiate, and spirits of one kind and quality come once to parley in the pride of blood.”

A proverb of the time stated, “A castle that parleys and a woman who hears will both yield.”

“Pride of blood” means 1) high point of emotion, and/or 2) high point of sexual passion.

Kitely continued:

“It is no slow conspiracy that follows.”

In other words, a sexual conspiracy quickly follows.

Kitely continued:

“Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time had corresponded to their affections and inclinations, and opportunity had matched their sexual desires, all the world would not

persuade me but I were a cuckold.

“By the Virgin Mary, I hope they have not got that start. For good fortune has balked and blocked them yet, and shall do still, while I have eyes and ears to attend the accusations of my heart.”

“Attend” means 1) pay attention to, 2) minister to, and/or 3) be present at the scene of.

“Impositions” means 1) commands, 2) accusations, and/or 3) falsehoods.

Kitely continued:

“My presence shall be as an iron bar between the conspiring impulses of desire. Yes, every look or glance my eye ejects shall check their opportunity, as one checks his slave when he forgets his prescribed duties.”

This society believed that the eye ejected beams that allowed it to see. Kitely would keep an eye on things to stop any adultery from occurring.

Dame Kitely (Kitely’s wife) and Bridget (Kitely’s sister) entered the scene.

Dame Kitely said, “Sister Bridget, please, fetch down the rose-water above in the closet.”

Rose-water was often served with fruit and sugar.

Bridget exited to carry out the errand.

Dame Kitely said to her husband, Kitely, “Sweetheart, will you come in to breakfast?”

Kitely said to himself, “I wonder if she overheard me just now!”

“Please, good muss, we are waiting for you,” his wife said.

“Muss” was a term of endearment: baby talk for “mouse.”

Kitely said to himself, “By heaven, I would not have her overhear what I said for a thousand angels.”

Angels are gold coins.

Dame Kitely said, “What ails you, sweetheart? Aren’t you well? Speak, good muss.”

“In truth, my head aches extremely all of a sudden,” Kitely replied.

He was jealous and suspected his wife of cheating on him with one or more of Wellbred’s friends.

In this society, men with unfaithful wives were said to have invisible horns growing on their heads. If horns were growing on Kitely’s head, that would cause him pain.

Dame Kitely felt his head and said, “Oh, the Lord!”

Did she feel horns?

“What now?” Kitely said. “What?”

“Alas, how your forehead burns!” Dame Kitely said.

He had a fever.

She continued, “Muss, keep yourself warm. In good truth, it is this new disease; there’s a number of people who are troubled with it.”

The “new disease” was characterized by fever and headache.

She continued, “For love’s sake, sweetheart, come in out of the air.”

Being outside in the air was believed to be harmful for invalids.

Kitely said to himself, “How simple and how subtle are her answers! A new disease, and many troubled with it! Why, truly, she heard me, I bet all the world to nothing.”

“All the world to nothing” means “It’s a sure bet.”

Dame Kitely said, “Please, good sweetheart, come in. The outside air will do you harm, in truth.”

Kitely said to himself, “‘The air’! She has me in the wind. She knows what’s up.”

If a hunter is in the wind, the animal being hunted can smell him.

The “air” could also be gossip in the air that would harm him.

He said out loud, “Sweetheart, I’ll come to you soon. My illness will go away, I hope.”

“Pray to heaven it does,” Dame Kitely said.

She and Bridget exited.

Alone, Kitely said to himself:

“A new disease? I don’t know whether it is new or old, but it may well be called poor mortals’ plague, for like a pestilence it infects the houses of the brain.”

His disease was jealousy. It is an old disease.

In this society, people thought of the brain as having three “houses,” or parts: front, middle, and back. Fancy and imagination were located in the front of the brain. Reason was located in the middle of the brain. Memory was located in the back of the brain.

Kitely continued:

“First it begins solely to work upon the fantasy, filling her seat with such pestiferous, plague-causing air that it soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence sends the same kind of contagion to the memory, still each to other giving the infection, which, as a subtle vapor, spreads itself confusedly through every part capable of sensation until not a thought or motion in the mind is free from the black poison of suspicion.

“Ah, but what misery is it to know this, or, knowing it, to want the mind’s erection — its strength and firmness — in such extremes!

“Well, I will once more strive, in spite of this black cloud, myself to be …

“And shake the fever off that thus shakes me.”

He exited.

Kitely suspected his wife of being unfaithful to him by having an affair with Wellbred’s friend or friends. He was suffering from melancholic jealousy.

— 2.4 —

Alone, Brainworm, disguised as a wounded veteran, stood on the Moorfields between Hoxton and London, and said to himself:

“By God’s eyelid, I cannot choose but laugh to see myself transformed thus, from a poor creature to a creator; for now must I create an intolerable set of lies, or my present profession loses the grace — excellence and credit — of being a soldier. And yet the lie to a man of my coat is as ominous a fruit as the *fico*.

Calling a soldier a liar was fighting words: The soldier would fight, or he would lose his honor.

Giving a soldier a *fico*, aka fig (an obscene gesture) was a fighting gesture: The soldier would fight or lose his honor.

The fruit — outcome — of these words and this action was ominous.

Brainworm then addressed you, the reader of this book:

“Oh, sir, it holds for good polity — stratagem — ever, to have that outwardly in vilest estimation that inwardly is most dear to us. So much for my borrowed disguise.”

Brainworm valued valiant military service, but he was going to play the role of a fake out-of-work soldier: a con man who pretended to be an out-of-work soldier who had been much wounded in battle.

He continued:

“Well, the truth is my old master intends to follow my young master, dryfoot, over Moorfields to London this morning.”

“Dryfoot” was a hunting term that meant to track prey without any pawprints to guide the hunter. The hunter would use only the scent of the prey to track it.

Because Moorfields was often wet, it was difficult to cross with dry feet.

Brainworm continued:

"Now I, knowing of this hunting match, or rather this conspiracy of one, and to insinuate myself with my young master — for so must we who are blue-waiters and men of hope and service do, or perhaps we may wear motley at the year's end, and you know who wears motley —"

Servants, who waited on their masters, wore blue livery, but unemployed servants wore motley (a coarse fabric) and Fools wore motley (parti-colored clothing). Unless a servant insinuated himself with the young master before the old master died, the servant would be a fool.

Brainworm continued:

"— I have got myself ahead of my young master in this disguise, determining here to lie in *ambuscade* — ambush — and intercept him in the midway of his journey.

"If I can but get his cloak, his purse, his hat — nay, anything — to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey, '*Veni, vidi, vici*,' I may say with Captain Caesar; I am made forever, in faith."

After a military victory, Julius Caesar said, "*Veni, vidi, vici*": "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Brainworm continued:

"Well, now I must practice in order to get the true manner of one of these lance-knights."

Lance-knights were mercenaries who fought with lances.

Brainworm adopted a military posture, and he said:

"My arm, aka weapon, here, and my — young master!"

He had seen Edward Knowell coming toward him across Moorfields.

Brainworm continued:

"My young master and his cousin, Master Stephen, as I am true counterfeit man of war and no soldier!"

He stood aside, hidden by some bushes.

Edward Knowell and Master Stephen stopped to talk by the bushes where Brainworm was hiding.

Edward Knowell said to Master Stephen, "So, sir, and what then, coz?"

"By God's foot, I have lost my purse, I think," Master Stephen said.

In this society, men kept their money in bags that they called purses.

"Lost your purse?" Edward Knowell said. "Where? When did you have it?"

"I cannot tell," Master Stephen said. "Wait!"

Brainstorm said to himself, "By God's eyelid, I am afraid they will recognize me, despite my disguise. I wish I could get by them without being seen!"

"Do you have it?" Edward Knowell said.

Master Stephen replied, "No, I think I was bewitched, I —"

"Don't weep about the loss," Edward Knowell said. "Hang it, let it go."

Finding his purse, Master Stephen said, "Oh, it's here. No, if it had been lost, I would not have cared, except for a jet ring Mistress Mary sent me."

Jet rings are made of an inexpensive material.

"A jet ring?" Edward Knowell said. "Oh, what is the posy, the posy?"

A posy is a motto engraved inside a ring.

Master Stephen said, "It was fine, in faith:

"*Though fancy sleep,*

"*My love is deep.*

"Its meaning is that although I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly."

"It is most excellent!" Edward Knowell said.

Master Stephen said:

“And then I sent her another, and my posy was this:

“*The deeper, the sweeter,*

“*I’ll be judged, by Saint Peter*.”

Readers may be forgiven for giggling while reading “The deeper, the sweeter,” which can refer to love, to drinking, and to sex.

“What?” Edward Knowell said. “‘By Saint Peter’? I do not conceive that.”

By “conceive,” he meant “understand.”

“By the Virgin Mary,” Master Stephen said, “‘Saint Peter’ to make up the meter.”

When it comes to peters, a “meter” is unrealistic. Inches are realistic and can conceive.

Edward Knowell replied, “Well, there the saint was your good patron; he helped you at your need. Thank him, thank him.”

Brainworm had started to sneak away, but he came back, saying to himself, “I cannot take my leave of them like this. I will take a risk, come what will.”

Still disguised as a wounded soldier, Brainworm said out loud:

“Gentlemen, would it please you to exchange a few crowns — a few coins — for a very excellent good blade here?

“I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, one who in the better state of my fortunes scorned so mean a recourse, but now it is the humor — the whim — of necessity to have it so.

“You seem to be gentlemen well-disposed toward martial men, else I should rather die with silence than live with shame. However, do me the courtesy to remember that it is my need that speaks, not myself. This condition agrees not with my spirit.”

“Where have thou served?” Edward Knowell asked.

Under King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I, England had fought wars with Scotland, France, and Spain. But wars with the countries that the disguised Brainworm will now mention? Not so much.

The disguised Brainworm said:

“May it please you, sir, I have served in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungaria, Dalmatia, Poland — where have I not served, sir?

“I have been a poor servitor — serving soldier — by sea and land any time these past fourteen years, and I have followed the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom.

“I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo, once at the relief of Vienna. I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic Gulf, a gentleman slave in the galleys thrice, where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both the thighs; and yet, being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance, nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution and courage.”

Sometimes, a wound to the thigh is a way to say a wound to the genitals. If he was wounded through both thighs, he may have been wounded through both testicles. Therefore, in addition to being void of financial maintenance, he was unable to maintain the family line.

Elizabeth I, whose reign began in 1558, was currently Queen of England, and the actions the disguised Brainworm mentioned had not taken place anytime during the past fourteen years. The year the play *Every Man in His Humor* was first performed was 1598, and that is the date of this conversation. Many of the campaigns the disguised Brainworm mentioned had occurred in the 1530s, and the siege of Marseilles had occurred in 1524.

The disguised Brainworm was pretending to have served “the best commanders in Christendom,” but the Ottoman Turks took Aleppo in 1516 in a battle of Muslim Turks versus Muslim Egyptians.

Many rufflers, aka con men who posed as ex-soldiers, could be found in London and its surrounding areas such as Moorfields.

The disguised Brainworm was acting as both a ruffler and a courtesy-man, a con man who very politely asked for money while praising the marks (people targeted to be conned), for example, as “gentlemen well-disposed toward martial men.”

Master Stephen examined the disguised Brainworm’s sword and asked, “For how much will you sell this rapier, friend?”

The disguised Brainworm replied, “Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgment. You are a gentleman; give me whatever you please.”

“True, I am a gentleman,” Master Stephen said. “I know that, friend. But so what, though? I ask you to tell me for how much would you sell this sword?”

“I assure you, the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“Aye, with a velvet scabbard, I think,” Edward Knowell said.

A velvet scabbard would be impractical; it would be decorative. A sword in a velvet scabbard would be unlikely to be used in war.

Master Stephen said, “If it should be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that’s flat — that’s for certain. I’d not wear it as it is if you would give me an angel.”

An angel is a coin.

“At Your Worship’s pleasure, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said. “Nay, it is a most pure Toledo.”

“I had rather it were a Spaniard,” Master Stephen said.

Actually, Toledo swords had a very good reputation and were made in Toledo, Spain.

Master Stephen then said, “But tell me, what shall I give you for it? If it had a silver hilt __”

“Come, come, you shall not buy it,” Edward Knowell said to Master Stephen.

Edward Knowell then gave a coin to the disguised Brainworm and said, “Hold on, there’s a shilling, fellow. Take thy rapier.”

“Why, but I will buy it now because you say so … because you say such things,” Master Stephen said to Edward Knowell.

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “And there’s another shilling, fellow. I scorn to be outbid. What, shall I walk with a cudgel, like Higginbottom, when I may have a rapier for money?”

The Old English “*híg*” was a word for hay. “Higginbottom” is “hay in bottom,” and so “Higginbottom” refers to a man who needs padding for his bottom and so has hay in the bottom part of his pants. The man may have been beaten on his bottom and therefore carries the cudgel for protection.

“You may buy one in the City,” Edward Knowell said.

“Tut, I’ll buy this in the field, so I will,” Master Stephen said. “I have a mind to it because it is a field rapier.”

It was a field rapier because it was being sold on Moorfields, but the disguised Brainworm would, of course, claim that it was a battlefield rapier.

Master Stephen then asked the disguised Brainworm, “Tell me your lowest price.”

“You shall not buy it, I say,” Edward Knowell said.

“By this money, but I will, though I give more for it than it is worth,” Master Stephen said.

“Come away,” Edward Knowell said. “You are a fool.”

“Friend, I am a fool, that’s granted,” Master Stephen said, “but I’ll have it for that word’s sake.”

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “Follow me for your money.”

“I am at your service, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

He exited.

— 2.5 —

Alone, Old Knowell, Edward's father, said to himself:

"I cannot lose the thought yet of this letter that was sent to my son, nor cease to wonder at the change of manners and the breeding of our youth within the kingdom since I myself was one.

"When I was young, even a man who lived in a brothel would not have dared to conceive an insult and utter it against a grey head.

"Old age was authority against a buffoon, and an old man had then a certain reverence paid to his years who had none due to his life — so much the sanctity of some prevailed for others."

Not every old man had lived his life in such a way that demanded respect, but they received respect anyway because other old men had lived their lives in such a way as to demand respect.

Old Knowell continued:

"But now we all are fallen. Youths have fallen away from their reverence, and the aged have fallen away from that which bred reverence: good example.

"Nay, I wish that we — even those of us who are parents — were not the first who did destroy the hopes in our own children, and I wish that children would not have learned our vices in their cradles and sucked in our ill customs with their milk.

"Even before all their teeth are born, or they can speak, we make their palates sophisticated.

"The first words we form their tongues with are licentious jests.

"Can it say 'whore'? Can it say 'bastard'?

"Oh, then, kiss it: It is a witty child.

"Can it swear? Then it is the father's darling! Give it two sugarplums.

"Nay, rather than it shall learn no bawdy song, the mother herself will teach it."

Old Knowell said sarcastically:

"But this is in the infancy, the days of the long petticoat worn by young children. When it puts on the breeches, it will put off all this."

He then said:

"Aye, it is likely, when its corruption has gone into the bone already."

Old Knowell continued:

"No, no, this dye does deeper than the coat, or shirt, or skin. It stains all the way to the liver, the seat of violent — and sexual — passion and all the way to the heart, the seat of knowledge and understanding, in some.

"And, rather than it — the child — should not grow up and be corrupt, note what we fathers do. Look how we live, what mistresses we keep, at what expense in our sons' eyes, where they may handle our gifts to our mistresses, hear our lascivious courtships, see our dalliance, taste of the same sexually stimulating, aphrodisiacal foods with us, to the ruin of our states!

By "states," he meant 1) bodily health, and 2) estates.

Old Knowell continued:

"Nay, when our own portion of wealth has fled, to prey on our children's remainder — property held in trust for heirs — we call them into fellowship of vice, bait them with the young chambermaid, to seal, and teach them all bad ways, to buy their affliction and their affection."

To “seal” means to sign a contract; in this case, the person would sign a contract giving away his property in return for having sex with a young chambermaid.

Old Knowell continued:

“This is one path; but there are millions more in which we spoil our own with leading them.

“Well, I thank heaven I never yet was a man who travelled with his son, before he was sixteen, to show him the Venetian courtesans, nor read the grammar of cheating he had made to his sharp boy at twelve, repeating continually this rule: ‘Get money, continually get money, boy, no matter by what means; money will do more, boy, than my lord’s letter — a letter of recommendation from an aristocrat.’

“Neither have I dressed snails or mushrooms in exotic ways before him, perfumed my sauces, and taught him to make them, proceeding continually with my grey gluttony at all the eating-houses, and only feared that his palate would degenerate, not his manners.

“These are the trade of fathers now. However, my son, I hope, has met within my threshold none of these household precedents, which are strong and swift to carry away youth to their — the household precedents’ — precipice. Indeed, the precipice threatens youth.

“But, let the house at home be never so clean-swept, or kept sweet from filth — nay, dust and cobwebs — if he will live away from home with his companions in dung and dung-heaps, then it is worth a fear.

“Nor is the danger of associating familiarly with them — his companions — less than all that I have mentioned by way of example.”

Brainworm, still disguised as a soldier, appeared on the scene.

Seeing Old Knowell, the disguised Brainworm said to himself, “My master! Nay, indeed, have at you. I am fleshed now, I have fared so well.”

By “fleshed,” he meant that he had done well so far: His efforts had been rewarded. Hunting hounds and hawks were given a piece of the flesh of the game that they had helped hunters to kill.

Brainworm had already “attacked” Edward Knowell and Master Stephen and had done well. Now he was going to “attack” Old Knowell. “Have at you” was a cry that meant “I am going to attack you now.”

The disguised Brainworm said to Old Knowell, “Worshipful sir, I beg you, heed and have regard for the estate and condition of a poor soldier. I am ashamed of this base course of life, God’s my comfort, but extremity provokes me to it. What is the remedy?”

Old Knowell replied, “I have nothing for you now.”

“By the faith I bear to truth, gentleman, begging is no ordinary customary behavior in me, but only to preserve my manhood,” the disguised Brainworm said. “I avow to you that a man I have been, and a man I may be, by your sweet bounty.”

“Please, good friend, be satisfied,” Old Knowell said.

“Be satisfied” meant, basically, “leave me alone.”

“Good sir, by that hand, you may do the part of a kind gentleman in lending a poor soldier the price of two mugs of beer, a matter of small value. The King of Heaven shall pay you, and I shall be thankful. Sweet Worship —”

Old Knowell said, “Nay, if you be so importunate —”

Blocking his way, the disguised Brainworm said, “Oh, tender sir, need will have its course. I was not made to this vile use. Well, the sword-edge of the enemy could not have cast me down so much. It’s hard when a man has served in his prince’s cause and be thus —”

He wept, and then continued, “Honorable Worship, let me derive — obtain — a small piece of silver from you; it shall not be given in the course of time — someday, I will return it.

By this good ground, I was obliged to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper; I had sucked the hilts long before pawning my rapier. I am a pagan else, sweet Honor."

Sucking the hilts was a way of dealing with hunger, such as sucking a pacifier or chewing gum or smoking.

Old Knowell said:

"Believe me, I am taken with some wonder to think that a fellow of thy outward presence would, in the frame and fashion of his mind, be so degenerate and sordid-base.

"Are thou a man? And thou aren't ashamed to beg? To practice such a servile kind of life?

"Why, no matter how poor your education, having thy limbs, a thousand more attractive courses of action offer themselves to thy election.

"Either the wars might still supply thy wants, or the service of some virtuous gentleman, or honest labor. Nay, what can I name but would become thee better than to beg? But men of thy condition feed on sloth, as does the beetle on the dung she breeds in, not caring how the mettle of your minds is eaten with the rust of idleness.

"Now, before me, whoever he be who would relieve a person of thy quality, while thou persists in this loose, desperate course, I would esteem the sin not thine, but his."

Giving alms to a beggar with a healthy body would be a sin, according to Old Knowell.

The disguised Brainworm said, "In faith, sir, I would gladly find some other course, if so —"

"Aye, you'd gladly find it, but you will not seek it," Old Knowell interrupted.

"Alas, sir, where should a man seek?" the disguised Brainworm said. "In the wars there's no ascent by desert — merit — in these days, but — and for employment as a servant, I wish it were as soon obtained as wished for, the air's my comfort; I know what I would say —"

"What's thy name?" Old Knowell interrupted.

"If it pleases you, Fitzsword, sir," the disguised Brainworm said.

"Fitzsword" means "Son of the Sword."

"Fitzsword?" Old Knowell said. "Say that a man should give thee employment now. Would thou be honest, humble, just, and true?"

The disguised Brainworm began, "Sir, by the place and honor of a soldier —"

"Nay, nay, I don't like those affected oaths," Old Knowell interrupted. "Speak plainly, man: What do thou think about my words?"

"Nothing, sir, but I wish that my fortunes would be as happy as my service should be honest," the disguised Brainworm said.

"Well, follow me and be my servant," Old Knowell said. "I'll test thee and see if thy deeds will bear a proportion to thy words."

"Yes, sir, immediately," the disguised Brainworm said. "I'll just garter my hose for a moment."

Old Knowell exited as the disguised Brainworm bent over to adjust the garters of his hose.

Alone, the disguised Brainworm said to himself:

"Oh, I wish that my belly were hooped like a barrel to keep it from bursting now! For I am ready to burst with laughing. Never was a bottle or a bagpipe fuller.

"By God's eyelid, was there ever seen a fox in years — such a cunning old man — who betrayed himself like this?"

Old Knowell had been fooled very much.

The disguised Brainworm said:

"Now I shall be possessed of all his plans, and, by that conduit, aka channel, my young master will also be possessed with knowledge of all his plans because I will tell him.

“Well, he is resolved to test my honesty; in faith, I say that I am resolved to test his patience.

“Oh, I shall deceive him intolerably! This small piece of service will bring him wholly out of love with soldiers forever.

“He will never come within the sign of soldiers — the sight of a soldier’s cassock, aka cloak, or a portable musket-stand — again. He will hate the musters at Mile End for it to his dying day.”

Militias composed of apprentices practiced maneuvers at Mile End.

The disguised Brainworm continued:

“It doesn’t matter. Let the world think me a bad counterfeit if I cannot trick him and give him the slip at an instant.”

Another meaning of the word “slip” is a counterfeit coin.

The disguised Brainworm continued:

“Why, this is better than to have stopped or delayed his journey. Well, I’ll follow him. Oh, how I long to be employed!”

He exited and followed Old Knowell.

CHAPTER 3

— 3.1 —

Master Matthew and Captain Bobadill met Wellbred in the street outside the Windmill Tavern.

Master Matthew said to Wellbred, “Yes, indeed, sir, we were at your lodging to seek you, too.”

“Oh, I did not go there last night,” Wellbred said.

“Your half-brother told us as much,” Captain Bobadill said.

“Who? My half-brother Downright?” Wellbred asked.

“Yes, he,” Captain Bobadill said. “Master Wellbred, I don’t know in what kind of esteem you hold me, but let me say to you this: As sure as honor, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation to throw the least beam of regard upon such a —”

“Out of the sunshine of reputation” means 1) shade of reputation, and 2) dishonorable.

Knowing that Captain Bobadill was going to talk ill about Squire Downright, Wellbred said, “Sir, I must hear no ill words about my half-brother.”

Captain Bobadill replied, “I protest to you, as I have a thing — a soul — to be saved about me, I never saw any gentleman-like quality —”

“Good Captain, about-face to some other topic of discourse,” Wellbred said.

Captain Bobadill replied, “With your leave, sir, if there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not like him, by Saint George.”

“In truth, neither would I,” Master Matthew said. “He is of a rustical cut — I don’t know how. He does not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion.”

Wellbred replied, “Oh, Master Matthew, that’s a grace peculiar but to a few: *quos aequus amavit Jupiter.*”

The Latin, which comes from Virgil’s *Aeneid* VI.129, means this: “Those whom kind Jupiter has loved.”

“I understand you, sir,” Master Matthew said.

“No question you do or you do not, sir,” Wellbred said.

Yes, there was no question whether Master Matthew understood him or — as was more likely — did not understand him.

Edward Knowell and Master Stephen entered the scene.

Seeing Edward, Wellbred said, “Ned Knowell! By my soul, welcome! How do thou, sweet spirit, my genius?”

A genius is a familiar spirit.

Wellbred continued, “By God’s eyelid, I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better while I live, for this.”

Apollo is the god of music.

The mad Thespian girls are the Muses, who provide inspiration (and so are mad) to creative people and who frequented the Thespian springs at the foot of Mount Helicon.

Wellbred continued, “My dear Fury, now I see there’s some love in thee.”

Calling Edward Knowell a Fury was a joke, as the Furies were avenging spirits who came from the Land of the Dead, but in Aeschylus’ tragedy *Eumenides*, the Furies acquired the name of the Eumenides, aka the Kindly Ones. In the play, crimes began to be tried in courts of law instead of crimes being avenged by the Furies.

The love in Edward Knowell was shown by Edward’s coming to the Windmill Tavern as invited.

Wellbred and Edward Knowell then talked privately between themselves; the others could not hear them.

Wellbred said to Edward Knowell:

“Sirrah, these are the two” — he pointed to Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew — “I wrote to thee about.

“Nay, what a drowsy humor is this now? Why don’t thou speak?”

“Oh, you are a fine gallant!” Edward Knowell said. “You sent me a ‘splendid’ letter.”

“Why, wasn’t it splendid?” Wellbred asked.

“Yes, I’ll be sworn I was never guilty of reading the like,” Edward Knowell said. “Match it in all Pliny the Younger’s or Symmachus’ epistles, and I’ll have my judgment burned in the ear for a rogue.”

Epistles are letters.

Pliny the Younger’s letters and Symmachus’ letters were published. Both were Roman scholars.

In Elizabethan times, before 1593, a rogue’s ear could be branded with a red-hot poker as punishment.

Edward Knowell continued, “Make much of thy vein, aka literary style, for it is inimitable. But I marvel what camel it was who had the task of carrying and delivering it?”

In this society, camels were thought to be dull creatures. They were pack animals: beasts of burden.

Edward Knowell continued, “For doubtless he was no ordinary beast who brought it.”

“Why do you say these things?” Wellbred asked.

“‘Why?’ sayest thou?” Edward Knowell said. “Why, do thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning — the sober time of the day, too — could have mistaken my father for me?”

Realizing that Edward’s father had gotten the letter, Wellbred said, “By God’s eyelid, you are joking, I hope.”

Edward Knowell replied, “Indeed, the best use we can turn it to is to make a jest of it now. But I’ll assure you, my father had the full view of your flourishing and florid style an hour or so before I saw your letter.”

“What a dull slave was this messenger!” Wellbred said. “But sirrah, what did your father say about it, truly?”

“I don’t know what he said,” Edward Knowell replied, “but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.”

“What?” Wellbred asked. “What?”

Edward Knowell replied, “By the Virgin Mary, he must have thought that thou are some strange, dissolute young fellow, and I a grain or two better for keeping thee company.”

“A grain or two better” means “hardly better.”

“Tut, that thought is like the moon in her last quarter; it will change shortly,” Wellbred said. “But, sirrah, I ask thee to become acquainted with my two hangers-on here. Thou will take exceeding pleasure in them if thou hear them once go: my wind-instruments. I’ll wind them up.”

His wind-instruments were blowhards.

He would wind them up in such a way that they would speak and reveal themselves to be fools.

Wellbred continued, “But” — he pointed toward Master Stephen — “what strange piece of silence is this? The sign of the Dumb Man?”

Tavern signs often consisted of a picture representing the name of the tavern.

Master Stephen had not yet spoken; he was dumb in more ways than one.

He also was adopting the signs of a melancholic man: He was standing with crossed arms.

Edward Knowell answered, “Oh, sir, he is a kinsman of mine, one who may make your music the fuller, if he pleases. He has his humor, sir.”

A humor is a distinctive personal characteristic.

“Oh, what is it?” Wellbred asked. “What is it?”

“Nay, I’ll neither do your judgment nor his folly that wrong of anticipating your impressions of him,” Edward Knowell said. “I’ll leave him to the mercy of your search. If you can discover him, so be it, well and good.”

“Discover him” meant to have Master Stephen act in such a way that revealed what kind of a fool he was.

Wellbred and Edward Knowell joined the others.

Wellbred said, “Well, Captain Bobadill, Master Matthew, I ask you to know this gentleman here: Edward Knowell. He is a friend of mine and one who will deserve your affection.”

He then said to Master Stephen, “I don’t know your name, sir, but I shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.”

“My name is Master Stephen, sir. I am this gentleman’s own cousin, sir; his father is my uncle, sir. I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman,” Master Stephen replied.

Captain Bobadill said to Edward Knowell, “Sir, I must tell you this: I am no general man.”

He was no general man because he was a captain and not a general. In addition, in this society a general man is a man who is widely accomplished and knows much.

A general man can also be a man who is friendly to everyone: This is the sense in which Captain Bobadill was using it.

Captain Bobadill continued: “But for Master Wellbred’s sake — you may embrace and accept it at what height of favor you please — I do communicate with you and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts. I love few words.”

“And I fewer, sir,” Edward Knowell replied. “I have scarcely enough to thank you.”

Edward Knowell’s words could be construed as saying that Captain Bobadill deserved many more words of thanks or as saying that Captain Bobadill scarcely deserved the few

words of thanks that he was receiving.

Master Matthew said to Master Stephen, “But are you indeed, sir, so given to it?”

“Aye, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy,” Master Stephen replied.

“Oh, melancholy is your only fine humor, sir,” Master Matthew said. “Your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir. I am melancholy myself at different times, sir, and then I do no more but take pen and paper immediately, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.”

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, “Surely, he utters them, then, by the gross.”

“Utters” in the commercial sense meant “puts into circulation” and “puts out for sale.”

“Gross” is a unit of measure: twelve dozen. “Gross” also means ignorant, stupid, and rude.

Master Stephen said to Master Matthew, “Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.”

“Out of measure” means 1) boundlessly, and 2) metrically inaccurate.

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, “Truly, better than in measure, I’ll undertake.”

In other words, Master Stephen loved bad, out-of-measure poetry more than he loved good, metrically accurate poetry.

Master Matthew said to Master Stephen, “Why, I invite you, sir, to make use of my study. It’s at your service.”

Master Stephen replied, “I thank you, sir; I shall be bold to do so, I promise you. Have you a stool there, to be melancholy upon?”

“That I have, sir,” Master Matthew said, “and I have some papers there of my own doing at idle hours, about which you’ll say there’s some sparks of wit in the poems when you see them.”

Given the quality of Master Matthew’s “poetry,” the stool could very well be a kind of toilet: a close-stool.

Wellbred whispered to Edward Knowell, “I wish the sparks would kindle for once and become a fire among them so that I might see self-love burned for her heresy!”

Master Matthew’s love of his poems was large enough to be idolatrous.

Master Stephen said to Edward Knowell, “Cousin, is it well? Am I melancholy enough?”

“Oh, aye, excellent,” Edward Knowell answered.

“Captain Bobadill, why do you muse so?” Wellbred asked.

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, “He is melancholy, too.”

Captain Bobadill replied to Wellbred, “Truly, sir, I was thinking of a most honorable piece of service that was performed on Saint Mark’s Day, which is tomorrow, some ten years ago now.”

Saint Mark’s Day is April 25.

“In what place, Captain?” Edward Knowell asked.

Captain Bobadill answered:

“Why, at the beleagering of Strigonium in Hungary, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen as any were in Europe lost their lives upon the breach the assault made in the fortifications.

“I’ll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first but the best leaguer, aka siege, that I ever beheld with these eyes, except the taking in, aka capture, of — what do you call it? — last year by the Genoese; but that of all others was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier.”

Master Stephen said, “By God, I had as gladly as an angel I could swear as well as that gentleman!”

In other words: By God, I wish as much for an angel (a gold coin) as I wish to swear like that gentleman!

In yet other words: By God, I, just as much as an angel in heaven does, wish to swear like that gentleman!

Edward Knowell said to Captain Bobadill, “Then you were a servitor — a soldier — at both, it seems: at Strigonium and What-do-you-call-it?”

“Oh, Lord, sir!” Captain Bobadill said. “By Saint George, I was the first man who entered the breach, and, had I not effected it with resolution, I would have been slain if I had had a million of lives.”

Edward Knowell said to himself, “It was a pity that you had not ten lives: a cat’s nine lives and your own, indeed.”

He said out loud, “But was it possible?”

Master Matthew said to Master Stephen, “Please, pay close attention to this discourse, sir.”

“So I do,” Master Stephen said.

“I assure you, upon my reputation, it is true, and you yourself shall confess it,” Captain Bobadill said to Edward Knowell.

“You must bring me to the rack first,” Edward Knowell said.

The rack was an instrument of torture in which arms and legs were dislocated. Edward Knowell would have to be tortured before he confessed the truth of — that is, acknowledged to be true — Captain Bobadill’s claims.

The word “rack,” however, also meant destruction, as in “rack and ruin.” Captain Bobadill interpreted Edward Knowell’s words as saying that he needed to hear more of Captain Bobadill’s description of the destruction that Captain Bobadill had witnessed.

Captain Bobadill said:

“Observe me judicially, aka judiciously, sweet sir. They had planted three demi-culverins, aka cannons, just in the mouth of the breach. Now, sir, as we were to charge, their master gunner — a man of no mean skill and marksmanship, you must think — confronted me with his linstock ready to give fire.”

A linstock is used to hold the lighted match that fires the cannon.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“I, spying his intention, discharged my petronel, aka pistol, in his bosom, and with these single — these sole and petty — arms” — he drew his weapon — “my poor rapier, I ran violently upon the Moors who guarded the ordnance and put them pell-mell to the sword.”

“To the sword?” Wellbred said. “To the rapier, Captain.”

Edward Knowell said to Wellbred, “Oh, it was a good figure of speech observed, sir.”

Edward Knowell was sarcastic. Captain Bobadill had said that he had put the enemy pell-mell to the sword. The word “pell-mell” means “confusedly” and as used by Captain Bobadill could refer to Captain Bobadill, not to the enemy. The word “pell-mell” also often refers to fleeing in a confused fashion.

He then said to Captain Bobadill, “But did you do all this, Captain, without hurting your blade?”

Captain Bobadill had been flourishing his sword, which was undamaged — evidence that it was unused.

Captain Bobadill said, “Without any impeach, aka damage, on the earth. You shall perceive, sir. Look at my sword. It is the most fortunate — blessed with luck — weapon that ever rode on a poor gentleman’s thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay, Excalibur, Durindana, or so; tut, I lend no credit to that which is fabled of them. I know the virtue of my own sword, and therefore I dare the boldlier maintain it.”

The sword named Morglay belonged to Sir Bevis of Hampton, the sword named Excalibur belonged to King Arthur, and the sword named Durindana belonged to Roland.

Master Stephen said, “I wonder whether it is a Toledo sword or not?”

“A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir,” Captain Bobadill said.

“I have a countryman of his here,” Master Stephen said, referring to the sword that he had bought from the disguised Brainworm.

“Please, let me see it, sir,” Master Matthew said.

He examined Master Stephen’s sword and said, “Yes, indeed, it is!”

Captain Bobadill examined the sword and said, “This a Toledo? Pish and pshaw!”

“Why do you ‘pish,’ Captain?” Master Stephen asked.

Captain Bobadill said, “This is a Fleming sword, by heaven. I’ll buy them for a guilder apiece, even if I want to have a thousand of them.”

Inexpensive swords were made in Flanders, a region in Belgium. A guilder is a Dutch coin.

Edward Knowell said to Master Stephen, “What do you say, cousin? I told you thus much.”

“Where did you buy it, Master Stephen?” Wellbred asked.

“I bought it from a scurvy rogue soldier,” Master Stephen said. “May a hundred lice go with him! He swore it was a Toledo sword.”

“It is a poor provant, aka government-issue, rapier, no better,” Captain Bobadill said.

“By the Mass, I think it is, indeed, now I look on it better,” Master Matthew said.

“The longer you look on it, the worse,” Edward Knowell said.

He then said to Master Stephen, “Put it up. Put it up.”

This meant: Sheathe your sword. Accept that you have been conned and move on.

Master Stephen said, “Well, I will put it up, but by — I have forgotten the Captain’s oath; I wanted to have sworn by it — if I ever meet him —”

He meant: “If I ever meet the man who sold me this sword —”

“Oh, it is past help now, sir,” Wellbred said. “You must have patience.”

“Whoreson, coney-catching rascal!” Master Stephen said. “I could eat the very hilts for anger!”

A coney-catcher is a swindler, a con man. Coneys are rabbits that can be lured from their rabbit-holes and caught.

“A sign of good digestion!” Edward Knowell said. “You have an ostrich stomach, cousin.”

Ostriches were reputed to be able to eat anything, including metals such as iron. Master Stephen was swallowing — bearing — the insult of being sold a poor sword, and an ostrich was capable of swallowing a sword.

“A stomach?” Master Stephen said. “I wish that I had him here! You should see if I had a stomach.”

He was saying that he had a stomach — a longing — for a fight.

“It’s better as it is,” Wellbred said to Master Stephen.

He then said, “Come, gentlemen, shall we go?”

— 3.2 —

Brainworm, still disguised as a soldier, entered the scene.

Edward Knowell said to Master Stephen, “A miracle, cousin. Look here! Look here!”

Master Stephen said to Brainworm, “Oh, by God’s lid, by your leave, do you know me, sir?”

“By your leave” meant “if you don’t mind.” It was a phrase of etiquette that could lead to avoiding a duel.

“Aye, sir. I know you by sight,” the disguised Brainworm replied.

“You sold me a rapier, didn’t you?” Master Stephen asked.

“Yes, by the Virgin Mary, I did, sir,” the disguised Brainworm replied.

“You said it was a Toledo sword, didn’t you?” Master Stephen asked.

“True, I did so,” the disguised Brainworm replied.

“But it is not a Toledo sword?” Master Stephen asked.

“No, sir, I confess it, it is not,” the disguised Brainworm replied.

“Do you confess it?” Master Stephen said to the disguised Brainworm.

He then said, “Gentlemen, bear witness he has confessed it.”

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “By God’s will, if you had not confessed it —”

Edward Knowell interrupted, “— oh, cousin, stop, stop.”

Master Stephen replied, “I have finished, cousin.”

“Why, you have acted like a gentleman,” Wellbred said to Master Stephen. “He has confessed it; what more do you want?”

Master Stephen said, “Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal — under his favor, do you see?”

“Under his favor” means “if he is agreeable to it.” It was a phrase of etiquette that could lead to avoiding a duel.

Edward Knowell said quietly to Wellbred, “Aye, ‘by his leave, he is,’ and ‘under favor’ — a pretty piece of civility! Sirrah, how do thou like him?”

Wellbred replied quietly, “Oh, he’s a most precious fool! Make much of him and build up his pride. I can compare him to nothing more aptly than a drum, for everyone may play upon him.”

“No, no,” Edward Knowell whispered. “A child’s whistle is by far the fitter to use as a comparison.”

A child’s whistle makes a shrill noise. So does Master Stephen.

The disguised Brainworm said to Edward Knowell, “Sir, shall I entreat a word with you?”

“With me, sir?” Edward Knowell replied. “You haven’t another Toledo sword to sell, have you?”

“You are full of conceits — jests — sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

He and Edward Knowell talked quietly and privately together.

He said to Edward, “Your name is Master Knowell, as I take it?”

“You are in the right,” Edward Knowell said. “You don’t mean to proceed in the catechism, do you?”

The Child’s Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer had questions such as “What is your name?” and “Who gave you this name?”

“No, sir, I am none of that coat,” the disguised Brainworm said.

By “coat,” he meant a parson’s coat; in other words, he was saying that he was not a parson.

“But you are of as bare a coat, though,” Edward Knowell said.

By “bare,” he meant “threadbare.” Parsons were proverbially impoverished.

Edward Knowell then said, “Well, speak, sir.”

The disguised Brainworm said, “Indeed, sir, I am but servant to the drum extraordinary — I am a soldier on a special mission — and indeed — this smoky varnish of makeup being washed off and three or four patches removed — I appear Your Worship’s in reversion, after the decease of your good father — Brainworm!”

He would be Edward Knowell’s servant after the death of Edward’s father; “reversion” referred to a legal right of succession.

He gave Edward Knowell a glimpse of his identity.

“Brainworm!” Edward Knowell said. “By God’s light, what breath of a conjurer has blown thee here in this disguise?”

“The breath of your letter, sir, this morning — the same that blew you to the Windmill and that blew your father after you,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“My father?” Edward Knowell asked, surprised.

“Don’t be startled,” the disguised Brainworm said. “It is true. He has followed you over the fields, by the footprints, as you would follow a hare in the snow.”

Edward Knowell motioned for Wellbred to join them, and then he said, “Sirrah Wellbred, what shall we do, sirrah? My father has come over after me.”

“Thy father?” Wellbred said. “Where is he?”

The disguised Brainworm answered, “At Justice Clement’s house over here, in Coleman Street, where he just waits for my return, and then —”

“Who’s this?” Wellbred asked. “Brainworm?”

“The same, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“Why, how in the name of wit did thou come to be transmuted like this?” Wellbred asked.

“In faith, it’s a stratagem, a stratagem,” the disguised Brainworm said. “For the love of reason, gentlemen, and for avoiding the danger, don’t stand here! Withdraw somewhere private, and I’ll tell you everything.”

“But are thou sure he will wait for thy return?” Edward Knowell asked.

“Do I live, sir?” the disguised Brainworm asked. “What kind of question is that?”

“We’ll prolong his waiting, then, a little,” Wellbred said. “Brainworm, thou shall go with us.”

Wellbred called to the others, “Come on, gentlemen.”

He then said to Edward Knowell, “Nay, I ask thee, sweet Ned, don’t droop; by God’s heart, if our wits are so wretchedly dull that one old, plodding brain can outstrip us all, I would wish that we were impressed — conscripted — into service to make porters of, and serve out the remnant of our days in Thames Street or at Custom House quay, in a civil war against the carmen.”

Porters transported goods by foot, and carmen transported goods by cart, and so they were engaged in a civil war for business carrying goods from the river.

The disguised Brainworm said, “Amen, amen, amen, I say!”

They exited.

— 3.3 —

Kitely and Cash talked together at Kitely’s business in Old Jewry about one of Kitely’s business associates.

“What does he say, Thomas?” Kitely asked. “Did you speak with him?”

“He will expect you, sir, within this half hour,” Thomas Cash answered.

“Has he the money ready, can you tell?” Kitely asked.

“Yes, sir,” Cash said. “The money was brought in last night.”

“Oh, that’s well,” Kitely said. “Fetch me my cloak, my cloak.”

Cash exited.

Alone, Kitely said to himself:

“Wait, let me see. An hour to go and come, aye, that will be the least amount of time, and then it will be an hour before I can settle my affairs with him, or very near to it. Well, I will say two hours.

“Two hours? Ha! Things never dreamt of yet may be contrived, aye, and effected, too, in my two hours’ absence.

“Well, I will not go. Two hours. No, sneering Opportunity, I will not give your subtle trickery that scope. Who will not judge him worthy to be robbed who sets his doors wide open to a thief and shows the felon where his treasure lies?

“Again, what earthly spirit but will attempt to taste the fruit of beauty’s golden tree when leaden sleep seels and seals up the dragon’s eyes?”

A dragon guarded the golden apples in the garden of the immortal nymphs known as the Hesperides. Hercules took some of the golden apples.

The word “seel” comes from falconry. A young hawk’s eyes were stitched shut during its training.

Kitely was jealous of his wife, and he did not want to leave her for two hours lest he be cuckolded.

Kitely continued:

“I will not go. Business, go by for once.

“No, Beauty, no. You are of too good caract — carat and character — to be left so, without a guard, or open. Your luster, too, will inflame at any distance, and it will draw courtship to you as a jet does straws, it will put the power of motion in a stone, and it will strike fire from ice. Nay, it will make a porter leap you with his burden!”

Jet is a semi-precious variety of lignite (a kind of coal) that is black and hard, takes a polish, and is used in jewelry. When rubbed, it generates an electrical charge that will draw a straw to it.

Leaping consisted of acrobatic leaps, but it also referred to the sexual act. This particular burden, in Kitely’s jealous mind, could be a load of semen. The word “burden” also refers to pregnancy.

Kitely continued:

“You, Beauty, must then be kept shut tight, secret, and well-watched, for, if given the opportunity, no quicksand devours or swallows swifter. He who lends his wife, if she is beautiful, either time or place, compels her to be false.

“I will not go. The dangers are too many.

“And then fashionable dressing is a most main — important and potent — attraction! Our great heads within the city never were in safety ever since our wives began to wear these little round velvet caps.”

Ever since the wives started wearing fashionable caps, the husbands’ heads were in danger of growing horns because the wives of the men might cuckold them. So said Kitely.

Kitely continued:

“I’ll change them. I’ll change them right away in my household. My wife shall no more wear three-piled acorns, to make my horns ache.”

“Three-piled” meant thick velvet of the best quality. The three-piled caps resembled the cap of an acorn.

Young bucks grew antler-like “velvet” skin covering their horns while growing their antlers.

Kitely was worried that the a-corn caps might give him ache-horns.

Kitely continued:

“Nor will I go. I am resolved for that. I have firmly decided that.”

Cash returned, carrying Kitely’s cloak.

Kitely said to Cash, “Carry in my cloak again. Yet stay! Yet do carry it in again, too! I will defer going on any and all occasions, whatever I do.”

“Sir, Snare, your scrivener, will be there with the bonds,” Cash said.

A scrivener draws up documents, including legal documents.

“That’s true,” Kitely said. “Fool on me! I had entirely forgotten it; I must go. What time is it?”

“Time for the Exchange to open, sir,” Cash said.

The Exchange opened at 10 a.m.

Kitely said to himself:

“By God’s heart, then Wellbred will soon be here, too, with one or other of his loose consorts. I am a knave if I know what to say, what course of action to take, or which way to make a decision.

“My brain, I think, is like an hourglass, wherein my imaginations run like sands, filling up time, but then are turned and turned, so that I don’t know what to stop at and who to have trust in, and know even less what choices to put in action.

“It shall be so. I dare to have faith in his secrecy; he doesn’t know how to deceive me.”

He called, “Thomas!”

“Sir,” Thomas Cash said.

Kitely said to himself:

“Yet, now I have thought about it, too, I will not have faith in Thomas’ secrecy.”

He then asked Thomas Cash, “Thomas, is Cob within?”

“I think he is, sir,” Cash said.

Kitely said to himself:

“But Cob will prate and blab, too; there’s no talking to him if I want privacy.

“No, there is no man on the earth compared to Thomas, if I dare to trust him: There is all the fear.

“But if Thomas were to have a chink, aka crack, and be leaky and blab my secrets, I would be a goner, having lost my reputation forever and being a subject of gossip for the Exchange.

“The manner Thomas consistently maintained until this present time promises no such change. What should I fear, then?

“Well, come what will, I’ll tempt my fortune for once.”

He said to Thomas Cash, “Thomas — you may deceive me, but I hope that your love to me is more —”

Cash interrupted, “— sir, if a servant’s duty with faith may be called love, you are more than in hope of having it; you are already possessed of it.”

Kitely said:

“I thank you heartily, Thomas. Give me your hand. I thank you with all my heart, good Thomas.

“I have, Thomas, a secret to impart to you — but when once you have it, I must seal up your lips.

“So far I tell you, Thomas.”

“Sir, as for that —” Thomas Cash began.

Kitely interrupted, “— nay, hear me out. Think that I esteem you, Thomas, when I will let you in thus to my private life. It is a thing that sits nearer to my crest than thou are aware of, Thomas. If thou should reveal it, but —”

A crest appears in a coat of arms, and Kitely meant the word to refer to his family. A crest also appears at the top of a head (for example, a rooster’s crest), and Kitely was worried about a cuckold’s horns appearing on his head.

Thomas Cash interrupted, “— what! I reveal it?”

“Nay,” Kitely said. “I do not think thou would, but if thou should, it would be a great weakness.”

“It would be a great treachery!” Thomas Cash said. “Give it no other name.”

“Thou will not reveal it, then?” Kitely asked.

“Sir, if I do, let mankind disclaim — disown — me forever,” Thomas Cash said.

Cash had said most of the right words, but he had not said, “I swear.”

Kitely said to himself:

“He will not swear. He has some reservation, some concealed purpose and close meaning, surely. Else, being urged so much, how should he choose but lend an oath to all this protestation?

“He’s no precisian — no Puritan — I am certain of that, nor is he rigid Roman Catholic. He’ll play at fayles and tick-tack; I have heard him swear.”

“Fayles and tick-tack” are forms of backgammon.

Puritans and Catholics did not play games of chance, and they did not swear.

Kitely said to himself:

“What should I think of it? Urge him again, and by some other way? I will do so.”

Kitely said to Thomas Cash, “Well, Thomas, thou have sworn not to disclose my secret. Yes, you did swear?”

“Not yet, sir, but I will, if it pleases you,” Thomas Cash said.

“No, Thomas, I dare to take thy word without an oath,” Kitely said. “But if thou will swear, do as thou think good. I am resolved to take your word without your swearing an oath; you may swear at thy pleasure.”

“By my soul’s safety, then, sir, I solemnly declare and swear that my tongue shall never take knowledge of a word delivered to me in nature of your trust,” Thomas Cash said.

Kitely said:

“It’s too much; these ceremonies are not necessary. I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.

“Thomas, come hither, nearer; we cannot be too private in this business. So it is —”

Kitely said to himself, “Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture —”

He said out loud to Cash, “I have recently by diverse observations —”

Kitely said to himself, “But I don’t know whether his oath can bind him, yea or nay, being not taken lawfully, before a magistrate. Ha!”

He then asked you, the reader of this book, “What do you say?”

Kitely said to himself, “I will ask counsel and advice before I proceed.”

He said out loud to Thomas Cash, “Thomas, it will be now too long to stay. I’ll spy some fitter time soon, or tomorrow.”

“Sir, at your pleasure,” Thomas Cash said.

“I will think,” Kitely said, “and, Thomas, I ask you, search the books in preparation for my return, for the receipts between me and Traps.”

“I will, sir,” Cash said.

“And listen: If your mistress’ brother Wellbred happens to bring here any gentlemen before I come back, let someone immediately bring me word,” Kitely said.

“Very well, sir,” Cash replied.

“Bring me word to the Exchange, do you hear?” Kitely said. “Or here in Coleman Street, to Justice Clement’s. Don’t forget it, and don’t be out of the way. Don’t leave them alone.”

“I will not, sir,” Cash said.

“I ask you to attend carefully to it,” Kitely said. “Whether he should come or not, if any other, stranger or otherwise, don’t fail to send me word.”

“I shall not, sir,” Cash said.

“Make it your special business, now, to remember it,” Kitely said.

“Sir, I promise you I will,” Cash said.

“But Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas, I told you of,” Kitely said.

“No, sir, I do believe it,” Cash said.

The words “I do believe it” are ambiguous and can mean: “I do believe it is the secret, or 2) I do believe it is not the secret.

“Believe me, it is not,” Kitely said.

“Sir, I do believe you,” Cash said.

What did he believe: Kitely’s words, or his actions and mannerisms, which showed that he was agitated and hinted that this was the secret he had told Thomas Cash about?

Kitely said:

“By heaven, it is not; that’s enough.

“But Thomas, I don’t want you to utter it, do you see, to any creature living; yet I don’t care if you do.

“Well, I must go away from here.

“Thomas, understand thus much: It was a trial of you when I intimated so deep a secret to you. I don’t mean this, but that which I have yet to tell you; this is nothing, this.

“But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you, locked up in silence, midnight, buried here.”

He tapped his chest.

He said to himself, “There is no greater hell than to be a slave to fear.”

He exited.

Cash said:

“‘Locked up in silence, midnight, buried here’?

“Whence should this flood of passion, I wonder, spring from? Huh?

“Best dream no longer of this running humor, for fear I sink! The violence of the stream already has transported me so far that I can feel no ground at all. But be silent —”

He had heard something and was now listening intently.

He then said, “Oh, it is our water-bearer. Something has vexed him now.”

— 3.4 —

Cob entered the scene. He did not notice Cash at first.

Thinking himself to be alone, he said, “Fasting days? What tell you me of fasting days? By God’s eyelid, I wish they were all on a light fire — all ablaze — as far as I’m concerned! They say the whole world shall be consumed with fire one day, but I wish I had these Ember weeks and villainous Fridays burnt in the meantime, and then —”

One week, called an Ember Week, occurred each season. During Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of each Ember Week, as well as on all Fridays and Saturdays, eves of holy days, and during Lent, no meat could be sold or consumed. One reason for this was to increase jobs for fishermen and fishmongers.

The current day was the Eve of Saint Mark’s Day, and so it was the eve of a holy day.

“Fasting days” did not mean abstinence from all food, but meat was forbidden.

Cash said, “Why, how are you now, Cob? What moves thee to this choler, huh?”

The word “choler” means anger.

“Collar, Master Thomas?” Cob said. “I scorn your collar. I, sir, I am none of your cart-horse. I am not a cart-horse, although I carry and draw water.”

The word “draw” means 1) get from the tap, or 2) pull.

Cob continued, “If you offer to ride me with your collar, or halter either, I may perhaps show you a jade’s trick, sir.”

The word “ride” can mean “irritate.”

Jades are bad horses, and jades sometimes have tricks that can irritate their owners.

Cash replied, “Oh, you’ll slip your head out of the collar?”

He was making a joke about the collar being a hangman’s noose.

Cash continued, “Why, goodman Cob, you mistake me.”

“Nay, I have my rheum,” Cob said, “and I can be angry as well as another, sir.”

“Thy rheum, Cob? Thy humor? Thy humor? Thou are mistaken,” Cash said.

The word “rheum” was an old-fashioned word for “humor.” It also meant “mucous discharge” or “watery discharge.”

Cob replied, “‘Humor’? Mack, I think it be so, indeed. What is that ‘humor’? Some rare thing, I warrant.”

“Mack” meant “by the Mass.”

“By the Virgin Mary, I’ll tell thee, Cob,” Cash said. “It is a gentleman-like monster bred in the special gallantry of our time by affectation, and it is fed by folly.”

“What!” Cob said. “Must it be fed?”

“Oh, aye, humor is nothing if it is not fed,” Cash said. “Didn’t thou ever hear that? It’s a common phrase, ‘Feed my humor.’”

“Feed my humor” meant “indulge my disposition” or “indulge my mood” or “indulge my whim.”

“I’ll have nothing to do with it,” Cob said. “Humor, avaunt! Be off! I don’t know you; be gone. Let who will, make hungry meals for your monstership; it shall not be I.”

In other words, let someone else go hungry in order to feed your humor.

Cob continued, “Feed you, quoth — said — he? By God’s eyelid, I have much ado to feed myself, especially on these lean rascally days, too.”

“Lean rascals” are lean inferior deer, and so they are not plentiful eating.

Cob continued, “If it had been any other day but a fasting day — a plague on them all, for me! I swear by this light, one might have done the commonwealth good service and have drowned them all in the flood two or three hundred thousand years ago. Oh, I do stomach — resent — them hugely! I have a maw, now, if it were for Sir Bevis his horse, against them.”

He could eat Sir Bevis’ horse to prepare himself for fasting days.

“I ask thee, good Cob, what makes thee so out of love with fasting days?” Cash said.

Cob replied, “By the Virgin Mary, that which will make any man out of love with them, I think: their bad conditions, if you need to know that. First, fasting days are of a Flemish breed, I am sure of that, for they raven up and devour more butter than all the days of the week beside. Next, fasting days stink of fish and leek porridge miserably. Thirdly, fasting days will keep a man devoutly hungry all day, and at night send him supperless to bed.”

According to Cash, the Flemish are Phlegm-ish. If phlegm is predominant in a person’s makeup, then the person is phlegmatic (calm, apathetic, indolent). Eating fish supposedly made a person phlegmatic.

The Flemish also had a reputation for liking butter.

Many fast days made a man devoutly — fervently and piously — hungry. Many fast days, such as those of Lent and the eves of holy days, had a religious origin.

Cash said, “Indeed, these are faults, Cob.”

“Nay, if this were all, it would be something,” Cob said. “But they are the only known enemies to my generation, aka breed. A fasting day no sooner comes but my lineage goes to rack.”

Remember that Cob traces his ancestry from Herring.

“Rack” can mean 1) ruin, 2) broiling rack or grill, and 3) torture rack.

“Poor cobs, they smoke for it,” Cob said.

True. Cobs are heads, and the heads of herring are often smoked.

The words “smoke for it” also meant “suffer for it.”

Cob continued, “They are made martyrs of the gridiron.”

Saint Lawrence was a Roman martyr who was cooked alive on a griddle. The legend is that he told his tormenters, “This side is cooked. Turn me over and eat.”

Cob continued, “They melt in passion, and your maidens also know this, and yet would have me turn Hannibal and eat my own fish and blood!”

Hannibal was a Carthaginian who crossed the Alps with war elephants and rampaged up and down Italy for years, terrifying the Romans, enemies of Carthage.

Cob was mixing up the words “cannibal” and “Hannibal.”

He pulled out a red herring and addressed it: “My princely coz, fear nothing. I have not the heart to devour you, even if I might be made as rich as King Cophetua.”

King Cophetua married a beggar maiden. He was rich, and he did not marry for money.

Cob continued, “Oh, that I had room for my tears!”

“Room” is a pun on “rheum,” aka a watery discharge.

Cob continued, “I could weep salt water enough now to preserve the lives of ten thousand of my kin; but I may curse none but these filthy almanacs, for, if it weren’t for them, these days of persecution would never be known.”

Almanacs listed fasting days.

Cob continued, “I’ll be hanged if some fishmonger’s son does not make much of them, and puts in more fasting days than he should do because he would utter — put up for sale — his father’s dried stockfish and stinking conger eels.”

A politician named William Cecil, the son of a fishmonger, was responsible for making some Wednesdays fish-days. Such days were called Cecil’s Fasts. They were unpopular.

Cash said, “By God’s light, peace! Thou shall be beaten like a stockfish else.”

Dried cod, aka stockfish, was beaten before being boiled.

Seeing an approaching group, Cash said, “Here is Master Matthew. Now I must look out for a messenger to my master.”

He was going to send a message to Kitely that men had arrived at his house.

Master Matthew was the son of a fishmonger.

Cob and Cash exited.

— 3.5 —

Wellbred, Edward Knowell, Brainworm, Captain Bobadill, Master Matthew, and Master Stephen were outside Kitely’s house. Wellbred, Edward Knowell, and Brainworm talked privately among themselves. The rest had pipes and tobacco but were not yet smoking.

Wellbred said, “Beshrew me — curse me — but it was an absolute good jest, and exceedingly well carried.”

“Aye, and our ignorance maintained it as well, didn’t it?” Edward Knowell said.

“Yes, indeed,” Wellbred said, “but was it possible thou didn’t know him? I forgive Master Stephen, for he is stupidity itself.”

Edward Knowell replied, “Before God, I swear that I did not recognize Brainworm, even if I might have joined the seven wise masters and become the eighth for recognizing him.”

The Seven Wise Masters of Rome were seven philosophers who were tutors to the son of Emperor Diocletian.

Edward Knowell continued:

“He had so contorted himself into the attire and guise of one of your poor infantry, your decayed, ruinous, worm-eaten gentlemen of the round — a military patrol going on its rounds — such as have vowed to sit on the outskirts of the city (let your provost and his half-dozen of halberdiers do what they can) and have translated begging out of the old hackney — plodding — pace to a fine, easy amble, and made it run as smooth off the tongue as a shove-groat shilling.”

Impoverished soldiers (and conmen) were living in the outskirts of the city, and they were accomplished beggars.

A provost was in charge of maintaining public order.

Halberdiers were civic guards who carried halberds — weapons that were half-spear and half-battleax.

A shove-groat shilling was a smooth coin of little value used in a game of shuffleboard called shove-groat.

Edward Knowell continued:

“He had molded himself so perfectly into the likeness of one of these *reformados*, observing every trick of their action — as varying the accent, swearing with an *emphasis*, indeed all with so special and exquisite a grace — that, had thou seen him, thou would have sworn he might have been sergeant-major, if not lieutenant-colonel, to the regiment.”

The *reformados* were members of a disbanded military company and so they were no longer employed as soldiers. The term originally referred to members of a military company that was disbanded so its soldiers could be reformed into other companies.

Wellbred, who had seen and quickly recognized Brainworm, said, “Why, Brainworm, who would have thought thou had been such an artificer?”

“An artificer? An architect!” Edward Knowell said.

An artificer is a trickster, one who has designs on another person and wants to trick that person.

Artificers can also mean craftsmen and artisans. An architect, however, is a designer — an artist — on a grand scale. When it came to disguises, Brainworm was an artist.

Edward Knowell continued, “Except a man had studied begging all his lifetime and had been a weaver of language — a spinner of tales — from his infancy for the clothing — the disguise — of begging, I never saw his rival.”

“Where did thou get this military coat, I wonder?” Wellbred said.

Brainworm answered, “I got it from a Houndsditch man, sir, one of the devil’s near kinsmen: a broker.”

Houndsditch was a street where many pawnbrokers worked.

Wellbred said, “That cannot be, if the proverb holds true, for ‘A crafty knave needs no broker.’”

Pawnbrokers were known for being dishonest and crafty.

“True, sir,” Brainworm said, “but I did need a broker, *ergo* —”

Ergo is Latin for “therefore.”

The syllogism is this:

P1: *A crafty knave needs no broker.*

P2: *I needed a broker.*

C: *Therefore, I am not a crafty knave.*

“P” means “Premise,” and “C” means “Conclusion.”

“Well parried,” Wellbred said. “Not a crafty knave, you’ll say.”

“Tut, Brainworm has more of these shifts,” Edward Knowell said.

Shifts can mean 1) dodges and tricks, and 2) items of clothing (e.g., shirts).

Punning on “shift” as “item of clothing,” Brainworm said, “And yet, where I have one, the broker has ten, sir.”

“One” means one shift (item of clothing), or it means one shift (trick).

Thomas Cash entered the scene and called, “Francis! Martin!”

He then said to himself, “Not a one to be found now. What a spite is this? Isn’t this maddening?”

He wanted Francis and/or Martin to carry a message to Kitely, who was at Justice Clement’s house.

“How are you now, Thomas?” Wellbred asked. “Is my brother-in-law Kitely inside?”

“No, sir, my master went out just now, but Master Downright is inside,” Thomas Cash said.

He called, “Cob! What, Cob!”

He then asked, “Is he gone, too?”

“Whither went your master, Thomas,” Wellbred asked. “Can thou tell me?”

“I don’t know for sure,” Thomas Cash said. “To Justice Clement’s, I think, sir.”

He called again, “Cob!”

He exited.

“Justice Clement — who’s he?” Edward Knowell asked.

“Why, don’t thou know him?” Wellbred said. “He is a city magistrate, a justice here, an excellent good lawyer and a great scholar, but the only — peerless — mad, merry old fellow in Europe. I showed him to you the other day.”

“Oh, is that he?” Edward Knowell said. “I remember him now. Good faith, and he has a very strange presence, I think. It shows as if he stood out of the rank from other men. I have heard many of his jests in the university. They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.”

A man who believed that he had social precedence over other men also believed that he and his horse should ride in the part of the street that was closest to the wall because it was cleaner and safer.

Edward Knowell had said, “They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.”

His horse? Whose horse? Justice Clement’s horse?

If another man would ride closer to the wall than Justice Clement’s horse, then he, as a justice of the peace, and therefore of high social status, could punish that man.

But maybe it was another man’s horse, and one man was unrightfully trying to take precedence over another man. In that case, Justice Clement could punish the man who was acting unrightfully.

Wellbred said, “Aye, or wearing his cloak on one shoulder, or serving of God — anything, indeed, if it should come in the way of his humor.”

If a man wearing his — Justice Clement’s cloak — on one shoulder without a good reason for having Justice Clement’s cloak, then Justice Clement could punish that man.

A man who served God would be unlikely to be punished, but a hypocrite who claimed to serve God might be punished.

But perhaps Justice Clement’s humor was sometimes to threaten to punish people but not punish them.

Cash went in and out of the scene, calling for potential messengers.

He re-entered the scene and called, “Gasper! Martin! Cob! By God’s heart, where should they be, I wonder?”

“Master Kitely’s serving-man, please, vouchsafe — grant — us the lighting of this match,” Captain Bobadill requested.

He handed a match to Cash.

In this society, a spark from a tinderbox was used to light a match.

“Fire on your match!” Cash said.

No doubt he wanted to say, “Fie on — to hell with — your match!”

He complained, “No time but now to ‘vouchsafe’?”

He was busy.

He called, “Francis! Cob!”

He then exited.

Captain Bobadill said, “I swear by the body of me, here’s the remainder of seven pounds of tobacco I got a week ago yesterday. It is your right, your true Trinidado.”

Seven pounds! If pipe-smokers can be chain smokers, Captain Bobadill must be a chain smoker.

High-quality tobacco came from Trinidad.

He then asked, “Have you ever taken — used — any tobacco, Master Stephen?”

“No, truly, sir, but I’ll learn to take it now, since you commend it so,” Master Stephen replied.

In Ben Jonson’s day, tobacco was controversial. Many people praised it and believed that it cured many diseases. Others disparaged it as causing many diseases. Captain Bobadill praised tobacco, but Cob disparaged it.

Captain Bobadill said:

“Sir, believe me, upon my relation, for what I tell you the world shall not refute. I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself nor a dozen gentlemen more of my knowledge have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world for the space of one-and-twenty weeks except for the fume of this simple — this medicinal herb — only.”

There were stories of Native Americans using tobacco to stop hunger pangs for four or five days.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“Therefore, it cannot be but it is most divine.

“Further, taken in the nature, in the true natural form so, it makes an antidote that, if you had taken the most deadly poisonous plant in all Italy, where the strongest poisons come from, the tobacco would expel it and purge you of it with as much ease as I speak.

“And for your green — fresh — wound, your balsamum and your Saint John’s wort are all mere cheats and trash compared to tobacco, especially your Trinidado. Your Nicotian is good, too.”

The word “Nicotian” comes from Jacques Nicot, who is credited for introducing tobacco into France. It is actually a term for tobacco in general, not a term for a particular kind of tobacco.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“I could say what I know of the virtue of it for the expulsion of rheums and colds, raw humors, crudities, obstructions and constipation, with a thousand of this kind, but I profess myself no quacksalver.”

“Quacksalvers” are medical quacks.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“Only thus much, by Hercules: I do hold it and will affirm it before any prince in Europe to be the most sovereign — efficacious — and precious weed that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.”

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, “This speech would have done decently and fittingly in a tobacco-trader’s mouth!”

Captain Bobadill sounded as if he were making a commercial.

Cash and Cob entered the scene.

Cash said to Cob, “At Justice Clement’s, in the middle of Coleman Street, he — Kitely — is.”

Coleman Street was close to Old Jewry.

Cash had Cob by the ear to make sure he was listening, and Cob said, “Oh, oh!”

Captain Bobadill asked Cash, “Where’s the match I gave thee, Master Kitely’s serving-man?”

Cash said, “I wish that his match, and he, and his pipe, and all were at the city of Sancto Domingo on the island of Hispaniola! I had forgotten about it.”

He exited.

Cob said:

“By God’s me, I wonder what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish and rascally tobacco.”

“By God’s me”? If we are God’s, then perhaps this oath means “By the body of me.” Or maybe Cob meant to say “God’s ’nee,” aka “God’s knee.”

Cob continued:

“It’s good for nothing but to choke a man and fill him full of smoke and embers. There were four died out of one house last week with the taking of it, and two more the bell went for yesternight.”

Bells were usually rung to announce a death, but for these two people, bells were rung in anticipation of their deaths.

Cob continued:

“One of them, they say, will never escape his death; he voided a bushel of soot yesterday, upward and downward — he vomited and defecated a bushel of tobacco ash.

“By the stocks, if there were no wiser men than I, I’d have it present — instant — whipping, man or woman, who should but deal with a tobacco pipe. Why, it will stifle them all in the end, as many as use it; it’s little better than ratsbane or rosaker.”

The stocks were two pieces of wood with half-circles carved out of one edge; when the two pieces of wood were put together, the half-circles would form circles. A person would be restrained by having his or her feet, and/or hands, and/or head put in the circles.

Ratsbane is rat poison, and rosaker is red arsenic, which was also used to kill rats.

Captain Bobadill beat Cob with a cudgel as Cash re-entered the scene while carrying a lighted match.

Everyone said, “Oh, good Captain, stop! Stop!”

“You base cullion, you!” Captain Bobadill said to Cob.

A cullion is literally a testicle.

The others restrained Captain Bobadill.

Cash handed the lighted match to Captain Bobadill and said, “Sir, here’s your match.”

He then said to Cob, “Come, thou must necessarily be talking, too. Thou are well enough served — you got what you deserved.”

Cob said, “Nay, he will not meddle with his match — fight with his equal — I assure you. Well, it shall be a dear beating, if I live.”

He meant that he would get revenge on Captain Bobadill.

Still angry, Captain Bobadill said to Cob, “Do you prate? Do you murmur?”

Edward Knowell said to Captain Bobadill, “Nay, good Captain, will you regard the humor of a fool?”

He then said to Cob, “Go away, knave!”

Wellbred said to Thomas Cash, “Thomas, get him away.”

Cash and Cob exited.

“A whoreson, filthy slave, a dung-worm, an excrement!” Captain Bobadill said about Cob. “I swear by the body of Caesar, that except that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I would have stabbed him to the earth.”

“Let forth so mean a spirit” means “let free from the body so mean a soul.”

“By the Virgin Mary, the law forbids murder, sir,” Wellbred said.

“By Pharaoh’s foot, I swear I would have done it,” Captain Bobadill said.

Master Stephen said to himself, “Oh, he swears admirably! ‘By Pharaoh’s foot,’ ‘by the body of Caesar’ — I shall never do it, to be sure. ‘Upon my honor,’ and ‘by Saint George’ — no, I have not the right grace.”

The right grace is the right tone of voice. Master Stephen knew the right words, but he did not know the right way to say them. Yes, he knew the words, but he did not know the tune.

The men lighted their pipes and smoked.

Master Matthew said, “Master Stephen, will you have any tobacco? By this air, this is the most divine tobacco that I ever drunk!”

“None, I thank you, sir,” Master Stephen said.

Master Stephen then said to himself, “Oh, this gentleman — Master Matthew — does it rarely, too, but nothing like the other.”

Master Matthew swore — “by this air” — but not as well as Captain Bobadill.

Master Stephen faced a post and began to practice swearing: “‘By this air!’ ‘As I am a gentleman!’ ‘By —’”

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew exited.

Brainworm said to Edward Knowell, “Master, glance, glance! Look at Master Stephen!”

He then said, “Master Wellbred!”

Master Stephen said to the post, “As I have something to be saved, I protest —”

He had a soul to be saved.

The phrase “I protest” is used in a solemn declaration.

Wellbred said to himself, “You are a fool; it needs no affidavit.”

Edward Knowell said to Master Stephen, “Cousin, will you have any tobacco?”

Taking some tobacco, Master Stephen said, “Aye, sir! Upon my reputation —”

“How are you now, cousin?” Edward Knowell asked.

Master Stephen said, “I protest, as I am a gentleman, but no soldier, indeed —”

“No, Master Stephen?” Wellbred said. “As I remember, your name is entered in the Artillery Garden?”

The Artillery Garden is the Artillery Yard, where citizens who were members of the Honorable Artillery Company practiced military drills.

“Aye, sir, that’s true,” Master Stephen said.

He then asked Edward Knowell, “Cousin, may I swear ‘as I am a soldier’ by that?”

“Oh, yes, that you may,” Edward Knowell said. “It’s all you have for your money.”

Citizens paid to become members of the Honorable Artillery Company, and they paid quarterly fees. By becoming members, they became citizen-soldiers.

“Then, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I swear that it is divine tobacco!” Master Stephen said.

“But wait,” Wellbred said. “Where’s Master Matthew? Gone?”

“No, sir, they went in here,” Brainworm answered.

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew had gone inside Kitely’s house.

“Oh, let’s follow them,” Wellbred said. “Master Matthew has gone to salute — greet formally — his mistress in verse.”

His mistress — that is, the woman he loved and served — was Bridget, Kitely’s sister.

Wellbred asked Edward Knowell, “We shall have the happiness to hear some of his poetry now. He never comes unsupplied.”

He then said, “Brainworm!”

Master Stephen said, “Brainworm? Where? Is this Brainworm?”

Brainworm was still disguised as a military man, and Master Stephen had not recognized him.

“Aye, cousin,” Edward Knowell said. “Say no words about it, upon your gentility.”

“I won’t, I swear by the body of me, by this air, Saint George, and the foot of Pharaoh!” Master Stephen said.

Wellbred said quietly to Edward Knowell, “Splendid! Your cousin’s discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.”

The oaths added unnecessary words to his conversation.

Edward Knowell said quietly to Wellbred, “His discourse is larded with them. It’s a kind of French dressing, if you love it.”

French cooks would add fat to lean fowl before cooking it to make it juicy.

French people were renowned for oaths and cookery. French swearing could give someone a good dressing-down.

— 3.6 —

Kitely and Cob talked together.

“Ha!” Kitely said. “How many are there, do thou say?”

Cob began, “By the Virgin Mary, sir, your brother, Master Wellbred —”

Kitely interrupted, “Tut, beside him. What strangers are there, man?”

“Strangers?” Cob said. “Let me see: one, two — by the Mass, I don’t well know, there are so many.”

“What!” Kitely said. “So many?”

“Aye,” Cob said, “there’s some five or six of them at the most.”

Kitely said to himself, “A swarm! A swarm! Spite of the devil, how they sting my head with forkèd stings, thus wide and large!”

The stings would cause his head to swell up in two spots and make horns.

He then asked, “But Cob, how long have thou been in coming hither, Cob?”

“A little while, sir,” Cob answered.

“Did thou come running?” Kitely asked.

“No, sir,” Cob answered.

“Nay, then, I am familiar with thy haste,” Kitely said.

He then said to himself:

“Bane to my fortunes! What meant I to marry? Why did I marry? I who before was established in such content, my mind at rest, too, in so soft a peace, being free master of my own free thoughts, and now become a slave?

“What, never sigh; be of good cheer, man, for thou are a cuckold. It is done, it is done. Nay, when such flowing store, plenty itself, falls in my wife’s lap, the *cornucopiae* will be mine, I know.”

When Zeus seduced Danae, he transformed himself into a stream of gold that poured into her lap.

Kitely's *cornucopiae* was a plentitude of horns.

Kitely then said, "But Cob, what manner of reception had the strangers? I am sure my sister and my wife would bid them welcome. Ha!"

"Likely enough, sir," Cob said, "yet I heard not a word of it."

Kitely said to himself, "No, their lips were sealed with kisses, and the voice, drowned in a flood of joy at their arrival, had lost her motion, state, and faculty."

He then asked, "Cob, which of them was it who first kissed my wife? My sister, I should say. My wife! Alas, I don't fear her. Ha? Who was it, do thou say?"

"By my truth, sir," Cob said, "will you have the truth of it?"

"Oh, aye, good Cob, I ask thee heartily for the truth," Kitely said.

"Then, I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than Your Worship's company, if I saw anybody to be kissed, unless they would have kissed the post in the middle of the warehouse," Cob said.

Bridewell was a workhouse for impoverished people.

To "kiss the (door)post" meant to "be shut out after arriving too late."

Cob continued, "For there I left them all at their tobacco — with a pox! A plague on them!"

"What!" Kitely said. "Hadn't they gone in, then, before thou came to me?"

"Oh, no, sir," Cob said.

"Spite of the devil!" Kitely said. "Why do I stay here, then?"

He wanted to get home before he was cuckolded.

"Cob, follow me," Kitely ordered.

Alone, Cob said to himself:

"Nay, soft and fair! I have eggs on the spit."

"Having eggs on the spit" meant "having important business at hand." Roasting eggs on a spit required careful attention.

Cob continued:

"I cannot go yet, sir. Now I am for some five-and-fifty reasons hammering, hammering revenge. Oh, for three or four gallons of vinegar to sharpen my wits! Revenge, vinegar revenge, vinegar-and-mustard revenge!"

Cob was angry at Captain Bobadill, who had beaten him although he was staying at his house. Cob was Captain Bobadill's host, and guests ought not to beat their hosts. It's a violation of hospitality. Cob was also jealous; he was afraid that Captain Bobadill was sleeping with his — Cob's — wife. This is another violation of hospitality.

The kind of revenge Cob wanted was vinegar-and-mustard revenge. The two, when combined, made a sharp salad dressing, and Cob wanted revenge with a sting to it.

Cob continued:

"Nay, if he had not lain in my house, it would never have grieved me. But being my guest — one whom, I'll be sworn, my wife has lent him her smock off her back while his one shirt has been in the wash, pawned her neckerchers for clean bands for him, sold almost all my platters to buy him tobacco — and he to turn into a monster of ingratitude and strike his lawful host!"

"Neckerchers" are neckerchiefs; "bands" are ornamental collars or ruffs.

Cob continued:

"Well, I hope to raise up a host — an army — of fury for it."

Looking up, he said, "Here comes Justice Clement."

— 3.7 —

Justice Clement, Old Knowell, and Roger Formal (Justice Clement's clerk) entered the scene.

"What, has Master Kitely gone?" Justice Clement asked.

He then called, "Roger!"

Roger Formal, his clerk, said, "Aye, sir."

"By the heart of me, what made him leave us so abruptly?" Justice Clement asked.

Seeing Cob, he asked him, "How are you now, sirrah? What are you doing here? What do you want?"

Cob answered, "If it pleases Your Worship, I am a poor neighbor of Your Worship's —"

Justice Clement interrupted, "A poor neighbor of mine? Why, speak, poor neighbor."

"I dwell, sir, at the sign of the water-tankard, nearby the Green Lattice," Cob said. "I have paid scot and lot there any time this eighteen years."

"To the Green Lattice?" Justice Clement asked.

Many alehouses had painted lattices.

"No, sir, to the parish," Cob said. "By the Virgin Mary, I have seldom escaped scot-free at the Lattice."

"Scot and lot" were parish taxes.

"Oh, well," Justice Clement said. "What business has my poor neighbor with me?"

Cob replied, "If Your Worship likes, I have come to crave the peace of Your Worship."

Cob wanted Justice Clement to issue a warrant of peace-keeping to keep Captain Bobadill from inflicting violence upon him.

Justice Clement, however, thought — or pretended to think — that Cob was saying that Cob wanted a warrant of peace-keeping to keep Justice Clement from inflicting violence upon him.

Justice Clement said, "Of me, knave? Peace of me, knave? Did I ever hurt thee? Or threaten thee? Or wrong thee? Huh?"

"No, sir," Cob said, "but I want Your Worship's warrant for one who has wronged me, sir. His arms are at too much liberty. I would like to have them bound to a treaty of peace, if my credit could compass it and bring it about with Your Worship."

"Thou go far enough about for it, I am sure," Justice Clement said.

"To encompass" means "to encircle." Justice Clement was punning: Cob was taking the long route in telling Justice Clement information; he was not getting straight to the point but was instead circling around it.

Old Knowell said to Cob, "Why, do thou go in danger of thy life for him, friend?"

"No, sir," Cob said, "but I go in danger of my death every hour by his means; if I die within a twelvemonth and a day, I may swear by the law of the land that he killed me."

Prosecution for murder could be instituted within a year and a day.

"What! What, knave?" Justice Clement said. "Swear he killed thee?"

Once a person is dead, it is unlikely that he will swear anything.

Justice Clement continued, "And by the law? What pretense, what color — what justification — have thou for that?"

Cob said, "By the Virgin Mary, if it pleases Your Worship, both black and blue — color enough, I assure you. I have it here to show Your Worship."

He showed the bruises from the beating that Captain Bobadill had given him.

"Who is he who gave you these bruises, sirrah?" Justice Clement asked.

"A gentleman and a soldier he says he is, of the city here," Cob said.

"A soldier of the city?" Justice Clement said. "What do you call him?"

"Captain Bobadill," Cob answered.

“Bobadill?” Justice Clement said. “And why did he bob and beat you, sirrah? How did the quarrel between you begin?”

To “bob” means to “hit with a fist.”

He continued, “Speak truly, knave, I advise you.”

“By the Virgin Mary, indeed, if it pleases Your Worship, only because I spoke against their vagrant — low and vile — tobacco as I came by them when they were taking it. That is the cause of the beating — it was for nothing else.”

“Ha? You speak against tobacco?” Justice Clement said.

He then ordered, “Formal, his name.”

Roger Formal asked Cob, “What’s your name, sirrah?”

“Oliver, sir,” Cob answered. “Oliver Cob, sir.”

Justice Clement said, “Tell Oliver Cob he shall go to the jail, Formal.”

Roger Formal said, “Oliver Cob, my master, Justice Clement, says you shall go to the jail.”

“Oh, I beseech Your Worship, for God’s sake, dear Master Justice!” Cob said.

He was asking for mercy.

“Nay, by God’s precious body,” Justice Clement said. “If such drunkards and tankards as you are come to dispute about tobacco once, I have done.”

He ordered, “Away with him! Take him away!”

“Oh, good Master Justice!” Cob said.

He said to Old Knowell, “Sweet old gentleman!”

Old Knowell replied, “Sweet Oliver, I wish that I could do thee any good.”

A popular ballad of the time began, “Oh, sweet Oliver.”

He then said, “Justice Clement, let me entreat you, sir.”

“What?” Justice Clement said. “A threadbare rascal, a beggar, a slave who never drunk out of better than piss-pot metal in his life?”

Piss-pot metal was pewter, the metal that tavern mugs — and chamber pots — were made of.

Justice Clement continued:

“And he to deprave and abuse the virtue of an herb so generally received in the courts of princes, the chambers of nobles, the bowers of sweet ladies, the tents of soldiers?

“Roger, away with him, by God’s precious.”

He then said to Cob, “I say, go to.”

“Go to” was an expression of annoyance. Sometimes, it meant “Go to hell.”

Cob said, “Dear Master Justice, let me be beaten again — I have deserved it — but don’t send me to the prison, I beg you!”

“Alas, poor Oliver!” Old Knowell said.

Justice Clement said, “Roger, make a warrant of peace-keeping for him.”

He was going to give Cob what Cob wanted.

Justice Clement then said about Cob, “He shall not go to prison; I was only frightening the knave.”

Roger Formal said, “Do not stink, sweet Oliver. You shall not go to prison; my master will give you the warrant of peacekeeping you wanted.”

“Do not stink” may mean “Don’t crap your pants.”

Cob, who had been very scared, said, “Oh, may the Lord maintain His Worship, His worthy Worship!”

“Leave, and take care of him,” Justice Clement ordered Roger Formal, his clerk.

Roger Formal and Cob exited.

Justice Clement then said to Old Knowell, “How are you now, Master Knowell! In the dumps? In the dumps? Are you melancholic? Come, this is not fitting.”

“Sir, I wish I could not feel my cares,” Old Knowell said.

He was worried about his son and the company his son was keeping.

“Your cares are nothing,” Justice Clement said. “They are like my cap, soon put on and as soon put off.”

While performing their official duties, justices wore a special cap.

Justice Clement continued:

“Your son is old enough to govern himself; let him run his course. It’s the only way to make him a staid, settled, dignified man, one who will stay at home.

“If he were a spendthrift, a ruffian, a drunkard, or a licentious liver, then you had reason, you had reason to take care and to be worried, but with him being none of these, mirth’s my witness, if I had twice as many cares as you have, I’d drown them all in a cup of sack.”

Sack is a kind of white wine.

Justice Clement continued:

“Come, come, let’s try it.

“I marvel that your parcel — piece — of a soldier has not returned all this while.”

The parcel of soldier was the disguised Brainworm.

They exited to drink a cup of wine.

CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Squire Downright and Dame Kitely talked together. They were brother and sister. Her brother and his half-brother was Wellbred, who often brought visitors to the Kitely house, in which he lived.

"Well, sister, I tell you true, and you'll find it so in the end," Squire Downright said.

He had been complaining about the visitors whom Wellbred often brought to the Kitely house.

"Alas, brother, what would you have me do?" Dame Kitely said. "I cannot help it; you see, my brother brings them in here; they are his friends."

"His friends? His fiends!" Squire Downright said. "By God's blood, they do nothing but haunt him up and down like a sort of unlucky sprites — malignant elves or fairies — and tempt him to all manner of villainy that can be thought of. Well, by this light, a little thing — something trivial — would make me play the devil with some of them. If it weren't more for your husband's sake than anything else, I'd make the house too hot for the best of them. They should say and swear hell were broken loose before they went away from here. But, by God's will, it is nobody's fault but yours. For, if you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboiled — thoroughly boiled — and baked, too, every mother's son, before they should have come in, ever a one of them!"

"God's my life, did you ever hear the like?" Dame Kitely said. "What a strange man is this! Could I keep out all of them, do you think? I should put myself against half-a-dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd madden the most patient body in the world to hear you talk so, without any sense or reason."

Hmm. "Put myself against half-a-dozen men." Ha.

— 4.2 —

Mistress Bridget, Master Matthew (who was holding some papers), and Captain Bobadill entered the scene, followed at a distance by Wellbred, Master Stephen, Edward Knowell, and Brainworm.

Master Matthew was Mistress Bridget's servant: He was her professed admirer, who served her. She was his mistress: the woman he loved. "Mistress" in this sense does not imply that they were sleeping together.

Bridget said to Master Matthew, "Servant, truly, you are too prodigal of your wit's treasure, thus to pour it forth upon so mean a subject as my worth."

"You say well, mistress; and I mean as well," Master Matthew said.

He was agreeing with her!

"Bah, here is stuff — here is nonsense!" Squire Downright said.

Edward Knowell said quietly to Wellbred, "Oh, now stand close — quiet and nearby and unnoticed. Pray heaven she can get him to read his poetry. He should do it of his own natural impudency."

Bridget pointed to the papers Master Matthew was carrying and asked, "Servant, what are these papers, I ask you?"

"By the Virgin Mary, an elegy, an elegy, an odd toy," Master Matthew said.

The word "elegy" meant a short lyrical poem, not necessarily mournful. "An odd toy" is a whimsical trifle.

Squire Downright said, “It is a toy to mock an ape with — that is, a trick to make a fool out of a fool. Oh, I could sew up his mouth now!”

“Sister-in-law, I request of you, let’s hear it,” Dame Kitely said.

“Are you rhyme-given, too?” Squire Downright said.

Master Matthew said to Bridget, “Mistress, I’ll read it, if you please.”

“I pray you do, servant,” Bridget replied.

Squire Downright said sarcastically, “Oh, here’s no foppery! By God’s death, I swear I can endure the stocks better.”

Squire Downright exited.

Edward Knowell said quietly to Wellbred, “What ails thy brother? Can’t he hold his water at the reading of a ballad?”

A then-current story was about a man who so hated the bagpipes that he peed himself whenever he heard them.

Wellbred quietly replied, “Oh, no, a rhyme to him is worse than cheese or a bagpipe.”

Cheese and other curdled foods nauseate some people. Some cheeses are cheesy.

Wellbred quietly continued, “But pay attention. You lose the protestation — you are missing Master Matthew’s comments.”

Master Matthew said, “In faith, I did it in a humor — an inspiration. I don’t know how good it is, but if it would please you, come near, sir. This gentleman” — he pointed to Master Stephen — “has judgment; he knows how to censure a —”

He then said to Master Stephen, “Please, sir, you can judge.”

“Not I, sir — upon my reputation, and by the foot of Pharaoh,” Master Stephen said, practicing his swearing.

Wellbred said quietly to Edward Knowell, “Oh, chide your cousin for swearing.”

Edward Knowell said quietly to Wellbred, “Not I, as long as he does not forswear himself.”

To “forswear himself” means to “swear falsely.” If Master Stephen swears “upon my reputation, and by the foot of Pharaoh” and has neither a reputation nor the foot of Pharaoh, he has not forsworn himself.

Captain Bobadill said, “Master Matthew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress and her fair sister. Bah, while you live, avoid this prolixity.”

“I shall, sir,” Master Matthew replied.

He then addressed his audience, “Well, *incipere dulce* — ‘to begin is sweet.’”

Edward Knowell said quietly to Wellbred, “What? *Insipere dulce*? ‘A sweet thing to be a fool,’ indeed.”

Wellbred said quietly to Edward Knowell, “What! Do you take *incipere* in that sense?”

Edward Knowell whispered, “You do not? You? This was your villainy, to gull him with a *mot*.”

A *mot* is a saying. A *bon mot* is a witty saying.

Edward Knowell was accusing Wellbred of teaching Master Matthew the *mot* “*incipere dulce*” so that Wellbred could pun on it with “*insipere dulce*” and call Master Matthew a fool in a *bon mot*. Edward Knowell, however, had beaten him to the jest and made it first.

Wellbred whispered to Edward Knowell, “Oh, the benchers’ phrase: *pauca verba*, *pauca verba*.”

“*Pauca verba*” is Latin for “few words.” Some proverbs beginning with that phrase included “Few words are best” and “Few words suffice for the wise.” When it came to Master Matthew’s own poetry, the fewer words the better. When it came to drinkers, it was best to talk less and drink more.

Benchers sit on a bench. The bench could be a tavern bench or a judge's bench; in this case, it is the bench a judge of poetry sat on.

Master Matthew read out loud:

"*Rare creature, let me speak without offence.*

"*Would God my rude words had the influence*

"*To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine;*

"*Then shouldst thou be his prisoner, who is thine*."

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, "This is Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*!"

Master Matthew was a plagiarist, but at least right now he was plagiarizing very good poetry. He was merely changing a few words and claiming it as his own poetry.

Marlowe had written this:

"*Fair creature, let me speak without offence,*

"*I would my rude words had the influence,*

"*To lead thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,*

"*Then shouldst thou be his prisoner who is thine*."

(The spelling and punctuation of Marlowe's poem here and later has been partially modernized.)

Wellbred whispered back, "Oh, aye, peace. Be quiet. We shall have more of this."

Master Matthew read out loud:

"*Be not unkind and fair. Misshapen stuff*

"*Is of behaviour boisterous and rough —*"

Marlowe had written this:

"*Be not unkind and fair; misshapen stuff*

"*Are of behaviour boisterous and rough*."

Wellbred said to Master Stephen, "How do you like that, sir?"

Master Stephen answered by shaking his head.

People nod their heads yes, and people shake their heads no. Master Stephen did not like the lines of poetry.

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, "By God's light, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel if there is any brain in it!"

Master Matthew said:

"But observe the catastrophe — the denouement — now:

"*And I in duty will exceed all other*

"*As you in beauty do excel Love's mother*."

Marlowe had written this:

"*And I in duty will excel all other,*

"*As thou in beauty dost exceed Love's mother*."

Love's mother is Venus; Love is Cupid.

Master Matthew then presented the verses to Bridget.

Edward Knowell whispered to Wellbred, "Well, I'll have him given the freedom of the wit-brokers, for he utters nothing but stolen remnants."

Edward Knowell would have Master Matthew enrolled among the dealers in second-hand remnants — in this case, the dealers in second-hand wit since Master Matthew had gotten his wit from Christopher Marlowe.

Wellbred whispered to Edward Knowell, "Oh, forgive him for it."

Edward Knowell whispered back, "A filching rogue, hang him! And from the dead? It's worse than sacrilege."

Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* had been published posthumously in 1598.

Wellbred said to Bridget, "Sister-in-law, what have you here? Verses? Please, let's see them."

Bridget gave the verses to Wellbred, who examined them and said, "Who made these verses? They are excellent good."

"Oh, Master Wellbred, it is your disposition to say so, sir," Master Matthew said. "They were good in the morning; I made them extempore — extemporaneously — this morning."

"What! Extempore!" Wellbred said.

"Aye, I wish that I might be hanged else," Master Matthew said. "Ask Captain Bobadill. He saw me write them at the — a pox on it! — the Star, yonder."

The Star was a tavern. It had taken Master Matthew a moment to remember the name.

Brainworm said quietly to Wellborn and Edward Knowell, "Can he find in his heart to curse the stars so?"

Edward Knowell whispered, "Indeed, his stars are even with him: They have cursed him enough already."

According to astrology, the stars have an influence on our life. At his birth, Master Matthew's stars had cursed him with foolishness.

"Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?" Master Stephen asked Edward Knowell.

"Oh, admirable!" Edward Knowell said. "The best that ever I heard, coz."

Master Stephen said, "By the body of Caesar, they are admirable! The best that ever I heard, I swear as I am a soldier."

If Edward Knowell liked the poetry, then so did Master Stephen. Many people make up their minds about the quality of a work of art after learning the opinion of good critics.

Justice Downright entered the scene.

He said to himself, not caring if anyone heard him, "I am vexed. I can hold never a bone of me still! By God's heart, I think they mean to build and breed — reside permanently — here!"

Wellbred said to Bridget, "Sister, you have a simple servant here, who crowns your beauty with such *encomions* and *encomiums* and devices."

Encomion is the Greek form of *encomium.* Each is a fancy expression of praise.

Devices can be tricks, or they can be poetic devices such as metaphors.

Wellbred continued, "You may see what it is to be the mistress of a wit who can make your perfections so transparent that every bleary eye may look through them and see him drowned over his head and his ears in the deep well of desire."

Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection. Unable to move away from his reflection, he stared at it until he died. In some versions of the myth, he fell into the pool and drowned.

Wellbred then said, "Sister Kitely, I marvel that you haven't gotten you a servant who can rhyme and do tricks, too."

Master Matthew's "trick" was plagiarism.

"Tricks" also has a sexual meaning that the others were well aware of.

Justice Downright said to himself, "Oh, monster! Impudence itself! Tricks?"

"Tricks, brother?" Dame Kitely asked. "What tricks?"

"Nay, speak," Bridget said. "I ask you, what tricks?"

"Aye, never spare anybody here, but say, what tricks?" Dame Kitely said.

Both women were worried about their reputations.

"Passion of my heart!" Bridget said. "'Do tricks'?"

"Tricks" can be sexual acts performed for pay. "Merry tricks" is a pun on *meretrix*, which is Latin for "prostitute."

Wellbred said, “By God’s light, here’s a trick, vied and revied.”

This kind of “trick” was one performed in a card game. The phrase “vied and revied” means “bid and rebid.”

Wellbred continued, “Why, you monkeys, you, what a caterwauling do you keep up! Hasn’t he given you rhymes and verses and tricks?”

Squire Downright said to himself, “Oh, the fiend!”

Wellbred said to Bridget, “Nay, you lamp of virginity — you paragon of virtue — who so take it in snuff — take offense at it, come and cherish this tame poetical fury — inspiration — in your servant; you’ll be begged else shortly for a concealment.”

King Henry VIII had dissolved the monasteries and taken their land, but some land that should have gone to the crown was concealed — the land that was taken from the monasteries and should have gone to the crown was instead held by private owners. Queen Elizabeth I gave commissions to people to find and report concealed land; these people received part or sometimes all of the land. Some greedy people tried to claim that land legally owned by others was actually concealed land. These greedy people begged the land — they claimed they were entitled to part or all of the land as a reward.

Like those greedy people, Master Matthew was claiming a part of Marlowe’s poetry as his own. Master Matthew had “found” the “concealed” *Hero and Leander* — foolishly, he thought that no one would recognize Marlowe’s poem and so discover his plagiarism. Bridget, who was Master Matthew’s mistress, had given him a “commission” for poetry and now she needed to reward him lest he lay a claim to — beg — the entire poem.

Also, unless Bridget cherished Master Matthew’s “tame poetical fury,” she could be accused of concealing his poetic “genius.”

Wellbred continued, “Go on, reward his muse. You cannot give him less than a shilling in conscience because the book he had it out of cost him a teston at least.”

A teston is sixpence; a shilling is twelvepence. Master Matthew would receive sixpence for the cost of Marlowe’s book (expenses) and sixpence for the labor of copying Marlowe’s verses.

Wellbred then said to the others, “How are you now, gallants? Master Matthew? Captain? What! All sons of silence? No spirit?”

Squire Downright said, out loud, to Wellborn, “Come, you might practice your ruffian tricks somewhere else and not here, indeed. This is no tavern, nor drinking school, to vent your exploits in.”

“What is this now!” Wellborn said. “Whose cow has calved?”

Sometimes, people could argue over whose cow had calved when a cow gave birth in a common pasture with no witnesses. Sometimes, cows gave birth at roughly the same time, and if a cow gave birth to twins, people could argue over the ownership of the second twin. Sometimes, a calf was stillborn, and if another cow gave live birth at roughly the same time, people could argue over the ownership of the living calf.

By saying “Whose cow has calved?” Wellbred was acknowledging that Squire Downright was in a mood for a fight.

The proverb can also mean, “What’s the matter?”

“By the Virgin Mary,” Squire Downright said, “That was my cow that calved. Nay, boy, don’t look at me like that about this matter. I’ll tell you about it; aye, sir, you and your companions, mend yourselves when I have finished talking.”

“My companions?” Wellbred said to his half-brother: Squire Downright.

The word “companions” could be used as a derogatory term. Squire Downright was using it in that way to insult Wellbred’s friends and guests.

For Wellbred to allow his guests to be insulted would be a major breach of hospitality.

"Yes, sir, your companions, so I say," Squire Downright said. "I am not afraid of you, nor am I afraid of them, either, your hang-bys — your hangers-on — here. You must have your poets and your potlings and drinking buddies, your *soldados* [Spanish for "soldiers"] and *foolados* [mock-Spanish for "fools"], to follow you up and down the city, and here they insist on coming to domineer and swagger."

He then said to Master Matthew, "Sirrah, you ballad-singer, and Slops, your fellow there, get out!"

Slops were baggy trousers; Captain Bobadill was wearing slops.

Squire Downright continued, "Get yourself home or, by this steel" — he put his hand on his sword — "I'll cut off your ears, and that immediately."

Wellbred said to Master Matthew and Captain Bobadill, as they shied away, "By God's light, stay. Let's see what he dares to do."

He then said to Squire Downright, "Cut off his ears? Cut a whetstone. You are an ass, do you see? Touch any man here and, by this hand, I'll run my rapier to the hilts in you."

Wellbred was no fan of Master Matthew and Captain Bobadill, but Squire Downright was going beyond the bounds of proper behavior.

Livy in his *History of Rome* (Book 1.36) recounted a story of a Roman augur named Attus [sometimes called Accius] Naevius who cut a whetstone with a razor. Such a task would be impossible, and Wellbred was mocking Squire Downright here.

Squire Downright said, "Yea, I would like to see that, boy."

They both drew their swords. So did a few others.

Dame Kitely shouted, "Oh, Jesu! Murder! Thomas! Gaspar!"

"Help, help, Thomas!" Bridget shouted.

Thomas Cash and the other serving-men came running and parted the opposing swordsmen.

"Gentlemen!" Edward Knowell said. "Don't fight, I ask you."

Captain Bobadill said to Squire Downright, "Well, sirrah, you Holofernes. By my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my rapier for this; I will, by this good heaven!"

Holofernes was the general of Nebuchadnezzar; Judith killed him. "Full of holes" is a play on his name.

They attempted to fight again, but they were parted.

Captain Bobadill said, "Nay, let him come, let him come, gentlemen; by the body of Saint George, I'll not kill him."

"Stop, stop, good gentlemen!" Cash said.

Squire Downright said to Captain Bobadill, "You whoreson bragging coistrel! You scoundrel!"

— 4.3 —

Kitely entered the scene and asked, "Why, what is this now? What's the matter? What's the trouble here? Whence springs the quarrel?"

He called for Thomas Cash, "Thomas! Where is he?"

He said, "Put up your weapons and put off this rage!"

He then said to himself, "My wife and my sister — they are the cause of this."

He called again for Thomas Cash, "What! Thomas! Where is this knave?"

Thomas Cash said, "Here I am, sir."

Wellbred said to Edward Knowell and the rest, “Come, let’s go. This is one of my half-brother’s ancient — long-established — humors, this.”

“I am glad nobody was hurt by his ancient humor,” Master Stephen said.

Because he was frightened, he forgot to swear.

Wellbred, Edward Knowell, Brainworm, Master Stephen, Captain Bobadill, Master Matthew, and the servants exited.

Staying behind were Kitely, Squire Downright, Dame Kitely, Bridget, and Thomas Cash.

Kitely said, “Why, what is this now, brother-in-law? Who forced this brawl? Whose rude behavior started it?”

Squire Downright replied, “A sort of lewd rakehells, who care neither for God nor the devil. And they insist on coming here to read ballads, and roguery, and trash. I’ll mar and mangle the group of them before I sleep, perhaps, especially Bob there, he who’s all manner of shapes, and Songs and Sonnets, his fellow.”

Captain Bobadill’s shape changed according to the kind of trousers he was wearing. Currently, he was wearing wide baggy trousers.

Songs and Sonnets was a popular title for books of — you guessed it — songs and sonnets.

Bridget said to Squire Downright, “Brother-in-law, indeed, you are too violent, too sudden in your humor; and you know that my brother-in-law Wellbred’s temper will not bear any reproof, especially in such presence where every slight disgrace he should receive might wound him in opinion and respect.”

“Respect?” Squire Downright said. “Why do you talk about respect among such as have neither spark of manhood nor good manners? By God’s dignity, I am ashamed to hear you. Respect?”

He exited.

Bridget said, “Yes, there was one, a civil gentleman, and he very worthily demeaned — conducted — himself.”

“Oh, that was some love of yours, sister,” Kitely said.

“A love of mine?” Bridget said. “I wish it would be no worse, brother. You’d pay my dowry sooner than you think.”

Her dowry was in the keeping of her brother until she married.

“Indeed, he seemed to be a gentleman of an exceedingly fair disposition, and of very excellent good parts,” Dame Kitely said.

Bridget and Dame Kitely exited.

Alone except for Thomas Cash, Kitely said to himself, “Her love, by heaven! My wife’s minion! Her sweetheart! ‘Fair disposition’? ‘Excellent good parts? By God’s death, these phrases are intolerable. ‘Good parts’? How should she know his parts? His parts! Well, well, well, well, well, well! It is too plain, too clear. “

“Parts” can mean 1) qualities, or 2) sexual parts.

He then said more loudly, “Thomas, come here. What! Have they gone?”

“Aye, sir, they went inside,” Thomas Cash said. “My mistress and your sister —”

This kind of mistress was a lady boss.

“Are any of the gallants inside?” Kitely asked.

“No, sir, they are all gone,” Cash replied.

“Are thou sure of it?” Kitely asked.

“I can assure you that it is so, sir,” Cash said.

“What gentleman was that they praised so, Thomas?” Kitely asked.

“One whom they call Master Knowell, a handsome young gentleman, sir,” Thomas Cash replied.

Kitely said to himself, “Aye, I thought so; my mind gave me as much. I’ll die if they haven’t hidden him in the house somewhere; I’ll go and search.”

He then said more loudly, “Go with me, Thomas. Be true to me, and thou shall find me a master worthy of the name.”

They exited.

— 4.4 —

Cob knocked on the door of his house. His wife, Tib, was inside. He was jealous of his wife. He worried that she was cheating on him with Captain Bobadill.

As he knocked, Cob called, “What, Tib! Tib, I say!”

From inside the house, Tib said, “What is it now? What cuckold is it who knocks so hard?”

Tib opened the door suddenly, and in so doing, hit Cob’s head with the door.

She said, “Oh, husband, is it you? What’s the news?”

“Nay, you have stunned me, indeed!” Cob said. “You have given me a knock on the forehead that will stick by me. Cuckold? By God’s eyelid, cuckold?”

“Bah, you fool!” Tib said. “Did I know it was you who knocked? Come, come, you may call me as bad a name when you like.”

“May I?” Cob said. “Tib, you are a whore.”

“You lie in your throat, husband,” Tib replied.

“What! The lie? And in my throat, too?” Cob said. “Do you long to be stabbed, huh?”

Telling a soldier that he lied in his throat was grounds for a duel to the death.

“Why, you are no soldier, I hope,” Tib said.

“Oh, must you be stabbed by a soldier?” Cob said.

He was referring to a sexual “stabbing.”

Cob continued, “By the Mass, that’s true. When was Bobadill here, your captain? That rogue, that foist, that fencing Burgullian! I’ll tickle — beat — him, indeed.”

A “foist” is a pickpocket, and “Burgullian” is Cob’s word for a Burgundian.

In England in 1598, a Burgundian named John Barrose was hanged for killing a man. Previously, he had challenged all the fencers in England to fence against him.

“Why, what’s the matter, I wonder?” Tib said.

Cob said:

“Oh, he has lambasted me rarely, sumptuously! But I have it here in black and white, for his black and blue, that shall pay him back.”

The “black and white” was the warrant that Cob had asked for, and the “black and blue” were the bruises that Captain Bobadill had given him.

Cob continued:

“Oh, the Justice! The honestest old brave Trojan in London!”

Being called a Trojan was a compliment.

Cob continued:

“I honor the very flea of his dog. A plague on him, though; he put me once in a villainous, filthy fear. By the Virgin Mary, it vanished away like the smoke of tobacco, but I was smoked — given a hot time — soundly first, I thank the devil and his ‘good’ angel, my guest.

“Well, wife, or Tib, whichever you prefer, get you in and lock the door, I order you.”

In this society, “Tib” was a slang name for a strumpet.

Cob continued:

“Let no body into you, wife, nobody in to you. Nobody in to and no body into you. Those are my words. Not Captain Bob himself, nor the fiend in his likeness. You are a woman; you

have flesh and blood enough in you to be tempted; therefore, keep the door shut upon all comers."

The word "comers" had a sexual meaning.

"I warrant you, there shall no body enter here without my consent," Tib said.

"Nor with your consent, sweet Tib," Cob said, "and so I leave you."

"It's more than you know, whether you leave me so," Tib said.

"What?" Cob asked.

"Why, whether I am sweet," Tib said.

Tib was teasing her husband: Was he leaving her in a state of sweetness? Maybe not.

"Sweet" can metaphorically mean "chaste."

"Tut, sweet or sour, thou are a flower," Cob said. "Keep closed thy door; I ask no more."

This particular "door" could be between her legs.

— 4.5 —

Edward Knowell, Wellbred, and Brainworm, who was still disguised as a soldier, talked together on a street. Master Stephen was present, but he was not close enough to hear the others' conversation.

Edward Knowell said, "Well, Brainworm, perform this business successfully and thou will make a purchase of my love forever. You shall gain my love forever."

Wellbred said to the disguised Brainworm, "Indeed, now let thy spirits use their best faculties. But, at any hand, remember the message to my half-brother, for there's no other means to start him."

To start an animal is to drive it out of its lair by startling it.

They were planning to trick Wellbred's half-brother: Squire Downright.

"I warrant you, sir," the disguised Brainworm said. "Fear nothing. I have a nimble soul that has awakened all the forces of my fantasy — imagination — by this time and put them in true motion. What you have instructed me to do, I'll discharge it amply, sir. Don't doubt it."

"Go forth and prosper, Brainworm," Wellbred said.

The disguised Brainworm exited.

Wellbred then said to Edward, "Indeed, Ned, how do thou approve of my abilities in this device?"

"In truth, well, in any case," Edward Knowell said, "but our plot will come to an excellent end if it succeeds."

Wellbred said:

"Succeeds, man? Why, it cannot choose but succeed, as long as the details of our plot don't miscarry.

"But tell me ingenuously and frankly: Do thou feel affection for my sister-in-law Bridget, as thou claim?"

"Friend, am I worth believing?" Edward Knowell asked.

"Come, do not protest," Wellbred said. "In faith, she is a maiden of good qualities and much modesty; and, unless I conceived very worthily of her, thou should not have her."

"Nay, that, I am afraid, will be a question yet, whether I shall have her or not," Edward Knowell said.

"By God's eyelid, I swear thou shall have her; I swear by this light, thou shall," Wellbred said.

"Nay, do not swear," Edward Knowell said.

“By this hand, thou shall have her,” Wellbred said. “I’ll go fetch her right away. Just appoint a place where you two shall meet, and, as I am an honest man, I’ll bring her there.”

In fact, Edward Knowell wanted to marry Bridget.

“Wait, wait,” Edward Knowell said. “Be temperate.”

“Why, by — what shall I swear by?” Wellbred said. “Thou shall have her, as I am —”

“Please, be at peace,” Edward Knowell said. “Be silent. I am satisfied, and I do believe thou will omit no offered occasion — opportunity — to make my desires complete.”

“Thou shall see and know that I will not,” Wellborn said.

They exited.

— 4.6 —

Roger Formal and Old Knowell talked together on a street near Justice Clement’s house. Roger Formal was Justice Clement’s clerk.

“Was your man a soldier, sir?” Roger Formal asked.

The man was an employee, a serving-man: the disguised Brainworm, whom Old Knowell had recently hired.

“Aye, a knave,” Old Knowell said. “I overtook him begging on the way, this morning, as I came over Moorfields.”

He was upset because his new employee had been absent for so long.

Brainstorm, who was still disguised as a soldier, entered the scene.

Seeing the disguised Brainworm, Old Knowell said, “Oh, here he is!”

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “You’ve made fair speed, believe me. Where, in the name of sloth, could you be thus —”

The disguised Brainworm interrupted, “— by the Virgin Mary, peace be my comfort, I was where I thought I should have had little comfort of — little support from — Your Worship’s service.”

In other words, he had been where he thought he would be treated badly because of his being employed by Old Knowell.

“How so?” Old Knowell asked.

“Oh, sir!” the disguised Brainworm said. “Your coming to the city, your reception of me, and your sending me to watch — indeed, all the circumstances, either of your charge or my employment, are as open, evident, and plain to your son as to yourself.”

In other words, Edward Knowell knew his father’s every move.

“How could that be?” Old Knowell asked. “Unless that villain Brainworm has told him about the letter and revealed all that I strictly charged him to conceal? It is so.”

“I am partly of the faith that it is so indeed,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“But how could he know thee to be my serving-man?” Old Knowell asked.

“Nay, sir, I cannot tell, unless it be by the black art,” Brainworm said. “Isn’t your son a scholar, sir?”

Some scholars, including Doctor Faustus, studied the black arts.

“Yes, but I hope his soul is not allied unto such hellish practice,” Old Knowell said. “If it were, I would have just cause to weep my part in him and curse the time of his creation.”

He then asked, “But where did thou find them, Fitzsword?”

Fitzsword was the disguised Brainworm’s alias.

The disguised Brainworm said:

“You should rather ask where they found me, sir, for I’ll be sworn that I was going along in the street, thinking nothing, when all of a sudden a voice calls, ‘Master Knowell’s man!’

Another cries, ‘Soldier!’ And thus half a dozen of them, until they had called me within a house, where I no sooner came but they were seen to be manly men, and out flew all their rapiers at my bosom, with some three- or four-score oaths to accompany them, and all to tell me I was but a dead man if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what. Which, when they could not get that information out of me — as, I affirm, they must have dissected and made a skeleton out of me first, and so I told them — they locked me up into a room in the top of a high house, whence by great miracle, having a light heart, I slid down by the use of a ball of packthread — strong cord for typing up packs — into the street and so escaped.

“But, sir, thus much I can assure you, for I heard it while I was locked up: there were a great many rich merchants and fine citizens’ wives with them at a feast, and your son, Master Edward, withdrew with one of them, and has appointed to meet her soon at the house of a man named Cob. He is a water-bearer who dwells by the old City wall.

“Now there Your Worship shall be sure to take him, for there he preys, and he will not fail to be there.”

“Nor will I fail to break his match, I don’t doubt,” Old Knowell said.

“Match” can mean 1) appointment, or 2) romantic match.

Old Knowell then ordered, “Go thou along with Justice Clement’s man, Roger Formal, and wait there — at Justice Clement’s house — for me. At Cob’s house, say thou?”

“Aye, sir, there you shall have him,” the disguised Brainworm said.

Old Knowell exited.

The disguised Brainworm said to himself, “Yes? Invisible? Much wench or much son!”

He was being sarcastic. Old Knowell would find neither Bridget nor Edward, his son, there.

The disguised Brainworm continued, “By God’s light, when he has stayed there three or four hours, travailing with the expectation of wonders, and at length be delivered of air — oh, the entertainment that I should then take to look on him if I dared!”

“To be delivered of air” means “to give birth to nothing.”

The disguised Brainworm continued, “But now I mean to appear no more before him in this disguise; I have another trick to act yet. Oh, that I would be so happy as to light on a nupson — a fool — now in this Justice’s novice!”

He was hoping that Roger Formal, the young man who was Justice Clement’s clerk, was a fool.

The disguised Brainworm said to Roger Formal, “Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.”

“Not a whit, sir,” Roger Formal said. “I ask you, what do you mean, sir?”

“I was putting up some papers,” the disguised Brainworm said.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one definition of “paper” is this: “A notice fastened on the back of a criminal undergoing punishment, specifying his or her offence.” The notice makes known the offender’s offense.

Brainworm, disguised as a soldier, had not been literally putting up papers, but he had been punishing Master Stephen for his foolishness, and he had been making Master Stephen’s foolishness known by conning him into buying a sword of low quality for the price of a sword of high quality.

Brainworm had also been fooling or would be fooling other people with his disguise, including Old Knowell and Roger Formal himself. His fooling of these people would also become known, just as if people were reading papers pinned to their back.

His fooling of Old Knowell had made Roger Formal stay somewhat long.

“You have been lately in the wars, sir, it seems,” Roger Formal said.

The disguised Brainworm said, “By the Virgin Mary, I have, sir, to my loss and expense of everything, almost.”

“Truly, sir, I would be glad to bestow a pottle of wine on you, if it would please you to accept it,” Roger Formal said.

A pottle is a two-quart tankard.

“Oh, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“I would like to hear the manner of your services and your devices — your stratagems — in the wars,” Roger Formal said. “They say they are very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories or sees at Mile End.”

Militias composed of apprentices practiced maneuvers at Mile End.

“No, I assure you, sir, my services were not like those,” the disguised Brainworm said. “Why, at any time when it would please you, I shall be ready to discourse to you all I know.”

He said to himself, “And somewhat more than I know, too.”

He would make up military adventures.

“No better time than now, sir,” Roger Formal said. “We’ll go to the Windmill. There we shall have a cup of neat — undiluted — grist, we call it. Please, sir, let me request that you go with me to the Windmill.”

“Grist” is malt that has been ground — perhaps by a windmill — for brewing strong beer. Roger Formal and his friends used the word “grist” to refer to strong beer.

“I’ll follow you, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

He then said to himself, “And make grist out of you, if I have good luck.”

“Make grist” in this context means “take advantage of you.”

They exited.

— 4.7 —

Master Matthew, Edward Knowell, Captain Bobadill, and Master Stephen talked together.

Master Matthew said to Edward Knowell about Squire Downright, “Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown — country bumpkin — of him where we were today? I mean Master Wellbred’s half-brother? I think the whole earth cannot show his parallel, I swear by this daylight.”

“We were just now speaking about him,” Edward Knowell said. “Captain Bobadill tells me that Squire Downright has fallen foul of you, too.”

“Oh, aye, sir, he threatened me with the *bastinado*,” Master Matthew said.

The *bastinado* was a cudgel. Squire Downright had threatened to beat Master Matthew with a cudgel.

“Aye, but I think I taught you prevention — defense — this morning for that,” Captain Bobadill said. “You shall kill him, beyond question, if you be so generously — nobly — minded.”

“Indeed, it is a most excellent trick!” Master Matthew said.

He practiced fencing.

“Oh, you do not give spirit enough to your fencing move,” Captain Bobadill said. “You are too tardy, too heavy. Oh, it must be done like lightning. *Hay!*”

Hai is an Italian fencing term meaning “A hit!”

Captain Bobadill demonstrated at a post.

“Splendid, Captain!” Master Matthew said.

“Tut, it is nothing, if it be not done in a — *punto*!” Captain Bobadill said, demonstrating.

Punto is an Italian word meaning 1) a point of time, aka moment, or 2) a thrust with the point of a sword.

“Captain, did you ever test yourself against any of our masters and teachers of defense here?” Edward Knowell asked.

“Oh, good sir!” Master Matthew said. “Yes! I should think so!”

Captain Bobadill said:

“I will tell you, sir.

“Upon my first coming to the city, after my long travail — travel and trouble — for knowledge in that mystery, aka art, of fencing, only there came three or four of them to me at a gentleman’s house, where it was my chance to be resident at that time, to entreat my presence at their schools, and in addition so much importuned me that — I protest to you, as I am a gentleman — I was ashamed of their rude demeanor out of all measure.

“Well, I told them that I would not come to a public school, and they should pardon me, as it was opposite in diameter — diametrically opposed — to my humor; but if instead they would give their attendance at — come to — my lodging, I promised to do them what right or favor I could, as I was a gentleman, and so forth.”

“So, sir, then you tried their skill?” Edward Knowell asked.

Captain Bobadill answered:

“Alas, soon tried! You shall hear, sir.

“Within two or three days afterward, they came; and, by honesty, fair sir, believe me, I graced them exceedingly, showed them some two or three tricks of defense that have purchased for them since a very creditable reputation! They cannot deny this. And yet now they hate me; and why? Because I am excellent, and for no other vile reason on the earth.”

“This is the strangest and most barbarous thing I ever heard!” Edward Knowell said.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“Nay, for a greater instance of their preposterous — perverse and ungrateful — natures, just note this, sir.

“They have assaulted me, some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walked alone in diverse outskirts in the town, such as Turnbull, Whitechapel, and Shoreditch, which were then my quarters.”

Turnbull, Whitechapel, and Shoreditch were areas known for their prostitutes and criminals.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“And they have assaulted me since upon the Royal Exchange, at my lodging, and at my ordinary, aka my usual eating-house, where I have driven them before me the whole length of a street in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe me.

“Yet all this lenity will not overcome their spleen, aka envy; they will be doing with the pismire — will be as busy as ants — raising a hill a man may spurn abroad — kick aside — with his foot at pleasure.

“By myself, I could have slain them all, but I don’t delight in murder. I am loath to bear any other weapon than this *bastinado* — this cudgel — against them, yet I hold it good policy not to go disarmed, for, although I am skillful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.”

Edward Knowell said, “Aye, believe me, you may indeed be so, sir, and in my conceit — opinion — our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.”

Of course, he did not believe this. He was saying these things to Captain Bobadill in the hope that Captain Bobadill would reveal his — Captain Bobadill’s — foolishness.

“Alas, no,” Captain Bobadill said. “What’s a peculiar — individual — man to a nation? Not seen.”

He was unacknowledged: Important people did not know who he was.

“Oh, but your skill, sir!” Edward Knowell said.

Captain Bobadill said, “Indeed, that might be some loss, but who respects or pays attention to it? I will tell you, sir, privately and figuratively sealed: I am a gentleman and live here obscure and to myself. But if I were known to Her Majesty and the lords, observe me, I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general, but to save the one half — nay, three quarters — of her yearly expense in holding war and against whatsoever enemy. And how would I do it, do you think?”

“Nay, I don’t know how, nor can I conceive it,” Edward Knowell said.

Captain Bobadill said:

“Why, I would do it thus, sir.

“I would select nineteen more men throughout the land to join with myself; they should be gentlemen of good spirit, and of a strong and able constitution.

“I would choose them by an instinct, a characteristic that I have.”

Captain Bobadill then used a number of specialized Italian fencing words:

“And I would teach these nineteen men the special rules — as your *punto*, your *reverso*, your *stoccata*, your *imbroccata*, your *passada*, your *montanto* — until they could all play very near or altogether as well as myself.”

He continued:

“This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong. We twenty would come into the field the tenth of March or thereabouts, and we would challenge twenty of the enemy. They could not in their honor refuse us.

“Well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them, too. And thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that’s twenty score; twenty score, that’s two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand. Forty thousand — forty times five, five times forty — two hundred days kills them all up, by computation.”

Hmm — “twenty score, that’s two hundred.” No, twenty score is four hundred.

Using the correct arithmetic, in one hundred days, Captain Bobadill and his nineteen chosen men would kill an army of forty thousand strong. So Captain Bobadill said.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“And this will I venture my poor gentleman-like carcass to perform — provided there be no treason practiced upon us — by fair and discreet manhood; that is, civilly and in a gentlemanly fashion, by the sword.”

He was using “carcass” to refer to his body, and if he really had the chance to challenge twenty enemy soldiers a day, and did so, his body would soon be a carcass indeed.

“Why, are you so sure of your hand, Captain, at all times?” Edward Knowell asked.

Isn’t it possible that in fighting so many men, even one at a time, he might make a mistake and be killed?

“Tut, never miss thrust upon, or mistrust, my reputation with you,” Captain Bobadill said.

“I would not stand in Downright’s shoes, then, if you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London,” Edward Knowell said.

He was still encouraging Captain Bobadill to say things that would reveal that he was a fool. So far, he had been very successful in doing that.

“Why, sir, you mistake me,” Captain Bobadill said. “If he were here now, by this welkin, aka sky, I would not draw my weapon upon him. Let this gentleman — Master Matthew — do as he wishes, but I will *bastinado* him, by the bright sun, wherever I meet him.”

He would not fight Squire Downright with his sword; instead, he would beat him with a cudgel.

Master Matthew said, “Indeed, and I’ll have a fling at him, at my distance.”

A safe distance, no doubt.

Squire Downright appeared some distance away.

“Godso, look where he is!” Edward Knowell said. “Yonder he goes.”

In this society, “Godso” was an exclamation of surprise.

Squire Downright, who was looking for Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew, said to himself, “What peevish luck I have. I cannot find these bragging rascals!”

He exited.

“It’s not he, is it?” Captain Bobadill said.

“Yes, indeed, it is he,” Edward Knowell said.

“I’ll be hanged, then, if that were he,” Master Matthew said.

“Sir, keep your hanging good for some greater matter, for I assure you that was he,” Edward Knowell said.

“Upon my reputation, it was he,” Master Stephen said.

“Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone away like that, not without a fight,” Captain Bobadill said. “But I can hardly be induced to believe it was he, yet.”

“I think so, sir,” Edward Knowell said.

If Captain Bobadill were to be induced to believe that it was Squire Downright, then according to his words, he would go after him and fight him. But Edward Knowell knew that Captain Bobadill was a coward who would not fight Squire Downright, and so he would not be induced to believe that it was Squire Downright.

Squire Downright reentered the scene.

Edward Knowell said, “But look, he has come again!”

Seeing them, Squire Downright took off his cloak and let it drop to the ground, and then he said to Captain Bobadill, “Oh, Pharaoh’s foot, have I found you? Come, draw; to your tools — your dagger and rapier. Draw, gypsy, or I’ll thrash you.”

People in this society fought duels using dagger and rapier — no shields. The dagger was used to help defend against the opponent’s rapier.

As used in this society, the word “gypsies” means 1) shiftless rascals, and 2) Egyptians. Squire Downright was calling Captain Bobadill an Egyptian because he often swore “by Pharaoh’s foot.”

“Gentleman of valor, I do believe what thou are saying,” Captain Bobadill said. “Hear me —”

Not in a listening mood, Downright said, “Draw your weapon, then.”

Traying to talk his way out of a fight, Captain Bobadill said, “Tall — valiant — man, I never thought about it until now: By the body of me, I had a warrant of the peace served on me just now as I came along, by a water-bearer. This gentleman saw it — Master Matthew.”

Cob had been given a warrant of peace upon him.

Squire Downright said, “By God’s death, you will not draw, then?”

He beat Captain Bobadill and disarmed him.

Master Matthew ran away.

“Stop! Stop!” Captain Bobadill said. “Under thy favor, stop beating me!”

“Prate again if you like this, you whoreson foist, you!” Squire Downright said. “You’ll control the point, you? You’ll control my sword with your own? Your consort — Master Matthew — is gone? Had he stayed, he would have shared this beating with you, sir.”

Squire Downright exited, accidentally leaving his cloak behind him.

“Well, gentlemen, bear witness I was bound to keep the peace, by this good day,” Captain Bobadill said.

He wanted to excuse his not fighting, but he did not want his excuse to be cowardice.

“No, indeed, it’s an ill day, Captain,” Edward Knowell said. “Never reckon it to be other than an ill day. But let’s say you were bound to keep the peace; even if that were so, the law allows you to defend yourself. That’ll prove but a poor excuse for not fighting.”

“I cannot explain what happened, sir,” Captain Bobadill said. “I desire a good and fair interpretation of what happened. I have never sustained the like disgrace, by heaven. Surely I was struck by a planet from heaven, for I had no power to touch my weapon.”

In other words, he was saying that he had been paralyzed by malign astrological influences. Others may instead say that he had been paralyzed by fear.

“Aye, likely enough,” Edward Knowell said. “I have heard of many who have been beaten under a planet.”

Catholic priests wore a chasuble, a sleeveless outer vestment that was called a planet. In anti-Catholic England, Catholic priests were sometimes beaten.

Edward Knowell continued, “Go, get yourself to a doctor. By God’s eyelid, if these are your tricks, your *passadas* and your *montantos*, I’ll have none of them.”

Captain Bobadill exited.

“Oh, manners!” Edward Knowell said. “That this age should bring forth such creatures! That Nature should be at leisure to make them!”

In other words, what a pitiable time we live in if such people as Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew exist in it.

He then said to Master Stephen, “Come, coz.”

Picking up Squire Downright’s cloak, Master Stephen said, “By the Mass, I’ll have this cloak.”

“By God’s will, it is Downright’s,” Edward Knowell said.

“Nay, it’s mine now,” Master Stephen said. “Another man might have picked it up as well as I. I’ll wear it, so I will.”

He put it on.

“What if he should see it?” Edward Knowell said. “He’ll demand that it be returned to him, you can assure yourself.”

“Aye, but he shall not have it,” Master Stephen said. “I’ll say I bought it.”

“Take heed you don’t buy it at too dear a cost, coz,” Edward Knowell said.

They exited.

— 4.8 —

Kitely, Wellbred, Dame Kitely, and Bridget talked together.

Kitely said to Wellborn about Squire Downright, “Now trust me, brother-in-law, you were much to blame to incense his anger and disturb the peace of my poor house, where there are sentinels who every minute watch to give alarms of civil war, without the adjection — the addition — of your assistance or taking the occasion to act.”

“No harm done, brother-in-law, I assure you, since there is no harm done,” Wellbred said. “Anger costs a man nothing; and a brave man is never his own man — truly himself — until he becomes angry. To keep his valor in obscurity is to keep himself, as it were, in a cloak-bag, aka suitcase. What’s a musician unless he plays music? What’s a brave man unless he fights? For, indeed, all this my wise half-brother stands upon absolutely, and that made me fall in with him so resolutely.”

Squire Downright wanted to fight, and Wellbred joined in with him in wanting to fight.

“Aye, but what harm might have come of it, brother!” Dame Kitely said.

“Might, sister?” Wellbred said. “So might the good warm clothes your husband wears be poisoned, for anything he knows, or the wholesome wine he drunk just now at the table —”

Wellbred was saying that there wasn’t much chance that serious harm could come from him and Squire Downright quarreling.

Kitely said, “Now, God forbid! Oh, me, now I remember: My wife drunk to me last and changed the cup, and she told me to wear this cursèd suit today. Let’s see if heaven will permit murder to be undiscovered!”

Hercules died from wearing poisoned clothing that his wife gave him. In Hercules’ case, his death was unintended by his wife. According to the myth, a Centaur named Nessus offered to give Deianira, Hercules’ wife, a ride across a fast, deep river. He did take her across the river, but when Hercules was still in the river, Nessus tried to run away with Deianira. Hercules killed Nessus with some arrows that had been dipped in the poisonous blood of the Hydra. Dying, Nessus told Deianira that if Hercules became attracted to another woman, then she should give him Nessus’ shirt, which was charmed and would make Hercules love her again. Hercules did fall in love with another woman, and Deianira did give him Nessus’ shirt. But the shirt was stained with the poisoned blood of the Hydra from Hercules’ arrows and with Nessus’ own Hydra-poisoned blood, and as Nessus knew would happen, the poison burned Hercules and caused him so much pain that he immolated himself. The fire burned away his mortal part, leaving his immortal part, and he became a god.

Kitely then said, “I feel ill. Give me some mithridate.”

Mithridate was a poison antidote. Mithridates was a King of Pontus who made himself immune to poison by taking a small amount of poison at first and then slowly taking larger amounts of poison each succeeding day.

Kitely continued, “Some mithridate and olive oil, good sister, fetch me.”

In this society, people sometimes used olive oil as an emetic to make them vomit.

Kitely continued, “Oh, I am sick at heart!”

He had heart palpitations — or thought he did. He was also sick from jealousy, which gave him a burning sensation.

Kitely continued, “I burn, I burn. If you will save my life, go fetch it for me.”

“Oh, what a strange humor!” Wellbred said. “My very breath has poisoned him.”

Just hearing Wellbred’s words had made Kitely ill.

Bridget said to Kitely, “Good brother, be patient and calm. What do you mean? The strength of these extreme conceits — powerful delusions — will kill you.”

Dame Kitely said, “Curse your heart-blood, brother Wellbred, now, for putting such a foolish idea into his head!”

“Is a fit simile a foolish idea?” Wellbred replied, referring to the argument he had just made. “Will he be poisoned with a simile?”

He then said, “Brother-in-law Kitely, what a strange and idle imagination is this! For shame, be wiser. On my soul, there’s no such matter. You aren’t poisoned.”

“Am I not sick?” Kitely asked. “How am I then not poisoned? Am I not poisoned? How am I then so sick?”

“If you are sick,” Dame Kitely said, “your own thoughts make you sick.”

“His jealousy is the poison he has taken,” Wellbred said.

Brainworm entered the scene. He was no longer disguised as a soldier; instead, he was disguised as Roger Formal, Justice Clement’s clerk.

Brainwork said, “Master Kitely, my master, Justice Clement, salutes you and desires to speak with you with all possible speed.”

“No time but now?” Kitely said. “When, I think, I am sick? Very sick! Well, I will wait upon His Worship.”

He then called, “Thomas! Cob!”

He said to himself, “I must seek them out and set them to be sentinels — watchful guards — until I return.”

He again called, “Thomas! Cob! Thomas!”

He exited to look for Thomas Cash and Cob.

Wellbred and the disguised Brainworm talked together apart from the others.

Wellbred quietly said, “This is perfectly splendid, Brainworm. But how did thou get this apparel of the Justice’s clerk?”

Brainworm quietly replied, “By the Virgin Mary, sir, my proper fine penman — the clerk Roger Formal — would necessarily bestow the grist on me at the Windmill Tavern, to hear some martial discourse, where I so marshalled and manipulated him that I made him drunk, with admiration.”

The disguised Brainworm had made Roger Formal admirably drunk with alcohol and drunk with admiration for Brainworm’s supposed martial exploits.

The disguised Brainworm continued, “And because too much heat — caused by the beer — was the cause of his distemper, I stripped him stark naked, as he lay at full length asleep, and borrowed his suit of clothing to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty suit of armor and an old brown bill — a kind of halberd — to watch over him until my return — which shall be when I have pawned his apparel and spent the better part of the money, perhaps.”

A brown bill is a kind of long-handled weapon.

Wellbred said quietly, “Well, thou are a successful merry knave, Brainworm. His absence will be a good subject for more mirth. I say to thee, return to thy young master — Edward Knowell — and tell him to meet me and my sister-in-sister, Bridget, at the Tower of London immediately.”

Marriages could be performed at the Tower immediately because the premises were extra-parochial. Such a place was called a liberty.

Wellbred added quietly, “For here, tell Edward, the house is so stored up with jealousy that there is no room for love to stand upright in.”

Hmm. “… love to stand upright in.” Those words have a double meaning.

Wellbred continued quietly, “We must get our fortunes committed to some larger prison, say; and I know no better air, nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service, than the Tower.”

One kind of commitment is to another person in a marriage; another kind of commitment is to a prison.

“Liberty of the house” is a certain amount of permitted freedom while in custody.

Wellbred said, “Go now!”

The disguised Brainworm exited.

Kitely and Thomas Cash entered the scene, but they were oblivious to the presence of Dame Kitely and Wellbred, who were far enough away not to hear their conversation.

Kitely said:

“Come here, Thomas.

“Now my secret’s ripe, and thou shall learn it. Listen carefully to what I say to thee with both of thine ears. I must go forth, Thomas.

“Be careful of thy promise.”

Thomas Cash had promised not to reveal Kitely’s secret.

Kitely continued:

“Keep a good watch. Note every gallant, and observe him well, any man who enters in my absence to thy mistress.

“If she would show him rooms, the jest is stale.”

The hostess of an inn — or whorehouse — can show rooms.

“Show him rooms” can have the implication of “lies backwards and lets out her forerooms” (Tilley F594).

A stale is a prostitute. A stale jest is an old trick.

Kitely continued:

“Follow them, Thomas, or else hang on him, and don’t let him go behind you. Closely observe their looks. Note if she attempts even just to see his hat-band or any other amorous toy about him, but praises his leg or foot, or if she says the day is hot, and asks him to feel her hand, how hot it is — oh, that’s a monstrous thing!”

The amorous toy could be a decorative piece of clothing — or a penis.

This society regarded a hot, moist palm as a sign of a lecherous nature.

Kitely continued:

“Closely observe all this for me, good Thomas; closely observe their sighs, and if they even just whisper, then break them off — interrupt them. I’ll back thee up in it.”

They might object to Thomas Cash’s interference, but Kitely would back him up.

Kitely then asked:

“Will thou do this?

“Will thou be true, my Thomas?”

“As true as truth’s self, sir,” Thomas Cash replied.

“Why, I believe thee,” Kitely said.

He then asked, “Where is Cob, now?”

He called, “Cob!”

Kitely exited.

Dame Kitely said, “He’s always calling for Cob. I wonder what he employs Cob to do.”

Wellbred said, “Indeed, sister, to ask how he employs Cob is a necessary question for you who are his — Kitely’s — wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in. But this I’ll assure you, sister: Cob’s wife is an excellent bawd — pander — and often your husband haunts her house — by the Virgin Mary, for what purpose I cannot altogether accuse him. Imagine what you think convenient. But I have known fair hides to have foul hearts before now, sister.”

“You never said truer than that, brother,” Dame Kitely said. “So much I can tell you in return for your information.”

She then ordered Thomas Cash, “Thomas, fetch your cloak and go with me; I’ll go after my husband immediately. I wish to Lady Fortune I could catch him in the act there, indeed! I’d return him his own, I assure him. Yes, I’d pay him back.”

Thomas Cash and Dame Kitely exited.

Wellbred said:

“So, let them go; this may make entertainment soon.

“Now, my fair sister-in-law: I wish that you only knew how happy a thing it were to be fair and beautiful!”

He was not saying that she was not fair and beautiful, only that she was not enjoying the effects of being fair and beautiful.

“That touches not me, brother-in-law,” Bridget said. “That does not concern me.”

Wellbred said:

“That’s true; that’s even the fault of it. For, indeed, beauty stands a woman in no stead unless it procures her touching.”

This kind of touching is sexual in nature.

Wellbred continued:

“But sister-in-law, whether it touches you or not, it touches your beauties, and I am sure they will abide the touch.”

A touchstone was used to determine the genuineness and quality of gold alloys.

Wellbred continued:

“If they do not, a plague on all ceruse, say I!”

Ceruse was a cosmetic that was used for touching up a woman’s beauty.

Wellbred continued:

“And it touches me, too, in part, though not in the —”

He omitted the word “whole,” perhaps because he realized that it might be mistaken as the word “hole.”

Wellbred continued:

“Well, there’s a dear and respected friend of mine, sister-in-law, who stands very strongly and worthily affected toward you, and has vowed to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart in honor of your perfections.”

“Bonfires” can be a pun on “bone-fires,” aka venereal disease.

Wellbred continued:

“I have already made my promise to bring you where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Knowell is the man, sister-in-law. There’s nothing to take exception to against the man. You are ripe for a husband, and a minute’s loss to such an occasion is a great trespass in a wise beauty.

“What do you say, sister-in-law? On my soul, I swear he loves you. Will you give him the meeting?”

Bridget replied, “In faith, I would have very little confidence in my own constancy and chastity, brother-in-law, if I did not dare to meet a man. But this proposition of yours savors of an old knight-adventurer’s servant a little too much, I think.”

“What’s that, sister-in-law?” Wellbred asked.

Bridget replied, “By the Virgin Mary, of the squire.”

A squire of ladies can be a pander. An apple-squire is also a pander.

“It doesn’t matter even if it did,” Wellbred said. “I would be such a one for my friend.”

The friend could be either Edward Knowell, or Bridget, or both. Wellbred was willing to be a “pander” to bring them together.

He was not really a pander, of course; he wanted them to be married.

Wellbred looked up and said, “But see who has returned to hinder us!”

Kitely entered the scene.

“What villainy is this?” he said. “Called out on a false message? This was some plot! I was not sent for by Justice Clement.”

He then said, “Bridget, where’s your sister-in-law — my wife?”

“I think she has gone out, sir,” Bridget said.

“What!” Kitely said. “Has my wife gone out? To where, for God’s sake?”

“She’s gone outside with Thomas,” Bridget said.

“Outside with Thomas?” Kitely said. “Oh, that villain dors — dupes — me! He has revealed all to my wife. Beast that I was, to trust him! To where, I ask you, did she go?”

“I don’t know, sir,” Bridget answered.

“I’ll tell you, brother-in-law, where I suspect she’s gone,” Wellbred said.

“Where, good brother-in-law?” Kitely asked.

“To Cob’s house, I believe,” Wellbred said, “but keep my secret.”

“I will, I will,” Kitely said. “To Cob’s house? Does she haunt Cob’s? She’s gone on purpose now to cuckold me with that lewd rascal, who, to win her favor, has told her all.”

He thought that his wife would have sex with Thomas Cash.

Kitely exited.

Wellbred said to Bridget, “Come, he’s once more gone. Sister-in-law, let’s lose no time; the affair is worth it.”

They exited.

— 4.9 —

Master Matthew and Sir Bobadill talked together in a street.

“I wonder, Captain, what they will say about my going away?” Master Matthew said.

His going away was running away.

“Why, what should they say, but as of a discreet gentleman, quick, wary, respectful of nature’s fair lineaments, and that’s all?” Captain Bobadill answered.

“Respectful of nature’s fair lineaments” refers to running away to keep one’s body from being beaten; in other words, Master Matthew had hauled ass to save his ass.

“Why, so, but what can they say about your beating?” Master Matthew said.

“A rude part, aka rude piece of combat, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery used, laid on strongly, borne most patiently, and that’s all,” Captain Bobadill said.

A rude part is also 1) an unmannerly act, or 2) an unmannerly role, as in a play.

A wooden cudgel is hardly soft wood.

“Aye, but would any man have offered it in Venice, as you say?” Master Matthew said.

Would anyone have offered — attempted — to fight Captain Bobadill in Venice?

Captain Bobadill said:

“Tut, I assure you, no. You shall have there your *nobilis* [gentlemen], your *gentilezza* [nobility], come in bravely upon your reverse, stand you close, stand you firm, stand you fair, save your *retricato* with his left leg, come to the *assalto* [attack] with the right, thrust with brave steel, defy your base wood.”

Captain Bobadill’s Italian was imperfect. By *retricato* he probably meant *rintricato*, which means “entangled.”

The base wood is a wooden cudgel.

Captain Bobadill continued:

“But wherefore do I awaken this remembrance? I was fascinated — bewitched. By Jupiter, fascinated! I was bewitched! But I will be unbewitched, and I will be revenged by law.”

“Do you hear me?” Master Matthew said. “Isn’t it best to get a warrant, and have him arrested and brought before Justice Clement?”

“It would not be amiss,” Captain Bobadill said. “I wish we had a warrant!”

Brainworm, still disguised as Roger Formal, Justice Clement’s clerk, entered the scene.

“Why, here comes his clerk,” Master Matthew said. “Let’s speak to him.”

“Agreed,” Captain Bobadill said. “You do the speaking.”

“Save you, sir,” Master Matthew said to the disguised Brainworm.

“With all my heart, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

Master Matthew meant, “God save you,” but Brainworm was willing to use his wit and intelligence and all his heart to save himself from any bad consequences of his actions.

Master Matthew then said, “Sir, there is a man named Downright who has abused this gentleman and myself, and we intend to make our amends by law. Now, if you would do us the favor to procure a warrant to bring him before your master, Justice Clement, you shall be well considered, I assure you, sir.”

The disguised Brainworm replied, “Sir, you know my service is my living. Such favors as these gotten from my master is his only preferment, and therefore you must consider me as I may make benefit of my job.”

The disguised Brainworm was saying that he made his living from serving Justice Clement, who did him the favor of allowing him to write warrants and make money from them.

“How is that, sir?” Master Matthew asked.

“Indeed, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account,” the disguised Brainworm said. “Yet, be who and what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand, you shall have it; otherwise, not.”

A brace of angels is two gold coins. The disguised Brainworm was selling the warrant at a high price.

Master Matthew and Captain Bobadill talked privately.

“What shall we do, Captain?” Master Matthew said. “He asks for a brace of angels. You have no money?”

“Not a cross, by Lady Fortune,” Captain Bobadill said.

A cross was imprinted on pennies and half-pennies.

“Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but two pence, left of my two shillings in the morning for wine and radish,” Master Matthew said. “Let’s find him something he can pawn.”

“Pawn?” Captain Bobadill said. “We have nothing to the value of his demand.”

“Oh, yes, I’ll pawn this jewel in my ear, and you may pawn your silk stockings, and pull up your boots,” Master Matthew said. “Your silk stockings will never be missed. It must be done now.”

Master Matthew was wearing one jeweled earring, as was fashionable at the time.

“Well, if there be no remedy, I’ll step aside and pull them off,” Captain Bobadill said.

He took off his stockings as Master Matthew removed his earring.

Master Matthew said to the disguised Brainworm, “Do you hear me, sir? We have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good things to pawn — look, sir, you shall have this jewel and that gentleman’s silk stockings — because we would have this business dispatched before we go to our chambers.”

“I am content, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said. “I will get you the warrant right away. What’s his name, do you say? Downright?”

“Aye, aye, George Downright,” Master Matthew said.

“What manner of man is he?” the disguised Brainworm asked.

“He is a tall, big man, sir,” Master Matthew said. “He goes in a cloak most commonly of silk russet laid about with russet lace.”

“That is very good, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“Here, sir, here’s my jewel,” Master Matthew said.

“And here are my silk stockings,” Captain Bobadill said.

They gave the disguised Brainworm these items to pawn.

“Well, gentlemen, I’ll procure for you this warrant right away,” the disguised Brainworm said. “But who will you have to serve it?”

“That’s true, Captain,” Master Matthew said. “That must be considered.”

“By the body of me, I don’t know who will serve the warrant,” Captain Bobadill said. “It is a dangerous service!”

“Why, you would best get one of the varlets of the city, a sergeant,” the disguised Brainworm said. “I’ll appoint one for you, if you please.”

Varlets were city sergeants who served warrants and made arrests. They were arresting sergeants.

“Will you, sir?” Master Matthew said. “Why, we can wish nothing better.”

“We’ll leave it to you, sir,” Captain Bobadill said.

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew exited.

“This is splendid!” the disguised Brainworm said. “Now I will go pawn this cloak of Justice Clement’s clerk at the broker’s for a varlet’s suit, and be the varlet myself, and get either more pawns or more money from Downright for the arrest.”

Another meaning of the word “varlet” is “scoundrel.”

— 4.10 —

Old Knowell stood in front of Cob’s house and said, “Oh, here it is. I am glad I have found it now.”

He knocked and said, “Ho! Who is within here?”

Tib opened the door a crack and said, “I am within, sir. What’s your pleasure? What do you want?”

“To know who is inside besides yourself,” Old Knowell replied.

He was looking for his son Edward and whatever woman his son was supposed to be with.

“Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope,” Tib said.

“Oh, do you fear the constable?” Old Knowell said. “Then I don’t doubt that you have some guests inside who deserve that fear. I’ll fetch the constable straightaway.”

“On God’s name, sir!” Tib said.

“Bah,” Old Knowell said. “Come, tell me, isn’t young Knowell here?”

“Young Knowell?” Tib said. “I know no such person, sir, I swear on my honesty.”

“Your honesty?” Old Knowell said. “Dame, it flies too lightly from you. There is nothing for me to do but fetch the constable.”

“The constable?” Tib said. “The man is mad, I think.”

She slammed the door shut, and Old Knowell started to leave.

Thomas Cash and Dame Kitely entered the scene. Old Knowell saw them and stood to the side to observe them. They did not notice him.

Dame Kitely was here because she thought that her husband was having an affair here.

Thomas Cash said loudly, “Ho! Who keeps house here?”

Old Knowell said to himself, “Oh, this is the female copesmate of my son. Now I shall meet my son immediately.”

A copesmate is a companion, but “to cope” means “to encounter,” and the encounter could be sexual in nature.

“Knock, Thomas, hard,” Dame Kitely ordered.

Knocking, Thomas Cash said loudly, “Ho, good wife!”

From inside her house, Tib said, “Why, what’s the matter with you?”

“Why, woman, does it grieve you to open your door?” Dame Kitely said. “Perhaps you get something to keep it shut.”

In other words: Perhaps you get paid to keep the door shut while people inside are having immoral sex.

Tib opened the door and said, “What do you mean by these questions, I ask you?”

“So strange you make it?” Dame Kitely said. “You pretend not to understand me? Isn’t my husband here?”

“Her husband?” Old Knowell said to himself.

“My tried husband, Master Kitely,” Dame Kitely continued.

She did not add “and true” to the word “tried.” “Tried” can mean 1) excellent, and 2) tested.

“I hope he need not to be tried here,” Tib said.

“To be tried” in this context meant 1) to be put on trial, 2) to have something (e.g., semen) extracted, and/or 3) to be sexually solicited.

“No, dame, he does it not for need, but for pleasure,” Dame Kitely said.

“Neither for need nor for pleasure is he here,” Tib said.

Old Knowell said to himself, “This is only a trick to balk me with.”

Seeing a figure approaching, he said to himself, “Wait, who is this? Isn’t it my son, disguised?”

Kitely, wearing his cloak, entered the scene. His wife, Dame Kitely, saw him coming, and she ran to him.

“Oh, sir, have I forestalled your honest market — your honest business?” Dame Kitely said. “Have I found your close — secret — walks? You stand amazed now, do you? Indeed, I am glad I have smoked you out yet at last. Who is your jewel, may I ask? In, come, let’s see her.”

She said to Tib, “Fetch forth your huswife — hussy — dame!”

She then said to her husband, Kitely, “If she is more beautiful, in any honest judgment, than myself, I’ll be content with it. But she is a change, she feeds you fat, she soothes your appetite — and you are well? Your wife, an honest woman, is figuratively meat twice sod — twice boiled, and rendered stale by familiarity — to you, sir? Oh, you treacher — you deceiver!”

Old Knowell said to himself, “She cannot counterfeit thus palpably. She cannot be faking her emotions and actions. This is real.”

Kitely replied to his wife, “Out on thy more than strumpet’s impudence! Do thou steal away thus to thy haunts? And have I taken thy bawd” — he pointed to Thomas Cash — “and thee and thy companion” — he pointed to Old Knowell — “this hoary-headed lecher, this old goat, close — secretly and close together — at your villainy? And would thou excuse it with this stale harlot’s trick of accusing me of doing what thou thyself are doing?”

In this society, goats were thought to be lecherous.

Kitely said to Old Knowell, “Oh, old incontinent, don’t thou feel ashamed, when all thy powers’ inchastity is spent, to have a mind so hot, and to entice and feed the enticements of a lustful woman?”

Kitely was saying that Old Knowell was impotent because of old age, but his mind still sinned in his thoughts.

“Bah!” Dame Kitely said. “I defy thee, I do, dissembling wretch!”

“Defy me, strumpet?” Kitely said.

Standing by Thomas Cash, he said, “Ask thy pander here. Can he deny it?”

He pointed to Old Knowell and added, “Or can that wicked elder deny it?”

Kitely now thought that his wife, Dame Kitely, was having an affair with Old Knowell, whose name he did not know.

Dame Kitely still thought that her husband, Kitely, was having an affair with a woman inside Tib’s house.

Old Knowell said out loud, “Why, listen, sir —”

“Tut, tut, tut, never speak,” Kitely said. “Thy guilty conscience will reveal thee.”

“What lunacy is this that haunts this man?” Old Knowell said.

Kitely said to Tib, “Well, goodwife B, A, D” — this meant “bad,” and it sounded somewhat like a goat and (once the vowel sound was changed) “bawd” — “Cob’s wife …”

And then he said to his wife, “… and you, who make your husband such a hoddy-doddy …” — a hoddy-doddy is literally a small shell-snail; snails have horns, like cuckolds.

And then he said to Thomas Cash and Old Knowell, “… and you, young apple-squire [pander], and old cuckold-maker …”

And then he said to all of them, “I’ll have every one of you before a justice of the peace. All of you shall answer it. I order all of you, go to the justice.”

Old Knowell replied, “By the Virgin Mary, I go willingly, although I taste — perceive — that this is a trick put on me to punish my impertinent search, and justly. And I half-forgive my son for playing this trick.”

Kitely said to his wife, “Come, will you go?”

“Go?” Dame Kitely said. “To thy shame, believe it.”

Cob entered the scene, and seeing the commotion, he asked, “Why, what’s the matter here? What’s here to do?”

“Oh, Cob, are thou come?” Kitely said. “I have been abused, and in thy house. Never was a man so wronged!”

“By God’s eyelid, in my house, my master Kitely?” Cob said. “Who wrongs you in my house?”

Referring to his wife and Old Knowell, Kitely said, “By the Virgin Mary, young-lust-in-old and old-in-young, here.”

He then said, “Thy wife’s their bawd; here have I taken them.”

“What?” Cob said. “Bawd? Has my house come to that? Am I preferred — promoted — to be a keeper of a brothel thither?”

He attacked his wife and beat her, saying, “Did I order you to keep your doors shut, Isabel?”

He had, indeed.

When he said “Isabel,” he may have meant “Jezebel,” aka an immoral, sexually promiscuous woman.

Cob continued, “And do you let them lie open for all comers?”

These comers could be cum-ers.

Old Knowell said, “Friend, know some cause before thou beat thy wife. This is madness in thee.”

“Why, isn’t there cause?” Cob asked.

“Yes, I’ll show cause before the Justice, Cob,” Kitely said. “Come, let her go with me.”

“She shall go,” Cob said.

“I will go,” Tib said. “I’ll see if you may be allowed to make a bundle of hemp out of your right and lawful wife thus, at every cuckoldly knave’s pleasure.”

Hemp stalks were beaten to separate the fibers, which were used to make rope.

Tib then said to Kitely, “Why don’t you go now?”

Kitely said, “You are a bitter quean — a bitter harlot. Come, we’ll have you tamed.”

They exited.

— 4.11 —

Disguised as a city sergeant, Brainworm was holding a staff of office. This staff of office was a mace that was decorated with the image of an artichoke. Mace is also a spice, as are salt and pepper, which can be used to spice an artichoke. Satirists can use words as if they were weapons, dealing blows the way a mace does. Satirists also rub salt into a wound.

Brainworm said to himself:

"Well, of all my disguises yet, now I am most like myself, being in this sergeant's gown."

Brainworm's being "most like myself" was his being disguised as a varlet.

The disguised Brainworm continued:

"A man of my present profession never counterfeits until he lays hold upon a debtor and says he arrests him, for then he brings him to all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace made like a young artichoke that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I don't know what danger I undergo by this exploit. Pray heaven I come well off."

Master Matthew and Captain Bobadill entered the scene.

"Look, I think yonder is the varlet, judging by his gown," Master Matthew said.

"Let's go in quest of him," Captain Bobadill said.

Master Matthew said to the disguised Brainstorm, "God save you, friend. Aren't you here at the appointment of Justice Clement's clerk?"

"Yes, if it please you, sir," the disguised Brainworm replied. "He told me two gentlemen had willed him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be served on a man named Downright."

"It is honestly done of you both," Master Matthew said.

Looking up, he said, "And see where the party comes whom you must arrest. Serve it upon him quickly, before he is aware of what you are doing."

Master Matthew had seen a man whom he thought was Squire Downright, but the man was actually Master Stephen, who was wearing Squire Downright's cloak.

"Bear back, Master Matthew!" Captain Bobadill said. "Retreat!"

He was afraid of Squire Downright.

The disguised Brainworm said to Master Stephen, "Master Downright, I arrest you in the Queen's name, and I must carry you before a justice of the law by virtue of this warrant."

"Me, friend?" Master Stephen said. "I am no Downright, I. I am Master Stephen. You don't do well to arrest me, I tell you truly. I am in nobody's bonds nor books — I want you to know that."

He thought he was being arrested for debt, and he was saying that he had no actionable debt registered in either bonds or books.

Master Stephen continued, "A plague on you heartily for making me thus afraid before my time!"

"Why, how are you deceived, gentlemen?" the disguised Brainworm asked.

"He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us," Captain Bobadill said.

The real Squire Downright entered the scene.

Seeing him, Captain Bobadill said, "But see, here he comes, indeed! This is he, officer."

Seeing that Master Stephen was wearing his cloak, Squire Downright said to him, "Why, what is this now, Signor Gull, have you turned filcher — thief — recently? Come, give my cloak to me."

"Your cloak, sir?" Master Stephen said. "I bought it even now, in open market."

"Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procured by these two gentlemen," the disguised Brainworm said.

"These gentlemen?" Squire Downright said. "These rascals!"

“Keep the peace, I order you, in Her Majesty’s name,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“I obey thee,” Squire Downright said. “What must I do, officer?”

“Go before Master Justice Clement, to answer for what they can object against you, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said. “I will treat you kindly, sir.”

Master Matthew said to Captain Bobadill, “Come, let’s go ahead of the others and make our case to the Justice, Captain.”

Captain Bobadill said about the disguised Brainworm, “The varlet’s a tall — brave —man, before heaven!”

The disguised Brainworm had said that he must serve a warrant on Squire Downright.

Actually, he had not written out or served a warrant, but had merely told Squire Downright that he must serve a warrant on him.

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew exited.

Squire Downright said to Master Stephen, “Gull, you’ll give me my cloak?”

“Sir, I bought it, and I’ll keep it,” Master Stephen replied.

“You will?” Squire Downright said.

“Aye, that I will,” Master Stephen replied.

Squire Downright gave the disguised Brainworm some money and said, “Officer, there’s thy fee. Arrest him.”

“Master Stephen, I must arrest you,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“Arrest me?” Master Stephen said. “I scorn it.”

He then said to Squire Downright, “There, take your cloak; I’ll not have it.”

“Nay, that shall not serve your turn now, sir,” Squire Downright said.

He wanted Master Stephen to be arrested.

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “Officer, I’ll go with thee to the Justice’s. Bring him — Master Stephen — along.”

“Why, isn’t your cloak here?” Master Stephen said. “What else do you want?”

“I’ll have you answer— give satisfaction — for it, sir,” Squire Downright said.

Master Stephen could have avoided this trouble by quickly giving Squire Downright the cloak — which Squire Downright owned.

“Sir, I’ll take your word, and this gentleman’s, too, for his appearance in court,” the disguised Brainworm said.

Brainworm was not really an arresting sergeant. He was not authorized to arrest anyone or to write warrants. If he were to actually deliver these men to Justice Clement, his disguise would be revealed.

“I’ll have no words taken,” Squire Downright said. “Bring him along.”

“Sir, I may choose to do that,” the disguised Brainworm said. “I may take bail.”

If he took bail, he could enrich himself.

“It is true, you may take bail and choose, at another time,” Squire Downright said, “but you shall not now, varlet. Bring him along, or I’ll beat you.”

“Sir, I pity the gentleman’s case,” the disguised Brainworm said. “Here’s your money back.”

“By God’s dignity, don’t tell me about my money,” Squire Downright said. “Bring him away, I say.”

“I assure you, he will go with you of himself — on his own accord — sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

He did not want to go with them to see Justice Clement.

“Yet more ado?” Squire Downright said. “Yet more arguing?”

The disguised Brainworm said to himself, “I have made a fair mash — a fine mess — of it.”

A mash is a mixture of malt and water and is used for brewing beer.

“Must I go?” Master Stephen asked.

“I know no remedy to avoid it, Master Stephen,” the disguised Brainworm said.

Squire Downright said to Master Stephen, “Come along before me here. I do not love your hanging look behind.”

He was saying that he didn’t want Master Stephen with his hangdog — dejected — look behind him. He wanted to keep an eye on him lest he escape.

“Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it,” Master Stephen replied.

He then asked the disguised Brainworm, “Can he, fellow?”

“I think not, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said. “It is but a whipping matter, surely.”

“Why, then, let him do his worst,” Master Stephen said. “I am resolute.”

They exited to go and see Justice Clement.

CHAPTER 5

— 5.1 —

Justice Clement, Old Knowell, Kitely, Dame Kitely, Tib, Thomas Cash, Cob, and some of Justice Clement's servants were together in a room in Justice Clement's house.

Justice Clement said, "Nay, but stay, stay. Give me leave."

He then said to a servant, "My chair, sirrah."

The servant brought him his chair, and he sat down.

Justice Clement then said to Old Knowell, "Master Knowell, you say that you went there to meet your son, Edward?"

"Aye, sir," Old Knowell said.

"But who directed you to go there?" Justice Clement asked.

"That did my own serving-man, sir," Old Knowell said.

He was referring to Brainworm, who at the time was disguised as a soldier. Old Knowell still did not know that the soldier was Brainworm.

"Where is he?" Justice Clement asked.

"I don't know, now," Old Knowell said. "I left him with your clerk and ordered him to stay here for me."

"My clerk?" Justice Clement said. "About what time was this?"

"By the Virgin Mary, between one and two, as I take it," Old Knowell said.

"And at what time did my clerk come with the false message to you, Master Kitely?" Justice Clement asked.

The person who had delivered the false message to Kitely was Brainworm, who at the time was disguised as Justice Clement's clerk.

"After two, sir," Kitely said.

"Very good," Justice Clement said.

He then asked, "But Mistress Kitely, how was it that you were at Cob's?"

"If it pleases you, sir, I'll tell you," Dame Kitely said. "My brother Wellbred told me that Cob's house was a suspected place."

A suspected place is a house of ill repute — a whorehouse.

"So it appears, I think," Justice Clement said. "But go on."

"And that my husband used thither daily," Dame Kitely said.

"Used" meant "was accustomed to go" or "used women sexually."

"That doesn't matter, as long as he used himself well, mistress," Justice Clement said.

"Used" meant "treated."

"True, sir, but you know what grows by such haunts often," Dame Kitely said.

Penises grow in such haunts. In the case of such activities resulting in cuckolds, horns grow.

"I see — rank fruits of a jealous brain, Mistress Kitely," Justice Clement said. "But did you find your husband there in that case, as you suspected?"

"I found her there, sir," Kitely said.

"Did you so?" Justice Clement said. "That alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there?"

"By the Virgin Mary, my brother-in-law Wellbred did," Kitely said.

"What?" Justice Clement said. "Wellbred first told her, and then afterward he told you? Where is Wellbred?"

"Gone with my sister, Bridget, sir, I don't know to where," Kitely said.

“Why, this is a mere trick, a device,” Justice Clement said. “You are gulled in this most grossly, all of you.”

He then asked Tib, “Alas, poor wench, were thou beaten for this?”

“Yes, most pitifully, if it pleases you,” Tib said.

“And worthily, I hope, if it shall turn out to be so,” Cob said.

“Aye, that’s likely, and a piece of a sentence — a bit of wisdom,” Justice Clement said.

One of Justice Clement’s servants entered the room.

Justice Clement asked, “What is it now, sir? What’s the matter?”

“Sir, there’s a gentleman in the court outside who desires to speak with Your Worship,” the servant replied.

“A gentleman?” Justice Clement said. “Who is he?”

“A soldier, sir, he says,” the servant replied.

“A soldier?” Justice Clement said. “Take down my armor and my sword quickly! A soldier speak with me? Why, when will you get me my armor and sword, knaves?”

The servant brought Justice Clement his armor and sword and helped him arm himself.

Justice Clement said, “Come on, come on, hold my cap there, so; give me my gorget. Give me my sword.”

A gorget is a piece of armor worn to protect the throat.

He then said to Old Knowell, Kitely, and Dame Kitely, “Stand nearby. I will end your matters soon.”

He then said to the servant, “Let the soldier enter.”

The servant went to the door.

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew entered the room.

Justice Clement said to Captain Bobadill, “Now, sir, what have you to say to me?”

— 5.2 —

Captain Bobadill began, “By Your Worship’s favor —”

Justice Clement said to Master Matthew, “Keep out, sir, I don’t know your claim to my attention.”

If he was going to be forced to fight, he wanted to fight only one person, not two.

He then said to Captain Bobadill, “You send me word, sir, that you are a soldier; why, sir, you shall be answered here. Here are men who have been among soldiers. Sir, what is your pleasure?”

“Indeed, sir, this is it: This gentleman and I myself have been most uncivilly wronged and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow about the town here,” Captain Bobadill said. “And for my own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humor of quarrelling, he has assaulted me in the way of my peace, despoiled me of my honor, disarmed me of my weapons, and rudely laid me flat in the open streets, when I not so much as once offered to resist him.”

Justice Clement was disgusted. Captain Bobadill was supposed to be a soldier, and yet he had not defended himself.

“Oh, by God’s precious!” Justice Clement said. “Is this the soldier?”

He then said to a servant, “Here, take my armor off quickly; it will make him swoon, I fear. He is not fit to look on it — he who will put up with and endure a blow.”

Master Matthew said, “If it pleases Your Worship, he was bound to the peace.”

“Why, if he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?” Justice Clement said.

A man can legally and morally defend himself.

A servant entered the room and said, “There’s one of the varlets of the city, sir, who has brought two gentlemen here, one of them upon Your Worship’s warrant.”

“My warrant?” Justice Clement said, surprised.

He had signed no warrants.

“Yes, sir,” the servant said. “The officer says that the warrant was procured by these two.”

The “officer” was the disguised Brainworm, and the false warrant had been paid for by Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew.

“Tell him to come in,” Justice Clement said.

He then pointed to Captain Bobadill and said, “Let’s put aside this picture.”

Captain Bobadill was not a true soldier; he was at best a picture of a soldier.

Captain Bobadill was led aside, and a servant went to the door and let into the room Squire Downright, Master Stephen, and Brainworm, who was still disguised as an arresting sergeant.

Justice Clement said, “What, Master Downright! Are you brought here at Master Freshwater’s suit?”

Captain Bobadill was a freshwater soldier; a freshwater sailor is one who has not been to sea.

— 5.3 —

Squire Downright answered, “Indeed, I am, sir. And here’s another brought at my suit.”

Justice Clement asked Master Stephen, “Who are you, sir?”

“A gentleman, sir,” Master Stephen replied.

Seeing Old Knowell, he said, “Oh, uncle!”

“Uncle?” Justice Clement said. “Who? Master Knowell?”

“Aye, sir,” Old Knowell said. “This is a ‘wise’ kinsman of mine.”

“God’s my witness, uncle, I am wronged here monstrously!” Master Stephen said. “He charges me with the stealing of his cloak, and I wish I might never stir if I did not find it in the street by chance.”

“Oh, did you find it, now?” Squire Downright said. “You said you bought it, previously.”

“And you said I stole it,” Master Stephen said. “Now that my uncle is here, I’ll do well enough with you.”

“Well, let this rest a while,” Justice Clement said.

He then said to Captain Bobadill, “You who have cause to complain there, stand forth. Did you have my warrant for this gentleman’s apprehension?”

Captain Bobadill replied, “Aye, if it pleases Your Worship.”

“Nay, do not speak in passion — so strongly,” Justice Clement said.

He was mocking Captain Bobadill, who spoke deferentially.

He then asked, “Where did you get it?”

“From your clerk, sir,” Captain Bobadill answered.

“That’s well,” Justice Clement said sarcastically. “As if my clerk can make warrants and my hand not sign them!”

He had not made or signed the warrant.

He then asked, “Where is the warrant? Officer, do you have it?”

The disguised Brainworm said, “No, sir. Your Worship’s man, Master Formal, bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge and take the responsibility.”

“Why, Master Downright, are you such a novice to be served and never see the warrant?” Justice Clement asked.

“Sir, he did not serve it on me,” Squire Downright said.

“No?” Justice Clement said. “What happened, then?”

Squire Downright said, “By the Virgin Mary, sir, he came to me and said he must serve it, and he would treat me kindly, and so —”

“Oh, God’s pity, was it so, sir?” Justice Clement said, “He must serve it?”

He then said to a servant, “Give me my long-sword there, and help me off the chair, so.”

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “Come on, sir varlet.”

Brainworm knelt.

Justice Clement waved his long-sword over him as he said, “I must cut off your legs, sirrah. Stand up; I’ll treat you kindly. I must cut off your legs, I say.”

“Oh, good sir, I beg you,” the disguised Brainworm said. “Don’t do that, good Master Justice!”

“I must do it,” Justice Clement said. “There is no remedy. I must cut off your legs, sirrah; I must cut off your ears, you rascal, I must do it. I must cut off your nose; I must cut off your head.”

“Oh, Your good Worship!” the disguised Brainworm said.

“Well, rise,” Justice Clement said.

The disguised Brainworm stood up.

Justice Clement said to him, “How do thou do now? Do thou feel thyself well? Have thou no harm?”

“No, I thank Your good Worship, sir,” the disguised Brainworm said.

“Why, so it is!” Justice Clement said. “I said I must cut off thy legs, and I must cut off thy arms, and I must cut off thy head, but I did not do it. So you said you must serve this gentleman with my warrant, but you did not serve him. You knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you must?”

He then said to a servant, “Sirrah, go away with him and take him to the jail!”

He then said to the disguised Brainworm, “I’ll teach you a trick for your ‘must,’ sir.”

“Good sir, I beg you to be good to me,” the disguised Brainworm said.

Justice Clement said to the servant, “Tell him he shall go to the jail. Take him away, I say!”

“Nay, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for committing more than this,” the disguised Brainworm said. “I will not lose, by my travail, any grain of my fame, certainly.”

Brainworm had performed mighty deeds in his various disguises this day, and he wanted credit for doing them. Therefore, he threw off his current disguise.

“Who is this?” Justice Clement asked.

“My serving-man Brainworm!” Old Knowell said.

“Oh, yes, uncle,” Master Stephen said. “Brainworm has been with my cousin Edward and me all this day.”

“I told you all there was some plot,” Justice Clement said.

Brainstorm, no longer disguised, said, “Excellent Justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me, both with your sword and your balance.”

Lady Justice carries both a sword and a set of scales. These represent punishment and fairness.

“By the body of me, I swear this is a merry knave!” Justice Clement said. “Give me a bowl of sack.”

A bowl is a shallow cup.

A servant brought him wine.

Justice Clement said, “If he belongs to you, Master Knowell, I can vouch for your patience.”

Brainworm said, “My master’s patience is what I have most need of.”

He then said to his master, Old Knowell, “Sir, if you’ll only pardon me, I’ll glory in all the rest of my exploits.”

He was proud of most of the actions he had performed this day.

Old Knowell replied, “Sir, you know I don’t love to have my favors come hard from me. You have your pardon — although I suspect you shrewdly of being in secret agreement with my son against me.”

“Yes, indeed, I have been, sir, although you retained me doubly this morning for yourself: first, as Brainworm, afterward, as Fitzsword,” Brainworm said. “I was your reformed — discharged — soldier, sir. It was I who sent you to Cob’s, upon the errand without an end — a pointless errand.”

“Is it possible?” Old Knowell said. “Is it possible that thou could disguise thy language so as I should not know thee?”

“Oh, sir, this has been the day of my metamorphosis!” Brainworm said. “It is not that disguise alone that I have run through today. I brought this gentleman, Master Kitely, a message, too, in the form of Master Justice’s clerk here, to draw him out of the way, as well as Your Worship, while Master Wellbred might make a conveyance of Mistress Bridget to my young master.”

A conveyance is a legal transfer of property. Bridget — now Edward Knowell’s wife — was now figuratively his property.

“What!” Kitely said. “My sister has been stolen away?”

“My son is not married, I hope!” Old Knowell said.

“Indeed, sir, they are both as surely — securely — joined in wedlock as love, a priest, and three thousand pounds (which is her dowry) can make them,” Brainworm said, “and by this time they are ready to order their wedding supper at the Windmill Tavern, unless some friend or family member here forestall them and invite them home.”

Edward Knowell and Bridget were married.

“By the Virgin Mary, that will I do,” Justice Clement said. “I thank thee for putting me in mind of it.”

He ordered a servant, “Sirrah, go and fetch them here, upon my warrant.”

The servant exited.

Justice Clement then said, “Neither’s friends and family have cause to be sorry, if I know the young couple rightly.”

This was a good marriage match for both bride and groom.

Justice Clement said to Brainworm, “Here, I drink to thee for thy good news. But, I ask thee, what have thou done with my clerk, Formal?”

Brainworm replied, “Indeed, sir, after some ceremony passed, as making him drunk, first with story, and then with wine, but all in kindness, and stripping off his outer clothing and leaving him in his shirt, I left him in that cool fashion, departed, sold Your Worship’s warrant to these two” — he pointed to Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew — “pawned his livery for that varlet’s gown to serve it in, and thus have brought myself, by my activity, to Your Worship’s consideration.”

A servant’s livery is distinctive clothing that shows whose servant he is.

Justice Clement said, “And I will consider thee, in another cup of sack. Here’s to thee, which, having drunk off, this is my sentence.”

Justice Clement’s sentencing of Brainworm consisted of Brainworm’s having a drink with him.

He drank and then added, “Pledge me — drink with me: Thou have done or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but what deserves to be pardoned for the wit of the offence. If thy

master, or any man here, is angry with thee, I shall suspect his ingenuity and intelligence as long as I know him to be angry."

A noise sounded.

Justice Clement said, "What now? What noise is that?"

A servant entered and said, "Sir, Roger has come home."

Roger Formal was the justice's clerk.

Justice Clement ordered, "Bring him in, bring him in."

Roger Formal entered the room. He was still drunk, and he was wearing an old suit of armor.

Justice Clement asked him, "What, drunk in arms, against me? What is your reason for this?"

— 5.4 —

"I beg Your Worship to pardon me," Roger Formal said. "I happened into ill company by chance who cast me into a sleep and stripped me of all my clothes —"

The ill company was Brainworm, who was then disguised as a soldier.

"Well, tell him that I am Justice Clement, and I pardon him," Justice Clement said. "But what does this have to do with your armor? What may that signify?"

"If it pleases you, sir, it was hung up in the room where I was stripped, and I borrowed it from one of the liquor-drawers, aka bartenders, to come home in, because I was loath to do penance through the street in my shirt."

People were sometimes shamed for moral offences by being forced to walk through the streets while wearing a white sheet.

"Well, stand by awhile," Justice Clement said, seeing some people coming.

Edward Knowell, Wellbred, and Bridget entered the room.

"Who are these people?" Justice Clement asked.

Recognizing them, he said, "Oh, the young company."

He greeted them: "Welcome, welcome! God give you joy."

This was a traditional greeting to a newly wedded couple.

He then said:

"Mistress Bridget, don't blush. You are not so fresh a bride but the news of it has come here before you.

"Master Bridegroom, I have made your peace with and reconciled you to your father and your brother-in-law; give me your hand. I will also make your peace with and reconcile you to all the rest, before you forsake my roof."

— 5.5 —

"We are the more indebted to your humanity, sir," the newly married Edward Knowell said.

Justice Clement pointed to Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew and said, "Only these two have so little of man in them that they are no part of my care."

Wellbred said, "Yes, sir, let me plead to you for this gentleman."

He pointed to Master Matthew and then said, "He belongs to my sister-in-law, the bride."

He had been Bridget's servant and had served her.

Justice Clement asked, "In what place, sir?"

By "place," he meant "position or capacity," but Wellbred punned on another meaning: "location."

“In the place of her delight, sir, below the stairs and in public,” he said. “He was her poet, sir.”

“Below the stairs” meant in the servants’ hall. Wellborn was bawdily punning on the “place of her delight” and “below the stairs.”

Justice Clement said:

“A poet? I will challenge him myself right now, at extempore:

“*Mount up thy Phlegon muse, and testify*

“*How Saturn, sitting in an ebon [black] cloud*,

“*Disrobed his podex, white as ivory*,

“*And through the welkin thundered all aloud*.”

Justice Clement was parodying poetry. In Greek mythology, Phlegon is one of the horses that pull the chariot of the sun-god Helios. A “podex” is a butt, and his poem was about the god Saturn dropping his pants, farting, and filling the welkin — the sky — with thunderous sound.

As one of the horses that pull the chariot of the sun-god Helios across the sky, Phlegon is connected with time. The word “extempore” means “without time for preparation.” The Latin *ex tempore* means “out of time.”

“He is not for extempore, sir,” Wellborn said. “He is all for the pocket muse; may it please you to command a sight of his pocketed poems.”

Master Matthew could not compose poems extempore and release the words into the air; his way of composing poems was to copy them out of a book with a few words changed and keep them in his pocket.

Of course, small books can also fit in pockets.

“Yes, yes, search him for a taste of his vein,” Justice Clement said.

“To taste his vein” meant “to take his pulse” — Justice Clement meant for the servants to grab him by the wrist. He also meant for them to search the man for samples of his poetic style.

Wellborn said to Master Matthew, who was resisting, “You must not deny the Queen’s justice, sir, under penalty of a writ of rebellion.”

A man who failed to show up in court after a summons was served was treated as a rebel against the law.

Some people searched Matthew’s pockets and found his poems.

Justice Clement said:

“What, all this verse? By the body of me, he carries a whole ream, a realm and commonwealth of paper, in his hose! Let’s see some of his subjects.”

He read out loud:

“*Unto the boundless ocean of thy face*

“*Runs this poor river, charged with streams of eyes*.”

He then said, “What! This is stolen!”

Yes, this was another of Master Matthew’s plagiarized poems.

Samuel Daniel had written:

“*Unto the boundless ocean of thy beauty*

“*Runs this poor river, charged with streams of zeal.*”

Edward Knowell said, “A parody! A parody! With a kind of miraculous gift to make it absurder than it was.”

“Is all the rest the same as this batch?” Justice Clement said. “Is all the rest of this plagiarized? Bring me a torch; lay the poems all together and set them on fire. Cleanse the air. Here was enough to have infected the whole city, if it had not been taken in time!”

They burned the poems.

A defense against the plague was to burn stinky rubbish. After it was burned, it would no longer stink and so the air would be cleansed.

Justice Clement continued, “See, see, how our poet’s glory shines! Brighter and brighter! Still it increases! Oh, now it’s at the highest; and now it declines as fast. You may see: *Sic transit gloria mundi.*”

The Latin means, “Thus passes the glory of the world.”

“There’s an emblem for you, son, and your studies!” Old Knowell said to Edward.

Justice Clement said:

“May no speech or act of mine be drawn forward against such as profess it — poetry — worthily. They are not born every year, as is an alderman.”

It has been said that a poet is born once in an age; however, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Ford, John Donne, and John Milton (and others) were all alive at the same time. Some ages are more productive of poets than others.

Justice Clement continued:

“There goes more to the making of a good poet than a sheriff, Master Kitely. You look upon me! Though I live in the city here among you, I will do more reverence to him, when I meet him, than I will to the mayor, out of his year.”

The Mayor of London served for one year.

Justice Clement continued:

“But these paper-peddlers! These ink-dabblers! They cannot expect reprehension or reproach. They have it with the fact.”

Bad poets are punished simply by the fact that their poetry is bad. They need not expect reprehension or reproach because bad poets and bad poetry tend to be ignored. Master Matthew has no reputation as a poet today. Plagiarism is not poetry.

“Sir, you have saved me the labor of a defense,” Edward Knowell said.

He would have made a defense of good poets and good poetry.

Justice Clement said:

“It shall be conversation for supper between your father and me, if he dare undertake me.

“But to dispatch away these.”

He said to Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew, “You sign of the soldier, and you picture of the poet — but both so false I will not have you hanged out at my door until midnight.”

Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew were mere signs or pictures to hang out in front of a tavern — they were not the real things. Hanging them out at Justice Clement’s house after midnight would be acceptable because it would be too dark for them to be seen.

Justice Clement continued:

“While we are at supper, you two shall penitently fast it out in my court outside; and, if you will, you may pray there that we may be so merry within as to forgive or forget you when we come out.”

Justice Clement then pointed to Roger Formal and said, “Here’s a third, because we value your safety, who shall watch you; he is provided for the purpose.”

Roger Formal was wearing old armor, and so he was provided with what was needed to guard Captain Bobadill and Master Matthew.

Justice Clement said to Roger Formal, “Look to your charge, sir. Do your job.”

Master Stephen asked, “And what shall I do?”

Justice Clement said, “Oh, I would have lost a sheep if he had not bleated!”

He had forgotten about Master Stephen.

He then said to Master Stephen, “Why, sir, you shall give Master Downright his cloak; and I will entreat him to take it. A trencher — a wooden plate — and a napkin you shall have in the buttery, and you shall keep Cob and his wife here” — he pointed to them — “company.”

The buttery is a large pantry, full of provisions, where servants ate and drank.

Justice Clement continued:

“I will first entreat Cob and his wife to be reconciled, and I will entreat you to endeavor with your ‘intelligence’ to keep them so.”

“I’ll do my best,” Master Stephen said, unaware of the justice’s sarcasm.

Cob said to his wife, “Why, now I see thou are honest and chaste, Tib, I receive thee as my dear and mortal wife again.”

He said “mortal,” but he meant “moral.”

Tib replied, “And I receive you as my loving and obedient husband.”

In the marriage service of this society, it was the wife who was supposed to be obedient.

Justice Clement said:

“Good complement and compliment! It will be their bridal night, too. They are married anew.

“Come, I conjure the rest to put off all discontent.

“You, Master Downright, put off your anger.

“You, Master Knowell, put off your cares and worries.

“Master Kitely and his wife, both put off your jealousy. For, I must tell you both, while that — jealousy — is fed, horns in the mind are worse than on the head.”

“Sir, thus they go away from me,” Master Kitely replied.

He then said to his wife, “Kiss me, sweetheart.”

He kissed his wife and then recited out loud:

“*See, what a drove of horns fly in the air,*

“*Winged with my cleansèd and my credulous breath!*

“*Watch ’em, suspicious eyes, watch where they fall:*

“*See, see, on heads that think they’ve none at all!*

“*Oh, what a plenteous world of this will come!*

“*When air rains horns, all may be sure of some.*”

He then said, “I have learned so much verse out of a jealous man’s part in a play.”

The play was *Every Man in His Humor*, and he was the jealous man.

Justice Clement said:

“It is well! It is well! This night we’ll dedicate to friendship, love, and laughter.

“Master Bridegroom, take your bride and lead; everyone shall take a fellow.

“Here is my mistress: Brainworm! To whom all my addresses of courtship shall have their reference.

“Brainworm’s adventures this day, when our grandchildren shall hear to be made a fable, I don’t doubt that it shall find both spectators and applause.”

Now is a good time for the readers of this book to applaud.

Thank you.

NOTES

— 2.3 —

These are my brother's consorts, these! These are his cam'rades,

(2.2.23)

Source of Above:

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

7 Volume Set. Volume 4.

Ben Jonson (Author), David Bevington (Editor), Martin Butler (Editor), Ian Donaldson (Editor).

Page 657.

According to Oxford English Dictionary:

A "rade" is a ray.

A "ray" is:

> A single line or narrow beam of light; each of the lines in which light (and accompanying radiant heat) may seem to emanate from the sun or other source.

The adjective "cam" means:

> Crooked, twisted, bent from the straight.
>
> Away from the straight line, awry, askew.

— 2.4 —

I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic Gulf, a gentleman

slave in the galleys thrice, where I was most dangerously shot in the head, 55

through both the thighs; and yet, being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance,

nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

(2.4.54-57)

This information comes from the Wikipedia article on "Fisher King":

> (A "thigh" wound has been interpreted by many scholars in Arthurian literature as a wound to the genitals.)
>
> […]
>
> The location of the wound is of great importance to the legend. In most medieval stories, the mention of a wound in the groin or more commonly the "thigh" (such as the wounding of the ineffective suitor in *Lanval* from the *Lais of Marie de France*) is a euphemism for the physical loss of or grave injury to one's penis. In medieval times, acknowledging the actual type of wound was considered to rob a man of his dignity,

> thus the use of the substitute terms “groin” or “thigh”, although any informed medieval listener or reader would have known exactly the real nature of the wound. Such a wound was considered worse than actual death because it signaled the end of a man's ability to function in his primary purpose: to propagate his line. In the instance of the Fisher King, the wound negates his ability to honor his sacred charge.

Source of Above: “Fisher King.” Wikipedia. Accessed 18 September 2021

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisher_King

This information comes from an article titled “The Motif of the ‘Mutilated Hero’ in Herodotus”:

> Classical scholars are generally aware of the trope that in literature from around the world thigh wounds are often euphemistic for castration, or at least for impotence.

Source of Above: D. Felton, “The Motif of the ‘Mutilated Hero’ in Herodotus.” *Phoenix*, Vol. 68 (2014) 1-2. Pages 47-48.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7834/phoenix.68.1-2.0047

D. Felton. “THE MOTIF OF THE ‘MUTILATED HERO’ IN HERODOTUS.” *Phoenix*, vol. 68, no. 1/2, Classical Association of Canada, 2014, pp. 47–61, < https://doi.org/10.7834/phoenix.68.1-2.0047 >.

— 2.4 —

What, shall I walk

with a cudgel, like Higginbottom, and may have a rapier for money?

(2.4.74-75)

Source of Above:

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

7 Volume Set. Volume 4.

Ben Jonson (Author), David Bevington (Editor), Martin Butler (Editor), Ian Donaldson (Editor).

Page 663.

According to the *Oxford England Dictionary*, “hay” comes from the Old English “*híg*.”

This paragraph by David Bruce is pure speculation:

> “Higginbottom” is “hay in bottom,” aka a man who needs padding for his bottom. The man may have been beaten on his bottom and therefore carries the cudgel.

In 1.3, Brainworm talks about bundled hay being used in place of riding boots to prevent chafing. Captain Bobadill wears voluminous pants that could hold bundled hay in the bottom that could protect him whenever he is beaten. He doesn’t do that in the play, of course, but maybe he should.

“Higginbottom” is perhaps the name of a man who carried a cudgel but is no longer remembered. Since that man, if he existed, is no longer remembered, we do what we can with what we’ve got.

— 4.2 —

Quotations from Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*.

The quotations from Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander* (not Master Matthew’s plagiarized version) I took from this source:

> AN OPEN COMPANION TO EARLY BRITISH LITERATURE
>
> 58 CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: HERO AND LEANDER
>
> https://earlybritishlit.pressbooks.com/chapter/christopher-marlowe-hero-and-leander/

— 4.2 —

“*Cut a whetstone.*”

(4.2.109)

Source of Above:

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

7 Volume Set. Volume 4.

Ben Jonson (Author), David Bevington (Editor), Martin Butler (Editor), Ian Donaldson (Editor).

Page 695.

The reference is a story about the Roman augur Attus Navius in Livy, *The History of Rome*, Book 1, 36:

> **36.** He1 was also making preparations for surrounding the City with a stone wall when his designs were interrupted by a war with the Sabines. So sudden was the outbreak that the enemy were crossing the Anio before a Roman army could meet and stop them. [2] There was great alarm in Rome. The first battle was indecisive, and there was great slaughter on both sides. The enemies' return to their camp allowed time for the Romans to make preparations for a fresh campaign. Tarquin thought his army was weakest in cavalry and decided to double the centuries, which Romulus had formed, of the Ramnes, Titienses, and Luceres, and to distinguish them by his own name. [3] Now as Romulus had acted under the sanction of the auspices, Attus Navius, a celebrated augur at that time, insisted that no change could be made, nothing new introduced, unless the birds gave a favourable omen. [4] The king's anger was roused, and in mockery of the augur's skill he is reported to have said, ‘Come, you diviner, find out by your augury whether what I am now contemplating can be done.’ Attus, after consulting the omens, declared that it could. ‘Well,’ the king replied, ‘I had it in my mind that you should cut a whetstone with a razor. Take these, and perform the feat which your birds portend can be done.’ It is said that without the slightest hesitation he cut it through. [5] There used to be a statue of Attus, representing him with his head

> covered, in the Comitium, on the steps to the left of the senate-house, where the incident occurred. The whet-stone also, it is recorded, was placed there to be a memorial of the marvel for future generations. [6] At all events, auguries and the college of augurs were held in such honour that nothing was undertaken in peace or war without their sanction; the assembly of the curies, the assembly of the centuries, matters of the highest importance, were suspended or broken up if the omen of the birds was unfavourable. [7] Even on that occasion Tarquin was deterred from making changes in the names or numbers of the centuries of knights; he merely doubled the number of men in each, so that the three centuries contained eighteen hundred men. [8] Those who were added to the centuries bore the same designation, only they were called the 'Second' knights, and the centuries being thus doubled are now called the 'Six Centuries.'
>
> 1 War with the Sabines-The Augur Attus Navius.

Source of Above:

Livy. *History of Rome* [Book 1, 36]. English Translation by Rev. Canon Roberts. New York, New York. E. P. Dutton and Co. 1912.

http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0026%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D36

— 4.2 —

"*Whose cow has calved*?"

(4.2.97)

Source of Above:

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

7 Volume Set. Volume 4.

Ben Jonson (Author), David Bevington (Editor), Martin Butler (Editor), Ian Donaldson (Editor).

Page 695.

This paragraph by David Bruce is pure speculation:

> Sometimes, people could argue over whose cow had calved when a cow gave birth in a common pasture with no witnesses. Sometimes, cows gave birth at roughly the same time, and if a cow gave birth to twins, people could argue over the ownership of the second twin. Sometimes, a calf was stillborn, and if another cow gave live birth at roughly the same time, people could argue over the ownership of the living calf.

— 4.6 —

"*Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.*"

FORMAL

Not a whit, sir. Pray you, what do you mean, sir? 50

BRAINWORM

I was putting up some papers.

(4.6.49-51)

Source of Above:

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

7 Volume Set. Volume 4.

Ben Jonson (Author), David Bevington (Editor), Martin Butler (Editor), Ian Donaldson (Editor).

Page 701.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one definition of “paper” is this:

> *A notice fastened on the back of a criminal undergoing punishment, specifying his or her offence.*

This is what I wrote in this book:

> The notice makes known the offender’s offense.
>
> Brainworm, disguised as a soldier, had not been literally putting up papers, but he had been punishing Master Stephen for his foolishness, and he had been making Master Stephen’s foolishness known by conning him into buying a sword of low quality for the price of a sword of high quality.
>
> Brainworm had also been fooling or would be fooling other people with his disguise, including Old Knowell and Roger Formal himself. His fooling of these people would also become known, just as if people were reading papers pinned to their back.
>
> His fooling of Old Knowell had made Roger Formal stay somewhat long.

Note: I suspect that “I was putting up some papers” may have additional meaning, but this is the best that I can do as of now.

APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for "sounds like" and "two words," then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Comedy*, *Homer's* Iliad: *A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare's* Hamlet: *A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

APPENDIX B: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Arden of Faversham*: A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Arraignment, or Poetaster: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Epicene: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, or Humors Reconciled: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The New Inn, or The Light Heart: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Sejanus' Fall: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings

Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: *Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text*

Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: *Retellings*

Dante's Divine Comedy: *A Retelling in Prose*

Dante's Inferno: *A Retelling in Prose*

Dante's Purgatory: *A Retelling in Prose*

Dante's Paradise: *A Retelling in Prose*

The Famous Victories of Henry V: *A Retelling*

From the Iliad *to the* Odyssey*: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's* Posthomerica

George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston's Eastward Ho! *A Retelling*

George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: *A Retelling*

George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: *A Retelling*

George Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: *A Retelling*

George Peele's Edward I: *A Retelling*

George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: *A Retelling*

George-a-Greene: *A Retelling*

The History of King Leir: *A Retelling*

Homer's Iliad: *A Retelling in Prose*

Homer's Odyssey: *A Retelling in Prose*

J.W. Gent.'s The Valiant Scot: *A Retelling*

Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica

John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English

John Ford's The Broken Heart: *A Retelling*

John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: *A Retelling*

John Ford's The Lady's Trial: *A Retelling*

John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: *A Retelling*

John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: *A Retelling*

John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: *A Retelling*

John Ford's The Queen: *A Retelling*

John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Campaspe: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Endymion, The Man in the Moon: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Galatea: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Midas: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Mother Bombie: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's Sappho and Phao: *A Retelling*

John Lyly's The Woman in the Moon: *A Retelling*

John Webster's The White Devil: *A Retelling*

King Edward III: *A Retelling*

Mankind: *A Medieval Morality Play* (A Retelling)

Margaret Cavendish's The Unnatural Tragedy: *A Retelling*

The Merry Devil of Edmonton: *A Retelling*

The Summoning of Everyman: *A Medieval Morality Play* (A Retelling)

Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: *A Retelling*

The Taming of a Shrew: *A Retelling*

Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling

Thomas Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside: *A Retelling*

Thomas Middleton's Women Beware Women: *A Retelling*

Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's The Roaring Girl: *A Retelling*

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's The Changeling: *A Retelling*

The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems

Virgil's Aeneid: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's As You Like It: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Hamlet: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Henry V: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's King John: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's King Lear: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Othello: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Richard II: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Richard III: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Tempest: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: *A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: *A Retelling in Prose*