

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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# ROBERT GREENE

A NOTABLE DISCOVERY  
OF COOSNAGE 1591

THE SECOND PART OF  
CONNY-CATCHING 1592

I  
BODLEY HEAD QUARTOS

## NOTE

The original of this text is in the British Museum.—  
(C. 27, b. 20.)

## ERRATA

The following emendations only have been made in  
the original text:—

Page	Line		In the Original reads:
7	2	' <i>corrector</i> '	' <i>correstor</i> '
9	9	' <i>Marchaunts,</i> '	' <i>Marchaunts.</i> '
10	15	' <i>swaines,</i> '	' <i>swaine;</i> '
11	2	' <i>wealthy</i> '	' <i>wealtby</i> '
23	5	'shuffle the'	'shuffle, the'
27	13	'you'	'yon'
27	17	'vp, and'	'vp. and'
30	24	'minded'	'binded'
31	29	','	','
43	29	'wil iet'	'wiliet'
44	17	'saith,'	'saith ?'
47	26	'one'	'ons'
52	14	' <i>legers</i> who'	' <i>legers</i> ) who'
54	14	'countrie'	'couwrrie'
54	15	'readers'	'reades'
54	17	'downe'	'powne'
58	7	'fright'	'frighr'
58	16	'neuer'	'ueuer'

G. B. H.



50

THE BODLEY HEAD QUARTOS  
EDITED BY G. B. HARRISON

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ROBERT GREENE, M.A.

"A NOTABLE DISCOVERY OF  
COOSNAGE"

1591

THE SECOND PART OF  
CONNY-CATCHING

1592



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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

AT THE PRESENT TIME one of the greatest handicaps of the student of Elizabethan Literature is the scarcity of texts, even of the more famous of Shakespeare's great contemporaries. From time to time reprints have been made, but these are for the most part now out of print and only occasionally to be met with in booksellers' shops. Moreover, few of the editions conform to the demands of modern scholarship.

In printing the *Bodley Head Quartos* every care has been taken to make them as accurate as possible; the punctuation, spelling, and other peculiarities of the original text have been faithfully reproduced. At the same time, modern typography has been used; the old tall 'f' being printed 's,' and black letter replaced by roman type. A few misprints have been emended, but every correction has been noted in a list of *Errata*.

Apart, however, from the student and his needs, it is hoped that these volumes will make some appeal to all who appreciate good books, but have hitherto regarded our early popular literature as the arid preserve of professors and writers of *theses*. These pamphlets of Elizabethan 'journalists' give, as nothing else can, a vivid and

fascinating picture of the life of the people in those spacious days. They reveal the wild desires and bitter disillusionment of the thoughtful; and, on the darker side, the strange forms of roguery, the fierce quarrels and pen-duels of professional writers, the odd attempts to attract notice—all signs of that feverish struggle for mere existence which accounts for much of the restless energy of Elizabethan England.

Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, are rightly regarded as giants in an era of greatness, but their work can only be fully appreciated when they are seen side by side with their contemporaries, and as their own age saw them.

G. B. HARRISON.

Cheltenham,

*November 25, 1922.*

A  
Notable Discouery of Coofnage.

189  
N 126  
Now daily practised by sundry lewd persons, called Connie-catchers, and Crosse-biters.

Plainly laying open those pernicious sleights that hath brought many ignorant men to confusion.

Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Apprentises, Country Farmers and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of such evill or companions.

With a delightful discourse of the coofnage of Colliers.

Nascitur pro patria.

By R. Greene, Maister of Arts.



3  
LONDON

Printed by John Wolfe for T.N. and are to be sold over against the great South doore of Paules. 1591.





TO THE YONG GENTLEMEN,  
Marchants, Apprentises,  
*Farmers, and plain Countrey men*  
HEALTH



**D**IOGENES, Gentlemen, from a counterfeit  
Coiner of money, became a currant corrector of  
manners, as absolute in the one, as dissolute in  
the other: time refineth mens affects, and their humors  
grow different by the distinction of age. Poore Ouid that  
amorously writ in his youth the art of loue, complained  
in his exile amongst the Getes of his wantō follies. And  
Socrates age was vertuous thogh his prime was li-  
centious. So, Gentlemen, my younger yeeres had vn-  
certaine thoughtes, but now my ripe daies cals on to  
repentant deedes, and I sorrow as much to see others  
wilful, as I delighted once to be wanton. The odde  
mad-caps I haue beene mate too, not as a companion,  
but as a spie to haue an insight into their knaueries,  
that seeing their traines I might eschew their snares:  
those mad fellowes I learned at last to loath, by their

owne gracelesse villenies, and what I saw in them to their confusion, I can forewarne in others to my countreies commodity. None could decipher Tyranisme better then Aristippus, not that his nature was cruell, but that he was nurtured with Dionisius : The simple swaine that cuts the Lapidaries stones, can distinguish a Ruby from a Diamond onely by his labour : though I haue not practised their deceits, yet conuersing by fortune, and talking vppon purpose with such copes-mates, hath geuen mee light into their conceiptes, and I can decipher their qualities, though I vtterly mislike of their practises. To be brieffe Gentlemen, I haue seen the world and rounded it, though not with trauell, yet with experience, and I crie out with Salomon, Omnia sub sole vanitas. I haue smyled with the Italian, and worne the vipers head in my hand, and yet stopt his venome. I haue eaten Spanishe Mirabolanes, and yet am nothing the more metamorphosed. Fraunce, Germanie, Poland, Denmarke, I knowe them all, yet not affected to any in the fourme of my life ; onelie I am English borne, and I haue English thoughts, not a deuill incarnate because I am Italianate, but hating the pride of Italie, because I know their peeuishnes : yet in all these Countreyes where I haue trauelled, I haue not seene more excesse of vanitie then wee Englishe men practise through vaine glory : for as our wits be as ripe as any, so our willes are more ready then they all, to put in effect any of their licentious abuses : yet amongst the rest, letting



ordinary sinnes passe, because custome hath almost made them a law, I will onely speake of two such notable abuses, which the practitioners of the shadow with the name of Arts, as neuer have been heard of in any age before. The first and chiefe, is called the Art of Cunny catching; the second, the Arte of Cros-biting; two such pestilent and preiudiciall practises, as of late haue been the ruine of infinite persons, and the subuersion and ouerthrow of many Marchaunts, Farmers, and honest minded yeomen. The first is a deceit at Cardes, which growing by enormitie into a Coosenage, is able to draw (by the subtill shewe thereof) a man of great iudgement to consent to his owne confusion. Yet Gentlemen when you shall reade this booke, written faithfullie to discouer these coosening practises, thinke I goe not about to disproue or disalow the most auncient and honest pastime or recreation of Card play, for thus much I know by reading: When the Cittie of Thebes was besieged by them of Lacedemonia, being girt within strong fenced walles, and hauing men enough, and able to rebat the enemie, they found no inconuenience of force to breed their ensuing bane, but famine, in that when victuals waxed scant, hunger would either make them yeeld by a fainting composition, or a miserable death. Whereuppon to wearie the foe with wintering at the siedege, the Thebanes deuised this pollicie, they found out the Method of Cards and Dice, and so busied their braines with the pleasantnesse of that new inuention, passing away

*the time with strange recreations and pastimes, beguiling hunger with the delight of the new sports, and eating but euery third day, and playing two, so their frugal sparing of victuals kept them from famine, the Cittie from sacking, and rayseed the foe from a mortall siedege. Thus was the vse of Cards and Dice first inuented, and since amongst Princes highly esteemed, and allowed in all common-wealths, as a necessarie recreation for the mind : But as in time and malice of mans nature hatcheth abuse, so good things by ill wits are wrested to the worse, and so in Cardes : for from an honest recreation, it is grown to a preiudiciall practise, and most high degree of coosenage, as shalbe discouered in my Art of Cuny-catching, for not onely simple swaines, whose wits is in their hands, but yoong Gentlemen, and Marchants, are all caught like Cunnies in the hay, and so led like lambs to their confusion.*

*The poore man that commeth to the Tearme to trie his right, and layeth his land to morgadge to gette some Crownes in his purse to see his Lawyer, is drawn in by these diuelish Cunny-catchers, that at one cut at Cardes looseth all his money, by which meanes, he, his wife and children, is brought to vtter ruine and miserie. The poore Prentice, whose honest minde aymeth only at his Maisters profites, by these pestilent vipers of the commonwealth, is smoothly intised to the hazard of this game at Cardes, and robd of his Maisters money, which forceth him oft times eyther to*

run away, or bankrout all, to the ouerthrow of some honest and wealthy Citizen. Seeing then such a daungerous enormity groweth by them, to the discredite of the estate of England, I would wishe the Iustices appoynted as seuerer Censors of such fatall mischiefes, to shewe themselues patres patriæ, by weeding out such worms as eat away the sappe of the Tree, and rooting this base degree of Cooseners out of so peaceable and prosperous a countrey, for of all diuelish practises this is the most preiudicial. The high Lawyer that challengeth a purse by the high way side, the foist, the nip, the stale, the snap, I meane the pick-pockets and cut-purses are nothing so daungerous to meete with all, as these Coosening Cunny-catchers. The Chetors that with their false Dice make a hande, & strike in at Hazard or Passage with their Dice of aduantage, are nothing so daungerous as these base minded Caterpillers. For they haue their vies and their reuies vpon the poore Cunnies backe, till they so ferrette beate him, that they leaue him neither haire on his skin, nor hole to harbour in. There was before this many yeeres agoe, a practise put in vse by such shifting companions, which was called the Barnards Law, wherein as in the Arte of Cunny-catching, four persons were required to perfourm their coosning commodity. The Taker vp, the Verser, the Barnard and the Rutter, and the manner of it indeed was thus. The Taker vp seemeth a skilful man in al things, who hath by long trauell learned without Booke a thousand

*pollicies to insinuate himselfe into a mans acquaintance : Talke of matters in law, he hath plenty of Casis at his fingers ends, and he hath seene, and tryed, and ruled in the Kinges Courtes : Speake of grasing and husbandry, no man knoweth more shires than hee, nor better which way to raise a gainefull commodity, and how the abuses and ouerture of prices might be redressed. Finally, enter into what discourse they list, were it into a Brormemans facultie, hee knoweth what gaines they haue for olde Bootes and Shooes : Yea, and it shall scape him hardly, but that ere your talke breake off, hee will be your Countrey man at least, and peraduenture either of kinne, aly, or some stale sib to you, if your reach farre surmount not his. In case hee bring to passe that you be glad of his acquaintance, then doeth hee carry you to the Tauernes, and with him goes the Verser, a man of more worshippe then the Taker vp, and hee hath the countenaunce of a landed man. As they are set, comes in the Barnard stumbling into your companie, like some aged Farmer of the Countrey, a straunger vnto you all, that had beene at some market Towne therabout, buying and selling, and there tipled so much Malmesie, that he had neuer a ready woord in his mouth, and is so carelesse of his money, that out he throweth some fortie Angels on the boords end, and standing somewhat aloofe, calleth for a pint of wine, and saith : Masters, I am somewhat bold with you, I pray you be not grieued if I drinke my drinke by you : and thus ministers such idle drunken talke, that*

*the Verser who counterfeited the landed man, comes and drawes more neare to the plaine honest dealing man, and prayeth him to call the Barnard more neare to laugh at his follie. Betweene them two the matter shal be so workemanly conueied and finely argued, that out commeth an old paire of Cardes, whereat the Barnard teacheth the Verser a new game, that hee saies cost him for the learning two pots of Ale not two houres agoe, the first wager is drinke, the next two pence or a groat, and lastly to be brieffe they vse the matter so, that he that were an hundred yeere olde, and neuer played in his life for a penny, cannot refuse to be the Versers halfe, and consequently at one game at Cardes, hee looseth all they play for, be it a hundred pound. And if perhaps when the mony is lost (to vse their word of Arte) the poore Countrey man beginne to smoake them, and sweares the drounken knaue shall not gette his money so, then standeth the Rutter at the doore and draweth his sword and picketh a quarrell at his owne shadowe, if he lacke an Osler or a Tapster or some other to brabble with, that while the streete and company gather to the fray, as the manner is, the Barnard steales away with all the coine, and gets him to one blinde Tauerne or other, where these Cooseners had appointed to meete.*

*Thus Gentlemen I haue glaunst at the Barnardes Lawe, which though you may perceiue it to bee a preiudiciall insinuating coosenage, yet is the Art of Cunny-catching so farre beyond it in subtiltie, as the*

*deuill is more honest then the holiest Angell : for so vnlikelie is it for the poore Cunny to leese, that might he pawn his stake to a pound, he would lay it that he cannot be crosbitten in the cut at cards, as you shall perceiue by my present discouerie. Yet Gentlemen am I sore threatned by the hacksters of that filthie facultie, that if I sette their practises in print, they will cut off that hande that writes the Pamphlet, but how I feare their brauadoes, you shall perceiue by my plaine painting out of them, yea, so little doe I esteeme such base minded braggardes, that were it not I hope of their amendment, I would in a schedule set downe the names of such coosening Cunny-catchers. Well, leauing them and their course of life to the honourable and the worshipfull of the lande, to be censors of with iustice, haue about for a blowe at the Art of Cros-biting : I meane not Cros biters at dice, when the Chetor with a langret, cut contrarie to the vantage, will cros-bite a bard cater tray : Nor I meane not when a broaking knaue cros-biteth a Gentleman with a bad commo-ditie : nor when the Foyst, the pick-pockets (sir reuerence I meane) is cros-bitten by the Snap, and so smoakt for his purchase : nor when the Nip, which the common people call a Cut-purse, hath a cros-bite by some brybing officer, who threatening to carry him to prison, takes away all the mony, and lets him slippe without any punishment : But I meane a more dishonourable Arte, when a base Roague, eyther keepeth a whore as his friende, or marries one to be his*

*mainteyner, and with her not onely cros-bites men of good calling, but especially poore ignoraunt countrey Farmers, who God wotte be by them ledde like sheep to the slaughter. Thus gentle Readers, haue I giuen you a light in brieffe, what I meane to prosecute at large, and so with an humble sute to all Iustices, that they will seeke to root out these two roagish Artes, I commit you to the Almighty.*

Yours Rob. Greene.





# THE ART OF CON- ny Catching



**T**HERE be requisit effectually to act the Art of Cony-catching thrée seueral parties: the Setter, the Verser, and the Barnackle. The nature of the Setter, is to draw any person familiarly to drinke with him, which person they call the Conie, & their methode is according to the man they aime at: if a Gentleman, Marchant, or Apprentice, the Connie is the more easily caught, in that they are soone induced to plaie, and therefore I omit the

circumstance which they vse in catching of them. And for because the poore countrie farmer or Yeoman is the marke which they most of all shoote at, who they knowe comes not emptie to the Terme, I will discover the means they put in practise to bring in some honest, simple & ignorant men to their purpose. The Conny-catchers, apparalled like honest ciuil gentlemen, or good fellows, with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouthes, after dinner when the clients are come from Westminster hal and are at leasure to walke vp and downe Paules, Fléet-stréet, Holborne, the sttrond, and such common hanted places, where these cosning companions attend onely to spie out a praie: who as soone as they see a plaine cuntry fellow well and cleanly apparellled, either in a coat of home spun russet, or of fréeze, as the time requires, and a side pouch at his side, there is a connie, saith one. At that word out flies the Setter, and ouertaking the man, begins to salute him thus: Sir, God saue you, you are welcom to London, how doth all our good friends in the countrie, I hope they be all in health? The countrie man séeing a man so curteous he knowes not, halfe in a browne studie at this strange salutation, perhaps makes him this aunswere. Sir, all our friends in the countrie are well thankes bee to God, but trully I know you not, you must pardon me. Why sir, saith the setter, gessing by his tong

what country man hee is, are you not such a cuntry man, if he say yes, then he créeps vpon him closely: if he say no, thē straight the setter comes ouer him thus: In good sooth sir, I know you by your face & haue bin in your companie before, I praie you (if without offence) let me craue your name, and the place of your abode. The simple man straight tels him where he dwels his name, and who be his next neighbors, and what Gentlemen dwell about him. After he hath learned al of him, then he comes ouer his fallowes kindly: sir, though I haue bin somewhat bold to be inquisitiue of your name, yet holde me excused, for I tooke you for a friend of mine, but since by mistaking I haue made you slacke your busines, wele drinke a quart of wine, or a pot of Ale together: if the foole be so readie as to go, then the Connie is caught: but if he smack the setter, and smels a rat by his clawing, and will not drinke with him, then away goes the setter, and discourseth to the verser the name of the man, the parish hee dwels in, and what gentlemen are his near neighbours, with that away goes he, & crossing the man at some turning, meets him ful in the face, and greetes him thus.

What goodman Barton, how fare al our friends about you? you are well met, I haue the wine for you, you are welcome to town. The poore countryman hearing himselfe named by a man he knows not, maruels, & answers that he knowes him not,

and craues pardon. Not me goodman Barton, haue you forgot me? why I am such a mãs kinsman, your neighbor not far off: how doth this or that good gentleman my friend? good Lord that I should be out of your remembrance, I haue béene at your house diuers times. Indeede, sir, saith the farmer, are you such a mans kinsman, surely sir if you had not chalenged acquaintance of me, I should neuer haue knowen you, I haue clean forgot you, but I know the good gentleman your cosin well, he is my very good neighbor: & for his sake saith y<sup>e</sup> verser, wéel drink afore we part, haply the man thanks him, and to the wine or ale they goe, then ere they part, they make him a cony, & so feret-claw him at cardes, y<sup>t</sup> they leaue him as bare of mony, as an ape of a taile: thus haue the filthie felows their subtile fetches to draw on poor men to fal into their cosening practises: thus like consuming moths of the common welth, they pray vpon the ignorance of such plain soules, as measure al by their own honesty, not regarding either conscience, or the fatal reuenge thats thretened for such idle & licentious persons, but do imploy all their wits to ouerthrow such as with their handy thrifte satisfie their harty thirst: they preferring cosenage before labor, and chusing an idle practise before any honest form of good liuing. Wel, to y<sup>e</sup> method again of taking vp their conies. If the poore countreyman smoake them still, and wil not

stoupe vnto either of their lures: then one, either the verser, or the setter, or some of their crue, for there is a general fraternity betwixt them, steppeth before the Cony as he goeth, and letteth drop twelue pence in the high way, that of force the cony must see it. The countreyman spying the shilling, maketh not daintie, for *quis nisi mentis inops oblatum respuit aurum*, but stoupeth very mannerlie and taketh it vp: then one of the cony catchers behind crieth halfe part, and so chalengeh halfe of his finding. The countriman content, offreth to change the mony. Nay faith frend, saith the verser, tis ill luck to kéepe founde mony, wele go spend it in a pottle of wine, or in a breakefast, dinner or supper, as the time of day requires: If the conye say he wil not, then answeres the verser, spende my part: if stil the cony refuse, he taketh halfe and away, if they spy the countriman to be of a hauing and couetous mind, then haue they a further policie to draw him on: another that knoweth the place of his abode, méeteth him and saith Sir, wel met, I haue run hastely to ouertake you, I pray you dwel you not in Darbeshire, in such a village? Yes marry doe I frend saith the cony, then replies the verser, truely sir I haue a sute to you, I am going out of town, & must send a letter to the parson of your parish, you shall not refuse to do a stranger such a fauor as to cary it him, haply, as men may in time meet, it may lie in my

lot to do you as good a turn, and for your paines I wil giue you XII. pence. The poor cony in meer simplicity saith, sir, Ile do so much for you with al my hart, where is your letter? I haue it not good sir redy written, but may I entreate you to step into some tauern or alehouse, wele drinke the while, and I wil write but a line or two: at this the cony stoupes, and for gréediness of the mony, and vpon courtesie goes with the setter vnto the tauerne. As they walke they méet the verser. and then they all thrée goe into the tauern together.

Sée Gentlemen what great logicians these cony-catchers be, that haue such rethorically perswasions to induce the poor cuntrye man to his confusion, and what varietie of villany they haue to strip the poore farmer of his money. Wel, imagine the connie is in the tauern, then sits down the verser, and saith to the setter, what sirrha, wilt thou geue mee a quart of wine, or shall I geue thee one? wele drink a pint saith the setter, & play a game at cards for it, respecting more the sport then the losse: content q<sup>d</sup>. the verser, go cal for a paire, and while he is gone to fetch thẽ, he saith to the cony, you shall sée me fetch ouer my yong master for a quart of wine finely, but this you must do for me, when I cut the cards, as I wil not cut aboute fve off, mark then of al the greatest pack which is vndermost, & when I bid you cal a card for me, name that, and you shall sée wele make him pay

for a quart of wine straight, truly saith the cony, I am no great player at cards, and I do not well vnderstand your meaning, why, saith he, it is thus: I wil play at mum-chaunce, or decoy, that hee shal shuffle the cards, and I wil cut: now eyther of vs must call a card, you shal call for me, and he for himselfe, and whose card comes first wins, therefore when I haue cut y<sup>e</sup> cards, then mark the nethermost of the greatest heap, that I set vpon the cards which I cut off, & always cal that for me. O now saith the cony, I vnderstand you, let mee alone, I warrant Ile fit your turne, with that in comes the setter with his cards, and asketh at what game they shal play, why saith the verser, at a new game called mum-chance, that hath no policie nor knauerie, but plain as a pike staf, you shal shuffle and Ile cut, you shal cal a carde, and this honest man, a stranger almost to vs both, shal cal another for me, and which of our cards comes first, shal win, contēt saith the setter, for thats but méer hazard, & so he shuffels the cards, and the verser cuts of some four cards, and then taking vp the heape to set vpon them, geueth the conny a glance of the bottom card of that heap, and saith, now sir, call for me. The cony to blind the setters eyes, asketh as though he were not made priuy to the game, what shal I cut? what card saith the verser? why what you wil, either hart, spade, club or diamond, cote-card or other. O is it so, saith the

connie? why then you shal haue the four of harts, which was the card he had a glaunce of, and saith the setter (holding the cards in his hand, and turning vp the vppermost card, as if hee knew not wel the game) Ile haue the knaue of trumpes. Nay saith the verser, there is no trump, you may cal what card you wil: then saith he, Ile haue the ten of spades, with that he draws, and the four of harts comes first: wel saith the setter, tis but hazard, mine might haue come as wel as yours, fue is vp, I fear not y<sup>e</sup> set: so they shuffle and cut, but the verser winnes. Well saith the setter, no butter wil cleaue on my bread, what, not one draught among fue: drawer, a freshe pinte, Ile haue another bout with you: but sir I beleue, saith he to the cony, you see some card, that it goes so cros on my side. I saith the cony, nay I hope you think not so of me, tis but hazard and chaunce, for I am but a meere stranger vnto the game, as I am an honest man I neuer saw it before.

Thus this simple cony closeth vp smoothly to take the versers part, only for gréediness to haue him winne the wine: wel answeres the setter, then Ile haue one cast more, and to it they go, but he loseth all, and beginneth to chafe in this maner: were it not quoth he, that I care not for a quart of wine, I could swear as many othes for anger, as there be haire on my head, why shoulde not my luck be as good as yours, and fortune fauor me as



wel as you? what, not one cald card in ten cuttes, Ile forswear the game for euer. What, chafe not man, saith the Verser, séeing we haue your quart of wine. Ile shew you the game, and with that discourseth all to him, as if he knew it not. The setter, as simply as if the knaue were ignorant, saith, I mary, I thinke so, you must néedes winne, whẽ he knowes what card to cal, I might haue plaid long enough before I had got a set. Truely saies the cony, tis a pretie game, for tis not possible for him to lose that cuts the cardes: I warrant the other that shuffles may loose Saint Peters cope if he had it. Wel, Ile carrie this home with me into the cuntrie, and win many a pot of ale with it. A fresh pint, sayth the Verser, and then wele away: but séeing sir, you are going homeward, Ile learne you a trick worth the noting, that you shall win many a pot with in the winter nights: with that he culls out the four knaues, & prickes one in the top, one in the midst, and one in the bottome. Now sir, saith he, you see these thrée knaues apparantly, thrust them downe with your hand, & cut where you will, & though they be so far asunder, Ile make them all come together. I praie you lets see that trick, sayth the connie, me thinkes it should be impossible. So the Verser drawes, and all the thrée knaues comes in one heap: this he doth once or twice, then the connie wonders at it, and offers him a pint of wine to teach it him. Nay,

saith the verser, Ile do it for thanks, and therefore marke me where you haue taken out the four knaues, lay two together aboue, and draw vp one of them that it may be seene, then prick the other in the midst, & the third in the bottome, so when any cuts, cut he neuer so warily, three knaues must of force come together, for the bottom knaue is cut to lie vpon both the vpper knaues. I marrie, saith the setter, but then the 3. knaues you shewed come not together. Truth saith the verser, but one among a thousand marke not y<sup>t</sup>, it requires a quick eie, a sharp wit, and a reaching head to spy at the first. Now gramercie sir for this trick, saith the connie, Ile dominere with this amōgst my neibors. Thus doth the verser and the setter feine friendship to the conie, offering him no shew of cosnage, nor once to draw him in for a pint of wine, y<sup>e</sup> more to shadow their vilany, but now begins the sporte: as thus they sit tipling, comes the Barnacle and thrusts open the doore, looking into the roome where they are, and as one bashfull steppeth back againe, and saith, I crie you mercie gentlemen, I thoght a friend of mine had bin here, pardon my boldnes. No harme saith the Verser, I praie you drinke a cup of wine with vs and welcome: so in comes the Barnacle, and taking the cup drinks to the Connie, and then saith, what at cards gentlemen? were it not I should be offensiue to the company I would play for a pint till my friend

come that I looke for. Why sir, saith the Verser, if you will sit downe you shalbe taken vp for a quart of wine. With all my heart, saith the Barnackle, what will you play at, at Primero, Primo visto, Sant, one and thirtie, new cut, or what shall be the game? Sir, saith the Verser, I am but an ignorant man at cards, & I see you haue them at your fingers end, I will play with you at a game wherein can be no deceit, it is called mum-chance at cardes, and it is thus: you shall shuffle the cards, and I will cut, you shal cal one, and this honest cuntrye yoman shal call a card for me, and which of our cards comes first shal win: here you see is no deceit, and this Ile play. No truly, saith the Connie, me thinkes there can be no great craft in this: well saith the barnacle, for a pint of wine haue at you: so they play as before, fve vp, and the verser wins. This is hard luck, sayth the Barnacle, and I beléeue the honest man spies some carde in the bottom, and therefore Ile make this, alwais to prick the bottom card: content saith the verser, and the Connie to cloak the matter, saith: sir, you offer me iniury to think that I can call a card, when I neither touch them, shuffle, cut, nor draw them: Ah sir, saith the barnacle, giue losers leaue to speak: wel, to it they go againe, and then the barnacle knowing the game best, by chopping a card winnes two of the fve, but lets the verser win the set, then in a chafe he sweareth tis but his ill

luck, and he can see no deceit in it, and therefore he will play xii.d. a cut. The verser is content, & wins ii. or iii.s. of the barnacle, whereat hee chafes, and saith, I came hether in an ill houre: but I will win my monie again, or loose al in my purse: with that he draws out a purse with some thrée or four pound, & claps it on the bord: the verser asketh the conie secretly by signs if he will be his halfe, he saies I, and straight seeks for his purse: well, the barnacle shuffles the cards throughly, and the verser cuts as before, the Barnacle when he hath drawen one card, saith, Ile either win somthing or loose something, therefore Ile vie and reuie euery card at my pleasure, till either yours or mine come out, and therefore twelue pence vpon this card, my card coms first for twelue pence: no saith the Verser, I saith the Connie, and I durst holde twelue pence more, why, I holde you, saith the Barnacle, and so they vie and reuie till some ten shillings bee on the stake: and then next comes forth the versers card, that the Connie called, and so the Barnacle loseth: wel, this flesheth the Conny, the sweetnes of gaine maketh him frolike, and no man is more readie to vie and reuie then he. Thus for three or four times the barnacle looseth, at last to whet on the Connie, he striketh his chopt card, and winneth a good stake. Awaie with the witch, cries the Barnacle, I hope the cards will turne at last. I much, thinketh the connie, twas

but a chance that you askt so right, to aske one of the fiue that was cut off, I am sure there was forty to one on my side, and ile haue you on the lurch anone, so stil they vie and reuie, and for once that the barnacle winnes, the conie gets fiue, at last when they mean to shaue the conie cleane of all his coine, the barnacle chafeth, and vppon a pawne borroweth some monie of the Tapster, & swears he wil vie it to the vttermost, then thus he chops his card to cros-bite the connie. he first lookes on the bottome carde, and shuffles often, but still keeping that bottome Carde which he knowes to be vppermost, then sets he downe the cards, and the Verser to encourage the Connie, cut of but three cards, whereof the barnacles card must needs be the vppermost, then shewes he the bottome carde of the other heape cut off to the connie, and sets it vpon the barnacles card which he knowes, so that of force the carde that was laide vppermost, must come forth first, and then the barnacle calles that carde: they drawe a carde, and then the Barnacle vies, and the countriman vies vpon him: for this is the law, as often as one vies or reuies, the other must see it, els he loseth the stake: wel, at last the barnacle plies it so, that perhaps he vies more mony then the cony hath in his purse. The cony vpon this, knowing his card is the third or fourth card, and that hee hath forty to one against the Barnacle, pawns his rings if hee haue any, his

sword, his cloke, or els what he hath about him, to maintaine the vie, and when he laughs in his sléeue, thinking he hath fléest the barnacle of all, then the barnacles card comes forth, and strikes such a cold humor vnto his heart, that hee sits as a man in a traunce, not knowing what to doe, and sighing while his hart is redy to breake, thinking on the mony that he hath lost, perhaps the man is very simple and patient, and whatsoeuer he thinks, for feare goes his way quiet with his losse, while the conny-catchers laugh and deuide the spoyle, and being out of the dores, poore man, goes to his lodging with a heauy hart, pensiuie & sorrowful, but too late, for perhaps his state did depend on that mony, and so he, his wife, his children, and his familie, are brought to extream miserie. Another perhaps more hardy and subtil, smokes the conycatchers, and smelleth cosenage, and saith, they shal not haue his mony so, but they answere him with braues, and thogh he bring them be fore an officer, yet the knaues are so fauored, that the man neuer recouers his mony, and yet he is let slippe vnpunished. Thus are the poore conies robbed by these base minded caterpillers: thus are seruing men oft entised to play, and lose al: thus are prentises induced to be Connies, and so are cosened of their masters mony, yea yoong gentlemen, merchants, and others, are fetcht in by these damnable rakehels, a plague as ill as hell, which is,

present losse of money, & ensuing miserie. A lamentable case in england, when such vipers are suffred to breed and are not cut off with the sword of iustice. This enormity is not onely in London, but now generally dispersed through all england, in euery shire, city, and town of any receipt, and many complaints are heard of their egregious cosenage. The poore farmer simply going about his busines, or vnto his attorneys chamber, is catcht vp & cosened of all. The seruing-man sent with his Lordes treasure, loseth ofttimes most part to these worms of the commonwelth, the prentice hauing his masters mony in charge, is spoiled by them, and from an honest seruant either driuen to run away, or to liue in discredit for euer. The gentleman loseth his land, the marchant his stock, and all to these abhominable conny-catchers, whose meanes is as ill as their liuing, for they are all either wedded to whores, or so addicted to whores, that what they get from honest men, they spend in bawdy houses among harlots, and consume it as vainly as they get it villanously. Their eares are of adamant, as pitiles as they are trecherous, for be the man neuer so poore, they wil not return him one peny of his los. I remember a merry iest done of late to a welchman, who being a méere stranger in Londõ, and not wel acquainted with the English tongue, yet chaunced amongst certaine cony-catchers, who spying the gentleman

to haue mony, they so dealt with him, that what by signes, and broken english, they got him in for a cony, and fléest him of euery peny that he had, and of his sword, at last the mã smoakt them, and drew his dagger vpon them at Ludgate, for thereabouts they had catcht him, and would haue stabde one of them for his mony, people came and stopt him, and the rather because they could not vnderstand him, though he had a card in one hand, and his dagger in the other, and said as wel as he could, a card, a card, Mon dieu. In the meane while the conny-catchers were got into Paules, and so away. The welchman folowed them. séeking them there vp and down in the church stil with his naked dagger and the card in his hand, and the gentlemen marueld what he meant thereby, at last one of his countrimen met him, and enquired the cause of his choler, and then he told him how he was cosened at cards, and robbed of all hys mony, but as his losse was voluntary, so his séeking them was meer vanity, for they were stept into some blind ale house to deuide the shares. Neere to S. Edmunds Burie in Suffolk, there dwelt an honest man a Shomaker, that hauing some twenty markes in his purse, long a gathering, and neerly kept, came to the market to buy a dicker of hides, and by chaunce fel among conny-catchers, whose names I omit, because I hope of their amendment. This plain countriman drawn in by these former deuises



was made a cony, and so straight stript of all his xx. marke, to his vtter vndoing: the knaues scapt, and he went home a sorowful man. Shortly after, one of these cony-catchers was taken for a suspected person, and laid in Bury gaole, the sessions comming, and he produced to the bar, it was the fortune of this poore shomaker to be there, who spying this roague to be arained, was glad, and said nothing vnto him, but lookt what would be the issue of his appeeraunce, at the laste hee was brought before the Iustices, where he was examined of his life, and being demanded what occupation he was, said none, what profession then are you of, how liue you? Marry quoth he, I am a gentleman, and liue of my frends. Nay that is a lie quoth the poor shoemaker, vnder correction of the worshipful of the bench, you haue a trade, and are by your art a Cony-catcher. A cony-catcher said one of the Iustices, and smiled, what is he a warriner fellow, whose warren keepeth hee, canst thou tel? Nay sir, your worship mistaketh me qd. the shoemaker, he is not a wariner, but a conny-catcher: the bench, that neuer heard this name before, smilde, attributing the name to the mans simplicitie, thought he meant a warriner, which the shomaker spying, answered, that some conies this fellow catcht, were worth twenty mark a peece, and for proof quoth he, I am one of them: and so discourst the whole order of the art, and the

basenes of the cosening: wherupon the Iustices looking into his life, appointed him to be whipt, and the shomaker desired that he might geue him his paiment, which was graunted: when he came to his punishment, the shomaker laught, saying, tis a mad world when poor conies are able to beate their catchers, but he lent him so frendly lashes, that almost he made him pay an ounce of bloud for euery pounce of siluer. Thus we see how the generation of these vipers increase, to the confusion of many honest men, whose practises to my poore power I haue discovered, and set out, with the villanous sleights they vse to intrap the simple, yet haue they clokes for the raine, and shadowes for their vilanies, calling it by the name of art or law: as conny-catching art, or cony-catching law. And herof it riseth, y<sup>t</sup> like as law, when the terme is truely considered, signifieth y<sup>e</sup> ordinance of good men, established for the commonwelth, to repress al vicious liuing, so these cony-catchers turne the cat in the pan, geuing to diuers vile patching shiftes, an honest & godly title, calling it by the name of a law, because by a multitude of hateful rules, as it were in good learning, they exercise their villanies to the destructiõ of sundry honest persons. Hervpon they geue their false conueyance, the name of cony-catching law, as there be also other lawes; as high law, sacking lawe, figging law, cheting law and barnards law. If you maruail

at these misteries and queynt words, consider, as the Carpêter hath many termes familiar inough to his prentices, that other vnderstand not at al, so haue the cony-catchers not without great cause: for a falshood once detected, can neuer compasse the desired effect. Therefore will I presently acquaint you with the signification of the termes in a Table. But leauing them til time and place. Coming downe Turnmil street the other day, I met one whom I suspected a conycatcher, I drew him on to y<sup>e</sup> tauern, and after a cup of wine or two, I talkt with him of the maner of his life, & told him I was sory for his frends sake, y<sup>t</sup> he tooke so bad a course, as to liue vpon the spoile of poore men, and specially to deserue the name of coni-catching, disswading him from that base kind of life, that was so ignominious in the world, and so lothsome in the sight of God. Tut sir, quoth he, calling me by my name, as my religion is smal, so my deuotion is lesse, I leaue God to be disputed on by diuines, the two ends I aime at, are gaine and ease, but by what honest gaines I may get, neuer comes within y<sup>e</sup> compasse of my thoughts. Thogh your experience in trauaile be great, yet in home matters mine be more, yea, I am sure you are not so ignorant, but you know that fewe men can liue vprightly, vnlesse hee haue some prety way more then the world is witnes to, to helpe him withall: Think you some lawyers could be such purchasers,

if all their pleas were short, and their procéedinges iustice and conscience? that offices would be so dearely bought, and the buiers so soone enriched, if they counted not pilage an honest kind of purchase? or doe you think that men of hãdie trades make all their commodities without falshood, when so many of them are become daily purchasers? nay what wil you more, who so hath not some sinister way to help himselfe, but foloweth his nose alwaies straight forward, may wel hold vp the head for a yeare or two, but y<sup>e</sup> third he must néeds sink, and gather the wind into begers hauen, therefore sir, cease to perswade me to the contrarie, for my resolution is to beat my wits, and spare not to busie my braines to saue and help me, by what meanes soeuer I care not, so I may auoide the danger of the lawe: wherupon, séeing this cony-catcher resolved in his forme of life, leauing him to his lewdnes I went away, wondering at the basenes of their minds, that would spend their time in such detestable sort. But no maruell, for they are geuen vp into a reprobate sence, and are in religion méere atheists, as they are in trade flat dissemblers, if I shoulde spend many shéets in deciphering their shifts, it were friuelous, in that they be many, and ful of variety, for euey day they inuent new tricks, and such queint deuises as are secret, yet passing dangerous, that if a man had *Argus* eyes, he could scant prie into the bottom of their

practises. Thus for the benefit of my countrey I haue briefly discovered the law of Cony-catching, desiring all Iustices, if such coseners light in their precinct, euen to vse *summum ius* against them, because it is the basest of all villanies. And that London prentices, if they chance in such conny-catchers companie, may teach them London law, that is, to defend the poore men that are wronged, and learn the caterpillers the highway to Newgate, where if Hind fauour them with the heauiest irons in all the house, & giue thẽ his vnkindest entertainment, no doubt his other pety sinnes shalbe halfe pardoned for his labour: but I woulde it might be their fortune to happen into Nobles Northward in white chappel, there in faith round Robin his deputie, would make them, like wretches, feel the waight of his heauiest fetters. And so desiring both honourable and worshipful, as well Iustices, as other officers, and all estates, from the prince to the beggar, to rest professed enemies to these baseminded conycatchers, I take my leaue.

*Nascimur pro patria.*

A table of the words of art, vsed in the effecting  
*these base villanies.*

*Wherein is discovered the nature of euery terme, being proper to none but to the professors thereof.*

- |               |                                     |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 High law    | <i>robbing by the highway side.</i> |
| 2 Sacking law | <i>lecherie.</i>                    |

- |   |                  |   |
|---|------------------|---|
| 3 | Cheting law      | <i>play at false dice.</i>                              |
| 4 | Cros-biting law  | <i>cosenage by whores.</i>                              |
| 5 | Conycatching law | <i>cosenage by cards.</i>                               |
| 6 | Versing law      | <i>cosenage by false gold.</i>                          |
| 7 | Figging law      | <i>cutting of purses, &amp; picking<br/>of pockets.</i> |
| 8 | Barnards law     | <i>a drunken cosenage by cards.</i>                     |

These are the eight lawes of villanie, leading the high waie to infamie.

The Theefe is called a High lawier.  
 He that setteth the Watch, a Scrippet.  
 He that standeth to watch, an Oake  
 He that is robd the Martin  
 When he yeeldeth, stouping.

In high  
Lawe.

The Bawd if it be a woman, a Pander  
 The Bawd, if a man, an Apple squire  
 The whoore, a Commoditie  
 The whoore house, a Trugging place.

In sacking  
Law.

Pardon me Gentlemen for although no man could better then my self discover this lawe and his tearmes, and the name of their Cheats, Barddice, Flats, Forgers, Langrets, Gourds, Demies, and many other, with their nature, & the crosses and contraries to them vpon aduantage, yet for some speciall reasons, herein I will be silent.

In  
cheating  
law.

The whore, the Traffique

The man that is brought in, the Simpler.

In  
Cros-biting  
lawe

The villaines that take them, the Cros-biters.

The partie that taketh vp the Connie, the Setter.

In  
Coni-catch-  
ing law.

He that plaieth the game, the Verser

He that is coosned the Connie,

He that comes in to them, the Barnackle

The monie that is wonne, Purchase

In Versing  
law.

He that bringeth him in, the Verser

The poore Countrie man, the Coosin

And the dronkard that comes in, the Suffier

The Cutpurse, a Nip

He that is halfe with him, the Snap

The knife, the Cuttle boung

In Figging  
law.

The picke pocket, a Foin

He that faceth the man, the Stale

Taking the purse, Drawing

Spying of him, Smoaking

The purse, the Bong

The monie, the Shels

The Act doing, striking

He that fetcheth the man, the Taker

In Barnards  
lawe.

He that is taken, the Coosin

The landed man the Verser

The dronken man the Barnard

And he that makes the fray, the Rutter.

*Cum multis aliis quæ nunc præscribere longum est.*

These quaint termes do these base arts vse to shadow their villanie withall: for, *multa latent quæ non patent*, obscuring their filthie crafts with these faire colours, that the ignorant may not espie what their subiltie is: but their end wil be like their beginning, hatcht with Cain, and consumed with Iadas: and so bidding them adue to the deuil, and you farewell to God, I end. And now to the art of Cros-biting.

*The art of Cros-biting.*

THE Cros-biting law is a publique profession of shameles cosenage, mixt with incestuous whoredomes, as il as was practised in Gomorha or Sodom, though not after the same vnnatural manner: for the method of their mischieuous art (with blushing chekes & trembling hart let it be spoken) is, that these villanous vipers, vnworthy the name of men, base roagues (yet why doe I tearme them so well) being outcasts from God, vipers of the world, and an excremental reuer-sion of sin, doth consent, nay constrayne their wiues to yeeld the vse of their bodies to other men, that taking them together, he may cros-bite the party of all the crownes he can presently make, and that the world may see their



monstrous practises, I wil briefly set downe the manner.

They haue sundry praies that they cal simplers, which are men fondly and wantonly geuen, whom for a penaltie of their lust, they fleece of al that euer they haue: some marchants, prentices, seruing-men, gentlemen, yeomen, farmers, and all degrées, and this is their forme: there are resident in London & the suburbes, certain men attired like Gentlemen, braue fellowes, but basely minded, who liuing in want, as their last refuge, fal vnto this cros-biting law and to maintein themselues, either marry with some stale whore, or els forsooth kéepe one as their frēd: and these persons be cōmonly men of the eight lawes before rehearsed: either high Lawiers, Versers, Nips, Conny-catchers, or such of the like fraternitie. These when their other trades fail, as the Cheater, when he has no cosin to grime with his stop dice, or y<sup>e</sup> high lawier, when he hath no set match to ride about, and the Nip when there is no tearme, faire, nor time of great assemblie, then to maintaine the maine chance, they vse the benefite of their wiues or friends, to the cros-biting of such as lust after their filthie enormities: some simple men are drawn on by subtill meanes, which neuer intended such a bad matter. In summer euenings, and in the winter nightes, these trafickes, these common truls I meane, walke abroad either in the fields or stréetes.

that are commonly hanted, as stales to drawe men into hell, and a farre of, as attending applesquires, certaine cross-biters stand aloofe, as if they knew them not: now so many men so many affections. Some viruly mates that place their content in lust, letting slippe the libertie of their eies on their painted faces, féede vpon their vnchast beauties, till their hearts be set on fire: then come they to these minions, and court them with many swéet words: alas their loues néeds no long sutes, for they are forthwith entertained, and either they go to the Tauerne to seale vp the match with a pottle of Ipocras, or straight she carries him to some bad place, and there picks his pocket, or else the Cross-biters comes swearing in, & so out-face the dismaied companion, that rather then hee would be brought in question, he would disburse all that he hath present. But this is but an easie cosnage. Some other méeting with one of that profession in the stréet, wil question if she will drinke with him a pint of wine, theyr trade is neuer to refuse, and if for manners they doe, it is but once: & then scarce shall they be warme in the roome, but in comes a terrible fellow, with a side haire & a fearefull beard, as though he were one of Polyphemus cut, & he comes frowning in & saith, what hast thou to doe base knaue, to carrie my sister or my wife to the tauern: by his ownes you whore, tis some of your cõpanions, I wil haue you both

before the Iustice, Deputie, or Constable, to bée examined. The poore seruingman, apprentise, farmer, or whatsoeuer he is, seeing such a terrible huffe snuffe, swearing with his dagger in his hand, is fearefull both of him and to be brought in trouble, and therefore speakes kindly and courteously vnto him, and desires him to be content he meant no harm. The whore, that hath teares at commaund, fals a wéeeping, and cries him mercy. At this submission of them both he triumphs like a bragard, and will take no compassion: yet at last, through intreaty of other his companions comming in as strangers, hee is pacified with some forty shillings, and the poor man goes sorrowful away, sighing out that which Salomon hath in his proverbs, *A shameles woman hath hony in her lippes, and her throte as sweet as hony, her throte as soft as oyle: but the end of her is more bitter than Aloes, and her tongue is more sharp then a two edged sword, her feet go vnto death, and her steppes leade vnto hell.*

Again these truls when they haue got in a nouice, then straight they pick his purse, and then haue they their cros-biters redy, to whom they conuey the mony and so offer themselues to be searcht: but the poore man is so outfaced by these cros-biting Ruffians, that hee is glad to goe away content with his losse, yet are these easie practises. O might the Iustices send out spials in the night, they shold sée how these stréet walkers wil iet in

rich garded gowns, quaint periwigs, rufs of the largest size, quarter and halfe déep, gloried richly with blew starch, their cheekes died with surfuling water, thus are they trickt vp, and either walke like stales vp and down the streets, or stande like the deuils *Si quis* at a tauern or alehouse, as if who shoulde say, if any be so minded to satisfie his filthie lust, to lende me his purse, and the devil his soule, let him come in and be welcome. Now sir comes by a countrey farmer, walking from his inne to perform some busines, and seeing such a gorgeous damzell, hee wondring at such a braue wench, stands staring her on the face, or perhappes doth but cast a glance, and bid her good spéed, as plain simple swains haue their lustie humors as well as others: the trull straight beginning her *exordium* with a smile, saith, how now my friend, what want you, would you speake with anie body here? If the fellow haue anie bolde spirit, perhaps he will offer the wine, & then he is caught, tis inough: in he goes, and they are chamberd: then sends she for her husband, or hir friend, and there either the farmers pocket is stript, or else the crossbiters fall vpon him, and threaten him with bride-will and the law: then for feare he giues them all in his purse, and makes them some bill to paie a summe of monie at a certaine daie. If the poore Farmer bee bashfull, and passeth by one of these shamelesse strumpets, then will she verse it with

him, and claime acquaintaunce of him, and by some pollicie or other fall aboard on him, and carrie him into some house or other: if he but enter in at the doores with her (though the poore Farmer neuer kist her) yet then the cros-biters, like vultures, will pray vpon his purse, and rob him of euerie pennie. If there bée anie yong gentleman that is a nouice and hath not séene theyr traines, to him will some common filth (that neuer knew loue) faine an ardent and honest affection, till she and her cros-biters haue verst him to the beggers estate. Ah gentlemen, marchants, yeomen and farmers, let this to you all, and to euery degré else, be a caueat to warn you from lust, that your inordinate desire be not a meane to impouerish your purses, discredit your good names, condemne your soules, but also that your wealth got with the sweat of your browes, or left by your parents as a patrimonie, shall be a praie to those coosning cros-biters. Some fond men are so farre in with these detestable trugs, that they consume what they haue vpon them, and find nothing but a Neapolitan fauor for their labor. Reade the seuenth of Salomons prouerbs, and there at large view the description of a shameles and impudent curtizan: yet is there an other kind of cros-biting which is most pestilent, and that is this. There liues about this towne certaine housholders, yet méere shifters and coosners, who learning some insight in the ciuill

law, walke abrode like parators, sumners and informers, beeing none at all either in office or credit, and they go spying about where any marchant, or marchants prentise, citizen, wealthie farmer, or other of credit, either accompany with anie woman familiarly, or else hath gotten some maide with child, as mens natures be prone to sin, straight they come ouer his fallows thus: they send for him to a tauern, & ther open the matter vnto him, which they haue cunningly larned out, telling him he must be presented to the Arches, & the scitation shalbe peremptorily serued in his parish church. The partie afraid to haue his credit crackt with the worshipfull of the Citie, and the rest of his neighbors, & grieuing highly his wife should heare of it, straight takes composition with this cosner for some twentie markes, nay I heard of forty pound cros-bitten at one time, & thẽ the cosning informer or cros-biter promiseth to wipe him out of the booke, & discharge him from the matter, when it was neither knowen nor presented: so go they to the woman, and fetch her off if she be married, and though they haue this grosse sum yet oft times they cros-bite hir for more: nay thus do they feare citizens, prentises, & farmers, that they find but any waie suspicious of the like fault. The cros-biting bauds, for no better can I tearme them, in that for lucre they conceale the sin, and smother vp lust, do not onely inrich themselues mightily

thereby, but also discredite, hinder, and preiudice the court of the Arches, and the Officers belonging to the same. There are some pore blinde patches of that facultie, that haue their Tenements purchased, and their plate on the boorde verie solemnly, who onely get their gaines by cros-biting, as is afore rehearsed. But leauing them to the deepe insight of such as be appointed with iustice to correct vice, againe to the crue of my former cros-biters, whose fée simple to liue vppon, is nothing but the folowing of common, dishonest and idle truls, and thereby maintain themselues braue, and the strumpets in handsome furniture. And to end this art with an English demonstration, ile tel you a pretie tale of late performd in bishopgate stréet, there was there fīue traffiques, pretty, but common huswiues, that stood fast by a tauern dore, loking if some pray would passe by for their purpose, anone the eldest of them, and most experienced in that law, called Mal B. spied a master of a ship comming along: here is a simpler quoth she, Ile verse him, or hang me. Sir, sayde shee, God euen, what, are you so liberal to bestow on three good wenches that are drie, a pint of wine. In faith, faire women qd. he, I was neuer nigard for so much, and with that he takes one of them by the hand, and caries them all into the tauern, there he bestowed cheare and ipocras vpon them, drinking hard til the shot came to a noble, so that they iii.

carousing to the gentleman, made him somewhat tipsy, and then *Et venus in vinis, ignis in igne fuit*, wel, night grew on, and hee would away, but this mistres Mall B. stopt his iorney thus, gentleman, qd. she, this vnderdeserued fauor of yours makes vs so déeplie beholding to you, that our abilitie is not able any way to make sufficient satisfaction, yet to shew vs kind in what we can, you shall not deny me this request, to see my simple house before you go. The gentleman a litle whittled, consented, & went with them, so the shot was paid, & away they goe: Without the tauern dore stood two of their husbands, J. B. & J. R. and they were made priuy to the practise. Home goes the gentleman with these lusty huswiues, stumbling, at laste hee was welcome to M. Mals house, and one of the three went into a chamber, and got to bed, whose name was A. B. After they had chatted a while, the gentleman would haue been gone, but she told him that before he went, hee shoulde see al the roomes of her house, and so ledde him vp into the chamber where the party lay in bed: who is here saide the Gentleman. Marie saith Mal, a good pretie wench sir, and if you be not well, lie downe by her, you can take no harm of her: dronkennes desires lust, and so the Gentleman begins to dallie, and awaie goes she with the candle, and at last he put of his clothes and went to bed: yet he was not so dronke, but he could after a while



remember his mony, and féeling for his purse all was gone, and three linkes of his whistle broken off: the sum that was in his purse was in gold and siluer twentie nobles. As thus hee was in a maze, though his head were well laden, in comes J. B. the good man of the house, and two other with him, and speaking somewhat loud, peace husband quoth she, there is one in bed, speak not so loud. In bed, saith he, gogs nownes ile go sée, and so will I, saith the other: you shall not saith his wife, but stroue against him, but vp goes he and his cros-biters with him, & seeing the Gentleman in bed, out with his dagger, and asked what base villain it was that there sought to dishonest his wife: well, he sent one of them for a constable, and made the gentleman rise, who halfe dronk yet had that remembrance to speake faire, and to intreate him to keep his credit: but no intreatie could serue, but to the Counter he must, & the Constable must be sent for: yet at the last one of them intreated that the gentleman might be honestly vsed, and caried to a Tauerne to talke of the matter till a constable come. Tut, saith J. B. I wil haue law vpon him: but the base cros-biter at last stoopt, and to the Tauerne they go, where the Gentleman laide his whistle to pawne for mony, & there bestowed as much of them as came to ten shillings, and sate drinking and talking vntill the next morrow. By that the Gentleman had stolne a nap, and waking

it was daie light, and then séeing himselfe compassed with these cros-biters, and remembering his nights worke, soberly smiling, asked them if they knew what he was: they answered, not wel. Why then quoth he, you base coosning rogues, you shall ere we part: and with that drawing his sword, kept them into the chamber, desiring that the constable might be sent for: but this braue of his could not dismay M. Mall, for shee had bidden a sharper brunt before, witnes the time of her martirdome, when vpon her shoulders was engrauen the history of her whorish qualities: but she replying, swore, sith he was so lusty, her husband should not put it vp by no meanes. I will tel thée thou base cros-biting baud, quoth he, and you coosening companions, I serue a noble man, & for my credit with him, I refer me to the penaltie hée will impose on you, for by God I wil make you an example to al cros-biters ere I ende with you, I tel you villaines, I serue, and with that he namde his Lord. When the guilty whores and coseners heard of his credite and seruice, they began humbly to intreat him to be good to thẽ: then quoth he, first deliuer me my mony, they vpon that gladly gaue him all, and restored the linkes of his chaine. When hee had all, he smiled, and sware afresh that he would torment them for al this, that the seueritie of their punishment might be a caueat to others to beware of the like coosenage: and vppon that knockt with

his foote, and sayde hee would not let them go till he had a constable. Then in general they humbled themselves, so recompencing the partie, that he agreed to passe ouer the matter, conditionallie beside, that they would pay the sixtéene shillings hee had spent in charges, which they also performed. The Gentleman stept his way, and said, you may see the olde prouerbe fulfilled, *Fallere fallentem non est fraus*. Thus haue I deciphered an odious practise not worthy to be named: and now wishing al, of what estate soeuer, to beware of filthy lust, and such damnable stales as drawes men on to inordinate desires, and rather to spend their coine amongst honest companie, then to bequeath it to such base cros-biters, as praie vpon men, like rauens vpon dead carcasses, I end with this praier, that Cros-biting and Conny-catching may be as little knowen in England, as the eating of swines flesh was amongst the Jewes. Farewel.

*Nascimur pro patria.*

FINIS.

A PLEASANT DISCOVERY OF  
*the coosenage of Colliers.*

ALTHOUGH (courteous Readers) I did not put in amongst the lawes of cosening, the law of *legering*, which is a deceit wherewith colliers

abuse the commonwelth, in hauing vnlawful sacks, yet take it for a pettie kinde of craft or mystery, as preiudicial to the poore, as any of the other two. for I omitted diuers other diuelish vices; as the nature of the *lift*, the *black art*, & the *curbing law*, which is the *filchers* and *theeues* that come into houses or shops, & lift away anything: or pick-locks, or hookers at windowes, thogh they be as *species* and branches to the table before rehearsed. But leauing them, again to our law of *legering*. Know therefore, that there be inhabiting in & about *London*, certaine caterpillers (coliers I should say) that terme thēselues (among themselues) by the name of *legers* who for that the honorable the L. Maior of the citie of *London*, & his officers, looke straitly to the measuring of coales, doe (to preuent the execution of his iustice,) plant themselues in & about the suburbs of *London*, as *Shorditch*, *White-chappel*, *Southwark*, & such places, and there they haue a house or yard, that hath a back gate, because it is the more conuenient for their cosening purpose, and the reason is this; the *Leger*, the crafty collier I meane, riseth very early in the morning, and either goeth towards *Croyden*, *Whetstone*, *Greenwitch*, or *Romford*, and there meeteth the countrey Colliers, who bring coles to serue the marktete: there, in a forestalling manner, this *leger* bargayneth with the Countrey Collier for his coales, and paieth for them nineteene shillings

or twentie at the most, but commonly fifteene and sixteene, and there is in the load 36. sackes: so that they paie for euerie couple about fourteen pence. Now hauing bought his coales, euerie sacke containing full foure bushels, he carrieth the Countrie Collier home to his legering place, and there at the backe gate causeth him to vnloade, and as they saie, shoote the coales downe. As soone as the Countrie Collier hath dispatcht and is gone, then the Leger who hath three or foure hired men vnder him, bringeth forth his own sacks, which be long & narrow, holding at the most not three bushels, so that they gaine in the change of euerie sacke a bushell for their pains. Tush, yet this were somewhat to be borne withal, although the gaine is monstrous, but this sufficeth not, for they fill not these sackes full by far, but put into them some two bushels & a halfe, laying in the mouth of the sacke certaine great coles, which they call fillers, to make the sack shew faire, although the rest be small wilow coles, and halfe dros. Whẽ they haue thus not filled their sacks, but thrust coles into thẽ, that which they lay vppermost, is best filled, to make the greater shew: then a tall sturdie knaue, that is all ragd, and durtie on his legs, as thogh he came out of the Countrie (for they durtie theyr hose and shoos on purpose to make themselues seem countrie colliers:) Thus with two sacks a peece they either go out at the back gate, or steal

out at the street side, and so go vp and downe the suburbs, & sel their coales in summer for fourteene and sixteene pence a couple, and in winter for eighteene or twentie. The poore cookes & other citizens that buy them, thinke they be countrie colliers, that haue left some coles of their load, and would gladly haue monie, supposing (as the statute is) they be good and lawfull sakes, are thus coosned by the legers, & haue but two bushels and a halfe for foure bushels, and yet are extreamlie rackt in the price, which is not onely a great hinderance to her Maiesties poore cōmons, but greatly preiudiciall to the master Colliers, that bring true sacks & measure out of the countrie. Then consider (gentle readers) what kind of coosnage these legers vse, that make of thirty sacks some 56. which I haue seen, for I haue set downe with my pen how many turnes they haue made of a load, and they make 28. euerie turne being two sacks, so that they haue got an intollerable gains by their false measure. I could not be silent seeing this abuse, but thought to reueal it for my countries commodie, and to giue light to the worshipfull Iustices, and other her Maiesties officers in Middlesex, Surrey, and elsewhere, to looke to such a grosse coosnage, as contrarie to a direct statute, doth defraud & impouerish her Maiesties poore cōmōs. Well may the honorable and worshipful of London flourish, who carefully looke to the

countrie coales, & if they finde not 4. bushels in euerie sacke, do sell thẽ to the poore as forfeit, & distribut the mony to them that haue need, burning the sacke, & honoring or rather dishonoring the pillerie with the Colliers durty faces: & wel may the honorable & worshipfull of the suburbs prosper, if they loke in iustice to these legers who deserue more punishment than the statute appoints for them, which is whipping at a carts taile, or with fauor the pillerie.

*A plaine Discouerie.*

For fewell or firing being a thing necessary in a common wealth, and charcole vsed more then any other, the poore not able to buy by the load, are fain to get in their fire by the sacke, & so are greatly coosned by the retaile. Seeing therefore the carefull lawes her Maiestie hath appointed for the wealth of her commons, and succor of the poore, I would humbly entreat all her Maiesties officers, to looke into the life of these legers, and to root them out, that the pore feele not the burden of their incõscionable gaines. I heard with my eares a pore woman of Shorditch who had bought coles of a leger, with weeping teares cõplain and raile against him in the streete, in her rough eloquence calling him coosning knaue, & saying, tis no maruell, villain (quoth she) if men compare you

colliers to the deuill, seeing your consciences are worser then the deuilles, for hee takes none but those souls whom God hates: and you vndo the poore whome God loues.

What is the matter good wife (quoth I) that you vse such inuectiue words against the collier: a collier sir (saith she) he is a theefe and a robber of the common people. Ile tel you sir, I bought of a Countrie collier two sakes for thirteene pence & I bought of this knaue three sakes, which cost me 22. pence: and sir, when I measured both their sakes, I had more in the two sakes by three pecks, then I had in the three. I would (quoth she) the Iustices would looke into this abuse, and that my neighbors would ioyne with me in a supplication, and by God I would kneele before the Queene, and intreate that such coosening Colliers might not onlie bee punished with the bare pillerie, (for they haue such blacke faces, that no man knowes them again, and so are they careles) but that they might leaue their eares behinde them for a forfet: & if that would not mend them, that *Bul* with a faire halter might root them out of the world, that liue in the world by such grosse and dishonest coosnage. The collier hearing this, went smiling awaie, because he knew his life was not lokt into, & the womã wept for anger that she had not some one by that might with iustice reuenge her quarrell. There be also certaine Colliers that



bring coles to London in Barges, and they be called Gripers, to these comes the leger, & bargens with him for his coles, & sels by retaile with the like cosnage of sakes as I rehearsed before. But these mad Legers (not content with this monstrous gaine) do besides mix among their other sakes of coales, store of shruffe dust and small cole, to their great aduantage. And for prooffe hereof, I will recite you a matter of truth, lately performed by a Cookes wife vpon a coosning Collier.

*How a Cookes wife in London did lately serue a Collier for his coosnage.*

IT chanced this Summer that a load of coles came forth of Kent to Billingsgate, and a Leger bought them, who thinking to deceiue the Citizens, as he did those in the suburbs, furnisht himselfe with a couple of sakes, and comes vp Saint Marie hill to sell them: a Cookes wife bargained with the collier and bought his coales, and they agreed vppon fourteene pence for the couple: which beeing done, hee carried the coales into the house, and shot them: and when the wife sawe them, and perceiuing there was scarce fiue bushels for eight, she calls a little girle to her, and bad her go for the Constable: for thou coosening rogue, quoth she, (speaking to the collier) I wil teach thee

how thou shalt coosen me with thy false sacks, whatsoeuer thou doest to others, and I wil haue thee before my Lord Maior: with that she caught a spit in her hand, and swore if he offered to stir, shee would therewith broach him; at which words the Collier was amazed, and the feare of the pillerie put him in such a fright, that he said he would go to his boat, & returne againe to answeere whatsoeuer she durst obiect against him, and for pledge heereof (quoth the Collier) keepe my sakes, your mony, and the coales also. Wherupon the woman let him go, but as soone as the collier was out of doores, it was needles to bid him runne, for downe he gets to his boate, & awaie he thrusts from Billinsgate, and so immediately went downe to Wapping, and neuer after durst returne to the Cookes wife to demand either monie, sakes or coales.

*How a Flaxewife and her neighbours used a coosning Collier.*

**N**OW Gentlemen by your leaue, and heare a mery Nienst: There was in the suburbes of London a Flaxe wife that wanted coles, and seeing a leger come by with a couple of sakes, that had before deceiued her in like sorte, cheaped, bargained & bought them, & so went in with her to shoote them in her colehouse. As soone as she saw her coles she easily gest there was

scarce sixe bushels, yet dissembling the matter, she paid him for thē, and bad him bring her two sacks more : the Collier went his waie, & in the mean time the flax wife measured the coles, and there was iust five bushels and a peck. Herevpon she cald to her neighbours ; being a companie of women, that before time had also bene pincht in their coles, and shewed them the cosnage, & desired their aide to her in tormenting the Collier, which they promist to performe, & thus it fell out. She conueid them into a back roome (some sixteen of them) euerie one hauing a good cudgell vnder her apron ; straight comes the Collier, and saith, Mistres, here be your coles : welcome good Collier, quoth she, I praie thee follow me into the backe side, & shoot them in an other roome. The Collier was content, and went with her. but as soone as he was in, the good wife lockt the doore, and the Collier seeing such a troupe of wiues in the roome, was amazed, yet said God speed you all shrews, welcome quoth one iolly Dame, being appointed by them all to giue sentence against him : who so soone as the collier had shot his sacks, said Sirrha collier, know that we are here all assembled as a grād Iurie, to determine of thy villanies, for selling vs false sakes of coales, & know that thou art here indited vpon cosnage, therefore hold vp thy hand at the bar, & either saie, guiltie, or not guiltie, and by whom thou wilt be tried, for thou must receiue condigne punishment for the same ere thou depart. The Collier who thought they had but iested, smiled & said Come on,

*which of you shall be my Iudge? Marry, quoth one iolly Dame, that is I, and by God you knaue, you shall finde I will pronounce sentence against you seuerely, if you be founde guiltie. When the Colliar sawe they were in earnest, he said, Come, come, open the doore, and let me go : with that fise or six started vp, and fell vpon the Collier, and gaue vnto him halfe a score of sound lambeakes with their cudgels, and bad him speake more reuerently to their Principall.*

*The Collier feeling it smart, was afraid, & thought mirth & courtesie would be the best mean to make amends for his villany, and therefore said he would be tried by the verdit of the smock. Vpon this they panneld a iurie, and the flax-wife gaue euidence ; and because this vnaccustomed iury requir'd witnes, she measured the coles before the colliers face, vppon which he was found gilty, & she that sat as principal to giue iudgement vpon him, began as followeth.*

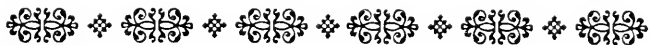
*Collier, thou art condemned here by proofe, of flatte cosenage, and I am now appointed in conscience to giue sentence against thee, being not only moued therevnto because of this poor woman, but also for the general commodie of my countrey, and therefore this is my sentence : we haue no pillery for thee, nor cart to whip thee at, but here I do award that thou shalt haue as many bastinadoes as thy bones will beare, and then to be turned out of dores without sacks or money. This sentence being pronounced, she rose vp, and gaue no respit of time for th' execution, but according to the*

*sentence before expressed, al the women fel vpō him, beating him extremely, among whom he lent some lusty buffets. But might ouercomes right, and therefore Ne Hercules contra duos. The women so crusht him, that he was not able to lift his handes to his head, and so with a broken pate or two, he was paid, & like Jack Drum, faire and orderly thrust out of dores.*

*This was the reward that the collier had, and I pray God all such colliers may be so serued, and that good wiues when they buy such sacks, may geue them such payments, and that the honorable and worshipful of this land, may look into this gros abuse of Coliers, as well for charity sake, as also for the benefit of the poore : and so wishing colliers to amende their deceitfull and disordered dealings herein, I end.*







SECOND PART OF  
CONNY-CATCHING

1592



## NOTE

The original of this text is in the Bodleian Library.—  
(Malone 575.)

## ERRATA

The following emendations only have been made in the original text :—

Page	Line		In the Original reads :
4	7	'as'	'is'
10	15	'approued'	'approooued'
26	9	'hors-stealer'	'hore-stealer'
27	24	'youthes,'	'youthes.'
32	11	'foist'	'first'
43	17	'there came'	'came'
44	4	'conueyance'	'conueance'
45	21	'world'	'wold'
46	5	'they touch'	'the ytouch'
46	22	'saies'	'aies'
47	1	'to'	'to to'
52	20	'long'	'leng'
53	9	'them'	'then'
57	29	' <i>mittimus</i> '	' <i>mitimus</i> '

G. B. H.



# THE SECOND

and last part of Conny-catching.

*With new additions containing many merry tales of  
all lawes worth the reading, because they are wort-  
hy to be remembered.*

Discourſing ſtrange cunning in Coofnage, which if you reade with-  
out laughing, He giue you my cap for a Noble.

*Mallet non eſſe quam non prodeſſe patria.*

R. G.



LONDON.  
Printed by John Wolfe for William Wright.

1597.

*Not in America at Printing*



A Table of the lawes contained in this second part.

- |   |                |                            |
|---|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Blacke arte.   | { Picking of lockes.       |
| 2 | Courbing Law.  | { Hooking at windowes.     |
| 3 | Vincent's Law. | { Coosenage at Bowls.      |
| 4 | Prigging Law.  | { Horse stealing.          |
| 5 | Lifting Law.   | { Stealing of any parcels. |

*The discoverie of the words of art, used in these Lawes.*

In blacke Arte.	{	The gaines gotten, Pelfrey.
		The pickelocke is called a Charme.
		He that watcheth, a Stond.
		Their Engines, Wresters.
In Curb- ing Law.	{	Picking the lock, Farsing.
		He that hookes, the Curber.
		He that watcheth the warpe.
		The hooke, the Curbe.
In lifting Law.	{	The goods, Snappingses.
		The gin to open the window the Tricker.
		He that first stealeth, the lift.
		He that receives it, the Markar.
In Vincent's law.	{	He that standeth without and carries it away, the Santar.
		The goodes gotten, Garbage.
		They which play bootie, the Bankars.
		He that betteth, the Gripe.
		He that is coosened, the Vincent.

Gaines gotten, Termage.  
The horse-stealer, the Priggar.  
In Prigging { The horse, the Prancar.  
Law. { The touling place, All hallowes.  
{ The towler, the Rifler.  
The Suerties, Quetries.

For the foist and the Nip, as in the first Booke.



TO AL YOONG GENTLMEN,  
Marchants, citizens, apprentices, yeomen,  
*and plaine countrey farmers,*  
HEALTH



WHEN *Scevola*, Gentlemen, saw his native citie besieged by Porsenna, and that Rome the mistresse of the world was readie to be maistred by a professed foe to the publicke estate: hee entred boldly into the enemies camp, and in the Tent of the king (taking him for the king) slew the kings Secretarie, whereupon condemned, brought to the fire, he thrust his right hand into the flame burning it off voluntarie, because it was so infortunat to misse the fatal stab he had intended to his coutries enemies, and then with an honourable resolution, breathd out this. *Mallem non esse quā non prodesse patria.* This instāce of *Scevola* greatly hath emboldened mee to thinke no pains nor danger too great that groweth to the benefit of my countrey, & though I cannot as he mannadge with my courtlax, nor attempt to vn-

leager Porsenna: yet with my pen I will indeuour to display the nature and secrets of diuers coosenages more preiudiciall to England then the inuasion of Porsenna was to Rome. For when that valiant king saw the resolutiõ of *Sceuola*, as one dismaid at the honour of his thoughtes, he sorrowed so braue a man had so desperatly lost his hand, and thereupon grewe friends with the Romans. But gentlemen these Conny-catchers, these vultures, these fatall Harpies, that putrifie with their infections, this flourishing estate of England, as if they had their consciences sealed with a hot iron, & that as men deliuered vp into a reprobate sence, grace were vtterly exild from their harts, so with the deafe Adder they not only stop their eares against the voice of the charmer, but dissolutely without any sparke of remorse stand vpon their brauados, and openly in words & actions maintain their palpable and manifest coosenages, swearing by no lesse then their enemies bloud, euẽ by God him selfe, that they will make a massacre of his bones, and cut off my right hand for penning downe their abhominable practises: but alas for thẽ poore snakes, words are wind, & looks but glances: euery thunderclap hath not a bolt, nor euery Conny-catchers oath an execution. I liue still, & I liue to display their villanies, which, gentlemen you shal see set down in most ample maner in this small treatise, but

heere by the way, giue me leaue to answere an obiection, that some inferred against me; which was, that I shewed no eloquent phrases, nor fine figuratiue conueiance in my first booke as I had done in other of my workes, to which I reply that *το πρεπον* a certaine decorum is to bee kept in euerie thing, and not to applie a high stile in a base subiect beside the facultie is so odious, and the men so seruile and slauish minded, that I should dishonor that high misterie of eloquence, and derogate from the dignitie of our English toonge, eyther to employ any figure or bestow one choyce English word vpon such disdained rakehels as those Conny-catchers. Therefore humbly I craue pardon, and desire I may write basely of such base wretches, who liue onely to liue dishonestly. For they seeke the spoyle and ruine of all, and like droanes eat away what others labor for. I haue set downe diuers other laws vntoucht in the first, as their Vincents law, a notable coosenage at bowles, when certain idle companions stand and make bettes, being compacted with the bowlers, who looke like honest minded citizens, either to win or loose, as their watch-woorde shall appoint, then the Prigger or Horsestealer, with all his ginnes belonging to his trade, and theyr subtile cawtels to amend the statute, next the curbing law, which some call but too basely hookers, who eyther diue in at windows, or else with a hook, which they

call a curb doe fetch out whatsoever, either apparell, linnen, or wollen, that be left abroad. Beside I can set downe the subtiltie of the blacke Art, which is picking of lockes, a coosenage as preiudiciall as any of the rest, and the nature of the Lift, which is he that stealeth any parcels, and sliely taketh them away. This (Gentlemen) haue I searcht out for your commodities, that I might lay open to the world, the villanie of these coosening caterpillers, who are not onely abhorred of men, but hated of God, liuing idley to themselues, & odiously to the worlde, they be those foolish children that Salomon speakes of, that feedes themselues fatte with iniquitie, those vntamed heifers, that will not breake the yoke of labor, but get their liuinges by the painfull thrift of other mens hands. I cannot better compare them, then vnto Vipers, who while they liue are hated & shunned of all men as most preiudiciall creatures, they feed vpon hemlocke and Aconiton, and such fatall & impoisoned herbs, but the learned apothecaries takes them, cuts off their heades, and after they be imbowelled of their flesh, they make the most pretious Mithridate: so these Conny-catchers, Foists, Nips, Priggars, & Lifts, while they liue are most improfitable members of the common-wealth: they glut themselues as Vipers vpon the most lothsome, and detestable sinnes, seeking after folly with greedinesse, neuer doing



any thing that is good, till they be trust vp at Tiburn: and then is a most wholsome Mithridate made of thē, for by their deaths others are forewarned for falling into the like enormities. And as the Gangrena is a disease incurable by the censure of the Chirugians, vnlesse the member where it is fixt be cut off: so this vntoward generation of loose Libertines, can by no wholsome counsailes, nor aduised perswasions be disswaded from their loth-som kind of life, till by death they be fatally, and finally cut off from the common-wealth, whereof spake *Ouid* well in his *Metamorphosis*.

*Immedicabile vulnus,*

*Ense resecandum est ne pars sincera trahatur.*

Sith then this cursed crue, these Machauilians, that neither care for God nor deuill, but set with the Epicures gaine, and ease, their *summum bonum* cannot be called to anie honest course of liuing: if the honorable and worshipfull of this land looke into their liues, and cut off such vpstarting suckars that consume the sap from the roote of the Tree, they shall neither loose their reward in heauen, nor passe ouer anie day wherein there wil not be many faithful praiers of the poore, exhibited for their prosperous successe and welfare: so deeply are these monstrous cooseners hated in the common wealth. Thus Gentlemen I haue discouered in briefe, what I meane to prosecute at large: though not eloquently, yet so effectually, that if you be

not altogether carelesse, it may redownd to your commoditie: forewarned, forearmed: burnt children dread the fire, and such as neither counsaile, nor other mens harmes may make to beware, are worthie to liue long, and still by the losse. But hoping these secrets I haue set abroach, and my labours I haue taken in searching out those base villanies, shall not be onely taken with thankes, but applied with care: I take my leaue with this farewell. God either confound, or conuert such base minded Cooseners.

Yours R. G.

### A TALE OF A NIP

**I** WIL tel you, gentlemen, a pleasant tale of a most singuler experienced and approued Nip, and yet I will not name any, although I coulde discourse of one that is *magister in Artibus*, both a Nip, and a Foist, and a Cros-biter. But I will tell you a merry Jigge of a notable Nip, named (no more of y<sup>t</sup> if you loue me.) Who taking a proper youth by S. *Dauie* to his prentice to teach him the order of striking, and foisting: so wel instructed him in his misterie that he could as wel skil of a cuttle-boong as a barber of a rasier, and being of a prompt wit, knew his places, persons, and circumstances, as if hee had beene a morrall philosopher. The old colte, this graund Cut-purse by Saint

*Laurence* let that suffice, did (as the tale was told to me) supply *Mannerings* place at the buriall of the olde ladie *Rich*, and comming thither verie deuout to heare the sermon, thrust with his apprentice amidst y<sup>e</sup> throng, and lighted upō a rich parson in *Essex* not far off from *Rochford* hundred, the Priest was facst afore with Veluet, & had a good boong, which the Nip espying, began to iustle the priest very hard at the entrance of the doore, and his apprentice strooke the strings, and took his boong cleere: the Priest litle suspecting it, fell to his praiera, and yet for all his other meditations, he felt for his purse, which when he mist, he fetcht a great sigh, and said, Lord haue mercie vppon me: what ayle you sir, said one that stode by: nothing said the priest, but I thinke vpon the sinnes of the people, and so past it ouer with silence. Well it so fell out that when the boong came to sharing, the prentise and his maister fel out, and the maister controld him, and said, art not my prentise, and hast not bound thy selfe to me for three yeares? is not thy gettings my gaines? then why doest thou stand vpon the Snap? Why saies the prentise, brag you so of my yeeres, shall I be made a slaue because I am bound to you: no, no, I can quittance my indenture when I list: his maister in a great rage asked how, marry saies the prentise, I will nip a boong, or draw a pocket openly, and so betaken, arraigned, and condemned

and then Bull shall cancell my indentures at Tiburne, and so I will not serue you, a day after: at this his maister laught, and was glad for further aduantage, to yeeld the bucklers to his prentise, and to become frends. For approuing the trueth of this, my self conferd with the Priest, and he told me thus much.

*The discouery of the Prigging Law, or nature of horse stealing.*



TO the effecting of this base villany of Prigging or horse-stealing, there must of necessity be two at the least, and that is the Priggar and the Martar. The Priggar is he that steales the horse, and the Martar is he that receiues him, and chops and changeth him away in any Faire, Mart, or other place where any good rent for horses is: and their method is thus. The Priggar if he be a Launce-man, that is, one that is already horst, then he hath more followers with him, and they ride like Gentlemen, and commonly in the form of Drouers, and so comming into pasture grounds, or inclosures, as if they ment to suruey for Cattell, doe take an especiall and perfect view, where prankers or horses be, that are of worth, & whether they haue horse-locks or no, then lie they houering about till fit oportunitie serue, & in the night they take him or them away, and are skilfull in the blacke Art, for picking open the tramels or lockes, and so make hast till they be out of those quarters. Now if the Priggars steale a horse in Yorkeshire, commonly they haue vent for him in Surrey, Kent, or sussex, and their Martars that receiue them at his hand, chops them away in some blind Faires after they haue kept them a moneth or two, till the hue and crie be ceast and past ouer. Now if their horse be of any great value, and sore sought after, and so branded or eare-markt, that they can hardly sell him without

extreame daunger, either they brand him with a crosse brand vpon the former, or take away his eare-marke, & so keepe him at hard-meat till he be whole, or els sel him in Corne-wall or Wales, if he be in Cumberland, Lincoln-shire, North-folke or Suffolke: but this is, if the horse bee of great valour & worthie the keeping: Mary if hee be onely coloured and without brands, they will straight spotte him by sundry pollicies, and in a blacke horse, marke saddle spots, or star him in the forehead, and change his taile, which secrets I omit, least I shuld giue too great a light to others to practise such leud villanies. But againe to our Launce-men Priggars, who as before I saide, cry with the Lapwing farthest from their nest, and from their place of residence, where their most abode is, furthest from thence they steal their horses, and then in another quarter as far of they make sale of them by the Martars means, without it be some base Priggar that steales of meere necessity, and beside is a Trailer. The Trailer is one that goeth on foot, but meanelly attired like some plaine gran of the Countrey, walking in a paire of boots without spurs, or else without boots, hauing a long staffe on his necke, and a blacke buckram bag at his back, like some poore client that had some writing in it, and there he hath his saddle, bridle and spurs, stirhops & stirhop-leathers, so quaintly and artificially made, that it

may bee put in y<sup>e</sup> slop of a mans hose: for his sadle is made without any tree, yet hath it cantle and bolsters, only wrought arteficially of cloth and bombast, with foldes to wrap vp in a short roome: his stirhops are made with vices and gins, that one may put them in a paire of glooues, and so are his spurs, & then a little white leather head-stal and rains, with a small scotish brake or snaffle, all so featlie formed, that as I said before, they may be put in a buckram bag. Now, this Trailer he bestrides the horse which he priggeth, and saddles and bridles him as orderly as if he were his own, and then carieth him far from the place of his breed, and ther sels him. Oh will some man say, it is easier to steale a horse then to sel him, considering that her Maiesty & the honorable priuy Counsail, hath in the last Act of Parliament made a strickt statute for hors-stealing, and the sale of horses, whose Prouiso is this: that no man may buy a horse vntould, nor the toule be taken without lawful witnesses, that the party that sellethe the horse is the true owner of him, vpon their oath and special knowledg, & that who buyeth a horse without this certificat or prooffe, shalbe within the nature of felony, as well as the party that stealeth him. To this I aunswere, that there is no act, statute, nor law so strickt conueid, but there be straight found starting holes to auoid it, as in this. The prigar when he hath stolne a horse, & hath

agreed with his Martar, or with any other his confederate, or with an honest person to sel his horse, bringeth to the toulcr, which they call the rifler, two honest men, either appparelled like cittizens, or plaine countrey yeomen, & they not onely affirme, but offer to depose, that they know the hors to be his, vpon their proper knowledg, although perhaps they neuer saw man nor horse before, and these periurde knaues, bee commonly old Knights of the post, that are foisted off from being taken for baile at the Kings bench, or other places, & seeing for open periuries they are refused, there they take that course of life, and are wrongly called querries: but it were necessary, and verie much expedient for the common wealth, that such base rogues should be lookt into, and be punished as well with the pillory, as the other with the halter. And thus haue I reuealed the nature of Priggars, or horse-stelers briefly, which if it may profit, I haue my desire, but that I may recreate your minds with a pleasant historie, marke the sequel.

*A pleasant storie of a horse-stealer.*

NOT far from *Tenro* in *Cornwel*, a certain prigar, a horse-stealer being a lance-man, surueying the pastures thereabouts, spied a faire blacke horse without any white spot at al about



him, the horse was faire and lusty, wel proportioned, of a high crest, of a lusty coūtenance, well buttokt, & strongly trust, which set the priggars teeth a water to haue him: wel he knew the hardest hap was but a halter, & therefore he ventred faire, and stole away the prauncer: and seeing his stomacke was so good as his lims, he kept him wel, and by his policy seared him in the forehead, and made him spotted in the backe, as if he had bin saddle bitten, and gaue him a marke in both eares, whereas he had but a mark in one. Dealing thus with his horse, after a quarter of a yere, that al hurly burly was past for the horse, hee came riding to *Tenro* to the market, and there offered him to be sold: the gentleman that lost the horse was there present, and looking on him with other gentlemen, likte him passing well, and commended him, in so much that hee bet the price of him, bargained, & bought him: and so when hee was tould, and the horse-stealer clapt him good lucke: wel my frend, quoth the gentleman, I like the horse the better, in that once I lost one, as like him as might be, but mine wanted these saddle spots, and this star in the forehead. It may be so sir said the priggar, & so the gentleman and he parted. The next day after, he caused a letter to be made, and sent the gentleman word that hee had his horse againe that he lost, onely he had giuen him a mark or two, and for that hee was well rewarded, hauing

twentie marke for his labour. The gentleman hearing how hee was cosened by a horse-stealer, and not onely robd, but mockt, let it passe till hee might conueniently meete with him to reuenge it. It fortun'd not long after, that this Launce-man priggarr was brought to *Tenro* Gaile for some such matter, and indeede it was about a mare that he had stolne: but as knaues haue friends, especially when they are well monied, he found diuers that spake for him, and who sayde it was the first fault, and the party plaintife gaue but slender euidence against him, so that the Iudge spake fauourably in his behalfe: the Gentleman as then sat on the bench, & calling to mind the Priggars countenance, how hee had stolne his horse and mockt him, remembred he had the letter in his pocket that he sent him, and therefore rising vp, spake in his behalf, and highly commended the man, and desired the Iudges for one fault he might not be cast away, & besides, may it please you (quoth hee) I had this morning a certificate of his honestie and good behauior sent me, and with that he deliuered them the letter, and the Iudge with the rest of the bench, smiled at this conceit, and askt the fellow if he neuer stole horse from that gentleman: no quoth the priggarr, I know him not, your honors mistakes me: sayd the gentleman, he did borrow a black horse of me, & markt him with a starre in the forehead, and askt twenty marke of mee for his

labour, and so discourst the whole matter: whereupon the quest went vpon him, and condemned him, and so the prigger went to heauen in a string, as many of his faculty had don before.

*The vincents Law, with the discouery therof.*

THE Vincents Law is a common deceit or cosenage vsed in Bowling-allies, amongst the baser sort of people, y<sup>t</sup> commonlie haunt such leud and vnlawfull places, for although I will not discommend altogether the nature of bowling, if the time, place, person, and such necessary circumstances be obserued: yet as it is now vsed, practised & suffered, it groweth altogether to the maintenance of vnthrifts, that idley and disorderly make that recreation a cosenage. Now the manner and forme of their deuise is thus effected: the Bawkers, for so the common hanter of the Ally are tearmed, aparelled like very honest and substantiall citizens come to bowle, as though rather they did it for sport then gaines, and vnder that colour of carelesnes, doe shadow their pretended knauery: wel to bowls they go, and then there resort of all sortes of people to beholde them, some simple men brought in of purpose by som cosening companions, to be stript of his crownes, others, Gentlemen, or Marchants, that delighted with the sport, stand there as beholders to passe away the time: amongst these

are certaine old sokers, which are lookers on, and listen for bets, either euen or od, and these are called Gripes: and these fellowes will refuse no lay, if the ods may grow to their aduantage, for the gripes and the bawkers are confederate, and their fortune at play euer sorts according as the gripes haue placed their bets, for the Bawker, he marketh how the laies goes, and so throes his casting, so that note this, the bowlers cast euer booty, and doth win or loose as the bet of the gripe leadeth them: for suppose 7. be vp for the game, and the one hath three and the other none, then the vincent, for that is the simple man that stands by, and not acquainted with their cosenage, nor doth so much as once imagine that the bawkers that carry the countenance of honest substantial men, would by any meanes, or for any gaines, be perswaded to play booty. Well, this vincent, (for so the cooseners or gripes please to terme him) seeing three to none, beginneth to offer ods on that side that is fairest to win: what ods saies the gripe? three to one saies the vincent, no saies the gripe it is more, and with that they come to foure for none, then the vincent offers to lay 4. to one, I take six to one saies the gripe, I lay it saies the vincent, and so they make a bet of some six crownes, shillings, or pence, as the vincent is of ability to lay, and thus will sundrie take their ods of him: wel, then the bawkers go forward with their bowles, and winne

another cast, which is five, then the vincent growes proud, and thinks both by the ods and goodnes of the play, that it is impossible for his side to loose, and therefore takes and laies bets freely, then the bawkers fortune begins to change, and perhaps they come to three for five, and still as their lucke changes, diuersity of bets growes on, till at last it comes to five & five, and then the gripe comes vpon the vincent and offers him ods, which if the vincent take, he loseth all, for vpon what side the gripe laies, that side euer wins, howe great soeuer the ods bee at the first in the contrary part, so that the cosenage growes in playing booty, for the gripe and the bawker meet together at night, and there they share whatsoeuer tearmage they haue gotten, for so they call the money that the pore vincent loseth vnto them. Now, to shadow the matter the more, the bawker that wins and is afore-hand with the game, will lay franckly that he shall win, and wil bet hard, and lay great ods, but with whome? either with them which play with him, that are as crafty knaues as himselfe, or els with the gripe, & this makes the vincent stoop to the blow, and to loose all the money in his purse. Besides, if anie honest men that holdes themselues skilfull in bowling, offer to play any set match against these common Bawkers, if they feare to haue the worse or suspect the others play to bee better then theirs, then they haue a tricke in watering of the alley, to

giue such a moisture to the banke, that hee that offers to strike a bowle with a shore, shal neuer hit it whilst hee liues, because the moisture of the banke hinders the proportion of his aiming.

Diuers other practises there are in bowling tending vnto coosenage, but the greatest is booty, and therefore would I wish all men that are carefull of their coyne, to beware of such coseners, & none to come in such places, where a haunt of such hel-rakers are resident, & not in any wise to stoope to their bets, least he be made a vincent, for so manifest & palpable is their cosenage, that I haue seene men stone-blind offer to lay bets franckly, although they can see a bowl no more then a post, but onely hearing who plaies, and how the old Gripes make their lais: seeing then as the game is abused to a deceit, that is made for an honest recreation, let this little be a caueat for men to haue an insight into their knauerie.

*For the Foist and the Nip, as in the first booke.*



THE professors of this Law, being somewhat dasht, and their trade greatly impouerished, by the late editions of their secret villanies, seeke not a new meanes of life, but a new method how to fetch in their Conies, and to play their pranckes: for as greeuous is it for them to let slip a country farmer come to the terme, that is wel aparelled, &

in a dirty paire of boots, (for that is a token of his newe comming vp, & a full purse) as it was for the boies of Athens, to let *Diogenes* passe by without a hisse. But y<sup>e</sup> country men hauing had partly a caueat for their cosenage, feare their fauorable speeches & their curteous salutations, as deadly as the Greekes did y<sup>e</sup> whistle of *Poliphemus*. The cony-catcher now no sooner commeth in company, & calleth for a paire of cards, but straight the pore cony smoaks him, & sais: Masters, I bought a booke of late for a groat, y<sup>t</sup> warnes me of Card-play, least I fall among Conny-catchers. What, doost thou thinke vs to be such, saies the verser? no Gentlemen saies the Conny, you may be men of honest disposition, but yet pardon me, I haue forsworne cards euer since I read it: at this reply, God wot, I haue many a coosening curse at these Conny-catchers hands, but I solemnly sticke to the old prouerbe: the Foxe, the more he is curst, the better hee fares: but yet I will discouer some of their newest deuises, for these caterpillers resemble the *Syrens*, who sitting with their watching eies vpon the rockes, to allure Sea-passengers to their extreame preiudice, sound out most heauenly melodie in such pleasing cords, that who so listens to their harmony, lends his eare vnto his own bane & ruine: but if any wary Ullisses passe by and stop his eares against their inchauntments, then haue they most delightfull iewels to shew him, as



glorious objects, to inueigle his eie with such pleasant vanities, that comming more nigh to beholde them, they may dash their ship against a rocke and so vtterly perish. So these Conny catchers, for that I smoakt them in my last booke, and laid open their plots & policies, wherewith they drew poore connies into their hay, seeking with the Orators *Beneuolentiam captare*, & as they vse rethorical tropes and figures, the better to draw their hearers with the delight of varietie: so these moathes of the Common-wealth, apply their wits to wrappe in wealthy farmers with strange and vncoth conceits. Tush, it was so easie for the Setter to take vp a Cony before I discovered their cosenage, that one stigmaticall shameles companion amongst the rest, would in a brauerie weare parsly in his hat, and said, he wanted but *Aqua vitæ* to take a cony with, but since he hath lookt vpon his feet, and valed his plumes with the peacock, and swears by all the shooes in his shop, I shall be the next man he means to kil, for spoyling of his ocupation: but I laugh at his brauados, and though he speaks with his Enoch's voice, and weares a long sword like a morice pike, were it not I thinke he would with *Batillus* hang himselfe at my inuectiue, his name should be set downe, with the nature of his follies: but let him cal himselfe home from this course of life, and this cosenage, and I shall be content to shadow what he is with pardon,

but from this digression again, to the double diligence of these Cony-catchers whose new sleights, because you shal the more easily perceiue, I will tell you a storie pleasant and worth the noting.

*A pleasant tale of a hors, how at Vxbridge he cosened a Cony-catcher, and had like to brought him to his neckeurse.*

**I**T fortun'd that not long since, certaine Conny-catchers met by hap, a Pranker or hors-stealer at Vxbridge, who took vp his Inne where those honest crue lodged, and as one vice followes another, was as ready to haue a cast at cards, as he had a hazard at a horse: the Conny catchers who supt with him, feeling him pliant to receiue the blow, began to lay the plot how they might make him stoope all the money in his purse, and so for a pint of wine drewe him in at cardes, by degrees as these rake-hels do, *Lento gradu*, measure all things by minutes, he fell from wine to money, and from pence to pounds, that hee was stript of all that euer he had, as well crownes, apparel, as iewels: that at last to maintaine the maine, and to check vies with reuies, he laid his horse in the hazard and lost him: when the priggar had smoakt the game, and perceiued he was bitten of all the bite in his bung, and turned to walke penny-lesse in Mark-lane, as the prouerb is, he began to chafe, and to

swear, and to rap out gogs Nownes, and pronounes, while at voluntarie hee had sworne through the eight parts of speach in the Accidence, auowing they had cosened him both of his money and horse. Whereuppon the grosse Asse more hardy then wise, vnderstanding the Conny-catchers were gone, went to the Constable and made hue and crie after them, saying: They had robd him of his horse: at this the Headborowes followed amaine, and by chaunce met with an other hue and cry that came for him that had stollen, which hue and crie was serued vpon the horse-stealer, and at that time as farre as I can either coniecture or calculate, the Conny-catchers were taken suspicious for the same horse, and the rather for that they were found loose liuers, and could yeeld no honest methode or means of their maintenance, vppon this, for the horse they were apprehended, and bound ouer to the Sessions at Westminster, to answer what might be objected against them in her Maiesties behalfe. Well, the horse-stealer brake from his keepers, and got away, but the rest of the rascall crue, the Conny-catchers I meane, were brought to the place of iudgment, and there like valiant youthes, they thrust twelue men into a corner, who found them guiltlesse for the fact, but if great fauour had not bene shoven, they had beene condemned, and burnt in the eares for rogues. Thus the horse-stealer made hue and crie after the Conny-catchers,

and the man that had lost the horse, he pursued the hors-stealer, so that a double hue and crie passed on both sides, but the Conny catchers had the worse, for what they got in the bridle they lost in the saddle, what they coosened at cards, had like to cost them their neckes at the Sessions, so that when they were free and acquitted, one of the Conny-catchers in a merry vaine, said, he had catcht many Connies, but now a horse had like to caught him, and so deeply quoth hee, that *Miserere mei*, had like to haue beene my best mattins. Thus we may see, *Fallere fallentem non est fraus*, euery deceit hath his due, he that maketh a trap falleth into the snare himselfe, and such as couet to coosen all, are crost themselues oftentimes almost to the crosse, and that is y<sup>e</sup> next neighbour to the gallows. Wel Gentlemen, thus I haue bewraied much and got litle thanks, I mean of the dishonest sort, but I hope such as measure vertue by her honours, will iudge of me as I deserue. Marry the goodman Cony-catchers, those base excrements of dishonesty, report they haue got one, ( ) I will not bewray his name, but a scholler they say he is, to make an inuectiue against me, in that he is a faouurer of those base reprobats: but let them, him, and al know, the proudest pesant of them all, dare not lift his plumes in disparagement of my credit, for if he doo, I wil for reuenge only appoint the iakes-farmers of

London, who shall case them in their filthy vessels, and carry them as doong to manure the baren places of Tiborne, and so for Conny-catchers an end.

*A discourse, or rather discovery of a Nip and the Foist, laying open the nature of the Cutpurse and Pickpocket.*



**N**OW Gentlemen, Marchants, Farmers, and Tearmers, yea whatsoeuer he be that vseth

to cary money about him, let him attentiuely heare what a peece of new-found Philosophie, I will lay open to you whose opinions, principles, aphorismes, if you carefully note and retaine in memory, perhaps saue some crownes in your purse ere the yeare passe, and therefore thus: The Nip and the foyst, although their subiect is one which they worke on, that is, a well lined purse, yet their manner is different, for the nip vseth his knife, and the foist his hand: the one cutting the purse, the other drawing the pocket: but of these two scuruy trades, the Foist holdeth himself of the highest degree, and therefore, they tearme themselues Gentlemen foists, and so much disdain to be called Cut-purses, as the honest man that liues by his hand or occupation, in so much that the Foist refuseth euen to weare a knife about him to cut his meat withal, least he might be suspected to grow into the nature of the nip, yet as I said before is their subiect and haunt both a like, for their gaines lies by all places of resort and assemblies therefore their chiefe walkes is Paules, Westminster, the exchange, Plaies, Bear-garden, running at Tilt, the L. Maiors day, any festiuall meetings, fraies, shootings, or great faires: to bee short, wheresoever is any extraordinary resort of people, there the nip and the foist haue fittest oportunity to shew their iugling agilitie. Commonly, when they spy a Farmer or marchant, whome they suspect

to be well monied, they follow him hard vntill they see him drawe his purse, then spying in what place he puts it vp, the stall or shadow beeing with the Foist or Nip, meets the man at some straight turne, and iustles him so hard, that the man marueiling, and perhaps quarrelling with him, the whilest the foist hath his purse, and bids him farwel. In Paules (especially in the tearme time) between x. and xi., then is their howers, and there they walke, and perhaps, if there be great presse, strike a stroke in the middle walke, but that is vppon some plaine man that stands gazing about, hauing neuer seene the Church before, but their chiefest time is at diuine seruice, when men deuoutly giuen do go vp to heare either a sermon, or els the harmony of the Queere and the Organes: there the nip, and the foist as deuoutly as if he were som zealous person, standeth soberly, with his eies eleuated to heauen, when his hand is either on the purse or in the pocket, surueying euery corner of it for coyne, then when the seruice is done, & the people prese away, he thrusteth amidst the throng, and there worketh his villanie. So like wise in the markets, they note how euery one putteth vp his purse, and there either in a great presse, or while the partie is cheapning of meat, the Foist is in their pocket, & the Nip hath the purse by the strings, or somtimes cuts out the bottome, for they haue stil their stals following

them, who thrusteth or iustleth him or her whome the foist is about to draw: So likewise at Plaies, the nip standeth there leaning like some mannerly gentleman against the doore as men go in, and there finding talke with some of his companions, spieth what euery man hath in his purse, & wher in what place, and in which sleeue or pocket he puts the boung, and according to that so hee worketh, either where the thrust is great within, or els as they come out at the dores: but suppose that the foist is smoakt, and the man misseth his purse, and apprehendeth him for it, then straight, he either conueith it to his stall, or els droppeth the boung, and with a great braue, hee defieth his accuser: and though the purse be found at his feet yet because hee hath it not about him, hee comes not within compasse of life.

Thus haue they their shifts for the Lawe, and yet at last so long the pitcher goeth to the brooke that it commeth broken home: and so long the foists put their villanie in practise, that West-ward they goe, and there solemnly make a rehearsall sermon at tiborne. But againe, to the places of resort, westminster, I marry, that is their chiefest place that brings in their profite, the tearm-time is their haruest, and therefore like prouident husbandmen they take time while time serues, & make hay while the sun shines, following their clients, for they are at the Hall very early, and



there worke like bees, haunting euerie court, as the Exchecker-chamber, the Starchamber, the kings bench, common-plees, and euerie place where the poore client standeth to heare his Lawier handle his matter, for the poore man is so busied with his causes, and so carefull to see his counsell, and to ply his Atturney, that hee thinketh least of his purse, but the Foist or Nip he watcheth, and seeing the Client draw his purs to pay some charges or fees necessary for the court, marketh where he putteth it, and then when hee thrusteth into the throng, either to answeere for himselfe, or to stād by his Counseller to put him in minde of his cause, the Foyst drawes his pocket and leaues the poore client pennillesse. This do they in al courts, and go disguised like seruing-men, wringing the simple people by this iugling subtity: well might therefore the Honourable and Worshipfull of those Courtes doe, to take order for such vilde and base-minded Cut-purses, that as the Lawe hath prouided death for them, if they be taken, so they might bee rooted out, especiallie from Westminster, where the poore Clients are vndone by such Rogish catchers.

It boots not to tell their course at euerie remooue of her Maiestie, when the people flock together, nor at Bartholomew Faire, on the Queenes day at the Tilt-yard, and at all other places of assemblie: for let this suffice, at any great

presse of people or meeting: There the foist and the Nip is in his kingdome. Therefore let all men take this caueat, that when they walke abroad amid any of the forenamed places, or like assemblies, that they take great care for their purse, how they place it, and not leaue it carelesse in their pockets or hose, for the Foist is so nimble-handed, that he exceeds the iugler for agilitie, and hath his *legiar de maine* as perfectly. Therefore an exquisite Foist must haue three properties that a good Surgeon should haue, and that is, an Eagles eie, a Ladies hand, and a Lions heart. An Eagles eie to spy out a purchase, to haue a quicke insight where the boung lies, and then a Lions heart, not to feare what the end will bee, and then a Ladies hande to be little and nimble, the better and the more easie to diue into any mans pocket.

These are the perfect properties of a Foist: but you must note that there be diuersities of this kind of people, for ther be Citty Nips and Countrey Nippes, which haunt from faire to faire, and neuer come in London, vnlesse it be at Bartholomew faire, or some other great and extraordinarie assemblies. Now there is a mortall hate betweene the country foist and the city foist: for if y<sup>e</sup> citie foist spy one of the country foists in London, straight he seeks by som means to smoke him. And so the countrey Nip, if he spy a Citty Nip in any faire, then hee smoakes him straight, and

brings him in danger, if he flee not away the more speedilie. Beside, there be women Foists and women Nippes, but the woman foyst is the most dangerous, for commonly there is some olde, Bawde, or Snout-faire strumpette, who inueigleth either some ignorant man, or some yong youth to folly, shee hath straight her hand in the pocket, and so foists him of all that he hath. But let all men take heed of such common harlots, who either sit in the streets in euenings, or els dwel in bawdy houses, and are pliant to euery mans lure. Such are alwaies Foists and Pickpockets, and seek the spoile of all such as meddle with them, and in coosening of such base-minded leachers, as giue themselues to such lewd companie, are worthy of whatsoeuer befallles, and sometimes they catch such a spanish pip, that they haue no more hair on their heads, then on their nailes.

But leauing such Strumpets to their soules confusion, and bodies correction in Bride-wel: Againe to our nips and foists, who haue a kind of fraternity or brother-hood amongst them, hauing a hall or place of meeting, where they confer of waightie matters, touching their workemanship, for they are prouident in that, euery one of them hath some trustie frend whom he calleth his Treasurer, and with him hee laies vp some ratable portion of euery purse hee drawes, that when neede requires, and he is brought in danger, hee may haue money

to make composition with the partie. But of late there hath bin a great scourge fallen among them: for now if a purse be drawn of any great value, straight the party maketh freindes to some one or other of the Counsell, or other inferior her Maiesities Justices, and then they send out warrants if they cannot learne who the Foist is, to the keepers of Newgate, that they take vp all the nips and foists about the Citty, and let them lie there while the money be reanswered vnto the partie, so that some pay three pound, nay fieve pound at a time, according as the same losse did amount vnto, which doth greatly impouerish their trade, and is likewise an hinderaunce to their figging law.

Therefore about such causes grow their meetings, for they haue a kind of corporation, as hauing Wardens of their company, and a hall. I remember their Hall was once about Bishopsgate, neere vnto Fishers folly, but because it was a noted place, they haue remooued it to Kent-street, and as far as I can learne, it is kept at one *Laurence Pickerings* house, one that hath bene, if he be not still, a notable Foist. A man of good calling he is, and well allied, brother in law to *Bul* the hangman. There keep they their feasts and weekly meetings, fit for their company.

Thus haue I partly set downe the nature of the Foist, and the Nippe, with their special haunts, as a caueat to all estates to beware of such wicked

persons, who are as preiudiciall vnto the Commonwealth, as any other faculty whatsoever: and although they be by the great discretion of the Judges and Justices daily trust vp, yet stil there springeth vp yong that grow in time to beare fruit fit for the gallows: let then euery man be as carefull as possiblie he may: and by this caueat take heed of his purse, for the pray makes the theefe, and there and end.

*A merrie tale, how a Miller had his purse cut  
in Newgat-market.*

**I**T fortun'd that a Nip and his staull drinking at the three tuns in Newgate market, sitting in one of the roomes next to the street, they might perceiue where a meal-man stood selling of meale, and had a large bag by his side, where by coniecture was some store of mony: the old cool, the old cut-purse I mean, spying this, was delighted with the shew of so glorious an object, for a full purse is as pleasing to a cutpurse eie, as the curious phisnomy of *Venus* was to the amorous God of warre: and entring to a mery vain (as one that counted that purchase his own) discover'd it to the nouice and bad him goe and nip it: the young toward scholler, although perhaps hee had striken som few strokes before, yet seeing no great press of people, & the meal-mans hand often vpon his

bag, as if he had in times past smokt some of their facultie, was halfe afraid, and doubted of his own experience, and so refused to do it. Away villaine said the old nip, art thou faint harted, belongs it to our trade to despaire? if thou wilt onely do common worke and not make experience of some hard matters to attempt, thou wilt neuer be maister of thine occupation, therefore trie thy wits and doe it. At this the yong stripping stalks me out of the Tauerne, and feeling if his cuttle boong were glib and of a good edge, went to this meal-man to enter combat hand to hand with his purse: but seeing the meale-mans eie was still abroad, and for want of other sport that he plaid with his purse, he was afraid to trust either to his wit or fortune, and therefore went backe againe without any act atchieued. How now saith the old Nip, what hast thou done? nothing q<sup>d</sup>. hee, the knaue is so wary, that it is vnpossible to get any purchase there, for hee standes playing with his purse for want of other exercise. At this his fellowe lookes out and smiles, making this reply, and doost thou count it impossible to haue the meal-mans boung? lend me thy knife, for mine is left at home, and thou shalt see me strike it straight, and I will shew thee a method, how perhaps herafter to do the like by my example, and to make thee a good scholler, and therefore goe with me, and doe as I shal instruct thee, begin but a fained quarrel, and when I giue

thee a watch-word, then throwe flower in my face, and if I do misse his purse, let me be hanged for my labour: with that hee gaue him certaine principles to obserue, and then paid for the wine and out they went together. Assone as they were come vnto the meal-man, the olde Nip began to iest with the other about the Millers sacke, and the other replied as knauishly. At last the elder called the younger Rogue. Rogue, thou Swaine quoth he, doest thou, or darest thou dishonour me with such a base title? And with that taking a whole handfull of meale out of the sacke, threw it ful in the olde Nips necke, and his brest, and then ranne his way. He being thus dusted with meale, in-treated the meale-man to wipe it out of his necke, and stoupt down his head. The meal-man laughing to see him so raied and whited, was willing to shake off the meale, and the whilst hee was busie about that, the Nip had stroken the purse and done his feat, and both curteouslie thanked the meale-man, and closely went away with his purchase. The pore man thinking little of this cheat, began againe to play with his purse strings, and suspected nothing till he had sold a peck of meale, and offered for to change money, and then he found his purse bottomlesse, which stroke such a quandary to his stomacke, as if in a frostie morning hee had droonke a draught of small beere next his heart, hee began then to exclaime against such villains,

and cald to minde, how in shaking the dust out of the Gentlemans necke, hee shaked his money out of his purse, and so the pore meal-man fetcht a great sigh, knit vp his sacke and went sorrowing home.

*A kinde conceit of a Foist performed in Paules.*

WHILE I was writing this discouery of foysting, & was desirous of any intelligence that might be giuen mee, a Gentleman, a friend of mine, reported vnto me this pleasant tale of a foist, and as I well remember it grewe to this effect. There walked in the midle walke a plaine Country farmer, a man of good wealth, who had a well lined purse, onely barely thrust vp in a round slop, which a crue of foists having perceiued, their hearts were set on fire to haue it, & euery one had a fling at him, but all in vaine, for he kept his hand close in his pocket, and his purse fast in his fist like a subtil churle, that either had been forwarnd of Pauls, or els had afortime smokt some of that faculty. Well, howsoeuer it was impossible to do any good with him he was so warie. The foists spying this, strained their wits to the highest string how to compasse this bounge, yet could not al their politike conceits fetch the farmer ouer, for iustle him, chat with him, offer to shake him by the hand, all would not serue to get his hand out of his



pocket. At last one of the crue that for his skill might haue bene Doctorat in his misterie, amongst them all choose out a good foist, one of a nimble hand and great agility, and said to the rest thus: Masters it shall not be said such a base pesant shall slip away from such a crue of Gentlemen foists as wee are, and not haue his purse drawen, and therefore this time Ile play the staul my selfe, and if I hit him not home, count mee for a bungler for euer, and so left them and went to the farmer and walkt directly before him and next him three or foure turnes, at last standing still, he cried alas honest man helpe me, I am not well, & with that sunck downe suddenly in a sown, the pore Farmer seeing a proper yong Gentleman (as hee thought) fall dead afore him, stept to him, helde him in his armes, rubd him & chaft him: at this there gathered a great multitude of people about him, and the whilest the Foiste drewe the farmers purse and away: by that the other thought the feat was done, he began to come something to himselfe againe, and so halfe staggering, stumbled out of Paules, and went after the crue where they had appointed to meet, and their boasted of his wit and experience. The farmer little suspecting this villany, thrust his hãd into his pocket and mist his purse, searcht for it, but lining and shels & all was gone, which made the Country man in a great maze, that he stood stil in a dumpe so long, that a

Gentleman perceiuing it asked what he aild: what aile I sir quoth he, truly I am thinking how men may long as wel as women, why doest thou coniecture that honest man quoth he? marry sir answers the farmer, the gentleman euen now that sowned heer, I warrant him breeds his wiues childe, for the cause of his sodaine qualme that he fel down dead grew of longing: the gentleman demanded how he knew that, wel enough sir quoth he and hee hath his longing too, for the poore man longed for my purse, and thanks be to God he hath it with him. At this al the hearers laught, but not so merrily as the foist and his fellows, that then were sharing his money.

*A quaint conceit of a Cutler and a Cutpurse.*

**A**NIP hauing by fortune lost his cutle boung, or hauing not one fit for his purpose, went to a cunning Cuttler to haue a new made, and prescribed the Cutler such a method and form to make his knife, and the fashion to bee strong, giuing such a charge of the finenes of the temper, and setting of the edge, that the Cuttler wondred what the Gentleman would do with it, yet because he offered so largely for the making of it, the cutler was silent and made few questions, onely he appointed them the time to come for it, and that was three daies after: wel, the time being expired,

the gentleman nip came, & seeing his knife liked it passing wel, and gaue him his money with aduantage. The Cutler desirous to knowe to what vse hee would put it, saide to the Cutpurse thus, sir quoth hee, I haue made manye kniues in my daies, and yet I neuer saw any of this forme, fashion, temper, or edge, and therefore if without offence I pray you tell me how or to what will you vse it?

While thus he stood talking with the nip, he spying y<sup>e</sup> purse in his aprone, had cut it passing cunningly, and then hauing his purchase close in his hand, made answer, in faith my friend, to dissemble is a folly, tis to cut a purse withal and I hope to haue good handsel: you are a merry gentleman quoth the Cutler, I tell true q<sup>d</sup>, the cutpurse and away he goes. No sooner was hee gone from the stall, but there came an other and bought a knife, and should haue single money againe, the cutler thinking to put his hand in his bag, thrust it quite through at the bottome, all his money was gone and the purse cut: perceiuing this, & remembering how the man praid he might haue good handsel, he fetcht a great sigh, & said, now I see, hee that makes a snare, first fals into it himselfe. I made a knife to cut other mens purses, and mine is the first hansell, well, reuenge is fallen vpon me, but I hope the rope will fall vpon him, and so hee smoothed vp the matter to himselfe, least men shuld laugh at his strange fortune.

*The discovery of the Lifting Law.*

THE Lift, is he that stealeth or prowleth any plate, iewells, boults of saten, veluet, or such parcels from any place, by a sleight conueyance vnder his cloke, or so secretly that it may not be espied: of lifts there be diuers kinds as there natures be different, some base rogues, y<sup>t</sup> lift when they com into alehouses, quart pots, platters, clokes, swords, or any such paltry trash, which commonly is called pilfering or petulacery, for vnder y<sup>e</sup> cullor of spending two or three pots of ale, they lift away any thing that commeth within the compasse of their reach, hauing a fine & nimble agility of the hand as the foist had: these ar the common and raskall sort of lifts, but the higher degrees & gentlemen lifts haue to the performance of their faculty 3. parties of necessity: the Lift, the Marker & the Santar: the lift attired in the forme of a ciuill Countrey Gentleman, comes with the Marker into some mercers shop, haberdashers, goldsmiths, or any such place where any particular parcels of woorth are to be conuaid, and there he cals to see a boult of Saten, veluet, or any such commoditie, and not liking the pile, culler or bracke, he cals for more, & the whiles he begins to resoluue which of thẽ most fitly may be lifted, and what Garbage (for so he cals the goods stolne) may be most easilie conuaid, then he calles to the Mercers man and

sais, sirrha, reach me that peece of veluet or satten, or that iewell, chaine, or peece of plate, and whilst the fellow turns his back, he commits his garbage to the marker: for note, the Lift is without his cloake, in his doublet and hose, to auoid the more suspection: The Marker which is the receyuer of the Lifts luggage, giue a winke to the Santar that walkes before the window, and then the Santar going by in great hast, the Marker cals him and saies, sir a word with you. I haue a message to do vnto you from a verie friend of yours, and the errand is of some importance: truly sir saies the santar I haue verie vrgent busines in hand, and as at this time I cannot stay, but one woorde and no more saies the Marker, and then hee deliuers him whatsoeuer the Lift hath conuaied vnto him, and then the Santar goes his way, who neuer came within the shop, and is a man vnknownen to them all: suppose he is smoakt and his lifting lookt into, then are they vpon their pantophels, because there is nothing found about them: they defie the world for their honestie, because they be as dishonest as any in the world, and swear as God shall iudge them they neuer saw the parcel lost, but oathes with them are like wind out of a bellowes, which being coole kindleth fire, so their voves are without conscience, and so they call for reuenge: Therefore let this be a caueat to all occupations, sciences and misteries, that they beware of the

Gentleman Lift, and to haue an eie to such as cheapen their wares, and not when they call to see new stufte to leaue the old behinde them, for the fingers of Lifts are fourmed of Adamant, though they touch not yet they haue vertue attractiue to draw any pelfe to them, as the adamant doth the Iron. But yet these Lifts haue a subtill shift to blinde the world, for this close kind of coose-nage they haue when they want money: one of them apparels himselfe like a Countrey Farmer, and with a Memorandum drawn in some legall forme, comes to the chamber of some Counsaier or Sargeant at Lawe, with his Marker and his Santar, and there tels the Lawyer his case and desires his counsaile, the whilest the Marker and the Santar lay the platforme for any rapier, dagger, cloake, gowne or any other parcell of worth, that is in the withdrawing or vtter chamber, and assoone as they haue it they go their way: then whẽ the lawier hath giuen his opinion of the case the lift requires, then hee puts in some demurre or blind, and saies he will haue his cause better discouered and then he wil come to his worship againe, so taking his leaue without his ten shillings fee, he goes his waies to share what his cõpanions had gottẽ: the like method they vse with Scriueners, for comming by the shop and seeing any garbage worth the lifting, one starteth in to haue an obligation or bill made in hast, and while the Scriuener is

busie, the Lift bringeth the marker to the blow, & so the luggage is caried away. Now, these Lifts haue their speciall receiuers of their stolne goods, which are two sundrie parties, either some notorious Bawds in whose houses they lie, and they keepe commonlie tapping houses, and haue yong trugs in their house which are consorts to these Lifts and loue them so deere, that they neuer leaue them till they come to the gallows, or els they bee Brokers, a kind of idle sort of leud liuers, as pernicious as the lift, for they receiue at their hands whatsoever Garbage is conuaied, be it linnen, wollen, plate, Jewels, and this they doe by a bill of sale, making the bill in the name of Iohn a Nokes or Iohn a Stiles, so that they shadow the Lift, & yet keepe them selues without the danger of the law. Thus are these brokers and bawds as it were, efficient causes of the Lifters villany, for were it not their alluring speeches, and their secret consealings, the Lift for want of receiuers should bee faine to take a new course of life, or els be continually driuen into great extreames for selling his garbage: and thus much breifly for the nature of the lift.

*The discovery of the courbing law.*

THE Courber, which the common people call the Hooker, is he that with a Curb (as they tearm it) or hook, doth pul out of a window any

loose linnen cloth, apparell, or els any other household stuffe whatsoever, which stolne parcels, they in their Art call snappings: to the performance of this law there be required, duly two persons, the Curber and the Warpe: the curber his office is to spye in the day time fit places wher his trade may be practised at night, and comming unto anie window if it be open, then he hath his purpose, if shut, then growing into the nature of the blacke Art, hath his trickers, which are engins of Iron so cunningly wrought, that he wil cut a barre of Iron in two with them so easily, that scarcely shal the standers by heare him: then when hee hath the window open and spies any fat snappings worth the Curbing, then streight he sets the Warp to watch, who hath a long cloke to couer what soeuer he gets: then doth the other thrust in a long hooke some nine foote in length (which he calleth a curbe) that hath at the end a crooke, with three tynes turned contrary, so that tis vnpossible to misse, if there be any snappings abroad. Nowe this long hooke they call a Curbe, and because you shall not woonder how they carrie it for being spied, know this that it is made with ioyntes like an angle rod, and can be conueyed into the forme of a truncheon, and worne in the hand like a walking staffe vntill they come to their purpose, and then they let it out at the length, and hook or curb whatsoever is lose and within the reach, and then he conueies it



to the warp, and from thence (as they list) their snappings go to the Broker or to the Bawd, and there they haue as readie money for it, as merchantes haue for their ware in the exchange: beside, there is a Diuer, which is in the verie nature of the Curber, for as he puts in a hooke, so the other puts in at the windowe some little figging boy, who plaies his part notably, & perhaps the youth is so wel instructed, that he is a scholler in the black art, and can picke a lock if it be not too crosse warded, & deliuer to the Diuer what snap-pinges he finds in the chamber. Thus you heare what the Curber doth and the Diuer, and what inconuenience growes to many by their base villainies: therefore I wish all menseruants and maids, to be carefull for their maisters commodities, & to leaue no loose ends abroad, especially in chambers where windows open to the streete, least the Curber take them as snappings, and conuey them to the cooseninge broker. Let this suffise, and nowe I well recreate your wits with a merry tale or two.

*Of a Courber, and how cunningly he was taken.*

**I**T fortun'd of late that a Courber and his Warp went walking in the dead of the night to spie out some window open for their purpose, and by chaunce came by a noblemans house about London, and saw the windowe of the Porters lodge open,

and looking in, spied fat snappinges, and bade his Warpe watch carefully, for there woulde be purchase, and with that tooke his Courbe, and thrust it into the chamber, and the Porter lying in his bed, was awake and sawe all, and so was hys bedfellow that was yeomã of the wineseller. The Porter stole out of his bed to see what woulde be done: the firste snapping the courber light on was his liuery coate: as he was drawing it unto the window, the porter easily lifted it off, & so the courber drew his hooke in vaine, the whilest his bedfellowe stole out of the chamber, and raised vp two or three more, and wēt about to take them, but still the roague plyed his businesse, and lighted on a gowne that he vsed to sit in in the porters lodge, and warily drew it, but when it came to the window, the porter drew it off so lightly, that the hooker perceiued it not: then when he sawe his courbe woulde take no holde, he swore and chafte, and tolde the Warpe he had hold of two good snaps, and yet mist them both, and that the fault was in the courbe: then he fell to sharpening and hammering of the hooke, to make it holde better, and in againe he thrusts it, and lightes vppon a payre of buffe hose: but when he had drawne them to the window, the porter tooke them off againe, which made the courber almost mad, and swore he thought the diuel was abroad to night he had such hard fortune: nay sayes the yeoman of the seller,

there is three abroad, and we are come to fetch you and your hookes to hell: so they apprehended these base rogues and carried them into the Porters lodge and made that their prison. In the morning a crue of Gentlemen in the houses, sate for Judges (in that they woulde not trouble their Lord with such filthie Caterpillers) and by them they were found guiltie, and condemned to abide forty blowes apeece with a bastinado, which they had solemnly paid, and so went away without any further damage.

*Of the subtiltie of a Courber in coosoning a Maid.*

A MERRY iest and as subtile, was reported to me of a cunning Courber, who had apparreld himselfe maruellous braue, like some good well-fauoured yong Gentleman, & in stead of a man had his Warp to wait vpon him: this smooth faced rogue comes into moore fields, and caused his man to cary a pottle of Ipocras vnder his cloke, and there had learned out amongst others that was drying of cloaths, of a very wel fauoured maid that was there with her Flasket of linnen, what her Maister was, where she dwelt, and what her name: hauing gotten this intelligence, to this maid he goes, courteously salutes her, and after some pretie chat, tels her how hee saw her sundrie times at her Maisters doore, and was so besotted with her beautie, y<sup>t</sup> he had made inquirie what her

qualities were, which by the neighbours he generally heard to bee so vertuous, that his desire was the more inflamed, and therevpon in signe of good wil, and in further acquaintance, hee had brought her a pottle of Ipocras: the maid seeing him a good proper man, tooke it very kindly, and thankt him, and so they drunke the wine, and after a little louers prattle, for that time they parted.

The maids hart was set on fire, that a Gentleman was become a suter to her, and she began to thinke better of her selfe then euer she did before, and waxed so proud that her other suters were counted too base for her & there might be none welcome but this newcom gentlemã her louer: wel, diuers times they appointed meetings, that they grew very familiar, and he oftentimes would come to her Maisters house, when all but she & her fellow maids were in bed, so that he and the Warpe his man did almost knowe euery corner of the house: it fortunèd that so long he dallied, that at length he meant earnest, but not to marry the maid whatsoever he had done els, and comming into the fieldes to her on a washing day, saw a mighty deale of fine Linnen, worth 20. pound as he coniectured: wherupon he thought this night to set downe his rest, and therefore he was very pleasant with his louer, and told her that that night after her Maister and mistres were in bed, he would come, & bring a bottle of Sacke with him and drinke

with her, the maid glad at these newes, promised to sit vp for him and so they parted: till about ten a clocke at night, when he came and brought his man with him, and one other Courber with his tooles, who should stand without the dores: to be briefe, welcom he came, & so welcome as a man might be to a maid: hee that had more mind to spy the clothes, then to look on her fauour, at last perceiued them in a Parlor that stood to the streetward, and there would the maid haue had him sit, no sweeting quoth he, it is too neere the street, we can neither laugh nor be merry, but euerie one that passeth by must hear vs: vpon that they remoued into another roome and pleasant they were, and tippled the Secke round, til all was out, and the gentleman swore that he would haue another pottle, and so sent his man, who tolde the other Courber that stood without, where the window was he should worke at, and away goes he for more secke and brings it very orderly, & then to their cups they fall againe, while the courber without had not left one rag of Linnen behinde. Late it grew, and the morning began to wax gray, and away goes this curber and his man, leauing the maid very pleasant with his flattering promises vntill such time as poore soule, she went into the Parlor, and mist all her mistres Linnen, then what a sorrowful hart she had, I refer to them that haue greeued at the like losse.

*The Discoverie of the blacke Art.*

THE Black Art is picking of Locks, and to this busie trade two persons are required, the Charme and the Stand: the Charme is he that doth the feat, and the Stand is he that watcheth: there be more that do belong to the burglary for conuauing away the goods, but only two are imploud about the lock: the charme hath many keies and wrests, which they call picklocks, and for euery sundry fashion they haue a sundry terme, but I am ignorant of their words of art, and therefore I omit them, onely this, they haue such cunning in opening a Locke, that they will vndoo the hardest lock though neuer so wel warded, euen while a man may turn his back: some haue their instruments from Italy made of steele, some are made heere by Smiths, that are partakers in their villanous occupatiōs: but howsoeuer, well may it be called the blacke art, for the Deuill cannot do better then they in their faculty. I once saw the experience of it my selfe, for being in the Counter vpon cōmandement, there came in a famous fellowe in the blacke Art, as strong in that qualitye as *Samson*: The partie now is dead, and by fortune died in his bed, I hearing y<sup>t</sup> he was a charme began to enter familiarity with him, and to haue an insight into hys art, after some acquaintance, he told me much, and one day being in my chamber I shewed him

my Deske, and askt him if he could picke that litle lock that was so wel warded, & too little as I thought for any of his gins. Why sir saies he, I am so experienced in the black Art, that if I do but blow vpon y<sup>e</sup> lock, it shall fly open, and therefore let me come to your Deske, & do but turne fve times about, and you shal see my cunning, with that I did as hee bad me, and ere I had turned fve times, his hand was rifling in my Deske verye orderly, I wondred at it, and thought verily that the Deuil and his dam was in his fingers, much discommodity grows by this blacke art in shops & noble mens houses for their plate, therefore are they most seuerely to be lookt into by the honourable and worshipfull of England, and to end this discourse as pleasantly as the rest, I wil rehearse you a true tale done by a most worshipful knight in Lancashire, against a Tincker that professed the black art.

*A true and merry tale of a Knight and a Tincker  
that was a Picklocke.*

NOT far off from Bolton in the moors, there dwelled an ancient Knight, who for curtesie & hospitality was famous in those parts: diuers of his Tenaunts making repaire to his house, offred diuers complaints to him, how their locks were pickt in the night, and diuers of them vtterlye

vndone by that meanes, and who it should bee they could not tell, onely they suspected a Tinker that went about the Countrey, and in all places did spend verye lauishly: the Knight willingly heard what they exhibited, and promised both redresse and reuenge, if he or they could learne out the man. It chanced not long after their complaints, but this iolly Tinker (so expert in the black art) came by the house of this Knight, as the old gentleman was walking before the gate and cried for worke: the Knight straight cōiecturing this should be that famous rogue that did so much hurt to his Tenants, cald in and askt if they had any worke for the Tinker, the cooke answered there was three or foure old Ketles to mend, come in Tinker, so this fellow came in, laid downe his budget & fell to his worke, a black Jacke of beere for the tinker sais the Knight, I know tinkers haue dry soules: the tinker hee was pleasant and thankt him humbly, the Knight sate downe with him and fell a ransacking his budget, and asked wherefore this toole serued and wherefore that, the tinker told him all, at last as he tumbled among his old brasse, the Knight spied 3. or 4. bunches of picklocks, he turnd them ouer quickly as though hee had not seene them and said, wel tinker I warrant thou art a passing cunning fellow and well skild in thine occupation by the store of thy tools thou hast in thy budget: in faith



if it please your worship quoth he, I am thanks be to God my crafts master: I, so much I perceiue that thou art a passing cunning fellowe quoth the Knight therefore let vs haue a fresh iacke of beere and that of the best and strongest for the tinker: thus he past away the time pleasantly, and when hee had done his worke he asked what hee would haue for his paines? but two shillings of your worship quoth the tinker: two shillings saies the Knight, alas tinker it is too little, for I see by thy tooles thou art a passing cunning workeman, hold there is 2. shillings, come in thou shalt drink a cup of wine before thou goest, but I pray thee tell mee which way trauelest thou: faith sir quoth the tinker all is one to me, I am not much out of my way wheresoeuer I go, but nowe I am going to Lancaster: I pray thee Tinker then quoth the K. carry me a letter to the Jailor, for I sent in a fellow thither the other day and I would send word to the Jailor he should take no bale for him, mary that I wil in most dutifull maner quoth he, and much more for your worship then that: giue him a cup of wine quoth the Knight, and sirrha (speaking to his Clarke) make a letter to the Jailor, but then he whispered to him and bad him make a *mittimus* to send the tinker to prison, y<sup>e</sup> clark answered he knew not his name, Ile make him tel it thee him selfe saies the Knight, and therefore fall you to your pen: the Clarke began to write his *mittimus*,

and the Knight began to aske what countrey man he was, where he dwelt, what was his name, the tinker told him all, and the Clarke set it in with this *prouiso* to the Jailor, that he should keepe him fast bolted, or else he would breake away. As-soone as the *mittimus* was made, sealed & subscribed in forme of a letter, the Knight took it and deliuered it to the Tinker and said, giue this to the chief Jailor of Lancaster, and here is two shillings more for thy labour, so the tinker took the letter and the mony, and with manie a cap and knee thanked the olde Knight and departed: and made hast till he came at Lancaster, and staid not in the town so much as to tast one cup of nappy Ale, before hee came to the Jailor, and to him very briefly he deliuered his letter, the Jailor tooke it and read it, and smilde a good, and said tinker thou art welcome for such a Knights sake, he bids me giue thee the best intertainment I may, I sir quoth the Tinker, the knight loues me well, but I pray you hath the courteous Gentleman remembred such a poore man as I? I marry doth he Tinker, and therefore sirra quoth he to one of his men, take the tinker into the lowest ward, clap a strong paire of bolts on his heeles, and a basill of 28. pound weight, and then sirra see if your pick-locks will serue the turne to bale you hence? at this the tinker was blank, but yet hee thought the Jailor had but iested: but when he heard the *Mittimus*,

his heart was cold, and had not a word to say, his conscience accused him, and there hee lay while the next Sessions, and was hanged at Lancaster, and all his skill in the black Art could not serue him.















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