# SOME OLD ENGLISH WORTHIES

BY DOROTHY SENIOR

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EDITED WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION BY DOROTHY SENIOR



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# Contents

Methinke it is better to passe the tyme with such a merry
Jeste and laugh thereat and doo no Synne, than
for to wepe and do Synne.—*Copland.*

# Introduction

LONG, long ago, when he knew nothing of an alphabet, man sought amusement for his leisure other than the slaughter of his enemies and the pursuit of game. But since these things constituted, for him, the main business of life, he could not forget them even in his hours of relaxation ; so, if he carved rude pictures on bone, they were pictures of himself engaged in these pursuits ; and if he composed chants, equally rude, they too set forth his exploits at large. With the latter mode of expressing himself he introduced, without knowing it, a great art—the art of Literature.

Ballad-making came, in time, to be the peculiar province of a certain class whose business it was to preserve the traditions of their race. To the oral minstrelsy of these tribal gleemen we owe our knowledge of ancient nations which had no other means of perpetuating their history. Not in Europe only, but in every inhabited quarter of the globe we find traces of the bards. They sang in verse because to 'catch the popular ear' it was necessary to adopt the fashion of rhyming. Poetry is, moreover, easier to remember than prose ; and the method has this additional recommendation, that its followers are less liable to err. The autocratic nature of metre will not suffer alterations ; whereas prose is more elastic and offers scope for the exercise of what Buckle calls the *principle of accumulation.*

*The Bar*

With the introduction of letters, however, when

*Metrical Romances*

the traditions formerly entrusted to the memories of wandering minstrels were permanently preserved by means of the new art, these human repositories of history found themselves in danger of losing their occupations. The bards therefore turned their attention to entertaining their hearers rather than to instructing them as heretofore, and began to embellish their recitals with marvellous fictions, very alluring to ignorant minds. The ultimate source of these fictions is hidden by the mists which veil from us that country of immemorial antiquity which lies 'very far off.' Dr Percy believed that they were introduced into Normandy by the Scalds, whose successors, substituting heroes of Christendom for the gods of Scandinavian mythology, propagated throughout France a revised version, which reached us after the Conquest. In strong contrast to these northern sagas were the voluptuous Eastern fables collected by pilgrims during their travels in the Holy Land, and repeated to admiring and credulous audiences at home. Many of the romances of chivalry, which came into being during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were founded on Welsh and Amorican legends, and this in spite of the fact that the Celtic dialect was unknown to those nations whose literature was strongly influenced by its traditions. The 'Brut' of Layamon (*circa* 1205) has been called 'the first metrical romance, after "Beowulf," which English literature possesses.' It is a translation of Wace's 'Brut' (1155), which in its turn was based on the *Historia Regum Britanniæ* of Geoffrey of Monmouth (1147), who transmitted to Europe the beginnings of its romance, but confesses that he too borrowed from another source.

*Effect of Superstition on Romance*

In the main, however, the early prose romances may be attributed to the fertile imaginations of their authors, who would have been the last to admit that they were not telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. On the contrary, whilst they cast reflections on the authenticity of the metrical versions, they presented their own fictions as historical facts to a public ready to swallow anything in the shape of a 'tall' story. Possibly these narratives were founded on fact; but the facts were so lavishly embroidered that they were lost to sight. Each fresh narrator added an individual touch. It was easier to conjure up the wildest fables to explain things which, to the ignorant mind saturated with a belief in the supernatural, seemed otherwise inexplicable, than it was to accept such things as being in the ordinary course of nature. The idea of an enchanter once conceived, miraculous powers were assigned to him as a matter of course. By superstition men sought to explain 'the mysteries of existence, and the secret agencies by which the operations of nature are conducted' (Prescott).

*Ancient English Fictions*

Yet, with all their shortcomings—one might almost say, because of them—these ancient English fictions constitute a vital link with the past history of our nation. They were the novels of our forefathers, who never wearied of hearing them repeated as they sat round the fire in the long winter evenings. For us they are much more—they are pictures of the past, wherein we may see our ancestors 'in such manner and fashion as they were in when that they lived.' Some of the tales (such as 'Friar Rush,' for instance, which stands last in the present volume) belong to no particular time or place. The underlying principles of the human mind do not vary. The

story which delights the English child may be found, slightly altered, amusing brown babies beside the Nile or Ganges, or the Eskimo stewing in his hut near the Pole. We repeat, to-day, fables which delighted men (who are 'but children of a larger growth') in times so far removed from ours that they are themselves become heroes of romance, and we scarce know if they really existed, or whether they are only the creatures of the fabulist's brain.

*Thomas of Reading*

As Thoms points out in his preface to the 'Early Prose Romances,' metrical versions have received abundant attention; but the *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana* was the first attempt to present a few only of the prose fictions in the form of a collection. Thoms himself reprinted ten of them, including the four which form the present series. Of these, 'Thomas of Reading' is the production of Thomas Deloney, silk-weaver by trade, ballad-writer and pamphleteer by inclination. An eighth edition of the history appeared in 1619, but no edition earlier than 1612 remains. The present version is taken from a copy of the edition of 1632. In its admixture of fact and fiction it is a type of the modern historical novel, and the earnest seeker after truth or 'local colour' is advised to take much of it *cum grano salis*; yet it contains allusions to manners and customs now obsolete, which are highly interesting. Coates, in his history of Reading, acknowledges the existence of 'Old Cole,' though he sneers at Deloney's narrative. 'Thomas Cole,' he says, 'in the time of *Edward I.* [Qy. Henry I.] was called the Rich Clothier of Reading. Though his name and reputation occasioned a fabulous and childish penny history, called the "History of Thomas of Reading"; yet we may learn from the

circumstance that Reading was even then famous for its trade of clothing.'

*History of the Clothing Trade*

The history of the clothing trade forms an interesting chapter in our commercial annals. Pennant is in error when he traces its antiquity only so far back as Edward III.'s reign. Cloth has been manufactured in Britain ever since—and possibly before—their Roman conquerors taught the natives to wear wool instead of skins. The Saxons understood the art of cloth-making, but exercised it sparingly, preferring to sell the raw material, which was taken to the Netherlands and returned as the manufactured article. A quantity of this cloth formed part of the toll exacted by Etheldred in 967 from the Easterlings of the Steelyard.

*The 'Scarlet Cruise'*

Within forty years of the Conquest Henry I. established the Weavers' Guild, which proves that a considerable trade existed at that time. Not many years later, two merchant ships bound for Dublin with English cloth and other goods were captured near that port by Swein, an Orkney pirate. This worthy, on his return home, amused himself by covering his sails with red cloth—part of his loot; and was pleased to call that his *Scarlet Cruise*.

Edward III. prohibited the exportation of English wool and the importation of foreign cloth; but he invited weavers from the Netherlands to settle here, in order that the English methods might be improved. Seventy families arrived in 1330 and took up their abode in the ward of Candlewick. The cloth manufacture of England reached its perfection in 1361, when the wool staple was removed from Calais and held at nine different towns, the chief being Westminster. In 1378 it was again removed from

*Origin of Staple Inn*

Westminster to Staple Inn; and in 1397 a weekly market was established at Blackwell Hall, London. In 1528 our trade to the Netherlands was one of our most important branches of commerce. That year, Henry VIII. confirmed the charter of the Guild of Clothworkers, first incorporated by letters patent of Edward IV. in 1482, under the name of the 'Fraternity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Shearmen of London.' The company was reincorporated by Queen Elizabeth, who changed its first title to that of 'the Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Freemen of the Art and Mystery of Clothworkers of the City of London,' which charter was confirmed by Charles I. in 1634.

*Charters*

*Two Noble Women*

If Deloney's story contained nothing else of interest, it is the setting for a pearl of great price—the character of Margaret, which is worthy to rank with that of Chaucer's Griselda, 'the flower of wifely patience.' Both made goodness lovable, and by their daily lives proved that it is possible for the actual to resemble, in some measure, the ideal. Both were ennobled and uplifted by misfortunes which would only have embittered weaker souls or crushed them to the earth. Deloney is at his best when he draws Margaret with touches so light yet so unerring that greater writers—and he was not a great writer—may well envy him his skill. The farewells of Duke Robert and Margaret can scarcely be read with dry eyes; and they are the more touching because there is no striving after pathos. In previous dialogues between the lovers we are conscious, now and again, of something a trifle pompous, not to say bombastic; but here we have the curt, simple sentences by which alone true

feeling is able to express itself in moments of stress. Indeed, if we except the passages above mentioned, this simplicity is characteristic of the whole story; and it never fails to reach its mark. So clearly, yet so naturally, are the foibles of each actor in the little serio-comedy depicted that we have only to close our eyes to see their owners in the flesh. Cole heads the procession; an honest, upright citizen whose end was as unexpected as it was undeserved. The rest follow—Simon of Southampton, who 'esteemed a mess of pottage more highly than a venison pasty,' but shrewd and kindly withal; Tom Dove, lusty lover of music and women, whose openhandedness was his ruin; Old Bosom, in his two coats and multitudinous footwear, and his young wife, 'fair as a lily in her red petticoat and waistcoat,' with an eye on Cuthbert of Kendal, amorous and secret; Margaret, also in red, with her broad-brimmed hat, bound for the hayfields, or barefooted, with ashes on her head and a hair-shirt tormenting her tender flesh, about to bid farewell to a world she found passing cruel; the gallant Duke; bluff Henry the King—for each of these we have a hearty welcome; their very faults have made them our friends.

*A Sinister Figure*

But here comes one from whom in horror we recoil—for the brand of Cain is on his brow. It is the murderer Jarman, furtive, sinister; who, scared by the strange manner of his intended victim (and indeed we are startled ourselves as we read how the screech-owl cried and the raven croaked close beside the window, on that fateful night!), like Macbeth and the cat in the adage, let '*I dare not* wait upon *I would*,' until, against his better judgment, he was persuaded by his more callous wife to do the deed. Let

him pass on, with his guilty partner, along the road which leads to the gallows and a well-merited reward !

*Human Nature*

We feel, more and more, as the story is unfolded, that human nature varies but little. The defection of Dove's servants in his hour of misfortune shows us that even in those days there were some who held that kindnesses, unasked, deserved no gratitude. The clothier's wife, desirous of 'London' garments, got her own way by a method which could hardly be improved upon by languishing ladies of the early Victorian era. Could we put the clock back to the time when primitive man inhabited the earth, no doubt we should find primitive woman working on his feelings in much the same way whenever a rival's splendour aroused yearnings after a new outfit of skins. Then, for the sake of peace, primitive man went out to snare the wherewithal to provide a fur petticoat ; and probably lost his life in the attempt, if the original owner of the fur refused to become a victim to the dictates of fashion. As for the revolt of the women (in Chapter II.) there is little to be said, save that it was perhaps conducted in a manner a trifle more dignified than are the tactics adopted by certain of their descendants of the present day.

*George a Green*

'George a Green' has been selected as a companion picture to 'Thomas of Reading,' although it is far inferior to the latter, from a literary point of view. The narrative does not run smoothly. At times there is an actual hiatus, and we are left to supply the details for ourselves. The jokes and puns are so obvious, suited to a period when wit, to be appreciated, had to possess the force of a mace-blow, rather than the delicate, piercing quality of a rapier's

thrust. But we meet with such old friends as Robin Hood and Maid Marian; and our interest in the doings of the martial Pindar is not allowed to flag. We feel we should like to know more of young Cuddy Musgrave, that brave and modest gentleman who, even in the first flush of victory, forgot himself in praise of another to whom, rather than to himself he considered honour was due. We dwell with pleasure on the picture of that mighty man of his hands, George—for the moment at peace—walking with Beatrice through the 'fields of green corn.' It is a touch worthy of Deloney. And we should like—we should dearly like to know how the friendship, which began with reprisals and ripened with kisses, prospered between Marian and Beatrice! But as far as I have been able to discover, history remains silent upon this extremely interesting point.

*Roger Bacon*

Our third story leads us far from these pleasant domesticities. With Friar Bacon we enter the region of the occult. This popular legend (taken from a chapbook dated 1661) affords a striking example of what the 'principle of accumulation' can accomplish, when allied with vulgar superstition and childish ignorance.

'It is dangerous to be wiser than the multitude,' opines the faithful translator of Bacon's 'Discoveries';* 'for that unruly Beast will have every topping head to be lopped shorter, lest it plot, ruine, or stop the light, or shadow its own extravagancies.' Roger Bacon was a man born out of due time—a philoso-

* 'Roger Bacon's *Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magic*, faithfully translated out of Doctor Dee's own copy by T.M. and never before in English. Printed for Simon Miller at the Starre in St Paul's Church-yard 1659.'

pher whose tenets were too far advanced for the understanding of his contemporaries. Society was not ready to receive his teaching, therefore—not wilfully, but through ignorance—it misconstrued his actions and motives, and saw in him not the greatest philosopher and natural scientist of his age, but a dangerous necromancer who had made the usual bargain with the devil, and had the whole Black Art at his finger-tips in return for his soul. Yet, in the opening chapters of his 'Discovery' the friar is very severe with those impostors who dabble in magic and proclaim, like Glendower, their ability to 'call spirits from the vasty deep.' There was in those days (when Bacon wrote) no Hotspur to quash such boasters with an airy

> 'Why, so can I; or so can any man:
> *But will they come when you do call for them?*'

*Superstition in the Middle Ages*

From the sixth to the tenth centuries superstition was rife in Europe, thanks to the priests who—the only people able to write—zealously propagated legends of the miraculous doings of saints and martyrs. As we have seen already, the public would swallow anything in the shape of omens, monstrous appearances in the heavens, and apparitions hot from hell. Their credulity was the greatest bar to progress, which they were taught to regard as rank blasphemy. 'Show us an enlightened man, and we will show you a sinner beyond all hope of redemption!' might have been their cry. Meanwhile the priests reaped a golden harvest, and fondly believed that their dominion was to be universal and eternal.

But that bubble was pricked. A spirit of scepticism

crept into men's minds, and they began to think for themselves. For years the 'unruly Beast' remained as muddle-headed as ever; but now and then some worker in the dark would see a gleam towards which he struggled. The glory of dawn was still far off in time, but there was a decided break in the clouds when Roger Bacon appeared; and he too, with clearer vision, followed the gleam.

*History of Roger Bacon*

His legendary history alone is firmly established in English literature; hence the records of his life are drawn mainly from traditions without satisfactory foundation. Born at Ilchester in 1214, of a family which, formerly in good circumstances, suffered reverses in Henry III.'s reign, he was educated at Oxford under the auspices of Robert Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln, who remained his great patron throughout his life. Edmund Rich (Archbishop of Canterbury), Adam de Marisco, and Richard Fitzacre also instructed and encouraged this ardent seeker after knowledge. As far as can be ascertained, Bacon was still at Oxford, and in orders, in 1233. He next proceeded to the university at Paris. His first residence there terminated about 1250; and from that date until 1257 he remained at Oxford and became a thorn in the side of the Church, who viewed with distrust the growth of knowledge amongst laymen. Fearful for her authority, she resorted to inquisitorial terrors; but she was powerless to prevent the struggle between faith and reason which then commenced, and which is going on still.

*Exiled to Paris*

In 1257 Roger Bacon—a pioneer of progress, and, as such, to be labelled 'Dangerous'—was sent to Paris, where he remained under restraint for ten years, during which period the use of books, instru-

ments, and writing materials was denied him. In 1265 Guy de Foulques (Papal Legate to England in the preceding year) became Pope Clement IV. During his residence in England he had endeavoured to communicate with Bacon, whom he urged to write a treatise on general science. On his accession to the pontificate he renewed his persuasions, with the result that Bacon complied, and, despite the difficulties of his position, wrote his 'Opus Majus' and 'Opus Minus.' That the work was completed in a very brief space of time we know from the fact that, two years later, in his 'Opus Tertium,' Bacon speaks of the 'Opus Majus' as having been already forwarded to Clement. During the period of composition the rigours of his confinement were relaxed; and in 1268 he returned to England, to devote himself to working out the particular sciences which he held to form the body of all knowledge.

*Opus Majus*

Bacon wrote on divinity, medicine, optics, music, astronomy, astrology, geography, philology, metaphysics, logic, cosmography and moral philosophy—a comprehensive list! He discovered the errors in the calendar and suggested the reformation afterwards adopted by Pope Gregory XIII. He understood the casting of metals, the arts of war and agriculture. Nothing escaped him—not even an old wife's remedy for warts or toothache. He claimed to have invented a system by which Hebrew, Greek and Arabic might be mastered in three days, geometry in a week. It is said that when the Jews were expelled from Oxford, certain of their books came into his hands, thus giving him the opportunity to study Hebrew rarities to which he could not otherwise have had access. In twenty years he spent

two thousand pounds on books and experiments—a prodigious sum, considering the times in which he lived.

The discoveries made by the famous Franciscan, and the celebrity he attained, excited envy ; and the report grew that he had recourse to the agency of evil spirits. In 1272 he made a vehement onslaught upon the clergy, who, he declared, obstructed the progress of true knowledge. Six years later the general of the Franciscan order, Jerome of Ascoli (afterwards Pope Nicholas IV.), held a chapter at Paris to consider the heretical propositions then troubling the Church's peace. Bacon was cited to appear, and again sent into prolonged confinement.

*Death of Bacon*

At this point tradition becomes confused. But a manuscript of his, dated 1292, proves that the philosopher was then alive and probably free. No doubt he owed his release to the death of Nicholas IV., which occurred in 1292, and to the liberality of Raymond Gaufredi, general of the Franciscan order from 1289 to 1294. As far as can be discovered, Bacon died in 1294, and is said to have been buried at Oxford.

*Legendary Lore*

So much for the dry bones of history. When we turn to examine the legendary lore which has grown up about the name of Friar Bacon, we find ourselves faced by an *embarras des richesses*. The present version of the old story contains a little which is authentic, and much which is purely fictitious. But, fact or fiction, the majority of us have been familiar with the tale from childhood. Who has not heard of the famous Brazen Head which was to have revealed such momentous secrets? Sir Thomas Browne, in his 'Vulgar Errors,' dismisses the legend with these somewhat obscure words :

*The Brazen Head*

'Every ear is filled with the story of Friar Bacon, that made a Brazen Head to speak these words *Time is*, which though they want not the like relation, is surely too literally received, and was but a mystical fable concerning the philosopher's great work, wherein he eminently laboured; implying no more by the copper head than the vessel where it was wrought; and by the words it spake, than the opportunity to be watched about the *tempus ortus*, or birth of the mystical child, or philosophical king of Lullius, the rising of the *terra foliata* of Arnoldus; when the earth, sufficiently impregnated with the water, ascendeth white and splendent; which not observed the work is irrecoverably lost, according to that of Petrus Bonus: *Ibi est operis perfectio, aut annihilatio, quoniam ipse die oriantur elementa simplicia, depurata, quae egent statim compositione, antequam volent ab igne.* Now letting slip this critical opportunity, he missed the intended treasure: which had he obtained, he might have made out the tradition of making a brazen wall about England, that is, the most powerful defence or strongest fortification which gold could have effected.'

*George Borrow's Explanation*

It was reserved for George Borrow to discover that the walls of brass with which England was to have been protected were but types of those 'roads of metal on which armies may travel with mighty velocity'—*i.e.* the railways.

*The Fulfilment of Prophecy*

Truly there is nothing new under the sun! In these days of motor cars and aeroplanes the Friar's speech to Henry in the sixth chapter (which, by the way, is taken bodily from the fourth and fifth chapters of the 'Discovery') reads like the fulfilment of prophecy. Apropos of flying machines, the philoso-

pher naïvely confesses that he never saw one, nor knew of anyone else who had seen one ; but he was 'exceedingly acquainted with a very prudent man who hath invented the whole artifice.'

*'Discovery of 'Miracles'*

This extremely interesting pamphlet (the 'Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magic') contains the recipe for making the Philosopher's Egg. The phraseology is somewhat involved, and the author at intervals impresses on his reader the necessity for great care in the perusal. 'Understand it if you can,' he urges ; and again : 'Mind and search what I say, for the speech is difficult.' He concludes : 'Know that when you have consummated your work, you are then to begin'—not a cheerful hearing for the student, who is left with a very confused idea as to what the 'work' really is ! The treatise ends with those words : 'Farewell. *Whoever unlocks these, hath a key which opens and no man shuts ; and when he hath shut, no man opens.*'

*The Thatcher of Oxford*

Anthony a Wood, in his 'Histories and Antiquities of Oxford,' tells a story of Bacon which is not recorded in the chapbook version, and which runs as follows :—Certain Cambridge scholars came to dispute with certain other scholars of Oxford, boasting that they would be victorious. Hearing this, Bacon disguised himself as a thatcher, and was at work on the roof of a house near the end of the town when the Cambridge men entered. They called to him in rhyming Latin, and he replied in the same manner. After a few minutes of this, the scholars decided that if a mere Oxford thatcher could beat them at their own game, to proceed further would be but to court disaster ; so they turned tail and fled.

It is amusing to note, in this connection, that in the contests between Bacon, Bungay and Vandermast, the Englishmen were always victorious.

*Recognition*

Generations pass away, and a period arrives when men begin to see things in their proper focus. Then they are filled with contempt for their forebears who smelt magic in what was, after all, a commonplace truth. The conjurer of one age becomes the teacher of the next; and succeeding ages acknowledge their indebtedness to one who, whilst he lived, was rewarded with obloquy and persecution. Thus has it been with Friar Bacon.

*Friar Rush*

Our series concludes with 'The History of Friar Rush,' which is frankly fictional. Friar Rush is the Brüder Rausch of Germany, the Broder Rus of Denmark. Grimm takes the name to mean *noise*; but Wolf inclines to *drunkenness*, from our old word *rouse*. My own opinion, which is only to be taken for what it is worth, I have set down in the form of a note at the end of this book.

Sir Walter Scott identifies the Friar with the *ignis fatuus*, popularly known as 'will-o'-the-wisp' or 'the Friar's lanthorn.' Reginald Scott classes him with Robin Goodfellow, and describes him as being 'for all the world such another fellow as this Hudgin'—*i.e.* Hödeken.* Harsnet, in his Declaration, says that 'if the bowl of curds and cream were not duly set out for Robin Goodfellow, *the Friar*, and Sisse the dairymaid, when then either the pottage was burnt, the cheese would not curdle, the butter would not come, or the ale in the vat would never have good head.'

*See 'George a Green,' *Note* DD.

Thus, to make confusion worse confounded, our hero is associated with the Kobolds or house-sprites. In this character, and under the name of Hödeken, he once took up his abode with the bishop of Hildesheim. During his residence in the palace Hödeken seems to have been of a most kind and obliging disposition. It was dangerous, however, to insult him. One of the scullions splashed him with dirty water, and he complained to the head cook. *Hödeken at Hildesheim*

'What!' laughed that functionary. 'Are you a spirit, and afraid of a little boy?'

'Since you will not punish him, I will soon show you how much afraid I am!' was the dignified retort.

That evening, Hödeken caught the boy asleep by the fire, strangled him, cut him up, and boiled him! When the cook rebuked him for this extremely reprehensible conduct, he flung toads all over the meat roasting on the spit; and soon afterwards tumbled the cook into the moat. People grew afraid lest he should set the town and palace on fire; and the bishop exorcised and banished him.

On another occasion Hödeken undertook to look after the flighty wife of a Hildesheimer during the latter's absence, but he found his task so difficult that he vowed never to meddle with such a matter again.

The Friar Rush of our story, an emissary of the devil sent to lead the monks into courses more evil than those which they were already pursuing, is a personage far more objectionable than Hödeken. Yet even he has his good points. At least, we find him on two occasions indulging in behaviour which is hardly in keeping with his usual pranks. His treatment of the lovesick priest is to be praised rather than blamed, unless we are to assume that *Friar Rush's good points*

the instinctive hatred of his fraternity for all churchmen was even stronger than his love of mischief for mischief's sake! Again, in his apparent desire to help the mad girl to a cure, he seems to have been actuated by kindly motives; yet he may have acted thus in the hope that it might lead to a reconciliation between the Prior and himself, and a renewal of his influence over the inmates of the monastery. If so, he was disappointed.

*The Moral*

Whatever the motives of its hero, the story has a moral, and that a plain one. Rush, in his wickedness, overreached himself, and opened the eyes of the monks to their own sins. Thus, out of Evil came Good, and the tempter himself induced his victims to use that great key to the gates of salvation which he sought to close against them for ever —the key which is called *Repentance*.

In preparing this volume for publication I have, whilst altering the phraseology and orthography throughout, endeavoured to preserve as far as possible the spirit of the originals. Certain passages have been softened, and others—not in any spirit of prudery—eliminated altogether. Those who wish to do so may read these passages in the original text. To justify myself for having made even these alterations, I would plead that, as they stood, the perusal of the tales was a task too laborious for the ordinary reader. They are now offered to the public in the hope that their modern dress may obtain for them a wider popularity than they at present enjoy, but which—as part of our National Literature—they so richly deserve.

DOROTHY SENIOR.

1909.

# THE HISTORY OF THOMAS OF READING

# THE HISTORY

OF

# THOMAS OF READING

*or*

## The Six Worthy Yeomen of the West.

Now the Sixth Time Corrected and Enlarged

By T[homas] D[eloney].

Thou shalt labour till thou return to dust.

London.
Printed by Eliz. Allde for
Robert Bird
1632.

# The Six Worthy Yeomen of the West

## INTRODUCTION

IN the days of King Henry the First, who first instituted the High Court of Parliament,* there lived nine men who were famed throughout England for their trade of clothmaking ; an art in those days held in great reputation, both in respect of the great wealth gained thereby, and also of the benefit it brought to the whole commonwealth.† The younger sons of knights and gentlemen, to whom their fathers could leave no land, were often taught this trade in order that by it they might live in comfort and end their days in prosperity. Among all crafts it was the chief, for it commanded the highest market, and by it our country became famous amongst the nations. It was thought that half the people in the land lived by it, insomuch that there were few, if any, beggars in the commonwealth. By means of this trade poor people whom God had blessed with many children, so ordered them that by the time they were six or seven years of age they were able to earn their own bread. Idleness was thus banished from our coasts, and it was a rare thing to hear of a thief in those days. It was not without cause, therefore, that clothiers were

* *Note* A. † *Note* B.

then both honoured and loved ; and amongst them in the first Henry's day, these nine were of the highest reputation—namely, Thomas Cole of Reading, Gray of Gloucester, Sutton of Salisbury, Fitzallan of Worcester (commonly called William of Worcester), Tom Dove of Exeter, and Simon of Southampton, *alias* 'Sup-broth.' These were called by the King, the six worthy husbands of the west. Besides these, there were three living in the north : Cuthbert of Kendal, Hodgekins of Halifax, and Martin Byram of Manchester. Every one of them employed a great number of men, spinners, carders, weavers, fullers, dyers, etc., to the great admiration of all who came to their houses to see them.

Now you must understand that these gallant clothiers, because of their respective dwelling-places, divided themselves into three companies. Gray of Gloucester, William of Worcester, and Thomas of Reading, since they journeyed by the same road to London, usually held converse together ; whilst Dove of Exeter, Sutton of Salisbury, and Simon of Southampton consorted together in the same way, meeting at Basingstroke ; and the three northern clothiers did likewise, though they did not meet the others until they reached Bosom's Inn* in London. Moreover, for the love and delight the western men had in each other's company they so arranged their wains and themselves should always meet one day in London at Gerard's Hall†. This Gerard was nicknamed ' the Giant,' for he surpassed in strength and stature all other men of that age ; of those merry-making and memorable deeds I shall tell you in the following discourse.

* *Note* C. † *Note* D.

*How King Henry sought the Favour of his Subjects, especially the Clothiers*

King Henry, who for his learning was called *Beauclerc*, was the third son of the renowned conqueror. After the death of his brother, William Rufus, he took upon himself the government of this kingdom in the absence of his brother Robert, Duke of Normandy,* who at that time was fighting against the infidels and was chosen King of Jerusalem, which office he, for love of his country, refused, and returned with great honour from the Holy Land. King Henry, when he heard of his brother's return, knowing that Robert would claim the crown, sought by all possible means to win the goodwill of his nobles, and to gain the favour of his commons by courtesy ; to obtain which, and to strengthen himself against his brother, he did them many benefits.

It chanced one day, as he, with one of his sons and several of his nobles rode from London towards Wales to appease the fury of the Welshmen, who had then begun to rise in arms against his authority,† that he met a great number of wains laden with cloth coming to London. Seeing so many drive by, one after another, he demanded whose they were, to which the waggon-drivers answered : 'Cole's, of Reading.' By-and-by the King asked another : 'To whom belongeth all this cloth ?' and was told : 'To Old Cole.' Soon afterwards he asked another man the same question, and again received the same reply. It must be explained that the King had met the wains in a place so narrow that he and his train were

* *Note* E. † *Note* F.

obliged to stand close to the hedge whilst the carts passed by. As these numbered above two hundred, it was nearly an hour before the King could proceed ; and he began, in time, to be displeased, though his admiration did much to qualify his fury. But at last, giving vent to his impatience, he said : 'I should think old Cole hath commissioned all the carts in the country to carry his cloth !'

'And if he hath, doth that grieve you, good sir ?' pertly asked one of the wain-men.

'Yes, good sir !' retorted our King. 'What say you to that, good sir ?'

The fellow, seeing the King frown, was abashed, though he knew not the speaker.

'Why, sir,' said he, 'if you be angry, nobody can hinder you ; for possibly, sir, you have anger at command.'

When he saw the man tremble and shake, the King laughed heartily, as much at his simple answer as at his fear. Soon afterwards the last wain went by, which gave passage to him and his nobles. As he rode, he asked many questions about the clothmaking trade, and gave orders for Old Cole to be brought before him on his return home, to the intent that he might confer with him, observing him to be a subject of great ability.

Within a mile of Staines, his Majesty met another company of wains laden with cloth, which sight inspired him with fresh admiration ; and demanding whose they were, he was told ; 'Goodman Sutton's, of Salisbury.' As often as he asked, he received this answer : *Sutton's, of Salisbury.*

'God send me many such Suttons !' said the King.

The further he travelled westward, the more wains

he met; upon which he said to his nobles that it would never grieve a king to die in defence of a fertile country and faithful subjects.

'I always thought that England's valour was greater than her wealth,' quoth he. 'Yet now I see her wealth is sufficient to maintain her valour, which I will seek to cherish in all that I may, and with my sword keep possession of that which I have. Kings and lovers can brook no partners, therefore let my brother Robert bethink him that although he was heir by birth to England's crown, yet I am King by possession. All who favour him will I account mine enemies, and will serve them as I did the ungrateful Earl of Shrewsbury,* whose lands I have seized and whose body I have banished.'

But we will now leave the King on his journey into Wales; and whilst awaiting his return, will in the meantime tell you of the meeting of these jolly clothiers in London.

### *How William of Worcester, Gray of Gloucester, and Old Cole of Reading, met at Reading; and of their Talk by the Way as they rode to London*

When Gray of Gloucester and William of Worcester were come to Reading, according to custom they called upon Old Cole to accompany them to London; and he duly awaited their coming, having provided a good breakfast for them. When they had refreshed themselves, they took their horses and rode on towards the city. As they journeyed, William of Worcester asked if they had heard of the Earl of Moraigne's escape out of the land.

* *Note* G.

'Where is he fled?' asked Gray.

'I wonder much at it, he being so high in the King's regard,' said Cole. 'I pray you, do you not know the cause of his going?'

'The common report,' quoth Gray, 'is this, that the covetous Earl, who through greedy desire never ceased begging the King for one thing or another, his request being now denied, hath of mere obstinacy and wilful forwardness banished himself and quite forsaken the country of Cornwall, having vowed never to set foot in England again. Rumour hath it that he and the late banished Earl of Shrewsbury have joined themselves with Robert, Duke of Normandy, against the King; which hath so inflamed his Majesty's wrath against them that their ladies and children are turned out of doors, helpless and friendless. I am told they wander up and down the countryside like beggars, yet although many pity them, few dare relieve them.'

'A lamentable hearing!' quoth William of Worcester.

Just then they espied Tom Dove with the rest of his companions riding to meet them; and when they reached them, they fell into pleasant converse, which shortened the long way to Colebrooke, where they always dined. There, according to old custom, good cheer was provided for them at the inn, for these clothiers were the chief guests who travelled along that road.

Now this was sure as an Act of Parliament, that Tom Dove could not digest his meat without music, nor drink wine without women; so his hostess, being a merry wench, would often call in two or three of her neighbours' wives to keep him company, and

they were all merry as magpies. This being a constant custom among them, the women's husbands began at length to take exception to it; whereupon a great controversy arose between them, with the result that being restrained, they became the more desirous of doing as they pleased.

'Now, gip!' quoth they. 'Must we be so tied to our tasks that we may not drink with our friends? Fie, fie upon these Yellow-hose! Will nothing serve your turn but this? Have we thus long been your wives, and do you now mistrust us? Verily you eat too much salt, and that makes you grow choleric! Bad livers judge others by themselves, but faith, you shall not bridle us like asses! We *will* go to our friends when we are sent for, and you may go hang!'

'Well,' quoth their husbands, 'if you be so headstrong, we will tame you. It is the duty of honest women to obey their husbands' commands.'

'And of honest men to think well of their wives!' was the retort. 'Yet who would sooner impeach their credit than their husbands, who charge them, if they do but smile, with being subtle; if they wink, then are they wily; if of sad countenance, then sullen; if forward, they are counted shrews, and sheepish if they are gentle. If a woman stay at home, you say she is melancholy; if she walk abroad, she is a gadabout; a prude if she be precise, a wanton if she be pleasant. There is no woman in the world who knows how to please you; we that are married wives do think ourselves accursed, living with so many woes. These men, of whose company you bid us beware, are (for aught that we ever saw) both honest and courteous, and far richer than you.

What reason is there, then, against our visiting them? Is their good will to be requited with scorn, that their expense may not be counterbalanced by our company! If a woman be disposed to play the light o' love, alas! alas! do you think that you can prevent her? Nay, we maintain that restraint of liberty forceth women to sin; for when a woman is not trusted, she cannot think herself beloved; and if not beloved, what cause hath she to care for such an one? Therefore, husbands, reform your opinions and do not make trouble for yourselves by mistrusting us. The clothiers, we tell you, are jolly fellows, and but for respect to our courtesy, they would scorn our company.'

Hearing their wives plead so well for themselves, the men knew not how to answer, but said the women would burden their own consciences if they dealt unjustly with their wedded lords; and so left them to go their own ways. Having thus conquered their husbands, the women would not, for all their frowns, lose the favour of their friends; of whom, above the rest, Tom Dove was the jolliest. So high was his reputation with the women that they made this song of him:

'Welcome to town, Tom Dove, Tom Dove,
The merriest man alive!
Thy company still we love, we love,
God grant thee well to thrive,
And never will we depart from thee,
For better or worse, my joy;
For thou shall always have our goodwill.
God's blessing on thee, sweet boy!'

This song went up and down throughout the

country, and at length became a dance among the common folk, so that Tom Dove, for his mirth and good-fellowship, was famous everywhere.

Now when the western clothiers came to London they were welcomed by the host, Gerard the Giant,* and as soon as they alighted they were saluted by the merchants who awaited their coming and always prepared for them a costly supper, at which they usually made their bargains; and for every bargain made, the merchants used to send presents to the clothiers' wives. The next morning they went to the hall [Gerard's], where they met the northern clothiers, who greeted them thus:

'What, my masters of the west, well met! What cheer? What cheer?'

'The best cheer our merchants could make us!' quoth Gray.

'Then you could not choose but *fare well*!' said Hodgekins.

'If you be weary of our company, *adieu*!' retorted Sutton.

'Not so,' said Martin Byram. 'Shall we not have a game before we go?'

'Yes, faith—for a hundred pounds!' agreed worthy Thomas.

'Well said, Old Cole!' cried the rest; and with that Cole and Gray sat down to dice with Martin and Hodgekins, and the luck being on Hodgekins' side, Cole's money began to fly.

'Now, by the Mass!' said he, 'my money doth shrink as badly as northern cloth.'

When they had played some time, Gray took his place, and recovered the money which Cole had

* *Note* D.

lost. Whilst they played, the rest, each of whom took pleasure in different things, satisfied every man his own humour. Thus, Tom Dove called for music, William of Worcester for wine, Sutton for merry tales. Simon of Southampton slipped away to the pottage-pot in the kitchen ; for he esteemed a mess of pottage more highly than a venison pasty.

But Cuthbert of Kendal was of another mind, for no meat pleased him so well as mutton laced in a red petticoat. You must know, by the way, that these jolly clothiers, when they went to dice, sojourned at Bosom's Inn,* which was so called after him that kept it. He, being a dirty sloven, went about with his nose in his bosom (wherefore he was known as Old Bosom), one hand in his pocket and the other on his staff. He might well have sat for a picture of cold Winter, for he always wore two coats, two caps, two or three pairs of stockings, and a high pair of shoes over which he drew on a pair of lined slippers ; yet he complained of cold. This lump of ice had lately married a young wife, who was as wily as she was wanton. Cuthbert took great delight in her company, and would often commune thus with her :

'I muse, good wife,' he would say.

'*Good* wife!' quoth she. 'Verily, sir, in my opinion there is none good but God, therefore call me mistress.'

'Fair mistress, I have often mused how you, a pretty woman, could find it in your heart to mate with such a greasy churl as your husband, an ill-mannered lout, a foul lump of kitchen stuff, the scorn of all men. How can you like one whom all women detest, or love such a loathsome creature?'

* See *Note* C on p. 32.

'Indeed, sir,' said she, 'I had but hard fortune in this respect, but my friends would have it so. In truth, my liking and my love for him are both alike —he never had the one, or never shall get the other ; yet I may tell you that before I married him there were several proper young men, suitors to me, who loved me as their lives, and glad was he who could get my company. Those were my golden days, wherein pleasure abounded ; but these be years of care and grief wherein my sorrows exceed. Now no man regardeth me, no man careth for me, and if they bear me good will in secret, who doth dare to show it ? This is an added grief, that my husband is so jealous I dare not look at a man, or he at once accuseth me of inconstancy, although I protest he hath no cause to do so.'

'In troth,' quoth Cuthbert, 'he should have cause to complain for somewhat, were I you !'

'As sure as I live, he shall, if he will not alter his ways !' declared she.

Hearing this, Cuthbert began to grow bolder, wishing to be her servant and secret friend. The better to obtain his desire he gave her various gifts, so that she began in time to listen to him. Yet, though she liked his soft speeches well enough, she would blame him and take him up very short now and again ; until at last Cuthbert became desperate and said he would drown himself rather than suffer her disdain.

'O my sweetheart, not so !' cried she then. 'God forbid I should be the death of any man. Be comforted, dear Cuthbert, and take this kiss in earnest of further kindness. But if thou wilt have my favour, thou must be wise and circumspect, and in

my husband's sight I would have you always to find fault with my doings—blame my bad housekeeping, dispraise my person, and take exception to everything, whereby he will be as well pleased as Simon of Southampton is with a mess of pottage.'

'Dear mistress,' quoth he, 'I will fulfil your charge to the uttermost, if you will promise not to take my jest for earnest.'

'Thy foulest speeches I will esteem the fairest, and take thy dispraise as praise, turning each word to the contrary,' she answered. 'Now for the present *adieu*, good Cuthbert, for supper-time draweth nigh, and it is meet for me to look to my meat.'

At that moment down came Old Bosom, calling to his wife: 'Ho, Winifred, is supper ready? They have done playing, above, therefore let the chamberlain set the table.'

'By-and-by,' returned she. 'It shall be done straightway.'

'How now, my masters, who wins?' asked Cuthbert, when he had rejoined his companions.

'Our money walks westward,' said Martin. 'Cole hath won forty pounds of me, and Gray hath done well too.'

'The best news is, they will pay for our supper,' said Hodgekins.

'Then let us have good store of sack!' quoth Sutton.

'Content!' said Cole. 'I promise you, I do not strive to grow rich by dicing, so call for what you will. I will pay for all.'

'Say you so?' cried Simon. 'Then, chamberlain, I pray you bring a whole bottle of pottage for me!' *

* A passage which seems irrelevant is here omitted, and transferred to page 57.—Ed.

Supper being on the board, the company sat down, and presently up comes Old Bosom, their host, who took his place among them; and soon after the good wife, fair as a lily in her red petticoat and waistcoat, came also, and said:

'My masters, you are welcome. Prithee be merry!'

They fell to eating with gusto; and only when they were satisfied did they find leisure to talk with one another. Then Cuthbert began to find fault.

'In truth, mine host, you have a wise housewife!' said he. 'Here is meat dressed in a new fashion, pardy! God sendeth meat, but the devil doth send the cooks.'

'Why,' cried she, 'what is wrong with the meat? Will it not serve your turn? Better men than you are contented with it! But a paltry companion is ever the worst to please.'

'Away, you sluttish thing!' said Cuthbert. 'Your husband hath a sweet jewel in you! I marvel that such a grave, ancient man should mate with a young giglot who hath in her as much beauty as good housewifery—which is just nothing at all.'

'Sir,' retorted she, 'out of regard for my husband I am loath to aggravate anger, else would I tell thee thy faults!'

'Go to! What is all this?' cried the rest. 'In good faith, Cuthbert, you are to blame, for you find fault where none is.'

'Tush! I must speak my mind,' said Curthbert. 'I cannot dissemble. Yet I trust mine host thinketh none the worse of me for what I have said? So long as I have his good will, what the foul fiend care I for his wife?'

'Enough,' quoth Tom Dove. 'Let us give over

this quarrelling for music. We mean to be merry, and not melancholy.'

Then said Old Cole :

'Trust me, Cuthbert, we will have our hostess and you friends before we part. Here, woman, I drink to you ! Pay no heed to his words, for he must always be quarrelling about something.'

'Nothing grieveth me so much as that he should thus openly chide me,' said she. 'If he found anything amiss, he might have chosen a better time to tell me of it ! He need not put my bad housewifery into my husband's head, for indeed I live not too happily with him.'

She began to weep.

'Come, Cuthbert,' said the others, 'drink to her, shake hands, and be friends.'

'Come, then, you puling baggage !' quoth he. 'I drink to you. Will you pledge me and shake hands ?'

'No,' answered she. 'I'll see thee hanged first ! Shake hands with *thee* ? I would as soon shake hands with the devil !'

'Go to !' said her husband. 'You shall shake hands with him. If you do not, I'll shake you ! What, you young hussy ?'

'Well, husband,' said she, 'it doth become a woman to obey her lord, wherefore for your sake I drink to him.'

'Well said,' quoth the company.

Then she took leave of them and went downstairs. Soon after, they paid their shot and departed to Gerard's Hall, where they lodged. Next day they took their way homeward, resting, as before, at Colebrooke ; and there, according to his custom, Old Cole gave his money to the goodwife of the house

to keep until morning, which custom in the end was his destruction, as will hereafter be shown.

*How Gray's Wife (of Gloucester), with one or two more of her Neighbours, went to the Fair where Servants came to be hired; and how she took the Earl of Shrewsbury's Daughter into her Service.*

It was an old custom, in Gloucester,* that at a certain time of the year all such young men and maidens as were out of service should resort to a fair held near Gloucester, there to await anyone who would come to hire them. The young men stood in a row on one side, the maids on the other.

Now it so happened about this time that the daughter of the late banished Earl of Shrewsbury, being in great distress and want, and weary with travel (for she never was used to such hardships) sat down beside the highway and made moan.

'O false and deceitful world!' cried she. 'Who that is in thee doth not wish to be rid of thee, so great are thy extremities of joy and woe! Thou art deceitful to all, trustworthy to none. Fortune is thy treasurer, and, wavering and inconstant as thyself, she setteth up tyrants, beateth down kings, giveth shame to some, to others renown. Fortune giveth these evils, and we see it not. With her hands she toucheth us, and we feel it not; she treadeth us underfoot, and we know it not; she doth speak in our ears, and we hear her not; she crieth aloud, but we understand her not; because we know her not until misery doth make her manifest.

'Ah, my dear father, may you fare well!' continued this poor doleful maiden. 'Of all misfortunes

* *Note* H.

the greatest is to be fortunate; and by this came my fall. Was ever good lady brought to such extremity before? What hath become of my rare jewels, my rich clothes, my sumptuous fare, my servants, my many friends, and all my vain enjoyments? My pleasure is banished by displeasure, my friends like foes are fled, my servants gone, my feasting turned to fasting, my rich array consumed to rags, and my jewels gone to deck my enemies! Alas! poverty with security is better than honour mingled with fear; therefore the meanest state is of all things the best. Yet, seeing God hath allotted this misery to me, I will frame my heart to embrace humility, and carry a mind conformable to my misfortunes. Fie on this empty title of *Ladyship*! How little doth it avail the distressed! No, no! I must forget my birth and parentage, and think no more of my father's house where I was wont to be served. Now I will learn to serve, and plain *Meg* shall be my name. Good Lord, grant I may get a good service! Nay, any service shall serve, whereby I may have meat, drink, and apparel.'

She had no sooner spoken these words than she saw a couple of girls coming towards her. They were going to the fair, and, bidding her good-morrow, asked her if she were also bound thither.

'Yes, marry!' quoth she, 'I am a poor man's child that is out of service, and I hear that at the fair folks come on purpose to hire servants.'

'True,' said the maidens. 'We go thither for the same purpose, and shall be glad of your company.'

'With a good will, and I am right glad of yours!' said she. 'I beseech you, good maidens, do me the favour to tell me what service were best for me; for

my parents were to blame, insomuch that they would never set me to learn anything.'

'What can you do?' they asked. 'Can you brew and bake, make butter and cheese, and reap corn?'

'No, in truth!' said Margaret. 'But I will gladly learn to do anything, whatever it be.'

'If you could spin, or card wool, you might do excellently with a clothier, for theirs is the best service I know,' said one of the girls. 'There you would be sure to fare well and live merrily.'

Then Margaret wept, saying: 'Alas, what shall I do? I was never brought up to these things.'

'What, can you do nothing?' asked they.

'No, truly,' quoth she. 'Nothing that is good for anything. But I can read and write and sew. I have some skill with my needle, and a little on my lute. But this, I see, will not profit me.'

'Good Lord!' cried they. 'Are you book-learned? We never yet heard of a serving-maid who could read and write! Yet, although you can do nothing else, you may perchance get a situation if you behave yourself seemly.'

'Seeing you are book-learned,' said one of them, 'prithee will you do so much as to read a love letter I have had sent to me? I took it to a friend to read, but he was not at home, so I know not what is in it.'

'Let me see it, and I will tell you,' said Margaret.

Therewith she began to read the letter, which was as follows:—

'O Jenny my joy, I die for thy love,
And now I hear say that thou dost remove:
And therefore, Jenny, I pray thee say,
Where shall I meet thee, dear, one day?

For why, with my master no more will I stay,
But for thy love I will run away:
O Jenny, sweet Jenny, thou givest me pain,
That thou no longer wilt here remain.

I will wear out my shoes of neat's-leather,*
But thou and I will again meet together,
And in spite of Fortune, Rat, or Mouse,
We will dwell together in one house.

For who doth not esteem of thee
Shalt have no service done of me.
Therefore, good Jenny, have a care
To meet poor Fragment at the fair.'

'Now, alas! poor soul!' quoth Jenny. 'I think he is the kindest young man in the world!'

'Surely, it appeareth that he hath a pretty wit!' said her companion. 'How finely hath he written his letter in rhyme! Prithee let me have a copy to send to my sweetheart, and I will give you something good!'

'You shall have it with all my heart!' was the answer.

So, laughing and chatting, they arrived at the fair, where they took up their stand. After a while came Goodwife Gray of Gloucester, to make up her store of household stuff. When she had bought what she wanted, she told a friend that she was in great need of a maid-servant or two.

'Therefore,' she added, 'pray you, good neighbour, go with me and let me have your opinion.'

'Willingly,' said her friend; and together they went and looked over the maidens, Goodwife Gray taking special note of Margaret.

* *Note* I.

'Believe me,' said she, 'there standeth a proper maid of a most modest and comely countenance.'

'In truth, so she is,' agreed her friend. 'As goodly a maid as ever I saw.'

Margaret, perceiving that they looked so much at her, was abashed, and the living scarlet overspread her lily-white cheeks; at which the women, seeing her blushes, came to her and asked if she were willing to take service. The maid, with a low curtsy and most gentle speech, replied that to do so was the sole reason for her coming.

'Can you spin, or card?' said Goodwife Gray.

'Truly, dame,' answered she, 'though my skill therein be small, my willingness to learn is great, and I trust my diligence will please you.'

'What wages will you take?' asked Goodwife Gray.

'That I leave to your conscience and courtesy, desiring no more than what I shall deserve,' said Margaret gently. Then, the goodwife asking her of what county she came, she wept as she answered: 'Ah, good dame, I was untimely born in Shropshire, of poor parents, who were yet not so needy as unfortunate. But death hath ended their sorrows, and I am left to the cruelty of these envious times, to finish my parents' tragedy with my trouble.'

'What, maiden, be of good cheer!' quoth the kindly dame. 'Have a care to do your duty and live in the fear of God, and you shall have no cause to regard fortune's frown.'

So they went home together, and as soon as the goodman saw Margaret, he asked his wife where she had got that maiden. She told him at the fair.

'Why, then,' quoth he, 'thou hast brought all

the fair away, and I doubt it were better for us to send the fair to another town than to keep the fair here!'

'Why, man, what do you mean by that?' demanded his wife.

'Woman,' said he, 'I mean this, that she will prove a lodestone to draw the hearts of all my men after her, and so shall we have wise service done on all sides.'

'I hope, husband, that Margaret will have better care both of her reputation and our business than to do so,' the goodwife returned. 'Let her alone to look to such matters.'

'Is thy name *Margaret*?' * Gray asked, turning to the maid. 'Then is thy name well suited to thy person, for thou art a pearl indeed, orient and rich in beauty.'

Hearing this, his wife began to change her opinion.

'Aha!' quoth she. 'What, husband, sits the wind in that quarter? Do you already begin to like your maid so well? I doubt I shall have the most need to look to yourself! Before God, I had rather have chosen some other than such an angel. But hear you, maid, you shall pack hence! I will not nourish a snake in my bosom. Get you gone! I will have none of you. Go, and get service where you can!'

'Oh, sweet dame, be not so cruel as to turn me out of doors now!' entreated Margaret, falling on her knees. 'Alas! I know not where to go, nor what to do, if you forsake me. Oh, let not the fading beauty of my face lose me your favour! Rather than that should hinder my service, I would disfigure it with this knife of mine, and banish beauty as my greatest enemy.'

There her tears silenced her, so that she could

* *Note* J.

not utter another word. At this piteous sight the goodwife could harbour resentment no longer, nor could her husband, for weeping, stay in the room.

'Well, Margaret,' said her mistress (little knowing that an earl's daughter knelt before her), 'behave thyself seemly and I will keep thee, and thou shalt have my good will if thou govern thyself wisely.'

Then she sent her about her work; and presently her husband, coming in to supper, said to her:

'How now, wife! Art thou so doubtful of me that thou hast sent away thy maiden?"

'You are a wise man, I ween,' quoth she, 'thus to stand praising a girl's beauty before her face!'

'And you are a wise woman, to grow jealous without a reason!' retorted he.

Then they went to supper; and because Margaret showed herself to be of refined manners above all the rest, she was appointed to wait at table. It must be said, by the way, that Gray never ate his meat alone, but always had some of his neighbours with him; before whom he called his maid, saying: 'Margaret, come hither!'

There was in the house another of the same name, and she answered his call.

'Nay,' said he; 'I called you not, but Margaret of the lily-white hands.'

And always after that the maid went by the name of 'Margaret of the White Hands.'

### *How the King's Majesty sent for the Clothiers, and of the sundry Favours he conferred on them*

King Henry, providing for his expedition into France [1106] against King Louis and Duke Robert

of Normandy, his own brother, committed the government of the realm during his absence to the Bishop of Salisbury,* a man of great wisdom and learning, whom the King esteemed highly. This done, he thought fit to send for the chief clothiers of England, who came to Court at his appointment. When they were come into his Majesty's presence, he spoke to them to this effect:

'The strength of a king lieth in the love and friendship of his people, and he that ruleth with justice and mercy doth govern his realm most surely. "He whom many fear, ought to fear many";† therefore the governors of the commonwealth ought to observe two special precepts. The first is, so to maintain the welfare of the commons that whatsoever they do in their calling, they refer it thereto. The other, to be as careful of the whole commonwealth as of any part thereof; lest, while they uphold the one, the other be brought to utter decay. And forasmuch as I understand, and have partly seen, that you, the clothiers of England, are of no small benefit to the public wealth, I thought it good to know from your own mouths if there be anything not yet granted which may benefit you, or anything to be removed which doth hurt you. The great desire I have to uphold you in your trade hath moved me to this. Therefore say boldly what you would have, and I will grant it to you.'

With that they all fell on their knees and desired God to save his Majesty. They then asked three days' respite to consider their answer, which was granted; and they departed.

* *Note* K.

† *Multos timere debet, quem multi timent.*—Publilius Syrus.

In due time, having well considered these matters, the clothiers thought fit to request of his Majesty, for their first favour, that all the cloth measures throughout the land might be of one length. Hitherto, to their great disadvantage, every town had a different measure, the result being that they found it difficult to remember each one, and so could not keep their reckonings. The second thing which troubled them was this, that the people would not take cracked money, though it were the purest silver; so it came about that the clothiers, and others who received great sums of money, found amongst it many cracked coins, which were useless, since they would not pass current, but lay on their hands without profit or benefit. They prayed, therefore, that this evil night be reformed. The third was a matter of which Hodgekins of Halifax complained, and that was that whereas the town of Halifax lived by the clothmaking trade and by reason of the Borderers and other evil-minded persons, the townsmen were often robbed and had their cloth stolen from the fields where it was drying; it might please his Majesty to grant the town this privilege—namely, that whoever should be taken stealing cloth might at once be hanged without trial.

When the day on which they were to appear before his Majesty arrived, the clothiers came into his presence and delivered up their petition in writing; which the King, most graciously perusing, said he was ready to grant. Therefore, for the first point of their petition, he called for a staff to be brought him, and measuring thereon the exact length of his arm, gave it to the clothiers, saying:

'This measure shall be called a *yard*,* and no other measure shall be used for the same throughout the realm of England. By this shall men buy and sell, and we will so provide that whosoever abuseth our subjects by any false measure shall not only pay a fine for the same to the King, but shall also be punished in his own person by imprisonment. Concerning the second point of your petition—cracked money—because of my instant departure out of the land I know no better way to ease you than to make this decree; that as they account cracked money not current, I say, none shall pass current save cracked money! Therefore I will give orders that all the money throughout the realm shall be slit, and so you will not suffer further loss. But now for your last request, for the town of Halifax, where your cloth is so often stolen by thieves. Since the laws already provided to meet the case are not sufficient to keep men in awe, it is indeed high time to have sharper punishment for them.'

Here Hodgekins was rude enough to interrupt.

'Gude faith, my liege,' said he, in his broad north-country speech, 'may t' foul fiend have my soul if onything will keep them quiet till the carles be hanged by t' necks! What the devil care they for boring out their een, sae lang as they may gae groping up and down t' countra, like fause worthless loons, begging and croaking?'

'Content thee, Hodgekins!' said the King, smiling at the rough-hewn fellow's words. 'We will have redress for all; and though hanging was never seen in England, yet, since the corrupt world is grown more bold in wickedness, I think it not amiss

* *Note* L.

to ordain this death for all malefactors; and peculiarly to the town of Halifax give I this privilege, that whosoever shall be found stealing cloth, if they be taken with the goods upon them they shall, without further trial, be hanged.* Thus I have granted what you desired, and if hereafter you find any other thing which may be of advantage to you, it shall be done. I would wish to live among you no longer than whilst I care for the good of the commonwealth.'

With these words the King arose from his royal throne and bowed to the clothiers, who, on their knees, prayed for his health and success, and showed themselves most grateful for his favour; for which the King kindly said that on his return home again he would, by God's grace, visit them.

*How the Clothiers provided a sumptuous Feast for the King's Sons, Prince William and Prince Robert, at Gerard's Hall; showing also what befell Cuthbert of Kendal at the same Time*

The clothiers left the Court in a merry mood, joyful at their success, each praising and magnifying the King's great wisdom and virtue, commending also his affability and gentleness of disposition. Hodgekins, in particular, affirmed on his oath that he would rather speak to the King's Majesty than to many justices of the peace.

'Indeed,' said Cole, 'he is a most mild and merciful prince, and I pray God he may long reign over us.' To which the others responded: 'Amen!'

'My masters,' said Cole then, 'shall we forget

* *Note* M.

the great courtesy of the King's sons, those sweet and gentle princes who with such kindness assisted us in our suit? In my opinion we ought to entertain them in some way, lest we be judged ungrateful; wherefore (if you think good) let us prepare a banquet for them at our host Gerard's, who, as you know, hath a fair house and goodly rooms. The man himself, moreover, is brave and of good behaviour, worthy to entertain princes. His wife, too, is a dainty fine cook; all which considered, I know not a fitter place in London.'

'That is true,' agreed Sutton. 'If the rest be content, I am pleased it should be so.'

To this they all answered yes, adding that it would not cost above forty shillings apiece, which they would recover in their cracked money. The feast was, therefore, prepared. To Tom Dove was left the ordering of the music.

Now Tom Dove had all the fiddlers at his beck and call. They followed him up and down the city as diligently as little chicks after a hen. At that time there lived in London a musician of great repute, named Rejor,* who kept his servants in such costly garments that they were fit to appear before any prince. Their coats were all of one colour, and it is said that the nobility of this land, noting it as a seemly sight, used afterwards, in the same way, to keep their men all in one livery.† This Rejor was the most skilful musician living at that time, and his wealth was enormous. All the instruments upon which his servants played were richly decorated with silver, and some with gold. The bows of their

* *Note* N. † *Note* O.

violins were of pure silver. For his wisdom he was besides called to great office in the city, where, at his own cost, he built the Priory and Hospital of St Bartholomew's in Smithfield. His servants, being the best players in the city, were appointed by Tom Dove to play before the young princes at the banquet.*

'I will invite several of our merchants and their wives to the feast,' then said Cole.

'That is well thought of,' said Gray. Upon which they called their host and hostess, who willingly promised to have all things ready; but the good wife asked for two days in which to prepare her house and other matters.

'Content,' said the clothiers. 'In the meantime we will invite our guests and despatch our other affairs.'

'Above all, do not forget to make good store of pottage!' Simon of Southampton charged his hostess.

'It shall be done!' laughed she.

Whilst all these preparations were in hand, Cuthbert of Kendal had not forgotten his affection for his hostess of Bosom's Inn. Choosing a convenient time when her husband was overseeing his haymakers, he went and greeted her thus:

'Sweet hostess, though the last time I was in town I was over-bold with you, yet I hope it was not as offensive to you as you pretended.'

'Bold, my Cuthbert?' quoth she. 'You have vowed yourself my servant, and therefore are not to blame for doing what I willed you to do. By my honesty! I could not help smiling to myself, as soon as I was out of their sight, to think how prettily you began to brabble!'

* Here follows the passage omitted from page 42.—Ed.

'But now,' said he, 'now we will change our chidings to kisses. It vexeth me that these cherry lips should be subject to such a lobcock * as your husband.'

'Subject to him!' quoth she. 'In faith, sir, no! I will have as much liberty for my lips as for my tongue, the one to say what I list, the other to touch whom I like. In truth, Cuthbert, I tell you, the churl's breath is so strong that I care as much for kissing him as for looking at him! Fie upon him! I would that my friends had carried me to my grave, ere they went with me to church to make him my husband!'

There, shedding a few dissembling tears, she paused.

'What, my sweet mistress!' said Cuthbert tenderly. 'Do you weep? Nay, sit down by my side, and I will sing you one of my country jigs, to make you merry.'

'Will you, in truth?' quoth she. 'Then, if you fall a-singing, I will sing with you.'

'It is well you can so suddenly change your note!' said Cuthbert. 'Now, have at it.'

CUTHBERT. 'Long have I loved this bonny lass
Yet durst not show the same.'
HOSTESS. 'Therein you prove yourself an ass!'
CUTHBERT. 'I was the more to blame.
Yet still will I remain to thee
(*Trang dilly do, trang dilly!*)
Thy friend and lover secretly.'
HOSTESS. 'Thou art my own sweet bully.

My husband he is gone from home,
You know it very well.'

* *Note* P.

CUTHBERT. 'But when will he return again?'
HOSTESS. 'In truth I cannot tell.
If long he keep him out of sight
(*Trang dilly do, trang dilly!*)
Be sure thou shalt have great delight.'
CUTHBERT. 'Thou art my bonny lassie!'

Whilst they were singing this song, Old Bosom, unexpectedly returning, stood secretly in a corner and heard all.

'Oh, abominable dissimulation!' he cried, blessing himself with both hands. 'Oh, monstrous hypocrisy! Are you in this humour? Can you brawl together, and sing together? Well,' he added to himself, 'I will let them alone, to see a little more of their knavery. Never did cat watch mouse so narrowly as I will watch them.'

Then, going noisily into the kitchen, he asked his wife if it were not supper-time.

'By-and-by, husband, the meat will be ready,' quoth she.

Immediately afterwards Hodgekins and Martin came in and asked for Cuthbert of Kendal. They were told he was in his chamber; so, when they had called him, they went to dinner, and requested their host and hostess to sit down with them.

'Husband,' said she, 'you may go, if you please. But as for me, I ask to be excused.'

'Nay,' said he. 'Go up, good wife! What, woman! you must bear with your guests!

'Why, husband,' quoth she, 'do you think any woman can bear the gibes and flurts* which that northern tyke gave me the last time he was in town? Now God forgive me, I had as lief see the

* *Note* Q.

devil as see him! Therefore, good husband, go up yourself and let me alone, for i' faith I shall never again abide that knave whilst I live.'

Upon these words, away went her husband; and though he said little, he thought the more. When he came up, his guests made him welcome.

'Prithee sit down, good host,' said they. 'But where is your wife? Will she not sit with us?'

'No, verily,' he returned. 'The foolish woman hath taken such a dislike to Cuthbert that she swears she will never come into his company.'

'Is that so?' said Cuthbert. 'Then trust me, we are well agreed; and I swear by my father's soul that were it not for good will to you rather than love for her, I would never come to your house again.'

'I believe it!' said Old Bosom; and so, turning to other things, they passed the time until dinner was ended. After they were risen from table, Martin and Hodgekins went about their business; but Cuthbert took his host by the hand, saying: 'Mine host, I'll go and talk with your wife. For my part, I thought we were friends; but seeing her pride is so high and her heart so great, I will see what she will say to me.'

With that he stepped into the kitchen, crying: 'God speed you, hostess!'

'It must be when you are away, then!' quoth she.

'What do you mean by that?' asked he.

'Why,' she answered, 'God never cometh when knaves are present.'

'Gip, good draggletail!' said he. 'If I had such a wife as you, I would present her tallow-face to the devil for a candle!'

She bent her brows at that, and like a fury of hell began to fly at him.

'You gag-toothed rogue—you blinking companion!' she screamed. 'Get out of my kitchen quickly, or with my powdered-beef broth I will make your pate as bald as a friar's!'

'Get me gone, quotha!' cried he. 'You shall not bid me twice! Out upon you, dirty heels! You will make your husband's hair grow through his hood!'

With that he went back to the hall, and sitting down on a bench beside his host, he said to him: 'It is a pity that your declining years, when a man loves quiet, should be troubled with such a scolding quean.'

'Ay, God help me! God help me!' returned the old man. By-and-by he shuffled away to the stable; and his wife, watching, stepped forth and gave Cuthbert a kiss.

An hour later the crafty old man called for his nag, to ride abroad. As soon as he was gone, Cuthbert and his hostess were such friends that they got into a storeroom and locked the door; but her husband, having set a spy for the purpose, suddenly turned back and called for a capcase which was in the storeroom. The servant, unable to find the key, shouted for help to break open the lock; hearing which, they within opened the door of their own accord.

As soon as Old Bosom saw his wife, he cried: 'Oh, passion of my heart, what do you here? You two, who cannot abide one another—what make you so close together? Is your chiding and railing, quarrelling and brawling, come to this? Oh, what dissemblers are these!'

'Why, mine host, what need have you to be so hot?' asked Cuthbert. 'I gave a cheese to my countryman, Hodgekins, to lay up, and delivered it to your wife to be kept. Is it then unreasonable that she should come with me to seek my cheese?'

'Oh!' sneered the old man. 'Belike the door was locked lest the cheese would run away?'

'The door clapped to of itself, unknown to us, said his wife, 'and having a spring lock was at once made fast.'

'Well, hussy,' said he, 'I will give you as much credit as a crocodile;* but as for your companion, I'll teach him to come hither looking for cheeses!'

With that he bade his men seize Cuthbert and bind him hand and foot. This done, they drew him up in a basket towards the smoked beams of the hall ceiling, and there let him hang all night, until dinner-time next day, when he should have been at the banquet with the princes. But neither Hodgekins nor Martin could persuade their enraged host to let him down. In such a heat was Old Bosom with drawing up the basket, that he was fain to cast off his gowns, his coats, and two pairs of stockings, to cool himself; and he made a vow that Cuthbert should hang there seven years unless the King's son came in person to beg him off. When Cole and the rest of the western yeomen heard this, they could not help laughing, to think how Cuthbert was caught.

The young princes, having promised to dine with the clothiers,† were punctual to the hour appointed. But when all the rest went to entertain them, Simon was so busily supping pottage that he could not

* *Note* R.

† At Gerard's Hall.

spare the time. Seeing this, the princes laughed, and said : 'Sup, Simon ! Tis good broth.'

'Or else beshrew our hostess!' quoth he, never looking behind him to see who spoke, until the prince clapt him on the shoulder. Then, good Lord! how blank he looked, not knowing how to excuse himself!

After the banquet, Gerard with one hand took the table (sixteen feet long) quite off the ground, over their heads, and set it on the other side of the hall, to the great admiration of all who beheld this feat.

The princes being ready to depart, the clothiers begged them, jestingly, to be good to one of their number who neither sat, lay, nor stood.

'Then he must needs hang!' said the princes.

'So he doth, most excellent princes,' returned the others; and forthwith told them the whole story. When they had heard it, away went the princes to Bosom's Inn; and there, looking up to the rafters, they espied poor Cuthbert slung up in a basket and so nearly smoked to death that, although he was greatly ashamed, he piteously desired them to have him released.

'What is his trespass?' asked the princes.

'Nothing, if it please your Graces,' returned Cuthbert. 'Nothing at all, beyond looking for a cheese!'

'Which he could not find without my wife!' said the goodman. 'The villain had just dined on mutton, and could not digest his meat without cheese; so I have made him fast these twenty hours, that he may have better appetite for his next meal.'

'Let me entreat you to release him,' said the

Prince. 'If you ever again find him in the corn, clap him into the pound!'

'Your Grace shall command me in anything,' said the old man.

So Cuthbert was let down and unbound; but when he was free he vowed never to come into that house again. It is said the old man Bosom ordained that in remembrance of this deed, once every year all who came to ask for cheeses should be served in the same way; a custom which is kept up to this day.

*How Simon's Wife of Southampton, being wholly bent on Pride and Pleasure, requested her Husband to take her to see London; which being granted, how she got Goodwife Sutton of Salisbury to go with her, who also took her Man, Crab. How he prophesied many things*

When the clothiers returned from London, Simon's wife, who was always very merry and pleasant with her husband, thus spake her mind to him:

'Good Lord, husband, will you never be so kind as to let me go to London with you? Must I for ever be pent up in Southampton like a parrot in a cage, or a hen in a coop? For all my trouble and care I would ask no more of you than to have a week in which to see that fair city. What is life, if it be not mixed with some enjoyment? And what enjoyment is more pleasant than to see the manners and fashions of places unknown? Therefore, good husband, if you love me, deny not this simple request. You know I am no habitual gadabout, nor have I often troubled you to travel. God knoweth, this may be the last thing I shall ever ask of you!'

'Woman,' quoth he, 'I would willingly satisfy your desire, but you know it is not convenient for both of us to be away. Our expenses are so great, and therefore our carefulness should not be small. If you will go yourself, one of my men shall accompany you, and you shall have plenty of money in your purse. But to go with you myself—you see my business will not permit me.'

'Husband,' said she, 'I accept your gentle offer, and it may be I shall persuade my gossip Sutton to go along with me.'

'I shall be glad,' said her husband. 'Prepare yourself to go when you please.'

Having thus obtained his permission, she sent her man Weasel to Salisbury to ask if Goodwife Sutton would accompany her to London. Sutton's wife, being as ready to go as she was to ask, never rested until she got leave of her husband. Then she bethought herself their pleasure would be small, being but two, so the wily woman sent letters by choleric Crab, her man, both to Gray's wife and Dame Fitzallen, bidding them meet at Reading. This they did, pleased with the jaunt ; and from Reading they all went together, with Cole's wife and their respective men-servants, to London, where each lodged with a friend.

When the merchants of London heard that they were in town, they invited them every day to their own houses, where they had delicate good cheer ; and when they went abroad to see the sights, the merchants' wives bore them company, attired so daintily that the clothiers' wives fretted because they had not the like fine things to wear.

When they were taken to Cheapside, there with

great wonder they beheld the shops of the goldsmiths on one side, and on the other the wealthy mercers, whose shops glowed with all sorts of coloured silks. In Watling Street they viewed the great number of drapers; in St Martin's, shoemakers; at St Nicholas Church, the flesh-shambles; at the end of the old 'Change, the fishmongers; in Candlewick Street,* the weavers. Then they came into the Jewish quarter, and thence to Blackwell-hall,† where the country clothiers used to meet. Afterwards they proceeded to St Paul's Church, whose steeple was so high that it seemed to pierce the clouds. On the top was a mighty weathercock of glistening silver which, on account of its height, seemed no bigger than a sparrow. This same goodly weathercock was afterwards stolen by a cunning cripple, who found means, one night, to climb up to the top of the steeple and take down the vane; with the proceeds of which, added to a great sum of money he had got together by begging, he built a gate on the north side of the city, which to this day is called Cripplegate. ‡

From thence the sightseers went to the Tower of London, which was built by Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome. There they saw salt and wine which had lain there ever since the Romans invaded this country, which was many years before our Saviour Christ was born. The wine had grown so thick that it could have been cut like a jelly. There also they saw the leather money which in ancient times passed current among the people.

Having with great content beheld all this, they repaired to their lodgings, where a sumptuous supper had been ordered.

* *Note* S. † *Note* T. ‡ *Note* U.

You must understand that when the country weavers,* who came up with their dames, saw the weavers of Candlewick Street, they greatly desired to talk with them, and thus began to challenge one another's workmanship.

'I'll work with any one of you for a crown,' quoth Weasel. 'Take me, if you dare, and he that makes his yard of cloth the soonest, shall have the money.'

'Done with you, though it were for ten crowns!' was the answer. 'But we will make this bargain, that each of us shall wind his own quill.' †

'Content!' said Weasel. So they set to work; but Weasel lost, and another of them took the matter in hand. He likewise lost, and the London weavers triumphed over the countrymen, at whom they jeered.

'Alas, poor fellows!' quoth they. 'Your hearts are good, but your hands are ill.'

'Tush!' quoth another. 'The fault was in their legs! Pray you, friend, were you not born at home?'

'Why do you ask?' demanded Weasel.

'Because,' was the answer, 'the biggest part of your leg is next to your shoe.'

At this Crab, who was of a choleric temper, chafed like a man of law at the bar, and wagered with them, four crowns to two. They agreed, and again set to work; and Crab beat them all. Thus were the London weavers nipped in the head like birds, and had not a word to say.

'Now,' said Crab, 'as we have lost nothing, you have won nothing; and because I know you cannot be true weavers except you be good fellows too, if you will go with us we will give you ale.'

* Weasel, Crab, etc. † *Note* V.

'Spoken like a good fellow and like a weaver!' cried they all; and off they went, to the sign of the Red Cross. When they were sitting down and had well drunk, they began to talk merrily and to extol Crab to the skies; whilst Crab, in his turn, protested that he would come and dwell among them.

'Nay, that must not be,' said a London weaver. 'The King hath given us the privilege that none shall live among us but such as have served seven years in London.'

With that Crab, who was wont to prophesy, sang the following:—

'The day is very near at hand
Whereas the king of this fair land
Shall privilege you more than so;
Then weavers shall in scarlet go,

And to one brotherhood be brought,
The first that is in London wrought,
When other tradesmen by your fame
Shall covet all to do the same.

Then shall you all live wondrous well.
But this one thing I shall you tell:
The day will come, before the Doom,
In Candlewick Street shall stand no loom,

Nor any weaver dwelling there,
But men that shall more credit bear;
For clothing shall be sore decayed,
And men undone that use that trade.

And yet the day some men shall see,
This trade again shall raised be;
Whereas bailiffs of Sarum town
Shall buy and purchase Bishops down.

And there, where never man did sow,
Great store of goodly corn shall grow;
And woad, that makes all colours sound,
Shall spring upon that barren ground.

At that same day, I tell you plain,
Whoso alive doth then remain,
A proper maiden they shall see
Within the town of Salisbury;

Of favour sweet and nature kind,
With goodly eyes, and yet stark blind;
This poor blind maiden I do say
In age shall go in rich array,

And he that takes her for his wife
Shall lead a joyful, happy life;
The wealthiest clothier shall he be,
That ever was in that country.

But clothing kept as it hath been
In London never shall be seen:
For weavers then the most shall win
That work for clothing next the skin;

Till pride the Commonwealth doth peel,
And causeth housewives leave their wheel.
Then poverty upon each side
Unto those workmen shall betide.

At that time, from Eagle's nest
That proudly builded in the west,
A sort shall come with cunning hand
To bring strange weaving in this land.

And by their gains that great will fall,
They shall maintain the Weavers' Hall:
Yet long they shall not flourish so,
For folly will them overthrow,

And men shall count it mickle shame
To bear that kind of weaver's name;
And this as sure shall come to pass
As here is ale within this glass.'

When the silly souls who sat round heard Crab speak thus, they wondered at it, and honoured him for the same.

'Why, my masters, do you wonder at these words?' asked Weasel. 'He can tell you twenty such tales, for which cause we call him our Canvas Prophet.'

'His attire fits his title,' said they. 'As for his words, we never in our lives heard the like. If they should be true, it would be strange.'

'Doubt not but that it will be true,' said Weasel. 'I tell you what, he once saw our Nick kiss Nell, and presently he poured out this rhyme:

'"That kiss, O Nell, God gave thee joy,
Will nine months hence bring thee a boy"—

and it fell out even as he said!'

Soon afterwards they parted and went about their business, the London weavers to their frames, the country fellows to their dames, who, after their feasting and merriment, went home with less money than they brought away, yet with more pride. Simon's wife, in particular, told the rest of her gossips that she saw no reason why their husbands should not maintain them as well as the merchants did their wives.

'I tell you what,' quoth she, 'we are (to my thinking) as proper women as the proudest of them, as handsome of person, as fair of face, our limbs as well made and our feet as fine. Why, then, what

reason is there—seeing our husbands are as wealthy as theirs—we should not be as well provided?'

'You say truly, gossip,' declared Sutton's wife. 'Trust me, it made me blush to see them brave it out so gallantly, and we to go so homely.'

'Before God, I will have my husband buy me a London gown, or in faith he shall have little peace!' cried one.

'So shall mine!' said another.

'Mine too!' chimed in a third; and all of them sang the same tune, so that their husbands had small rest, especially Simon, whose wife bothered him daily for London apparel.

'Good woman, be content,' was his reply. 'Let us go according to our station and means. What will the bailiffs think if I prank you up like a peacock, and you in your attire surpass their wives? Either they would think me mad, or that I have more money than I know what to do with! I pray you, dear wife, consider that such as spend in their youth do prove in their age stark beggars. Besides that, it would be enough to raise me in the King's book,* for men's coffers are often judged by their clothes. We are country folk and must keep ourselves as such. Grey russet† and good homespun best become us. I tell you, wife, it were as unseemly for us to dress like Londoners as it is for Londoners to go like courtiers.'

'What a coil you are making!' said she. 'Are we not God's creatures as well as Londoners, and the King's subjects as well as they? Our wealth is equal to theirs, why then should we not go as gay as Londoners? No, husband, no, here lieth the fault—

* *Note* W. † *Note* X.

we are kept poor because our husbands are less kind than London men. Why, a cobbler there keepeth his wife better than doth the richest clothier here ! Nay, I swear that the London oyster-wives and the very kitchen-stuff criers excel us in their Sunday clothes. More than that, I saw the wife of the water-bearer of one of our merchants come in with a tankard of water on her shoulder, and half-a-dozen gold rings on her fingers.'

'Then think, wife, that she got them not with idleness,' said Simon. 'You must remember that London is the chief city in the land, a place on which all strangers cast their eyes, the King's dwelling-place and royal seat. To that city repair all nations under heaven. Therefore it is meet that the citizens of such a town should go, not like peasants in their attire, but for the credit of our country wear such seemly habits as carry gravity and comeliness in the eyes of all beholders.'

'But if we of the country went likewise, were it not as much to the credit of England ?' argued she.

'Woman, it is quite unnecessary, and in divers respects it cannot be,' said he.

'Why, then I pray you let us go and dwell in London !' quoth she.

'Easily said,' he answered, 'but not so easily performed, therefore I beg you cease prating, wife, for your talk is foolish.'

'Yea, yea, husband !' cried she. 'Your old churlish conditions will never be altered ! You keep me here like a drudge, and so long as your money stays in your purse, 'tis little you care for your credit ! But before I'll any longer go like a shepherdess, I'll go

naked. I tell you plain, I scorn it that you should clap a grey gown on my back as if I had not brought you twopence. Before I was married you swore I should have anything I asked, but that is all forgotten now!'

So saying, she went in, and soon afterwards became so ill that she had to go to bed. That night she lay groaning, sighing, and sobbing, without rest, and in the morning, when she tried to rise, the good soul fell down in a swoon which alarmed her maidens, who ran down to their master, crying: 'Alas! alas! our dame is dead—our dame is dead!'

The goodman, hearing this, ran up in all haste, and fell to rubbing and chafing her temples, sending for *aqua vitæ*, and saying: 'Ah, my sweetheart, speak to me. Good wife! Alack, alack! Call in the neighbours, you queans.'

But at that she raised her head, drew a deep breath and immediately swooned again. He had much ado to restore her, but at last she came to herself.

'How are you now, wife?' he asked her then. 'What will you have? For God's sake tell me! Whatever you have a mind to, you shall have.'

'Away, dissembler!' she murmured. 'How can I believe you? You have said as much a hundred times, and then deceived me. It is your churlishness which hath killed me. Never was woman mated with so unkind a man!'

'Nay, goodwife, blame me not without cause! God knoweth how heartily I love you!'

'Love me?' quoth she. 'No, no, you never loved me but with the tip of your tongue. I dare swear you desire nothing so much as my death, and for my

part I would to God you had your wish! Yet be content I shall not trouble you long.'

And with that she sighed and groaned, and swooned again.

Simon was much grieved, but as soon as they had restored her he said: 'Oh, my dear wife, if any bad conceit hath caused this illness, let me know it; or if you know anything which may cure you, tell me of it, and I protest you shall have it, though it cost me all I possess.'

'Oh, husband!' cried she, 'how can I believe you, when you denied me a paltry suit of apparel?'

'Wife, you shall have clothes or anything else you want, if God will but send you health!' said Simon.

'Ah, husband, if I find you so kind I shall think myself the happiest woman in the world!' said she. 'Your words have greatly comforted my heart. I think, if I had it, I could drink a good draught of Rhenish wine, and eat a morsel of chicken.'

'I am glad of that!' said her husband.

Within a few days she was quite well; but you are to understand that Simon was obliged to dress her London-wise, before he could keep her quiet; neither would it please her but that the stuff were bought in Cheapside, for out of Cheapside nothing would content her, were it never so good. If she thought a tailor not of Cheapside made her gown, she would declare it to be quite spoilt.

She having thus got her own way, the other clothiers' wives, when they heard of it, would be treated in like manner; and ever afterwards the wives of Southampton, Salisbury, Gloucester, Worcester, and Reading were clad as gallantly and fine as any Londoner's wife.

*How the Clothiers sent help to the King in France, and how he overcame his Brother Robert and brought him to England; and how the Clothiers feasted his Majesty and his Son at Reading*

The King's Majesty, being at war with France against Louis the French King and Duke Robert of Normandy, sending to England for fresh supplies of soldiers, the clothiers at their own expense fitted out a great number and sent them over to the King; with which fact Roger of Salisbury (who governed the realm in the King's absence) acquainted his Majesty by letters written in commendation. It came to pass that God gave his Highness the victory over his enemies; and Henry, having taken his brother prisoner,* joyfully brought him to England and appointed that he should be kept in Cardiff Castle, with the privilege of hunting and hawking where he pleased, up and down the country. In this way the Duke lived many years. We shall speak more of him hereafter.

The King being home again, after his winter's rest made his summer progress into the west country to inspect the chief towns. The clothiers forthwith made great preparations against his coming, because he had promised to visit them all. When, therefore, he came to Reading, he was entertained and received with great joy. Thomas Cole being the chief man in the town, the King honoured his house with his royal presence, and was there, with his sons and his nobles, richly feasted during his stay. There, too, he saw the great number of people maintained in work

* *Note* Y.

by one man, whose hearty affection and regard for his Majesty was well shown both by their manners and their gifts to him. With Cole himself the King was so prepossessed, and put such trust in him, that he set him in a position of great authority in the town. Furthermore, the King said that for the love these people bore him living, he would have his bones laid amongst them when he was dead. 'For,' said he, 'I know not where they may be better bestowed until the blessed day of resurrection, than among these my good friends, who shall be happy partakers of the same.'

He therefore caused to be built a goodly and famous abbey,* in which he might show his devotion to God by increasing His service, leaving an example to his successors to do the like. Also he built within the town a lordly castle, which was afterwards one of his chief residences, and in which he often held his Court; for, as he told the clothiers, he found them such faithful subjects that he would be their neighbour and dwell amongst them.

After his Majesty's feasting at Reading he proceeded on his progress until he had visited the whole of the western counties, much delighted to see the people so diligent about their business. At last he reached Salisbury, where the Bishop received him with great joy, and with triumph attended him to his palace, where his Highness lodged. There Sutton the clothier presented the King with a broadcloth of exceeding good workmanship, of so fine a thread and so fair a colour that his Grace commended it and, it is said, held it in such high estimation that he had his state robes made of it, and the first

* *Note* Z.

Parliament held in England * was graced with the King's person in these robes; in requital whereof his Majesty afterwards granted Sutton many princely favours.

Simon of Southampton (the King having passed by the place where he dwelt) came with his wife and servants to Salisbury; and against the King's departure from that city he caused a pleasant arbour to be made on the top of the hill leading to Salisbury, which he had decorated with red and white roses in such a way that none of the woodwork could be seen. Within sat a girl attired like a queen, attended by a train of fair maidens who, at the King's approach, presented him with a garland of sweet flowers, yielding him such honour as the ladies of Rome were wont to do to their princes after their victories; which the King took in gracious part. To bid him farewell from the city, they bore him company over part of Salisbury Plain to the sound of divers instruments of sweet music. When his Grace understood that all this was done at the expense of a clothier, he said he was honoured by these men above all his subjects; and so passed on to Exeter, having richly rewarded the maidens.

Thomas Dove and the rest of the clothiers, in anticipation of the King's coming,† had prepared various sumptuous shows. There was one which represented Augustus Cæsar, the Emperor who, after the Roman invasion, commanded that the city should be called after his own name, though it was formerly known as *Isca*, and of late years *Exeter*.‡ There his Majesty was royally feasted seven days at the sole expense of the clothiers, but the many

* See *Note* A. † To Exeter. ‡ *Note* AA.

delights and pastimes with which they entertained him and his nobles would take too long to recount, therefore I will pass them over to avoid tediousness.

Coasting along the country, his Grace at last came to Gloucester, an ancient city built by Gloue, a British king who named it after himself.* Here his Majesty was entertained by Gray the clothier, who professed to be of that ancient family of Grays whose founder issued from the old and honourable castle of Rithin. The King, who had in his company his brother (and prisoner) Robert, was most lavishly treated. His Grace being desirous to see the maidens card and spin, they were set to work. Amongst them was fair Margaret of the White Hands, whose beauty made such an impression upon the amorous Duke (of Normandy) that he could not forget her. So vehemently was his affection kindled that he could not rest until he had written to her and revealed his state of mind. But we shall speak of this elsewhere. The King, at his departure, to please the townsfolk, said he would make his son Robert their earl, who thus became the first Earl of Gloucester.†

The King next proceeded to Worcester, where William Fitzallen had made preparations to receive him honourably. This man, himself of noble birth, was in no need to be taught how to entertain his Majesty. He was descended from that famous family whose patrimony lay about the town of Oswestry, which town his predecessors had enclosed with stately walls of stone. Although adverse fortune had grievously frowned on some of them, so that their children were fain to become tradesmen whose hands

* *Note* BB. † *Note* CC.

stood them instead of lands, yet, notwithstanding this, God raised again the fame of William Fitzallen, whose eldest son Henry, the King's godson, afterwards became Lord Mayor of London, and the first mayor of that city; in which capacity he served twenty-three years, after which his son Roger succeeded him.*

The princely pleasures shown to the King in Worcester were many and marvellous, and nowhere had he more delight than there; for which he showed himself, at his departure, grateful.

Having thus viewed all his great towns in the west, and visited the clothiers during his progress, King Henry returned to London, to the great joy of his people.

*How Hodgekins of Halifax came to Court and complained to the King that his Privilege was worth nothing, because when they caught any Offender they could not get a Hangman to execute him. How a Friar devised a Gin to chop off Men's Heads by itself*

After Hodgekins had obtained for the town of Halifax the privilege of hanging without further trial such thieves as stole their cloth at night, all the clothiers of that town were exceedingly glad, and persuaded themselves that now their goods would be safe and there was no need to watch them; so, whereas before the town had maintained certain watchmen to guard their cloth by night, these were now dismissed as unnecessary. For the worthy citizens believed that fear of the penalty would keep men from undertaking an enterprise so desperate;

* *Note* DD.

and indeed the news, being spread throughout the country that all cloth-stealers were to be hanged, if caught, made many of them amend their ways. Nevertheless, there was living at that time a notorious thief named Wallace, whom in the north they called Mighty Wallace, because of his valour and strength. This man, when he heard of the privilege granted by the King, and of the town's fancied security, said he would venture his neck for a pack of northern cloth. He therefore approached one or two of his companions and asked if they would be partners in this enterprise; for if, said he, they would hazard their bodies, they should share the booty. To this, after much persuasion, the men consented. Late one night they entered a farrier's shop and called up the people of the house, who asked what the foul fiend they wanted at that time of night.

'Good fellows, we would have you take off our horses' shoes and set them on again,' answered Wallace. 'You shall be well paid for your trouble.'

The smith was at last prevailed upon to do this, and when he had taken off all the shoes he was ordered to put them on again hind side before.

'Fay, fay!' he cried. 'Are ye all fules? What the deil do ye want—to break your crowns? Gude fay, I trow these men be mad!'

'Not so, smith,' was the reply. 'Do as we bid you, and you shall have your money. It is an old proverb:

> '"Be it for better, or be it for worse,
> Please you the man that beareth the purse."'

'Gude fay, and so I will!' said the smith; and forthwith did as he was told. When all the horses were shod, off went the thieves to Halifax, where, without hindrance, they loaded their steeds with cloth and departed in the opposite direction.

In the morning, directly the clothiers came to the field they found they had been robbed, whereupon one ran to tell the others the news. Hodgekins, as soon as he heard it, rose up in haste and bade his neighbours look out for the footprints of men or of horses. They saw at once that horses had been there; and pursuing them by the track of their feet, they went in the wrong direction, because the horses had been shod backwards. Naturally the pursuit was in vain!

Wallace employed this ruse so often that eventually he was taken, and two other men with him; and according to the privilege of the town, halters were slung about the thieves' necks preparatory to hanging them. When they came to the place of execution, Wallace and his companions, having no hopes of escape, made themselves ready patiently to suffer the rigour of the law. They confessed their sins, commended their souls to God, and yielded their bodies to the grave; a sight which moved the people—who had never seen a man hanged before—to pity, with the result that when Hodgekins asked one of his neighbours to play the part of the hangman he would not do it, though he was a very poor man, and would have had all the clothing of the thieves for his trouble. When he refused to do the deed, one of those whose cloth had been stolen was commanded to act; but he also refused, saying: 'When I have the skill to make a man, I will hang a man,

should it chance that my workmanship displease me.'

Thus the office of hangman was passed off from one to another, until at last a rogue came by, whom they would have compelled to do what they would not do themselves.

'Nay, my master, not so!' said he. 'As you have a privilege for the town to hang men you had better procure a commission to make a hangman, or else you are likely to be without one for me.'

'Neighbour Hodgekins, I pray you do this office!' urged one. 'You have suffered most loss, therefore you should be most ready to hang them yourself.'

'Not I!' returned Hodgekins. 'No, not though my loss were ten times greater than it is! But whichever of these thieves will take upon himself to hang the other shall have his life saved. Otherwise they shall go to prison until I can provide a hangman.'

'My masters of the town of Halifax,' said Wallace, when he saw things were come to this pass, 'though your privilege extend to hanging men directly they are caught stealing your goods, yet it gives you no warrant to imprison them until you can find a hangman. I and my fellows here have yielded ourselves to satisfy the law, and if sentence be not performed the fault is yours, not ours; therefore we humbly take our leave. Given from the gallows, this eighteenth day of August!' And with that he leapt from the ladder and flung the halter in Hodgekins' face.

The clothiers, when they saw this, knew not what to say, but took the thieves by the sleeves and en-

treated them at least to give back what they had stolen.

'Not the value of a pack or a bawbee!' declared Wallace. 'We have stolen your cloth—then why do you not hang us? We have made ourselves ready, and if you will not hang us, choose. A plague on you! You have hindered me, God knoweth! I thought to dine in heaven to-day, and you keep me here on earth, where there is not a quarter such good cheer! the devil take you all—I was fully prepared to give the gallows a box on the ear, and now God knoweth when I shall again be in such a good mind to do it.'

Then he and his companions departed; and when Hodgekins saw how, notwithstanding their guilt, they had flouted his lenience, he was much disturbed in his mind. As he stood ruminating in doleful dumps, making his dinner with a dish of melancholy, a grey friar respectully saluted him.

'All hail, Goodman Hodgekins!' said he. 'Happiness and health be ever with you, and to all suppressors of evil livers may God send everlasting joy! I am sorry, Hodgekins, that the privilege granted to this town by our King hath come to nothing. Better far had it never been given, than that it should be so lightly regarded! The town, through its own peevishness, hath an everlasting reproach this day, when foolish pity hath hindered justice. Consider, that compassion is not to be had upon thieves and robbers. Pity belongeth only to the virtuous overwhelmed by waves of misery and mischance! You have emboldened evil livers by letting these fellows escape. How will you now keep your goods in safety, seeing you do not carry out the law which should

be your defence? Do not think that thieves will hesitate to carry away your goods, if they find themselves in no danger of death! They have more cause to praise your pity than to commend your wisdom; wherefore seek whilst there is time to prevent the ensuing evil. For my part I have that care for your good that I would do anything for your benefit, not so much in respect of your profit as for my desire to uphold justice. Since I find you and the rest so womanish that you could not find it in your hearts to hang a thief, I have devised a machine which shall cut off heads without man's aid, if the King will allow thereof.'

When Hodgekins heard this he was somewhat comforted, and told the friar that if his skill could contrive what he promised, he would himself again petition the King to allow the use of such a machine. The friar bade him have no doubts; and, when he had completed his invention, got a carpenter to put it together. Hodgekins in the meantime posted to Court, and told his Majesty that the privilege of Halifax was not worth a pudding.

'Why not?' asked the King.

'Because we could get no hangman to truss up our thieves,' answered Hodgekins. 'But, if it please your Grace, there is a clever friar who will make us a device which shall, without aid of man, cut off the heads of all such carles, if your Majesty will allow of it.'

The King at length granted this petition; and to this day the custom is observed in Halifax, that such as are taken stealing cloth do have their heads chopped off with the machine which the grey friar made in the days of Henry I.

*How the Bailiffs of London could get no one to be a Catchpole,* and how certain Flemings (many of whom had fled into this Realm because of the Floods which had drowned a great Part of their Country) took that Office upon them*

The city of London being at that time governed by bailiffs, it chanced that in a fray two of their catchpole (who had not the name of *sergeants* then) were killed. You must know that their office was so much hated by Englishmen that none of them would take it upon them, so that the bailiffs were glad to get anyone and to pay him certain wages to perform that office.

It chanced, as I said before, that two of their officers, in arresting one man, were slain, and the bailiffs were obliged to find others to fill their places ; but they could get no one. They therefore, according to custom, made proclamation that if any man would present himself before them he should not only be settled in that office for life, but should also have such maintenance and allowance as was by the city provided for such men. Yet, notwithstanding that it was an office highly necessary in the commonwealth, the poorest wretch who lived in any estimation amongst his fellows despised it. At last a couple of Flemings who had fled into this country because their own was inundated by the sea, hearing the proclamation, offered themselves to the bailiffs to serve as catchpoles. They were instantly accepted, and had garments given them of two colours, blue and red, coats, breeches and stockings, to distinguish them from other men.

* *Note* EE.

Within half-a-year it came to pass that Thomas Dove of Exeter came up to London, and having by his jollity and good-fellowship brought himself into difficulties, was in debt to divers city men ; and one of his creditors paid an officer to arrest him. The Dutchman, who was not yet experienced in such matters, hearing how many of his fellows had been killed in trying to effect arrests, stood shivering and shaking in a corner of the street, to watch for Tom Dove.

Having waited long, at last he espied him ; whereupon he got his mace ready and with a pale face proceeded to do his duty. Going behind Dove, he suddenly knocked him on the head with his mace and said : 'I arrest you !' dealing him such a blow that the clothier fell to the ground senseless. At this the catchpole, thinking he had killed him, dropped his mace and ran away, with Dove's creditor in pursuit calling him to turn back. The Fleming, however, would do no such thing, but fled from the city and took sanctuary at Westminster ; whilst Dove, recovering consciousness, rose and went to his inn, no man hindering him. He was not a little pleased to have escaped ; yet, at his next coming to London, another catchpole met him and arrested him in the King's name.

Dismayed by this mischance, Dove knew not what to do. At last he requested the catchpole not to cast him into prison, but to wait until he could send for a friend to be his surety. Although kindness in a catchpole is rare, the officer was won over by fair words to grant this favour, whereupon Dove asked a bystander to go to his host, Gerard, who immediately came to him and offered himself as Dove's surety.

The officer, who had never seen the man before, was amazed at the sight of him ; for Gerard was a mighty man, of grim countenance and exceeding high stature. Indeed, he so alarmed the catchpole that the latter, asking Dove if he could find no surety but the devil, entreated him to exorcise Gerard, and he would do him any favour.

'What, will you not take my word?' thundered Gerard.

'Sir,' quavered the catchpole, 'if it were for any matter in hell, I would take your word as soon as any other devil's there ; but seeing it is for a matter on earth, I would have an earthly surety.'

'Why, thou whoreson cricket—thou maggot—thou spinner—thou paltry spider! dost thou take me for a devil?' roared Gerard. 'Sirrah, I charge thee, take my word for this man, or else, Goodman Butterfly, I'll make thee repent it!'

The officer, whilst he was inside the house, said he was content ; but as soon as he got into the street he shouted : 'Help, help, good neighbours, or the devil will have my prisoner!'

But no one stirred to the catchpole's aid ; perceiving which, he held fast to Thomas Dove, and would by no means let him go. Then Gerard, without more ado, gave the poor Fleming such a fillip on the forehead with his finger that the officer fell to the ground ; and whilst he lay stretching his heels in the street, Gerard took Dove under his arm and carried him home, where he thought himself safe as King Charlemagne in Mount Albion. The next morning Gerard conveyed the clothier out of town to Exeter, where he afterwards took care to keep out of reach of the catchpoles' claws.

*How Duke Robert came a-wooing Margaret of the White Hands, and how he plotted to steal her away from her Master*

The beautiful Margaret, who had now dwelt with her dame for the space of four years, was highly regarded and secretly beloved of many gallant and worthy gentlemen, but of two in particular, Duke Robert and Sir William Ferrers. It chanced one day that fair Margaret, with many others of her master's people, went a-haymaking, attired in a red stammell* petticoat, with a broad straw hat on her head. She had also a hayfork, and carried her breakfast with her. As she went along, Duke Robert, with one of his keepers, met her ; and the lovely sight kindled anew the secret fire of love, which long had smouldered in his heart.

'Fair maid, good-morrow!' was his friendly salutation. 'Are you walking so diligently to your work? In sooth, the weather must needs be fair when the sun shines so brightly, and the hay wholesome which is dried with rays so splendid.'

'Renowned and most notable duke,' she returned, 'poor harvesters pray for fair weather, and it is the labourer's reward to see his work prosper. The more happy may we count the day which is blessed by your princely presence.'

'And happier still are they who speak with you,' said the Duke. 'But let me entreat you to turn back to your master's house with me, and give your fork to someone fitter for such toil. Trust me, methinks your dame is ill-advised in setting you to such homely

* *Note* FF.

tasks. I wonder you can endure this vile-seeming servitude—you, whose delicate limbs were never framed for such work!'

'It becometh me not to control your thoughts,' said she. 'Yet, were you not the Duke, I would say your opinion deceived you! Though your eyes seem clear, I must deem them imperfect if they reflect upon your mind any spark of beauty in me. But I rather think that because it is an old saying, *Women are proud to hear themselves praised*, you either speak thus to pass the time, or else to wring from me my too-apparent imperfections. But I humbly entreat your pardon! I have too long neglected my work, and have shown myself over-bold in your presence.'

So saying, with the grace of a Court lady she bowed to the Duke and went onward to the fields, whilst he proceeded to Gloucester. When he came thither, he made his keepers great cheer, entreating them to give him leave to chat a while with old Gray.

'We twain must have a game or two,' he said. 'For my safe return I pledge my princely word that, as I am a true knight and a gentleman, I will come back to your keeping again.'

The keepers being agreeable, the Duke departed, and went with old Gray to the fields to inspect the workmen. Whilst Gray was busy with other things, the Duke took the opportunity to talk with Margaret.

'Fair maid,' said he, 'I did long since manifest my love to you by my letter.* Tell me, then, were it not better to be a duchess than a drudge—a lady of high reputation than a servant of low degree? With me you might live at ease, whilst here you drag out your days in labour. My love

* See page 78.

should make you a lady of great treasures, whereas now you are poor and beggarly. All manner of delights should then be yours, and whatsoever your heart desired, that should you have. Wherefore, seeing it lieth in your own choice, make yourself happy by consenting to my suit!'

'Sir,' she replied, 'I confess your love deserveth a lady's favour, your affection a faithful friend, such an one as could make of two hearts and bodies but one heart and mind. Yet it is not meet that the turtle-dove should mate with the eagle, for though her love be never so pure, her wings are not strong enough to mount so high. Whilst Thales * gazed on the stars he stumbled into a pit. They that climb unadvisedly risk a sudden fall. What availeth high dignity in time of adversity? It cannot help the sorrowful heart, nor abate the body's misery. As for wealth and treasures, what are they but fortune's baits to lure men into danger? They are good for nothing but to make people forget themselves; and whereas you allege poverty to be an hindrance to heart's ease, I find it the contrary, knowing that more security doth rest beneath a simple habit than under a royal robe. There are, in truth, none poor in the world save those who think themselves so; for such as are endowed with content are rich, having no more; but he who possesseth riches without content is most wretched and miserable. Wherefore, noble duke, though I account my life unworthy of your lightest favour, yet I would desire you to match your love to your like, and let me rest to my rake and use my fork for my living.'

'But consider, Margaret, it lieth not in a man's

* *Note* GG.

own power to love where he listeth,' said the Duke. 'That doth rest with God. A bird was never seen in Pontus, nor true love in a fickle mind. But nothing shall remove the affection of my heart, which doth resemble the stone Abiston, whose fire can never be cooled. Therefore, sweet maid, give not an obstinate denial to one who should receive gentle acceptance.'

'Fair sir,' quoth she, 'consider, in your turn, what high displeasure may arise from a rash match, and what danger a king's frown may breed. My worthlessness mated with your royalty may perhaps regain you liberty, and hazard my life. Then call to mind how little you shall enjoy your love, or I my wedded lord.'

To this the Duke replied that if she consented she need fear nothing.

'The thunder,' said he, 'is driven away by ringing bells, the lion's wrath mollified by a yielding body; how much more, then, a brother's anger by a brother's entreaty! He hath received many favours of me, and never yet repaid me one of them. Who is ignorant that the crown he weareth is mine by right? Yet I am content he shall still enjoy it, if he requite my kindness. But if he should not, then would I be as those men who, having eaten of the lotus, forget the country of their birth; and never more should English skies shine over me, but with you would I live in a strange land, better content with an egg in your company than with all the delicacies in England.'

With these and many other words he wooed her, until at last the maid consented to yield him her hand and heart. He then departed, promising to write to her from Cardiff Castle his plans for the future. So, taking leave of Gray, he posted to Cardiff with his keepers.

A day or two later, Sir William Ferrers came to Gray's house, as was his custom, not so much for Gray's society as for the mind he had towards Maid Margaret ; for although he was a married man and had a pretty wife, he laid hard siege to the fort of this damsel's heart, and sought to tempt her with fair words and rich gifts. But when she saw that by a hundred denials she would never be rid of him, she chanced on a sudden to give him an answer which drove him from deceit into such a conceit that he troubled her no more ; for when he asked her why she repulsed him, she told him there were many reasons, one above all the rest.

'I pray you, my wench, let me know what that is,' said he. 'Whatever it be I will amend it.'

'Pardon me, sir,' returned Margaret demurely, 'were I to speak my mind it might possibly offend you and do me no good. It is a natural defect in you which no physic can cure.'

'Yet let me—if I may obtain no more of you—know what this defect may be,' urged Sir William, abashed. 'I am not wry-necked, crooked-legged, stub-footed, lame-handed, nor blear-eyed. What is it you dislike in me? I never knew anybody take exception to my person before.'

'And I am the more sorry that I was malapert enough to speak of it,' said Margaret. 'Good Sir William, I would I had been tongueless, like the stork, then I should not have disquieted you thus! I pray you pardon my presumption.'

'Nay, tell me, sweet Margaret!' begged he. 'I commend your singleness of heart in speaking. Good Margaret, tell me!'

'Let it rest, Sir William,' said she. 'I know you

will not believe it when I have revealed it, neither is it a thing you can help. Yet surely is my foolishness that, but for it, I truly think I should have granted your suit before now. Well, since you urge me, I will tell you. It is, sir, your ugly great nose, which hangeth so over your lips that I cannot find it in my heart to kiss you.'

'What?' cried he. '*My nose?* Is my nose so great and I never knew it? Certainly I thought it as comely as any man's nose! But we are all apt to think well of ourselves, and a great deal better than we ought. But, let me see—*my nose*! By the mass, it is true! I feel it now myself. Good Lord, how came I to be so blind hitherto?'

Thereupon the knight was driven into such a conceit that no one could persuade him his nose was not extraordinary. To his wife, or to anyone who said it was otherwise, he retorted that they were flatterers and that they lied. Indeed, he was ready to strike some of them if they commended and spoke well of his nose. Whether they were men of rank, or any other, who contradicted his opinion, he would swear they mocked him, and be ready to challenge them. In time he became so ashamed of himself that he would not go out; and Margaret was well rid of him.

One day a wise and grave gentleman, seeing him so strongly obsessed by this notion, counselled his lady not to contradict him, but rather to say that she would find a skilled physician to cure him.

'For,' said he, 'as Sir William hath taken this conceit of his own accord, so will he never hear another opinion until his own conceit doth remove this one, which must be wisely wrought to bring it to pass.'

The lady then consulted a physician who bore a great reputation in the country, and who undertook to remove this foolish idea of the knight's by his skill. A day being appointed for him to come, the knight in his joy went to meet him. But on the way a woman who had heard of his nose looked very hard at him, and he, seeing her staring, said angrily :

'Well, good housewife, cannot you get about your business ?'

The woman, a shrewish quean, answered him sharply :

'No, marry, that I cannot !'

'Why not ?' demanded the knight.

'Because,' answered she, 'your nose is in my way !' At which the knight, angry and abashed, returned home.

Now the physician had filled a bladder with sheep's blood and put it up his sleeve. Into the mouth of the bladder he put a swan's quill, through which the blood would run so near his hand that, he holding the knight by the nose, it should seem to issue from that notable organ. All things being prepared, he told the knight that he was suffering from an overcharge of blood in the veins of his nose, and must therefore have one of these veins opened that the blood might flow away, when the nose would return to its natural size and he should be troubled by it no more.

'I pray you, Master Doctor, is my nose as big as you make out ?' asked Sir William.

'With all due respect, to tell the truth and avoid flattery, I never saw a more misshapen, ugly nose !' replied the physician.

'There !' cried Sir William, turning to his wife.

'And you would have that my nose was as handsome and as comely as any man's nose!'

'Alas, sir, God knowth I said it that you should not grieve nor take my words in ill part,' she answered. 'Besides, it did not become me to mislike your nose.'

'We will soon remedy this,' said the physician; and with that he pricked him in the nose, but not in a vein which would bleed very much. Then, having craftily unstoppered the quill, the sheep's blood ran in great abundance into a basin. When the bladder was empty and the basin almost full, the physician pretended to close the vein and asked Sir William how his nose felt now, at the same time showing him the contents of the basin. The knight, greatly astonished, said he thought no man in the world could have held as much blood in his whole body as lay in his misshapen nose. Then he began to feel that member all over, and a glass was brought for him to look at it.

'Yes!' quoth he. 'I praise God now I see my nose is come down to reasonable proportions, and I feel myself eased of the burden of it. I only hope it will remain as it is!'

'I'll warrant that, your worship!' said the physician. 'You will never be troubled by it again.' The knight, overjoyed, rewarded him richly for his services.

*How Thomas of Reading was murdered by the Innkeeper at Colebrook, who had murdered many others before him; and how his Guilt was at last revealed*

Thomas of Reading was often obliged to go to London, not only on his own business, but also on

the King's, since he held office under the crown. At such times he was wont to break the journey at Colebrooke. Now his host and hostess there, through covetousness, had murdered many travellers; and one day, knowing he had a great deal of money upon him, they appointed Cole as 'the next fat pig to be killed.' Whenever they plotted a murder, the innkeeper would say: 'Wife, there is a fat pig to be had, if you want one,' to which she would reply: 'Prithee put him in the sty till to-morrow.' For, when a traveller arrived alone and they saw he had much money with him, it was their custom to give him a room above the kitchen; a fair chamber, better furnished than any other in the house. The bedstead, though small and low, was beautifully carved; but the feet were nailed to the floor, and the mattress sewn to the sides of the bedstead. Moreover, that part of the floor on which it stood was so made that by the removal of two iron pins in the kitchen below, it could be let down and taken up, like a trap door. Immediately beneath it was a huge cauldron, in which, when they were brewing, they seethed their liquor. The man appointed for slaughter was laid in this bed; and in the dead of night, when he was sound asleep, the bolts were removed, and down fell the victim into the boiling cauldron wherein, before he could utter a cry, he was instantly scalded and drowned. Then the murderers had a ladder standing ready in the kitchen, by which to mount into the room above and take from thence the man's clothes and all the money in his bag or capcase; after which, raising the trap door, they made it fast as before. The dead body they would presently take out of the cauldron and throw it into

the river which flowed close to the house. If, in the morning, any of the other guests, who had talked overnight with the murdered man, chanced to ask for him, they were told he had ridden away before dawn, and the goodman of the house himself had seen him on his way. Meanwhile his horse, by that same goodman, had been hidden in a barn which stood a mile or two away, of which he kept the key, and before letting the steed loose to wander where it pleased, he would disguise it by cropping the tail, mane, or ears. Thus they escaped detection.

Thomas of Reading, as I said, being marked as 'a fat pig,' was laid in this death-chamber; but because Gray of Gloucester happened to come also that night he escaped scalding. The next time he came, he was put there again; but before he was warm in bed, a man rode through the town shouting that London was on fire, and that Thomas Becket's house in Westcheap, with many others, was burnt to the ground. These tidings greatly depressed good Thomas, for of that same Becket he had received much money that day, and had left in his house many of his papers, and some of the King's also; so there was nothing for it but to ride back to London at once, to see how things stood. He therefore dressed and departed, which made his host frown, though he promised himself that the next time should pay for all. Nevertheless God so ordered matters that the would-be murderers were again prevented from carrying out their design, on account of a great fray which arose at the inn between a couple who fell out at dice. The host was obliged to call up Thomas, as a man in great authority, to restore quiet. Another time, when he was put to sleep in the death-trap, he

fell so ill that he asked for someone to sit with him ; which again foiled their wicked purpose.

But it is hard for a man to escape the ills allotted to him. The next time Cole rode home from London his horse stumbled and broke a leg. He hired another (alas ! to his own destruction), for he was anxious to reach Colebrooke that night, but he was so sleepy that he could scarcely keep in the saddle ; and as he approached the town, suddenly his nose began to bleed. When he reached the inn, he could not eat ; and his host and hostess, seeing him so melancholy, came to cheer him up.

'Why, Master Cole, what aileth you to-night ?' they asked. 'We never saw you so sad before ! Will it please you to have a quart of burnt sack !'

'With a good will !' he answered. 'And would to God Tom Dove were here. He would cheer me, and we should not want for music. I am sorry for the man—he is so deep in debt, too. But everyone is sorry for him ; and what good does it do him ? Words are no use in such a case—he is in need of other relief. Let me see ! I have only one child in the world, and that is my daughter. Half that I have is hers, the other half my wife's. Shall I be good to none but them ? In all conscience, my wealth is too much for two people to possess. What is our religion worth without charity—and to whom is charity to be shown, if not to ruined householders ? Good host, lend me pen, ink, and paper. I will write a letter to the poor man straightway, and give him something. The alms which a man bestoweth with his own hands is sure to be delivered ; and God knoweth how long I have to live !'

'Doubt not but that in the course of nature

you will live many years, Master Cole!' said his hostess.

'God knoweth!' he repeated. 'I have never felt so heavy-hearted before.'

By this time pen, ink and paper had been brought; and he wrote as follows:—

'*In the name of God, Amen.* I bequeath my soul to God, and my body to the ground, my goods equally between my wife Eleanor and Isabel my daughter. *Item*: I give to Thomas Dove of Exeter one hundred pounds. Nay, that is too little. I give to Thomas Dove two hundred pounds in money, to be paid him immediately upon his demanding the same from my said wife and daughter.'

'Ha!' he cried, when he had finished. 'How say you, host—is not this well done? Read it, prithee.'

'Why, Master Cole, what is this?' exclaimed the innkeeper, perusing it. 'You said you would write a letter, but methinks you have made your will! What need had you to do this? Thanks be to God, you will yet live many years.'

''Tis true, if it please God,' returned Cole. 'I trust this writing cannot shorten my days! But let me see—have I made a will? I promise you, I purposed to write a letter! However, I have written what God put into my mind. Yet look again, mine host. Is it not written there that Dove shall have two hundred pounds, to be paid when he doth ask for it?'

'Yes, indeed,' said his host.

'Why, then, all is well!' said Cole. 'It shall go as it is, for me. I will not rewrite it now.'

He folded it up and sealed it, then asked his host to send it to Exeter. He promised to do so, yet Cole

was not satisfied, but must needs hire a messenger to take it. This done, he sat down again, and suddenly burst into tears.

'I know no cause for these fears which oppress me,' he replied, when they asked why he wept. 'But it is on my mind that when I set out on this journey to London, my daughter made such a coil to have me stay at home! I could not get rid of the little baggage, she did so hang about me; and when her mother took her away by force she cried out: '*Oh, my father, my father—I shall never see him again!*'

'Alas, pretty soul!' said his hostess. 'This was mere fondness in the girl! It showeth she doth love you dearly. Why should you grieve at it? You must consider it was but childishness.'

'Ay, so it was, indeed,' agreed Cole.

Presently he began to nod, and they asked if he would go to bed. But he refused, saying he was not in the humour. Then certain musicians of the town, knowing he was there, came into the room with their instruments and began to play solemn music.

'That doth suit my mood!' said Cole, when he had listened awhile. 'Methinks these instruments sound like the ringing of St Mary Overy's bells; but the bass doth drown the rest, and is like a knell. For God's sake bid them desist, and give them this small reward.'

The musicians being gone, his host again asked if he would retire, for it was nearly eleven o'clock. Cole looked hard at him and at his wife, and suddenly started back.

'What aileth you, that you look so like pale Death?' he muttered. 'Good God, what have you done? Your hands are bloody!'

'My hands?' echoed his host. 'Why, you may see they are quite clean! Either your eyes are dazzled, or the fancies of a troubled mind delude you.'

'Alas!' cried Cole. 'You see how weak my wits are! I never felt my head so light before. Come, let me drink once more, and then I will go to bed, and trouble you no more.'

He began to undress, whilst his hostess busied herself with warming a kerchief to put round his head.

'I am not ill, thank God!' said he. 'But I find in myself such an alteration as I never knew before.'

Just as he spoke, a screech-owl cried piteously, and a raven croaked close to the window.

'Jesu have mercy on me!' quoth Cole. 'What an ill-omened cry do yonder carrion birds utter!'

Then he laid himself down in the bed from which he was never to rise again. Meanwhile his host and hostess, who had observed his distress of mind, began to talk together about it, and the man said he did not know what to do for the best.

'By my consent the matter should pass,' said he. 'I think it were better we did not meddle with him.'

'What, man, are you faint-hearted?' she scoffed. 'Have you done so many murders, and will you shrink from this? Look,' she added, showing him a great bag of gold which Old Cole had left in her keeping. 'Would it not grieve a body's heart to lose all this? Hang the old churl! Why should he live any longer? He hath too much, and we too little. Tut, husband, let the thing be done, and then this is our own!'

Her wicked counsel prevailed, and when they had

listened at Cole's door and made sure, by his deep breathing, that he was sound asleep, they went into the kitchen (their servants being all abed) and pulled out the iron pins ; down fell the bed, and its occupant dropped into the boiling cauldron. As soon as he was dead they threw his body into the river, destroyed his clothes, and made all look as usual. But when the host went to the stable to remove Cole's horse, the door was open, and the steed flown, with part of the halter about his neck and straw trussed under his belly, as the ostler had dressed him the night before. The horse, in the meanwhile, had escaped into an adjoining field, and, after leaping sundry hedges, had got into another field, where a mare was out at grass. Eventually the twain arrived on the highroad, where one of the townsmen met them, and, knowing the mare, took her and the horse to her owner.

Now the musicians who had played at the inn and been rewarded by Cole, intended, for gratitude, to give him more music in the morning. But the innkeeper told them his guest had ridden away at dawn. He told the same tale to another guest who would have borne Cole company to Reading. Presently the man who owned the mare, and who was going from house to house to inquire if anyone had missed a horse, arrived at the sign of 'The Crane,' where Cole lodged, and asked the ostlers if they had lost a horse ; to which they answered no.

'Why, then,' said the man ; 'my mare is good for something, I see ; for if I send her to grass single, she cometh back double !'

That day passed, and the night. The next day Cole's wife, wondering why her husband did not

return, sent one of his men on horseback to see if he could meet him.

'If you meet him not between this and Colebrooke, ask for him at The Crane,' she said. 'But if you do not find him there, then ride to London; for I fear he is either sick, or some mischance hath happened to him.'

The fellow did as he was told, and, asking for his master at Colebrooke, heard that he had gone home on such and such a day. Wondering what had become of him, the man made further inquiries in the town; and at last someone told him of a horse found on the highway whose owner could not be discovered. He went off at once to see the horse, recognised him, and took him back to The Crane; whereupon the host, in great alarm, fled secretly. The servant then went to the Justice, demanding assistance; and whilst he was there, news came that Jarman of The Crane had run away, whereupon everyone said he had surely murdered Cole. The musicians then came forward to tell what Jarman had said when they wished to play to Cole. The hostess was promptly arrested, and confessed. Jarman was soon afterwaids taken in Windsor Forest, and both he and his wife, having made a full confession, were hanged. Jarman admitted that he, being a carpenter, had made the trap door at his wife's suggestion, and that by means of it they had murdered nine persons. Yet, notwithstanding their ill-gotten gains, they had not prospered, but were found at their death to be deeply in debt.

When the King heard of this murder he was so grieved that for seven days he would see no one. He also gave orders that the house wherein Cole was foully

done to death should be burnt to the ground, and no one should ever build again upon that accursed site.

Cole's wealth, at his death, was very great. He had daily in his house a hundred men-servants and forty maids. He maintained, besides, above two or three hundred people, spinners and carders, and a great many others. His wife never married again, and at her death she left a great sum of money towards the maintenance of the newly-built monastery. Her daughter was well married to a gentleman of great position, by whom she had many children. Some say that the river into which Cole's body was thrown was afterwards called the river Cole, and the town, Colebrooke.

### *How some of the Clothiers' Wives went to the Churching of Sutton's Wife of Salisbury, and of their Merriment*

Sutton's wife of Salisbury, who had lately been delivered of a son, prepared great cheer against her going to church, when Simon of Southampton's wife, and others of the clothiers' dames, came to make merry at the churching feast. Whilst these ladies sat at table, Crab, Weasel and Wren waited on them ; and as the old proverb hath it : *Many women, many words*, so it fell out that day. Some talked of their husbands, some of their maids' sluttishness, others revealed the cost of their garments, others told tales about their neighbours. To be brief, there was not one of them but had talk enough to last a whole day. Seeing this, Crab, Weasel and Wren conspired amongst themselves, as often as any of the women had a good piece of meat on her trencher, to snatch it away and offer a clean one ; which ruse

the women, deep in conversation, did not notice until at last one found time to miss her meat. Then she said that their boldness exceeded their diligence.

'Not so, forsooth!' retorted Weasel. 'There are hundreds bolder than we are.'

'Name me one, if you can,' said the woman.

'A flea is bolder,' said Crab.

'How will you prove that?' asked the woman.

'Because they will bite you, as we dare not do,' replied Crab.

'Ah!' said she. 'But what doth then become of them? Their sweet meat hath sour sauce, and their lustiness doth often cost them their lives. Therefore, take heed!'

'A good warning of a fair woman!' said Wren. 'I had not thought so quick a wit went with so large an appetite.'

Seeing their men so merry, the women said it was a sign there was good ale in the house.

'That,' said Wren, 'is as fit for a churching as is a cudgel for a shrew.'

Thus, with pleasant discourse and merry quips, they passed the time until the fruit and spice-cakes were set on the board, when one of them asked the others if they had heard of the cruel murder of Thomas of Reading.

'What, is Old Cole murdered?' they cried. 'When was the deed done?'

'On Friday last,' was the reply.

'Good Lord!' exclaimed they all. 'How was it done, do you know?'

'Report hath it, he was roasted alive.'

'Oh, pitiful! Was he roasted? Nay, I heard it said that a man was murdered in London, and sodden

at an innkeeper's house, and served to the guests instead of pork!'

'No, neighbour, it was not in London,' said another, better informed. 'I hear it was done as he came from London, at a place called Colebrooke; and it is said to be true that the innkeeper made pies of him and penny pasties—ay, and made his own servant eat one!'

'But I pray you, good neighbour, can you tell how it was known? Some say that a horse revealed it.'

'Now, by the mass, it was told one of my neighbours that a horse did speak and tell great things!' cried Gray's wife eagerly.

'That soundeth like a lie,' observed someone.

'Why?' demanded another. 'May not a horse speak as well as Balaam's ass?'

'It may, but it is unlikely,' retorted the sceptic. 'Where was the horse when he spoke?'

'Some say he had broken out of the stable, where he was secured in mighty strong iron fetters, which he burst in pieces as though they had been straws, broke down the stable door, and so got away,' said Dame Gray.

At that juncture Goodman Sutton entered and asked what they were talking about so eagerly.

'Marry, we hear that Cole of Reading is murdered!' said his wife. 'Prithee, is it true?'

'Ay!' returned Sutton sadly, 'it is true. That vile villain, his host, in whose house he spent many a pound, murdered him.'

'But *did* they make pies of him?' asked Dame Sutton.

'No, no!' answered her husband. 'He was scalded

to death in a boiling cauldron and afterwards thrown into the river.'

'But, good husband, how was it discovered?'

'By his horse.'

'What?' cried she. 'Did he really tell how his master was murdered? Could the horse speak English?'

'Lord, what a foolish woman you are, to ask such a question!' quoth Sutton testily. 'But, to end this, you are all heartily welcome, good neighbours, and I am sorry you had no better cheer.'

Thus are tales of an evil deed magnified when they are spread abroad.

*How Duke Robert deceived his Keepers and escaped from them; how he met fair Margaret, and, in carrying her off, was taken, for which he had his Eyes put out*

Duke Robert having, as you have heard, obtained Margaret's love, pondered how he should deceive his keepers and carry her away. In the end he resolved what to do, and sent her a letter bidding her meet him in the forest between Cardiff and Gloucester. She received his message unknown to her master and mistress, and secretly set out one morning for the trysting-place. She arrived there first, and, whilst she waited, fell into a train of thought which foreboded disaster.

'Oh, my dear love!' she cried. 'How slack art thou in performing thy promise! Why do not thy deeds agree with thy written words? See, here they are: "*Come, my dear Margaret—with Cupid's swift wings fly to thy friend. Be as nimble in thy footing as the camel which runneth an hundred miles in a day.*

*I will wait for thee—but do not keep me waiting long! There is no country like Austria for ambling horses, and I have got one to carry thee.*" Oh, my love, here am I—but where art thou? Why dost thou play the truant with Time who, like the wind, flieth by unseen? An ambling jennet of Spain is too slow for us—a flying horse were more fit for flying lovers!'

Thus she made moan, casting many an anxious glance through the sylvan glades, up and down, thinking every minute an hour. Sometimes she would wish herself a bird, that she might fly through the air to meet him, or a pretty squirrel to climb the highest tree and watch for his coming. But finding her wishes vain, she began to excuse him and to blame herself.

'How greatly am I to blame, thus to find fault with my lover!' she thought. 'Alas, men that lack liberty must come when they can, not when they would! Poor prisoners cannot do what they desire. Why, then, should I be so impatient? I will lay me down and beguile unquiet thoughts with quiet sleep. England's forests breed no bears nor lions, therefore I hope I may rest a while in safety.'

So, leaving fair Margaret in a sweet slumber, we will return to Duke Robert, who had plotted to escape from his keepers thus: Having leave of the King to hawk and hunt, he determined, as he followed the chase, to leave the hounds to the hart and the hunters to their horns, and fly whilst they were intent upon their sport. This he did on the day he had appointed for Margaret to meet him; and when at last he came to the trysting-place, his horse in a lather of foam and himself in a sweat, he found her asleep and awakened her with a kiss.

'Rise, fair Margaret!' said he. 'Now is come the time when thou shalt be made a queen!'

Then he set her on horseback, and posted away. Meanwhile his keepers, seeing he was not as usual in at the death, divined that he had escaped, and were ready to stab one another in their excitement, each blaming the other. But at last they left their quarrel, and whilst one hastened to the King, the other searched the country for the Duke, who, having killed his horse in travelling, was most unhappily caught on foot with Margaret before he could reach a town where he might have hired another steed. When he saw his pursuers, he bade Margaret fly and save herself; but she refused, declaring that she would live and die with him. At this the Duke drew his sword and said he would buy his liberty with his life before he would yield himself a prisoner. Thereupon a great fight ensued, in which the Duke killed two men; but being sore wounded himself and faint with loss of blood, he fell down at last, unable to stand. Thus was he taken, with his fair love, and both committed to prison.

In the meantime Gray's wife had missed her maid, and was making great lamentation for her amongst her neighbours; for she loved her as her own child.

'Oh, Margaret, why did you leave me thus?' she mourned. 'If you misliked anything, why did you not tell me? If your wages were too small, I would have amended it. If your clothing were too simple, you should have had better. If your work were too much for you, I would have had help for you! Farewell, my sweet Meg, the best servant that ever came into any man's house! I have had many of your name, but none of your nature and diligence.

In your hands I laid the government of my whole house and eased myself of that burden which now I must take up once more. See! here has she left my keys in my chests, but my comfort is gone with her. Every gentle word that she was wont to speak cometh now into my mind. I shall never forget her courteous behaviour. With how modest and sweet a countenance would she soothe my over-hasty temper! From my heart I repent that I ever spoke crossly to her. Oh, Meg, were you here again I would never chide you more! But I was an unworthy mistress of such a servant. What will become of me now if I should be ill, seeing she is gone, who was my apothecary and nurse?'

'There is no help for it,' said her neighbours. 'Rest content, you'll hear of her one day. Think this, that she was not so good but you may get another as good; therefore, do not take it so much to heart.'

'Ah, neighbours, blame not my grief!' returned the weeping dame. 'I have lost a jewel, and am convinced that few people have ever met with her like. I protest I would go round England on my bare feet to find her again. Ah, my Meg was surely stolen from me, else would she never have gone!'

Goodman Gray grieved with his wife, rested not day or night, but rode up and down, seeking Margaret. But she, poor soul, was in prison, and he could not find her.

The King, when he heard of his brother's escape, was very wroth, and commanded that when he was caught his eyes should be put out and he shut up in prison until his dying day; ordering, also, that the maid should die for her presumption in loving

Duke Robert. This being reported all over England, came in time to the ears of Gray and his wife, who, when she heard that Margaret was in prison and condemned to death, would not rest—good aged woman!—until she came to Court to kneel before the King and with many tears beseeched him to spare the maid.

'Consider, most royal King,' urged she, 'that your brother the Duke was able to entice any woman to love him; much more a silly maid to whom he promised marriage, to make her a lady, a duchess, a queen! Who would refuse such an offer, by which they might at once get a princely husband and high dignity? If death be a lover's guerdon, then what is due to hate? I am persuaded in my heart that had my poor Margaret thought it would displease your Majesty, she would never have paid such a price for his love. Had your Grace made it known that it was unlawful for anyone to marry your brother, who would have attempted it? If she had wilfully disobeyed your commands, she might have been thought worthy of death; but seeing that she offended in ignorance, I beseech your Grace to recall the sentence, and let me still enjoy my servant; for I will never rise until your Majesty hath granted my petition.'

The King, who was by nature merciful, beholding the woman's fears, took pity on her and granted her suit; having obtained which favour, she hastened home, and from thence journeyed with her husband to Cardiff Castle, arriving just as the maid was being led forth to execution. Gladly she went, saying they were not worthy to be called true lovers who were not willing to die for love; and so passed on with a

smiling face, as if she had eaten *Apium Risus*, which makes a man die laughing. But Dame Gray fell on her neck and embraced her, crying: 'Thou shalt not die, my maid, but go home with me! See, here are the King's letters for thy delivery.'

So saying, she gave the papers to the Governor of the castle, who found them to contain these words: '*We pardon the maid's life and grant her liberty; but let her not go until she hath seen her lover's eyes put out, which we would have done in such a way that only the sight may be destroyed and the eye remain fair; for which cause we send Doctor Piero, that he may execute the same.*'

Having read this document, the Governor said to the maid:

'The King's Majesty hath pardoned thy life and allowed thy liberty; but thou must not pass hence before thou hast seen thy lover's eyes put out.'

'Oh, sir, make no mistake!' cried Margaret. 'They are *my* eyes which must be put out, and not the Duke's! He offended through my fault, therefore I, being guilty, ought to receive the punishment.'

'The King's commands must be fulfilled,' said the Governor; and Duke Robert was brought forth.

'The noble mind is never conquered by grief nor overcome by misfortune,' said he, when he heard his sentence. 'As the hart reneweth his youth by eating the serpent, so doth a man lengthen his life by devouring sorrow. My eyes have offended the King and must be punished. But my heart is as great a culprit—why is not that killed also?'

'The King's Majesty, out of love for you, spareth your life, and is content to satisfy the law with the loss of your eyes,' returned the Governor. 'Take this

punishment in good part, and think you have deserved more than you are to receive.'

At this Margaret cried out, saying: 'Oh, my dear love, most gentle prince, well mayest thou wish I had never been born, since thou must lose thy sight because of me! But I should count myself a happy woman if it might please the King to let me redeem thine eyes with my life; or else, being equally guilty, that I might receive equal punishment. Hadst thou suffered this for a queen or princess of high blood, it might have been easier for thee to bear. But to endure it for such an one as I am, maketh thy trouble threefold.'

'Nay, content thee, fair Margaret!' said the Duke tenderly. 'Honour ought to be given to virtue, not to riches. Glory, honour, nobility and riches, without virtue, are but cloaks of maliciousness. Let me now take my leave of thy beauty, for never again may I behold thy face. Yet I account my eyes well lost, since I lost them for so peerless a paragon. Now, fair heavens, farewell! Sun, moon and stars shall I in this world behold no more. Farewell, fruitful earth! I may feel thee, but these poor windows of my body shall view thee never again; and though the world hath always been my foe, yet I bid thee farewell. Farewell, all ye my friends! Whilst I live, think that I sleep, to awake in heaven, where I hope to see you again. Yet, had it pleased the King, I had rather have lost my life than my eyes. Life—what is it but a flower, a bubble, a span long and full of misery? Of such small account is life that every soldier will sell it for sixpence!'

Then the doctor prepared his instruments; but when he was ready, the Duke said, 'Stay, Master Doctor, until I have learnt my love's dear face by

heart. Come hither, my sweet, and let me give thee my last kiss whilst my eyes can still show me the way to thy lips.'

Embracing her in his arms, he cried : 'Oh, that I might give thee a kiss of twenty years long, and satisfy my greedy eyes with the sight of thee! Yet it doth console me that thou art here, and I may hold thy hand to comfort my heart at the sudden prick of my eye.'

The doctor then performed his duty and destroyed the crystal sight, which done, the Duke stood up and bravely said : 'I must thank his Majesty who, though he hath deprived me of sight, leaveth me my eyes to weep for my sins!'

As soon as Margaret saw the deed was done, she fell down in a swoon, and her mistress had much trouble to restore her. When the Duke heard of it he was greatly troubled, and groped his way towards her.

'Where is my love?' he cried. 'For God's sake take care of her! I beseech you, Goodwife Gray, for my sake use her kindly.'

Then the keepers led him into the castle, and Margaret was carried away. For a long time she was very ill, but her mistress was wonderfully tender with her, and suffered her to lack nothing. When she was a little better, Dame Gray set her on horseback and took her home to Gloucester, where she was received with no little joy.

*How Thomas Dove, being ruined, was forsaken by his Friends and despised by his Servants; and how in the End he was reinstated by the Liberality of the Clothiers*

Those who seek worldly enjoyments follow a shadow without substance, and as the asp stings a man to

death, so vain pleasure flatters us until it makes us forget God and waste our goods; for an example, take Thomas Dove, who through a generous heart and liberality of mind wasted his wealth, whereupon his friends promptly forsook him. Though he had been of great ability and done good to many, yet no one cared for him in his poverty, but looked scornfully at him, or passed him by with curt greetings. None of his former acquaintances would help him to the value of a farthing. Their old friendship was clean forgotten, and he made of as slight account as Job when he sat on the dunghill.

Now when his wicked servants saw him thus despised by the world, they too began to disdain him. Notwithstanding the fact that for years he had maintained them at his own expense, they thought nothing of it, but derided him behind his back, and abused him both by their words and actions. Respect for him they had none, but when they spoke to him it was so rudely that an honest man would have grieved to hear it. Finally they said they would stay with him no longer. It was not to their credit to serve a beggar, wherefore they thought it convenient to seek benefits elsewhere.

'Now I find, to my sorrow, what little trust is to be put in this false world!' exclaimed Dove, in great grief. 'Have you forgotten, my masters, my former prosperity, that you have no regard for my present necessity? In your need I forsook you not, in your sickness I left you not, nor ever despised your great poverty. It is not unknown, though you choose to forget it, that I took some of you from the gutter, others from needy parents, and brought all of you from want to abundance. From poor boys I brought

you up to man's estate, and at great expense taught you a trade whereby you may live like men. And now, in return for my good will towards you, will you thus suddenly forsake me? Is this the best recompense you can find it in your hearts to yield me? Honest servants do not so. The fierce lion is kind to those who are kind to him. Pluck but one thorn out of his foot, and he will show you manifold favours for the same. The wild bull will not overthrow his dam, and the very dragons are dutiful to those who nourish them. Be better advised, and call to mind that I have not plucked thorns from your feet, but drawn your whole bodies out of danger. When you had no means of support I helped you, and when all others forsook you I comforted you in your extremity.'

'What of that?' asked one of them. 'Because you took us up when we were poor, does it follow therefore that we must be your slaves? We are young men, and for our parts we are not obliged to regard your profit unless it is to our advancement. Why should we lose our chances to please you? If you taught us our trade and brought us up from boys to men, you had our service for it, whereby you might have gained no small benefit had you but used it as well as we earned it. But if you are poor, you have yourself to thank. 'Tis a just scourge for your prodigality; and since, in my opinion, it is plain that to stay with you is the next step to becoming like you—unable to help ourselves or our friends—— Come, pay me my wages, for I will not stay! The rest may do as they please. I am resolved.'

'Well,' said his master, 'if you must needs be gone, here is part of your wages in hand. The rest you shall have as soon as God sendeth it.'

Then, turning to the others, he went on: 'Let me entreat you to stay! Leave me not altogether destitute of help! I live by your labour, and without you I know not what I shall do. Consider my need, and if you will do nothing for my sake, take compassion on my poor children! Stay my sliding feet, and let me not utterly fall through your desertion.'

'Tush!' cried they. 'What are you saying? We can earn better wages and serve a man of credit, where our fare shall be better and our gain greater. The world might with good reason account us fools if we forsook our profit to please you! Therefore, *adieu*! God send you more money, for you are not likely to have more men.'

So they departed. Soon afterwards they met with one another; and one of them cried: 'What cheer? Have you all come away?'

'In faith, yes! What else should we do? But hear you, sirrah—have you got your wages?'

'Not yet,' he answered. 'But I shall have, and that is as good. 'Tis but ten shillings.' *

'Say you so?' returned another. 'Then I see you are one of God Almighty's idiots!'

'Why?' demanded the first speaker.

'Because you will be fed with shells,' was the reply. 'But I tell you one thing, you had better arrest him quickly, lest someone else do it and there be nothing left to pay you. It is an old saying: *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.* If you do not arrest him I will not give you twopence for your ten shillings.'

'But how can I get him?' asked the other.

* *Note* HH.

'Give me two pots of ale, and I'll betray him,' said he.

So, the other agreeing, this smooth-faced Judas came to his late master and told him that a friend of his would speak to him at the door. The unsuspecting man went to the door, where an officer immediately arrested him at his servant's suit. The poor fellow, struck to the heart with sorrow, cried: 'Ah, wicked one, are you the first who doth seek to increase my misery? Have I thus long given you bread, to breed my overthrow, and nourished you to work my own destruction? Little did I think, when you so often dipt your false fingers in my dish, that I gave food to my chief enemy! But what boots it to complain in such an extremity? Go, wife, to my neighbours, and see if any of them will stand bail for me.'

But she went in vain. Then he sent to his kinsfolk, and they denied him; to his own mother's son, and he would not come. There was nothing for it—he must go to prison! But as he was on his way thither, a messenger met him with a letter from Master Cole, in which (as you have heard) he promised Dove two hundred pounds. At this the poor fellow rejoiced greatly, and showed the letter to the officer, who was content to take his word. Tom Dove at once set out for Reading, where he found all the rest of the clothiers lamenting Cole's untimely death. The disconsolate widow promptly paid the money, which induced the clothiers to do something for Dove. One gave him ten pounds, another twenty, another thirty, to begin the world anew; and by this means (under God's blessing) he grew richer than he was before.

Wealth being his once more, his former friends

came fawning back to him, and, when he had no need of them, were all ready to proffer him their services. His servants too, who had cast him off in his distress, were glad to come creeping, cap in hand, to beg on bended knees for his favour and friendship. But although he seemed to forgive them, he often said he would never trust them for a straw.

Thus he lived in wealth and prosperity, doing much good to the poor, and leaving at his death great lands to his children.

*How fair Margaret made her Rank known to her Master and Dame; and how, for the Love of Duke Robert, she made a Vow never to marry, but became a Nun in the Abbey of Gloucester*

Fair Margaret, after she came back to Gloucester, never beheld the day but with weeping eyes; and so great was her sorrow for the loss of Duke Robert, her faithful lover, that she utterly despised all worldly pleasures, and at last betrayed herself, in these words, to the Grays:

'Oh, my good master and dame, too long have I, whom Fate pursueth to deserved punishment, kept secret from you my parentage. I am the woeful daughter of the unhappy Earl of Shrewsbury. Ever since his banishment I have done nothing but draw misfortune after me. Therefore, I entreat you, dear master and dame, let me spend the remainder of my life in some blessed nunnery.'

When Gray and his wife heard this, they marvelled greatly, as much at her strange request as at her birth.

'Good Lord, are you a lady, and I knew it not?'

cried Dame Gray, uncertain whether to call her *Maid* or *Madam*. 'I am sorry I did not know it before.'

After this revelation, the demeanour of the people of the house was very different towards Margaret, and her dame was heard to say that she had hoped to make a match between her and her son. She tried all she could to dissuade her from becoming a nun.

'What, Margaret!' she would say. 'You are young, and fair, and no doubt the world hath better fortune in store, whereby you may leave an honourable issue behind you, in whom you shall live again after death.'

But to this, as to all other arguments, Margaret turned a deaf ear.

'Who doth not know that this world giveth pleasure for an hour, but sorrow for many days?' said she. 'It payeth what it promiseth—which is nothing more than continual trouble and vexation of mind. Do you think that if I had the choice of the mightiest princes in Christendom, I could match myself better than to my Lord Jesus? No, no! He is my husband; to Him I yield myself, body and soul, giving to him my heart, my love, and my deepest affections. Too long have I loved this vile world; therefore I pray you, dissuade me not.'

Finding they could not alter her decision, her friends made the matter known to his Majesty, who, when she was about to be received into the nunnery, came to Gloucester with most of his nobles, to honour her act with his own presence. All things being ready, the maid was richly attired in a gown of pure white satin, her kirtle of the same cunningly embroidered with gold. Her head was decked with gold, pearls and other precious stones; and her hair,

like threads of burnished gold, hung down in the fashion of a noble bride's. About her ivory-white neck were jewels of inestimable value, and her wrists were encircled with bracelets of gleaming diamonds. The streets through which she was to pass were decked with green oak-boughs. As all the bells in Gloucester were ringing, she came—looking like one of heaven's angels—out of her master's house, led by the King, who wore his royal robes and crown, and by the Bishop in his mitre and cope of cloth-of-gold. Above her head was borne a canopy of white silk fringed with gold. Before her chanted a hundred priests, and after her followed the highest ladies in the land. Behind them came the wives and maids of Gloucester, an innumerable crowd standing on every side to watch.

Thus she passed on to the cathedral, and so to the nunnery gates, where the Lady Abbess received her. There the lovely maid, in the sight of all the people, knelt down and prayed. With her own hands she took off her beautiful gown and gave it to the poor ; her kirtle too, her jewels, bracelets and rings.

'Farewell to the pride and vanity of this world !' quoth she.

Next she gave away the ornaments of her head, and was led aside to be stripped ; and instead of her soft silk smock, a rough hair-shirt was put over her shoulders. Then came one who cut off her golden hair with a pair of shears, and smeared her face and head with dust and ashes. This done, she was again brought, barefooted, before the people.

'Now farewell to the world, farewell the pleasures of this life, farewell my lord the King, and to the

Duke's sweet love farewell!' said she. 'Now shall mine eyes weep for my former transgressions, and no more shall my tongue talk of vanity. Fare thee well, my dear master and dame! Farewell, good people all!'

With these words she was led away, and never afterwards seen abroad. Duke Robert, when he heard of it, requested that at his death his body might be buried in Gloucester—'in that town,' said he, 'where mine eyes first beheld the heavenly beauty of my love, and where for my sake she forsook the world.' His request was fulfilled accordingly. The King wished at his death to be buried at Reading, for the great love he bore that town.*

Gray, who died enormously rich, gave land to the nunnery which had received Margaret. William Fitzallen also died a very wealthy man, and endowed many houses for the poor. His son Henry was the first Lord Mayor of London.†

Sutton of Salisbury likewise did much good at his death, when he left a hundred pounds yearly, to be lent to poor weavers of the town. Simon of Southampton gave a generous gift towards the building of a monastery at Winchester. Hodgekins of Halifax also did much good; so did Cuthbert of Kendal, who married twenty-three couples out of his own house and gave each of them ten pounds to begin the world withal. Martin Bryam gave a great sum towards the building of a free school in Manchester.

Thus, gentle reader, I have finished my story of these worthy men; and would now ask you to take my pains in good part, which will engage me to greater matters, should I find this courteously accepted.

* *Note* II. † See *Note* DD.

# THE HISTORY OF GEORGE A GREEN

# THE HISTORY

OF

# GEORGE A GREEN

## Pindar of the town of Wakefield.

His birth, calling, valour, and reputation in the country;

*with*

Divers pleasant, as well as serious passages in the course of his life and fortune.

Printed for Samuel Ballard, at
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in Little Britain. 1706.

# Preface [by the Author]

WAKEFIELD is a market-town in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the hundred of Agbridge, upon the river Calder, here covered with a fair stone bridge. Edward the Fourth, King of England, adorned the town with a stately chapel. It is a large town, well built of stone, of great antiquity, and drives the clothing trade. Of this place it was that George a Green was chosen Pindar so long ago as the reign of King Richard the First, as you will find in the following history.

As for *Pindar*, it is a word and office peculiar to the north of England, and implies one who looks after strays and the like, being much the same as *pound-keeper* in the southern parts of the kingdom. That there was such a person as George a Green who was Pindar of Wakefield, I think is not to be doubted, from many considerations ; to say nothing of the many signs * we have of him, not only in and about London, but in several other parts. Also the uninterrupted tradition of him handed down from father to son and retained in the north to this day, especially in his birthplace, is no small proof of his existence. Yet I do not find the Pindar's name mentioned in any of our chronicles ; but those of Robin Hood and Little John, who were George's contemporaries, being recorded in Hollingshed †

* *Note* A. † *Note* B.

(these being some of the descendants of Little John, —who bore the surname of Nailor—still, or at least very lately, living in the kingdom); I cannot conceive this makes against, but rather for our present history, the actions of the other two happening in all probability to become more cognisable to that chronicle on account of their being outlaws; whereas George, continuing steadfast in his loyalty to his prince, followed a lawful and honest calling. It is true he was as conspicuous for his valour as any one of them, which should recommend him to the good opinion of the brave and generous; and it is not to be conceived that anyone will value him the less because he was more virtuous than his companions.

I confess it pleases me not a little that George is noticed by Mr Butler, the famous author of 'Hudibras,' * an immortal piece; and the same seems to be a confirmation, in the main, of the truth of this history, for in his first canto, of the second part, having brought Hudibras to promise his mistress he would suffer a whipping on condition that she would have him, being unable to persuade his man Ralpho to undergo the punishment for him, the hero fell to threats, saying:

> 'If not, resolve before we go
> That you and I must pull a crow.'

To which the other answered:

> 'Y' had best (quoth Ralpho) as the ancients
> Say wisely, have a care 'th' main chance,
> And look before you ere you leap;
> For as you sow, y' are like to reap.

* *Note* C.

And were y' as good as George a Green,
I shall make bold to turn agen;
Nor am I doubtful of the issue
In a just quarrel, and mine is so.'

As for the history itself, it is very easy to observe by its phraseology and manner of writing that it is not very modern, but that the manuscript must at least have been as old as the days of Queen Elizabeth. It is lodged in a public library in the city of London, from which a copy was taken, and is now made public with no other alterations than such as were necessary to make the sense tolerably congruous. We do not pretend to vouch for the truth of this history in every particular. It was the practice of the times to embellish truth (as the writers imagined) with some of their own inventions; but it not being easy at this distance [of time] to distinguish the one from the other, we choose rather to put it entire into the hands of the gentle reader, to whose censure and determination we do wholly submit it.

N. W.

# The History of George a Green

*Of the Parentage and Birth of George a Green, and of some Accidents which befell him in his Childhood, before he could write* Man, *and which gave great Hopes to his future Strength and Valour*

IN order that this history may gain the greater credit and countenance, and not incur the imputation of a vain and fabulous discourse (of which number this age hath already been abused with too many) I thought it best, both for the reputation of the work and the encouragement of the reader, to follow and observe an exact computation of time ; as also all the series of such circumstances as are not only known, but very remarkable in our best and most approved chronicles.

Thus, therefore, it followeth :

The reign of Henry the Second of that name, King of England, great-grandson of William the Conqueror, and son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, and Maud the Empress, daughter of Henry I., began in the month of October, in the year after our blessed Saviour's Incarnation, 1155, and in the nineteenth year of Louis VIII. [*sic*] King of France. He was a prince of valour and courage so great that he was often heard to say the world was not sufficient to contain or limit a valiant and magnanimous spirit. Nor did his words come much short of his heroic

actions, for he subdued Ireland by the sword * and surprised William, King of Scots † in battle, joining and annexing the kingdom to his own. From the south ocean to the north islands of the Orcades ‡ he comprehended the whole land under due principality and government, extending his empire farther than any of his progenitors had done; for no King of England, before his time, held so many countries and provinces under their dominion. Besides his own kingdom and crown, of which he was heir and unto which he was lineally descended, he had under his rule and command the entire dukedoms of Normandy, Gascony, Guyenne, Anjou and Chinon; and he subjected unto himself Auvergne, with other territories. Moreover, by his wife Eleanor (who had been divorced from Louis VIII. of France § he had in dower the Pyrenees, dividing France and Spain. By this queen Henry had a fair and hopeful issue—namely, five sons and three daughters. His sons were William, Henry, Richard, Godfrey and John, of whom only two succeeded him, the third son, Richard (afterwards surnamed *Cœur de Lion* for his invincible courage), and John. His eldest daughter, Maud, married the Duke of Saxony. The second, Eleanor, was wedded to the King of Spain; the third, Jane, became the wife of William, King of Sicily.

King Henry was very prosperous in the beginning of his reign, but in the latter part of it very unfortunate,‖ for, as Gerald the chronicler ¶ records, he reigned twenty-six years in all worldly prosperity and to the content of his heart, but the next four years with difficulty and trouble, and the five years

* *Note* D. † *Note* E. ‡ *Note* F.
§ *Note* G. ‖ *Note* H. ¶ *Note* I.

after that with infinite vexation and sorrow. * The first tumult arose in about the twentieth year of his reign, when his sons were aided by the Scots king and the two eminent Earls of Chester and Lincoln. The cause of their taking up arms against their father was that he had imprisoned their mother, Queen Eleanor † and kept the fair Rosamond ‡ as his mistress, abandoning the bed and company of his lawful wife.

Thus far I have borrowed of our English annals, the better to illustrate our history now in hand.

In those civil and domestic tumults, whilst the whole land was in an uproar—the father against the son, and the son opposed to the father—the country, bewildered by these factions, was racked by internal quarrels. It was not only peer against peer and county against county, but nephews opposed their uncles, brother was against brother, son against father, one supporting the father's quarrel, the other animating the faction of the rebellious children, as their fancies and affections led them. § Amongst those who abetted the insurrection of the princes was one Geoffrey Green, a rich farmer of the town of Wakefield, who assisted them in all their designs both with his purse and person. These wars lasted for the space of two whole years, to the great disturbance of the realm; but at the end of that season the King had the better of it, for the army of the princes was dispersed, and the King, pursuing his victory, besieged the two Earls of Chester and Lincoln, with other great men, in Anwich [Alnwick] Castle, and in a short time surprised both it and them. ||

* *Note* J. † *Note* K. ‡ *Note* L.
§ *Note* M. || *Note* N.

Having quieted and pacified his realm, the King (his sons being fled) now had leisure to make inquiry after such of his subjects as had taken up arms against him contrary to their oath and allegiance. In the list was found the name of this same Geoffrey Green. By the King's gracious clemency his life was pardoned, but according to the strict command of his Highness directed to the commissioners, all his goods and lands were seized as forfeit, and confiscated to the Crown. Grief for his loss made such an impression on him that Geoffrey lived only two months afterward, leaving an only son, about nine years of age, heir to nothing save his father's misfortunes; for he had neither house, farm, cattle nor goods by which to subsist. His name was George, that very A Green on whom our present discourse is founded. I must here give you to understand that he was not (as some say) a foundling—that is, a forsaken infant cast out by his unnatural parents and taken up in his swaddling-clothes by charitable folk who, doubting if he had been baptised, caused him to be christened; giving him the name of George, surnamed Green (from the Green at Wakefield), and bringing him up by the common charity. Nor was he *filius populi*, a bastard, as others have suggested, seeking to sully his worth by the infamy of his birth; but he was the legitimate issue of an honest and substantial farmer of good means and ability and of an unblemished reputation, esteemed by his neighbours, respectfully spoken of by the country; a man free from blemish or unjust taxation, until, either being reduced to embrace innovation, or overmuch inclining to the immature succession, he fell into the forenamed disaster.

As I have cleared his birth from bastardy, my design is to free his upbringing from calumny. He was trained, according to his father's means, at the school of Wakefield to read and write; for in those days few farmers' sons aimed at any higher learning. He proved himself an able scholar, and in strength excelled those who exceeded him in years. In all bodily exercises, especially when any trial was to be made by blows and buffets, he always had the mastery, insomuch that his fellow-scholars gave him the name of Captain of the School. But his means failing, on account of his father's poverty and untimely death, his master began to use him hardly, and, because he found him to be friendless as well as fatherless, insulted him by chastising and beating him on the slightest provocation. Though yet a child, the boy's great spirit could not endure this, and he made up his mind, on the next occasion, to revenge himself upon his master and afterwards leave the school. The opportunity was soon forthcoming. It happened that his master, for some trivial cause, was wroth, and bade George prepare himself for a lashing. At this terrible summons, the lad fell on his knees with *Quaeso praeceptor* (for he had so much Latin) in his mouth, to beg pardon, loath on so sudden a condemnation to go to execution. But, after many threats on the one side and entreaties on the other, George, perceiving his master to be inexorable and not to be moved either by prayers or tears, as the pedagogue was calling out a boy to horse him, George, mindful of his determination, suddenly thrust his head between his master's legs, held them fast, heaved up his own heels and threw the man with a back somersault, and left him (caring little whether his

head or neck touched the ground first) lying flat on his back and half dead in the midst of the school. The door being open, George ran out, vowing that he would never enter it again. Thus George, in the marring of a scholar, almost spoilt a schoolmaster. The poor man, now much less choleric than before, began to entreat his scholars to help him on his legs again, and to run home for *aqua vitæ*. They led him to a seat, the while he complained, now of a pain in his head, now of a crick in his back, or his neck, or his bones. But his scholar George was gone, determined—having made so free with his legs—never again to come within reach of his fingers. This incident, though it angered some, pleased others ; especially those who were indulgent to their children, with whom the pedant had been too harsh. All talked of George's strength and boldness, since he, albeit so young, had dared to cope with this tyrant at whose frown the rest of his schoolmates quaked and trembled.

In many other ways George proved himself the master, not only of those of his own age, but of others who had previously beaten him. Yet he was naturally of so honest and gentle a temper that he rather attracted love and amity than emulation or enemies.

Hitherto I have spoken of him as a child. I must now ask you to imagine so many years have passed over his head that he is grown to his full manhood, with an understanding more capable and a frame more vigorous, the one to apprehend and the other to undertake. These things duly considered, I propose to conclude the first division of this treatise, and prepare myself to go on with the second.

*How George a Green was persuaded by a Friend of his to go to an Astronomer, or Fortune-teller, to cast his Nativity*

George, grown to twenty years of age, persuading himself that in regard both of his strength and stature he might now write himself fully *Man*, began to consider what course in life he should follow. Whilst he meditated, he met an old friend of his, and much familiar discourse was exchanged between them. At length they touched upon the subject of George's former reflections. Personally he inclined to the profession of a soldier, but from that he was debarred, for there was no employment for such persons since there prevailed a general peace and a cessation of civil arms throughout the kingdom. A serving-man he did not much affect, for he held it too servile, and besides, he remembered the two English proverbs: *Service is no heritage*, and: *An old serving-man makes a young beggar*. He had no hopes of proving a scholar, since he had (as you have heard) broken up school too early; nor did he care for a trade, because he could not endure to be imprisoned seven years in a shop to cry: *What do you lack?* * After much conference, his friend told him that at Halifax, some twelve miles distant, lived a soothsayer or fortune-teller, who cast figures † and could predict from men's nativities what should happen to them.

'Therefore, of him be advised,' urged George's friend; 'and according as he shall calculate of your birth, so frame the course of your life.'

His counsels so far prevailed with George that he

* *Note* O. † *Note* P.

undertook the journey, the more willingly because he had heard from other people of the soothsayer's wisdom. A time was appointed, and he and his friend set out together; but coming to the town somewhat late, they thought it best not to trouble the artist that night, but rather to make proof of him early in the morning, fresh and fasting. They supped merrily with some good fellows of their acquaintance, from whom, however, they concealed the object of their coming. In the morning they were up betimes, and George, understanding that ten groats was the sum usually paid to the wise man, had the fee ready in his hand. They were directed to his house, and happened to arrive there just as the sage himself opened the door to find that some careless lout had left some rubbish lying on the threshold, at which sight, in a rare temper, he exclaimed:

'If I could but imagine, or find out by inquiry, who hath done this, I would make an example of him!'

Then he went in and slammed the door.

'Come, George,' cried his friend. 'Let us follow close, for ten to one we shall find him alone!'

But George, who had an idea, shook his head, and said he was sorry his friend had taken so much pains to so little purpose; yet though he had made him such a fool as to lose so much labour, still he had wit enough left him to keep his money.

'Why, what mean you?' demanded the other.

'I mean to be as wise as the wise man, and not part with my money for nothing!' replied George. 'How can I believe that he, who cannot inform himself of a thing lately past, could tell me of things to come? Nay, let him keep his art for his own

use, as I will keep my money for my own spending!'

With that he altered his course and went back to Wakefield, where he arrived somewhat wiser than when he left. But his friend, as arrant a fool as he was, got there first!

*How George a Green was chosen Pindar of Wakefield. How he bore himself in that Office, and of some other Incidents which befell him*

It happened, soon after his journey to Halifax, that the Pindar of Wakefield died. The post, though of no great reputation, was profitable, therefore many of the townsmen and others of the neighbouring villages made suit for it. Now George was well beloved, partly for his father's sake but chiefly for his own. He being destitute of means and employment, it was generally decided that although he had made no request for the office, either by his own mouth or through the mediation of friends, it should be mentioned to him that if he thought fit to accept so poor a favour—albeit it proceeded from their love—until something better turned up, he should have the post, in spite of all competitors. Pleased with this voluntary token of affection and being in himself a hater of all ingratitude, George—considering that he was without a calling—decided that it were better to enter a mean profession than to have none at all. He therefore returned a thankful answer of acceptance (modestly excusing his own demerits) on this condition: that as he understood there were many suitors for the post who seemed more expert than himself, and since it was an office

which required a strong man able to undergo much without being beaten, he for his part desired that merit should gain it rather than favour ; wherefore his request was that all who were interested in the matter should appear next holiday, after evensong, on the green, to have a bout or two at quarter-staff (the weapon most in use in those days), and so remove all pretext for his being afterwards hated or envied. This suggestion was so fair that it was denied by none, but accepted by all, and George was much commended for having proposed it. The day was appointed, and a proclamation made, not only to the neighbouring villages but also in all the market towns in the country, that whosoever would appear—whether strangers or not—should not only have fair play, but he who by staff and law could maintain his claim should have the Pindarship during his life, etc. When the time came, a great crowd of people appeared from all parts, and many stout champions entered the lists. Many a tinker was seen with his long staff on his shoulder (for lances belonged to horsemen only), and there was not one but would venture his body in the fight. George was the challenger, the rest defendants ; the prize, the Pindarship. Neither bakers nor butchers were excluded, nor fencers, even, for the challenge was general. Many who made no pretensions to the place came solely to show their valour.

The champion stands forth, a defendant appears, the charge is sounded—not by trumpets but by bagpipes, as the Scotsmen go to war. As one is struck down, another starts up in his place. In this combat George may well be compared with Hercules fighting with Hydra ; for as soon as one opponent is van-

quished, two or three appear in his stead.* Fewer staves have been broken at a tilt on a coronation day than quarter-staves at this trial of strength. Twenty heads, which at first stood upright on their respective shoulders, in less than an hour stooped lower than their knees ; yet there was in George no sign of weakness or weariness. He seemed as fresh as when he began. Some of those who came to make proof of their valour, learned, by other men's fates, to be wary, and forebore to enter the lists, deeming that the safest way—seeing so many cracked crowns pass current—to sleep in a whole skin. In short, George opposed so many that at last there were none to resist ; and the office, by common consent, was conferred on him. All acknowledged, moreover, that it was his by merit and not by favour.

It chanced that as his valour attracted the hearts of all men, his fair and genteel appearance made him of interest to many women, and to one in particular, a beautiful damsel named Beatrice, only daughter and heiress of a rich justice of the peace, whose name was Grymes ; a man of wealth and of no mean reputation. This maiden, who was the chief beauty in the north country, was espied by George in such breathing space as he enjoyed when, having foiled one champion, he awaited the coming of another ; and she, perceiving that whenever he had an opportunity he cast a loving glance in her direction, was not slow to respond. 'Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?' The saying was true enough in this case, for ever afterwards there was an impression of such cordial and entire love between Beatrice and George that neither prevention nor

* *Note* Q.

disaster could erase it. Of this we will speak further in the sequel. But here for the present we shall leave our new-made Pindar, who was carried home shoulder-high by the lusty lads of the town, whilst his sweetheart, attended by the country maidens according to her degree, returned to her father's house, some two miles off, though—had modesty permitted—she would rather have made a shorter journey of it and borne George company, even as he would have willingly made the longer journey and escorted her home. But as neither could have their wish, part they must, and part they did ; yet met as closely in their thoughts as they were far divided in their bodies. Thus we take leave of them for a little time, whilst I tell you what was happening in the affairs of the nation.

*Of a great Insurrection in the Kingdom, made by the Earl of Kendal and his Accomplices on Account of a vain Prophecy ; and how George a Green demeaned himself towards the Rebels*

Richard the First, [second] son of Henry II., after his father's death,* began his reign in 1189. Having settled his affairs in Normandy and England, and released his mother, Eleanor, from prison (his father having kept her in confinement because she had caused the death of his beloved Rosamond), the King conferred many honours on his younger brother, John, to whom he gave the provinces of Nottingham, Devonshire and Cornwall. He also created him Earl of Lancaster, and married him to the Earl of Gloucester's heiress,† by which match the earldom

* *Note* R.

† *Note* S.

shortly came into his hands. These matters satisfactorily accomplished, King Richard prepared for a voyage to the Holy Land with Philip II., King of France. During his absence he constituted the Bishop of Ely, then Chancellor of England, Vice-regent of the kingdom. The covetousness of this bishop,* on the one hand, and the ambition of the King's brother [John] on the other, caused factions to arise against the tyrannous prelate, and great distractions ensued. Nay, a third ulcer, worse than these, broke into open rebellion—namely an insurrection raised by the Earl of Kendal and several of his adherents, such as the Lord Bonville, Sir Gilbert Armstrong, and others. These, having collected an army of some twenty thousand malcontents, made public proclamation that they came into the field solely to purchase their countrymen's liberty and to free them from the great and insufferable oppression of the prince and prelate. This drew many followers to the Earl's side, so that he seemed to have got together a very potent army. But the main reason of this rebellion was that when the Earl was still a child, a soothsayer had prophesied that Richard and he should meet in London and the King doff his bonnet to him; a prediction which eventually proved true, but not as it was expounded.

The Earl's army struck terror to the hearts of the King's faithful subjects in the north, who wished for the good of the Commonwealth and the safety of the kingdom; yet many were forced through fear to supply his men with the necessary provisions, lest they should make havoc of all they possessed. The Earl being for some time destitute of many things needful to an army, the three confederates, encamp-

* *Note* T.

ing some five miles from the town of Wakefield, drew up a commission, which they each signed with their own seals, and sent it by one Mannering, a servant of the Earl's, to the bailiff and townsmen of Wakefield, desiring them to send a quantity of provisions, corn and cattle, with other necessaries for the use of their host. A sum of money was also required, to pay the soldiers. Mannering was to use persuasion first, then—if they denied his request—he was to threaten them with fire and sword. News of this commission coming to their ears, the bailiff and his fellows sent a message to the neighbouring justices (Master Grymes included), appointing a meeting in the town hall. At this many of the commons were present, George a Green amongst them. Before this assembly the messenger [Mannering] appeared, showed his warrant, and, according to his orders, entreated his love and favour. The bailiff and justices were loath to grant his request, which was contrary to their allegiance ; yet they were afraid to deny it peremptorily, and stood wavering and debating amongst themselves what they had better do. Seeing this, Mannering began to alter his tone, first taunting them and deriding their cowardice, then threatening them that if they did not at once comply with his demands the army would instantly despoil them of their goods, ravish their daughters, and make a bonfire of the town, as an example to others who should dare to oppose the Earl. At this haughty and insufferable menace, whilst the bench sat quaking, George pressed forward through the crowd and asked leave to answer the messenger. Permission being granted him, he boldly stepped up to the latter and demanded his name.

'Mannering,' was the reply.

'Mannering!' roared George. 'The name was ill bestowed on one who can so far forget his manners as to stand covered before a bench on which the majesty of his sovereign is represented! I will teach thee manners, since thou lackest them.'

So saying, he snatched the fellow's bonnet off his head, trod on it, and spurned it from him.

'How dare you offer violence to one who beareth so mighty a commission?" exclaimed Mannering, enraged.

'Your commission!' quoth George. 'I beg your pardon, sir.'

Then he asked to be allowed to peruse the precious document, and having done so: 'Marry!' cried he, 'I cannot choose but submit myself to this authority.'

He made a gesture as if he would kiss it, but instead, tore it in pieces. At this Mannering began to stamp, stare, and swear; whereupon George, seizing him by the collar, shook him as though he would have loosened every bone in his body. Then, drawing his dagger and pointing it at his bosom, he said: 'I have physic which shall purge you of your angry blood!'

With that, he stooped to pick up the three seals, which were (said he) three pills, to be instantly swallowed by the messenger if he wished ever again to return to his master; nor would he leave Mannering, or take the dagger from his breast until the seals were down. Then, seeing that they almost choked him, George called for a jug of ale.

'It shall never be said,' quoth he, 'that the messenger of such great personages was sent to the town of Wakefield, and no one was kind enough to

make him drink. Here, Mannering, is a health to the confusion of that traitor, your master, and all his rebellious army! Pledge me it, without delay, or I vow, by the allegiance which I owe to my prince and sovereign, you have drunk your last draught!'

Mannering, seeing there was nothing else for it, and feeling the wax still in his throat, drank off the ale with all speed.

'Now,' said the Pindar, 'commend me to your master and the rest, and tell them that one George a Green, Pindar of the town of Wakefield, though he hath torn their commission, sendeth them their seals safe back again by their servant.'

Whatever Mannering thought, he was heard to speak but little. Muttering the devil's *Pater Noster*,* he left them. Everybody commended George's resolution, and, encouraged by his example, determined from henceforth to oppose the rebels.

*How George wrote a Letter to fair Beatrice, and how it was delivered to her; of its Success, and of other Incidents pertinent to this History*

The story of the Pindar's latest exploit, told to Beatrice by her father, Justice Grymes, who loudly commended George's spirit and valour, added fresh fuel to the fire already kindled in her breast. Nothing could have delighted her more than to hear him praised; and nothing troubled her so much as that modesty would not suffer her to tell him of her affection. George, on the other hand, was much worried with the consideration of the differences between them, of birth and estate. She was an esquire's

* *Note* U.

daughter, he a yeoman's son; her father was a justice of the peace, his a farmer. She was an heiress, he, master of nothing; she was so rich, he was so poor! These discouraging meditations drove him into so deep a melancholy that nothing could comfort him. Then, again, he reminded himself that all virtuous lovers were respecters of person rather than of place and preferred the man to his means. He told himself, moreover, that he who feared not the face of any man, should not be daunted by the frowns of a woman—that faint heart never won fair lady—that all contracts were first confirmed in heaven before they could be concluded on earth.* These thoughts prevailing over his melancholy, he next began to devise a means to acquaint his lady love with his affection; and knowing it is a laudable ambition to aim high rather than to look low, he decided to put his fortune to the test, since the worst thing which could come of it would not be death, but denial. He had read, too, that it is a kind of ingratitude in one who is loved and honoured by another to be angered thereby. Forthwith he took pen in hand (still as one loath to offend) and set himself cautiously to express his own love rather than presumptuously to urge or persuade hers. Being a pretty poet, he wrote his fancy:

*'What art thou, beauty, uncommended?*
*Or what is state, if not attended?*
*Or gold in ground*
*If sought, not found?*
*What's favour in a prince offended?*
*All these like smoke and bubbles prove!*
*And so it happens to my love.*

* *Note* V.

*What are pleasures if untried?*
*Or what great suits if still denied?*
*Or what, to thee*
*Who cannot see,*
*Is Phœbus in his noonday pride?*
*He may be fair, and yet annoy*
*All who are helpless to enjoy.*

*What use is wealth, but to possess it?*
*Or virtue, if none dare profess it?*
*Even so it fares*
*With these my cares.*
*Then what my mistress, who can guess it*
*Saving you only that do know it:*
*I have a heart, but dare not show it!'*

George was afraid that in thus overtly discovering his meaning he might arouse some distaste, yet it could not breed anger; and if it did, he would make the excuse: '*A cat may look at a king*. The air is free for men to breathe, nor is the poorest wight debarred the privilege of gazing at the sun, which shines upon all.' This letter told her that he loved her—true! But she could prevent no man from doing that, nor would it harm her; therefore he incurred no blame. Animated with these hopes he signed his name, sealed the letter and gave it to his boy, whom he charged to watch his opportunity, and when no one was looking, to drop the packet in some place where Beatrice would be sure to find it and pick it up. The boy proved an apt scholar, and did as his master had tutored him; and the letter came safely into the hands of her to whom it was written. When she read it, as she did over and over again, I can safely say that never came tidings of

more comfort to her sad and discontented heart. All her study and care was to return him a prompt and pleasing answer; for she considered that there was no object in appearing coy or delaying; for she had many importunate suitors of her own rank, daily and hourly soliciting a reply, to all of whom she gave fair answers and seeming regard. But now, being firmly resolved to marry her dear George, she went to her room, shut herself in, and wrote to him as follows:—

'*Prove but as constant as thou'rt bold,*
*Thy suit shall never be controlled.*
*I am not to be bought or sold*
*For wealth or treasure.*

*Let suitors fret and parents rage,*
*Then keep me in an iron cage;*
*Yet I myself to thee engage—*
*I'll use my pleasure!*

*Then be no longer discontent:*
*I write no more than what is meant.*
*With this my hand, my heart is sent.*
*Be't thine endeavour*

*To lay some plot how we may meet,*
*And lovingly each other greet*
*With amorous words and kisses sweet.*
*I'm thine for ever.*

BEATRICE.'

Without waiting to read this through to see if she had written anything rashly or unadvisedly, she folded it up and—for fear of discovery or prevention—hid it in her bosom, not knowing how to convey

it to George safely and secretly. In this quandary, as she walked along the road at some distance from her father's house, she saw William, the Pindar's boy, lingering near the gate. She at once guessed that he had come to learn what success his master might hope for; and perceiving that the coast was clear, she dropped the letter as if by chance, where he could not fail to see it; then she went towards the house without saying a word, though she watched out of the corners of her eyes to see whether the lad took it up or not. William, who was as crafty as she was cunning, picked up the letter, and seeing by the superscription that it was not in his master's hand, ran home gladly; for he hoped he was the bearer of good tidings. Never was a man in such ecstasies of delight as George was when he had opened and read the letter!

But I must now leave him, to speak of the rebels. The Earl, Lord Bonville, and Sir Gilbert, hearing of the fame of Beatrice's beauty—the sole bright and refulgent star of the north—had left the command of the army to men whom they trusted, and invited themselves to the house of Justice Grymes, who—much against his will—was forced to make them welcome and to give them leave to court his daughter. But she, true to her resolve, put them off with slight answers, humouring all and satisfying none. Whilst they were thus enjoying themselves, Mannering, who had been first to seek them in camp, arrived with his unpleasant message from Wakefield. He related the whole history, omitting no detail, of how they had been baffled by a peasant, one George a Green, who had not only torn their commission, but forced their messenger to

swallow their seals. Needless to say, they were incensed at this affront from a man of low station. That night they spent in feasting and courting fair Beatrice, whom the Earl promised to make a countess at least; but the next day they took their leave of her and of Master Grymes, her father, and returned to camp to lay their heads together for the devising of a plan by which to seize the Pindar, in whom alone (according to Mannering's report) lay the whole strength of the town. Whilst they were debating, Sir William Musgrave, a brave old knight, and his son Cuddy—a valiant and successful gentleman—had raised a small army on behalf of their absent King, and, although fewer in numbers, only awaited the opportunity to fall upon the rebels; but they were so strongly encamped that Musgrave could only do it at great hazard to himself and his people; pending which adventure, I will leave him for a while, to speak of other incidents pertinent to our story.

*How George a Green surprised a Spy who was sent by the Rebels to betray Sandon Castle, of which Sir William Musgrave and his Son, Cuddy, had the Keeping; and of sundry other Passages*

Previous to the incident between George and Mannering at Wakefield, the Earl of Kendal had hired a spy and given him a round sum to betray, if he could, Sandon [Sandal] Castle, in which the Musgraves lay with a garrison which, though very small, had hitherto repulsed all assaults on the part of the rebels. This spy, as he prowled about, chanced to meet George, whom he had never seen before,

and did not know. The two entered into conversation, and George, seeing that the other was of the Earl's faction, began to smooth him down with soft speeches, and commended the insurrection as though it were a good thing for the kingdom at large. By these mean she so ingratiated himself into the spy's favour that the latter told him frankly what he purposed to do, at the same time showing him a bag of gold which, he said, should be his who could devise a plot to bring this stratagem to pass. The Pindar, secretly rejoicing, told him that for such he would himself undertake to bring him into the castle at dead of night, when he might open the gates and let in as many of his confederates as he pleased.

'I am very well known to the garrison,' said George; 'for I am often sent to carry them provisions. It would be best, to my thinking, for you to enter at nightfall, when I will take you on my back (as if you were a load of corn or some such commodity as I usually bring thither) and put you in some corner of the castle that is least suspected. Then, in the dead of night, when you think all is safe, you can get out, open the gates, and let in all your friends.'

This he said with such a serious and earnest countenance that the spy promptly fell into the trap. A sack was provided, into which he crept, whereupon George slung him over his shoulder and nimbly set out until he came within sight of the castle, when, taking from his pocket the halter which he used to lead strays to the pound, he fastened it to the mouth of the sack and hoisted it, about twelve feet from the ground, to a tree before the castle green.

He then bade the spy farewell and left him dangling between heaven and hell, with this inscription pinned on his breast :

*'Whoever next shall pass this way,*
*A little I entreat to stay ;*
*And, if he'll deign to look so high,*
*He'll see a most notorious spy.*
*This sack, too, I would have you think,*
*More wholesome is to hang than drink ;* *
*Because in this a plot was laid*
*By which you all had been betrayed.*
*Use him according to your skill*
*Who sought this night your blood to spill.*
*If who did this you shall enquire,*
*'Twas George a Green did hang him here.'*

Having done this, George trudged as fast as he could to the town, to attend to his lawful business. He was scarcely out of sight when Sir William Musgrave and his son, Cuddy, came out to take the evening air ; and Cuddy by chance espying a strange something in the tree, pointed it out to his father, and both drew nearer to discover what it might be. When they had read the inscription, however, they could easily perceive what pig was in that poke (as the saying is). So they cut down the sack and its contents with such haste that the latter's neck was nearly broken by the fall ; and they took the traitor to the castle, where they made him confess all the plans made by the rebels. At the same time they spoke highly of George's witty stratagem, and of his fidelity to his sovereign.

But now, for variety's sake, I will break off,

* *Note* W.

though somewhat abruptly, to speak a word or two of Robin Hood, his Maid Marian, and his bold yeomen, who at this time kept revel rout in the forest of Sherwood.*

*Of Robin Hood, Maid Marian, and the bold Yeomen; and how Marian, jealous of the Fame of George a Green and the Beauty of Beatrice, would not rest until it was proved whether Robin or George were the more valiant, and she or Beatrice the fairer*

I do not propose to trouble the reader with any tedious discourse by telling you how Robin Hood † was first Earl of Huntingdon and was turned out of his possessions by the covetous bishop aforementioned [the Bishop of Ely], whom the King, on his departure for the Holy Land, had made governor of the kingdom; nor how she who called herself Maid Marian was Matilda, daughter of the Lord Fitz-Walters.‡ She, having discovered herself to be beloved of Prince John, retired to the forest of Sherwood for love of Robin. This history would require a small volume to itself. I propose only to speak of it insomuch as it concerns the story in hand. It is to be remembered, therefore, that George a Green and Beatrice, the daughter of Justice Grymes, were famous in the north, the one for his strength and valour, the other for her beauty; and Robin and his Marian, before unequalled, were now scarcely mentioned. Thus there was emulation between Robin and George, Marian and Beatrice, which afterwards grew into a quarrel, and ended in friendship, as you will see.

* *Note* X. † See *Note* B. ‡ *Note* Y.

It was a custom amongst the outlaws, when they and Robin Hood went a-hunting, to come (each dressed in green, armed with a good yew bow and a sheaf of arrows hanging at the girdle) early in the morning to rouse their leader with a song.

*'Now wend we together, my merry men all,*
*Unto the greenwood side-a,*
*And then to kill a buck or a doe,*
*Let your cunning all be tried-a.*
*No man may compare with Robin Hood,*
*With Robin's Slathbatch * and John-a,*
*The like never was and never shall be,*
*In case that they were gone-a.*

*Then let us not linger away the time,*
*But hie to the merry greenwood-a,*
*And there strike down a buck or a doe*
*For my master Robin Hood-a:*
*For my master Robin Hood-a!'*

With this music of voices well attuned they would salute him, and afterwards attend him to the chase. But it happened that for four or five days together the weather was very rainy and tempestuous, and during this time Marian remained in a state of melancholy, the cause of which her Robin could not discover, though he tried by all means and entreaties, and at last began to be a little jealous lest her love should be inclining towards Prince John, who was continually sending messengers to her with letters and gifts. Yet such was Robin's faith in her constancy, of which he had had proof again and again, that he soon blamed himself for having

* *Note* Z.

doubted her, and attributed her sadness to the gloomy and unseasonable weather, which might well have been the cause of her indisposition. To drive this away (for nothing could have troubled him more than to see her looking sad) he dressed one of his pages as a wood-nymph, and providing him with a costly mantle embroidered in many colours, bade him present it to the Maid Marian as she sat alone. This the boy did, the while a choir of sweet singers, placed out of sight, sang the following soft strains:—

'Beauty's rose and virtue's look,
Angel's mind and mortal's book,
Both to men and angels dear.
O thou fairest on the earth,
Heaven did smile upon thy birth
And since, the days have been most clear.

Only poor St Swithin now
Doth fear you blame his cloudy brow:
But your saint devoutly swears
'Tis but a tradition vain
That his weeping causeth rain:
For saints in heaven can shed no tears.

But this he says, that to the feast
Comes Iris, an unwelcome guest,
In her moist robe of colours gay.
And when she comes, she ever strays
For the space of forty days,
And, more or less, weeps every day.

St Swithin then, when once he knew
That rain was like to fall on you,
(If saints could weep) he wept as much
As when you did the lady lead
Who did on burning iron tread;
To virgins his respect is such.

He gently then bade Iris go
Unto th' Antipodes below;
But she at this more sullen grew.
When he saw this, with angry look
From her this rainy robe he took,
Which here he doth present to you.

'Tis fit it should with you abide,
As man's great wonder, virtue's pride:
Yet if it still rains as before
St Swithin prays that you will guess
Fair Iris doth more robes possess,
And so you will not blame him more.'

No sooner was the song ended than Robin Hood appeared; but instead of friendly thanks Marian greeted him with these words:

'I wonder, sir, that you can be so stupid and heavy-witted as to flatter me by calling me the "pride of virtue" and the "wonder of mankind," when the lustre of both of us is so suddenly eclipsed! Until within these last few months, who was so famous for magnanimity and valour as Robin Hood, or who more renowned than his Marian for chastity and beauty? But now they are scarce thought of, much less spoken of at all. The mouths of the multitude are filled with the valiant exploits of George a Green, the famous Pindar of Wakefield; and of the refulgent sun of the north, fair Beatrice, daughter to old Grymes. These are preferred before an earl—before me, the daughter of an earl! Yet the Pindar is but a yeoman, and she the child of a petty gentleman—and even so, they are more highly esteemed throughout the kingdom than we are. Can you blame me, then, for being melancholy, when I hear abroad such loud acclamations of them, and of ourselves scarce any rumour at all?"

When she had thus freely uttered all that was in her mind, Robin on his part commended her and asked her what, under the circumstances, was best to be done; to which she replied that two suns could not shine in one element, neither could there be two unequalled beauties in one country, and further counselled him that, for the honour of both, they should travel as far as Wakefield. There he could prove which was the better man, he or George; and she could compare herself with Beatrice in order that true judgment might be given as to which was the fairer woman. Robin, than whom a more undaunted spirit was not known to breathe in those days, was not a little pleased to hear that this was the sole cause of Maid Marian's discontent. Taking her by the hand he bade her be of good cheer, for before the month was out she should have her wish. Sealing the promise with a kiss, he gave orders for his journey, which was to be made secretly, lest, being taken from his guard of archers (he being outlawed*) it might prove dangerous to him. He therefore selected three of the stoutest amongst his crew — namely, Slathbatch, Little John and the Friar [Tuck], to be his attendants and to take charge of his fair Marian on the journey; in the pursuit of which I will for the present leave them. Of its success you shall hear later.

*How the Earl of Kendal and Lord Bonville laid an Ambush to entrap George a Green; how he foiled this Plot, and what happened thereupon*

As the fame of George grew greater and greater,

* *Note* AA.

so the displeasure of the rebels was increased more and more against him, especially for the two merry affronts, the one against Mannering, the other against their spy, of whose surprisal they had lately got intelligence. This decided them to defer revenge no longer. They therefore placed a strong ambush, and thought they had him fast; for the Earl, Bonville and Mannering, thinking to lay a bait which he would be sure to nibble at, broke down a strong fence and put in their horses to feed amongst the corn. George, who always had an eye on business, soon noticed them, and sent his boy to drive the animals to the pound. The three confederates at once appeared, disguised, and asked what he meant to do with their horses—did he intend to steal them under their very noses? They then began to assault the lad, which George perceiving, he hurried to the scene of action and told the Earl and his companions (whom as yet he did not recognise, thanks to their disguise) that it was base and discourteous in gentlemen such as they seemed to be to do an injury and then maintain it by obstinacy; to which the Earl replied that the horses were his, and were put into the cornfield to feed in spite of George or anyone else who should say nay. The Pindar, seeing he had (apparently) no more than three to deal with, would not be beaten down by bold words, and told them in plain terms what a forfeit they had made and what amends were due from them; else, he added, as they had ridden on horseback thither, they should go home on foot; and he swore by the life of good King Richard that he would see it performed. The Earl, hearing him name the King, angrily told George that he was a base groom and a peasant,

and had affronted one who before long would be King Richard's master. The words were no sooner out of his mouth than George, who could not endure such an insult to his sovereign, struck the speaker a sound blow with his staff across his shoulder blades.

'You lie like a traitor, and I'll make it good upon your carcass!' thundered the wrathful Pindar.

'You are a villain!' said Mannering, stepping forward. 'You have struck an earl.'

George's retort was a blow, and the words: 'I care not! As I have before unsealed his commission, so will I now sign his passport into another world.'

With that he knocked the Earl down.

Seeing this, Lord Bonville gave a sign to the men in ambush, who were about forty in number, and they surrounded the Pindar, who began to apprehend that strength would no longer avail—he must have recourse to diplomacy; so he craved a parley, which was granted, and began to speak as follows to the Earl:—

'I wonder, sir, that you, being a nobleman and, what is more, the general of so puissant an army, should so demean yourself as to assault with such unequal odds a poor man of no reputation. What have I done more to you, who abused my king, than you would have expected from your peasant Mannering if he had heard your Honour reviled? If you expect from him the duty of a peasant, will you deny me, or blame me for the same duty to my king? Yet, my lord, if you can prove that your cause is just and your enterprise for the good and benefit of the commonwealth, I shall be glad to follow you, and to draw my sword in your quarrel.'

He was about to say more, when Bonville, taking the Earl aside, persuaded him to fall in with this offer and ask no questions ; for, said he, could they but enrol the Pindar in their faction he might persuade others—especially the town of Wakefield —to join them. The Earl approved, and spoke thus to George :

'Thy submission and apology, which thou hast so boldly uttered, hath dispelled my spleen and mediated with me for thy pardon.'

He then ordered his men to return to camp, and proceeded :

'My rising in arms is to suppress the insolence of a proud prince and a prelate even more insolent, both of whom have encroached upon the liberties and privileges of the commonwealth. I stand for the common good ; but the greatest inducement which drew me into this cause was the prophecy of a wizard at my birth, who thus calculated my nativity : *that King Richard and I should meet in London, and he should doff his bonnet to me.*'

'Ay, marry,' replied the Pindar. 'You speak to the purpose indeed, my lord, and I am encouraged, by what you tell me, to become your soldier and servant ; but, my lord, might I humbly presume to advise you, the better to justify your proceedings, and for a more complete notion of your affairs ? In a cave not far hence there lives a reverend old man who is a great soothsayer and was never known to fail in his predictions. It were not amiss to take his advice, and to see how nicely his calculation jumps with the former. May it please you, then, this night to take some simple provision such as my poor cottage can afford ; and my boy shall lead you

to the sage's cave, where you may be satisfied of all your doubts and difficulties.'

This motion being accepted, they parted to make their arrangements.

The morning, much longed for, came in due time, and the Pindar's boy, with his guests, was early at the cave, yet not so early as the Pindar, who was already there, disguised as an old hermit such as he had described. Altering his natural voice, he told them the things they had previously related to him, calling each by name and discovering to them their purpose in coming, at which they marvelled. But suddenly, in the midst of their discourse, George threw off his disguise, seized the good staff which had never yet failed him at his need, and so bestirred himself a while that after some slight resistance, having no hole to creep out at, and being without their ambush, he first disarmed them, then took them prisoner. Meanwhile he had provided that certain officers should be at hand with a strong guard to take his captives to the house of Justice Grymes, who later conveyed them safely to London, there to be disposed of by the King, who was now returned from the holy wars in Palestine.

*How George a Green, having seized the Arch-rebels, plotted to obtain his beloved Beatrice; and what afterwards became of Armstrong and the Army*

The Pindar, vigilant and careful as he was for the honour of the King and the welfare of the public, was not altogether forgetful of his own private affairs, especially of the great affection which he bore to fair Beatrice. At all convenient opportunities

letters passed between the two, in which she solemnly promised to let slip no chance of freeing herself from the close confinement of her father's house and flying to George as her only protection and sanctuary. Meanwhile he devised a plan—namely, to dress his boy Willy as a seamstress's maid and to send him up to the house with lace bands and other commodities for sale, hoping that by this means he might be admitted without suspicion to Beatrice's presence. Fortune favoured the design insomuch that the boy came to show his wares when the Justice was busy receiving the Earl of Kendal and his accomplices, which prevented a too curious inquiry about the lad, who was freely admitted and sent to Beatrice in her own room. No sooner was he inside the door than he shut it and revealed his identity and his plan. Beatrice was to put on the seamstress's dress, and muffling her face as if she had the toothache (a posture assumed by the boy when he came in), she was to take the box of laces and go out, leaving the boy to answer her father and to 'face the music' generally. Beatrice was delighted with this plan, and with no less speed than willingness exchanged clothes with her visitor. Willy was as nimble as she, and was soon as ready to be taken for Mistress Beatrice as she for a seamstress's maid; so that she, holding a handkerchief before her mouth, easily passed through the house and out at the gates unquestioned. We will there leave her on her way to Wakefield, and Willy in her chamber, and return to Armstrong, who in the Earl's absence had charge of the camp.

He, thinking himself as secure as the Earl had appeared negligent, was set upon in the night by

Sir William Musgrave and his son, Cuddy, who took him when he was carelessly asleep. Thus the whole army was discomfited, and young Cuddy, fighting hand to hand with Armstrong, took him prisoner. Glad of such a present wherewith to welcome the King home from the wars, he hastened with his captive to London, to offer him as a pattern of his prowess.

Justice Grymes, his share in the business completed for the present, stole up to see his daughter, but found—as he thought—another maid in her dress, asleep in a chair. At first amazed, and afterwards afraid, as he began to suspect the truth, Grymes roused the sleeper and demanded who she was and how she came thither.

'I am a poor gentlewoman, and I came hither upon my legs,' returned Willy, demure as any sucking dove.

'Where is my daughter?' shouted Grymes roughly.

'In truth, sir, a seamstress's habit, which doth become her mighty well, hath been the means to convey her abroad,' was the answer. 'But, lest her chamber should be found empty, she left me here in pawn until her return.'

The Justice, more and more enraged, threatened Willy with the extreme rigour of the law if he did not tell him the truth. But just then he was called down again about some business of the commonwealth which had to be attended to immediately. Yet the charms of the young impostor in his daughter's room had made such an impression upon him that he locked 'her' in and pocketed the key, resolved that since through her he had lost a daughter, she could make him a wife (he being a widower) if she could give a good account of her birth and station. These and the like meditations somewhat

moderated his choler for the present, and he made what haste he could to despatch his prisoners, in order that he might the more speedily return to visit his uninvited guest.

But here for a while we must leave him, to return to Robin Hood and his fair Marian (who had by this time accomplished the greater part of their journey), and show what happened to them at their meeting with the Pindar and his Beatrice.

*Of that which took place between Robin Hood and his Marian, and George a Green and his Beatrice; and how their great Animosity was at length reconciled; with other pertinent Incidents* *

The great joy at the meeting of George and Beatrice was unspeakable, the more so since it was unexpected. But as there is no day so clear, yet there will be some clouds to stain the beauty of the sky, so in their content there was one thing which troubled them greatly, and that was the danger Willy incurred for their sakes. Nothing could be done, however, and their fears continued lest the Justice, enraged by the deception, should use violence. To divert her melancholy, and also to devise a plan for Willy's release, George one evening took Beatrice by the arm and led her forth to breathe the fresh and wholesome air. They were strolling through the fields of green corn when they suddenly perceived a company of wild-looking fellows break through a gap in the hedge, and, without troubling to find the path, come towards them, treading down the corn. This was more than George's sense of propriety

* *Note* BB.

could stand, and he hastened to meet them, despite Beatrice's entreaties. His indignation against such wilful trespass prevailed over her entreaties and the care for his own safety. Taking his staff in his hand, he ordered the intruders to stand, and not only to render him an account, but also to give immediate satisfaction for the damage they had done. Robin and his companions, who had put off their bows and arrows with their forest green, and were armed only with good strong quarter-staves according to the fashion of the country, retorted contemptuously that they were travellers and all ways were alike to them—if they could make a short cut, therefore, they saw no reason to take the long way round. They added that they had done no damage, or, if they had, the amends lay in his own hands.

'Marry, and so it doth!' answered the Pindar, twirling his staff. 'I have that in my hand which shall call you to a dear reckoning. You seem to be men furnished with limbs and spirit. If you be such, and not base and effeminate cowards, come upon me, not all at once, but one by one; and then—have at you, though you were twice as many again!'

Slathbatch, since he asked to be the first to fight, was the first to be laid at his master's feet. Then Little John must needs revenge his friend and fellow, and dipped his finger in the same source. At this sight Beatrice took courage and began to laugh; but Marian, who was watching her, did nothing but fret. Meanwhile the Friar had buckled himself up for the third encounter, but George, perceiving him to be a Churchman by his shaven crown, refused at first, until he saw that the nimble Friar yearned to have a bout with him; then—remarking that

as Tuck had begged a cudgelling at his hands and he was bound in conscience to deny the Church nothing, he would surely give it him—he soon laid the Friar sprawling on God's earth. Still Beatrice smiled and Marian fretted ; and whilst Robin and George were preparing for the final combat (for Robin was ready to give him liberty to breathe) Marian stepped up to Beatrice and called her a proud minx.

'Turn now your laughter into tears,' she added, 'for here comes one who will not only revenge his friends, but beat, baffle, and disarm your lubberly sweetheart !'

To this Beatrice, who was of a high spirit, and was moreover emboldened by her George's valour, retorted : 'Thou shalt find as much difference between my champion and thine in manhood, as between the true and natural colour in my cheeks and thy painted and plaistered beauty !'

These words were enough to begin new wars, and the two would have been by the ears in an instant, had not the Friar and the rest (now recovered) with much ado kept them apart.

But the two virgins, who would have been actors themselves, were now forced to be spectators of one of the bravest combats ever fought in Wakefield. Long did it last, and fiercely did they contest which should be victor, until at length, when both were weary, Robin said : 'Hold thy hand, noble Pindar, for I protest thou art the stoutest man that I ever yet laid my hand upon.'

'Recall those words !' retorted George. 'Never yet hast thou laid thy hand on me !'

'Nor ever will, noble George, save in courtesy,' was the answer. 'Know, then, I am Robin Hood.

This is my Marian, and these my bold yeomen who are come thus far from Sherwood solely to prove thy valour and to be spectators of Beatrice's beauty, both which I find to exceed the report which fame hath given of them.'

At these words the Pinder embraced his late adversary and said that, next to King Richard, he was the man he honoured most. He then craved pardon of Maid Marian, and caused Beatrice to kneel before her, as she would willingly have done, but that the sweet lady would not suffer it, but lovingly embraced her instead, confessing that she would never have believed the north country could have bred such a beauty.

George then invited them all to an entertainment, wherein he showed himself to be as generous and bountiful as he was strong, for their repast and welcome was better suited to a large manor-house than to a thatched cottage. But Robin had not come altogether unprovided from Sherwood, for he had both money and heifers laden with all sorts of provisions on purpose to feast and revel with the Pindar.

So we may leave them in content and felicity, and proceed to welcome King Richard on his return from Palestine.

*How King Richard, after his Return, ordered that the Abuses committed in his Absence by the Prince and the Bishop should be redressed. How the Rebels were presented to him, and how he disposed of them; and how George a Green was reported of to the King*

Richard, the first of that name, and for his hardiness

and magnanimity surnamed Cœur de Lion,* after some years spent in the holy wars, returned to his kingdom, and was received with much joy and pomp. No sooner was this passed over, than sundry petitions were delivered to him concerning the oppressions of the Bishop and the insolencies committed by the Prince. These complaints the King, with the advice of his council, now studied to redress; and having settled them satisfactorily, he next considered the question of raising fresh forces to suppress the northern rebellion. Whilst he was in the midst of these deliberations, young Cuddy Musgrave appeared in London with Sir Gilbert Armstrong, whom he presented as a prisoner to the King, at the same time telling him of the defeat of the great army, which had been materially assisted by one George a Green, Pindar of the town of Wakefield. He then related how the latter had taken a spy and hung him up before the gate of Sandon Castle, by which means they had discovered the strength of the rebels and learnt how and when to surprise them, which was the direct cause of so fortunate a victory. The King scarcely had time to commend young Musgrave for his diligence, or to ask what had become of the others concerned in the late rebellion, when Justice Grymes appeared and presented (as from George a Green) the Earl of Kendal, Lord Bonville, and Mannering, giving such an exact testimony of the Pindar's valour that his Majesty said, for all to hear, how glad he was to have so brave a subject. Then, turning to the Earl, in mere derision the King doffed his bonnet to him.

'My lord, you are welcome to London!' quoth

* *Note* CC.

Richard. 'I did not think, at my departure, that you and I should meet here on such terms.'

The salutation reminded the Earl of the prophecy uttered at his birth; he roundly cursed the wizard whose idle prediction had been the cause of his downfall and ruin.

To be brief, the rebels were committed to the Tower, there to await their trial, and the King, having made further inquiries about the Pindar and finding more and more to recommend him, disguised himself and, with the Earl of Leicester (who had accompanied him in his wars) and Cuddy Musgrave for their guide, set out for the north, not only to see this famous yeoman but also to hear how he himself was beloved and his government liked in those parts.

Whilst the King was preparing for this journey, Justice Grymes, having got rid of his prisoners, longed to be at home again to have a better view of the (supposed) girl who had, as it were, been left in pawn for his daughter. He had given strict orders that she should be well attended, but trusted no farther than her room until he returned to examine her more carefully than he had been able to hitherto on account of business. We may now imagine him on his way towards the county whither the King himself was secretly journeying; but we must ourselves return to Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, and Matilda (otherwise known as Robin Hood * and Maid Marian), whom we left feasting with George a Green and his sweet Beatrice.

* *Note* DD.

*Of the Town of merry Bradstead, and a Custom thereof called* Trail-staff *observed by the Shoemakers, others called the 'Gentle Craft.' How the King, Leicester and Cuddy passed through this Town and met Robin Hood and George a Green; and what happened*

Not far from Wakefield there is a town called Bradstead [Bradford?], where the shoemakers long ago had a custom that no person should walk through the town with his staff on his shoulders unless he would have a bout or two with one or other of the gentle craft; but if he trailed it after him, he might proceed in peace without molestation, for then none would so much as say: 'Black his eye!'

It happened that the King's path lay through this town. He, therefore, with Leicester and Cuddy, disguised as country yeomen, walked boldly along like plain, honest travellers, with their staves on their shoulders, for they knew nothing of this custom. Three stout shoemakers, each with a good staff in his hand, instantly stepped forward and beat the strangers' staves from their shoulders. The King, who had hitherto received treatment more polite, wondered at such rudeness, and gently asked the reason for such violence. They told him it had been a privilege of theirs from time immemorial. Their fathers had kept it before them, and they would in turn hand it down to their successors. When the King asked if they had received their patent from their sovereign, they answered that they did not stand on patents, neither knew they any law for it save staff-law, but that all their confraternity were ready to maintain it with downright blows.

'Handle your staves, therefore,' added the shoemakers. 'There is no other way to save yourselves from a speedy and sour banging.'

The King returned that he and his companions were men of peace, and rather than break their custom, or enter into an unnecessary quarrel, they would drag their staves after them, which they did.

Whilst they were talking, George a Green, with Robin Hood and his yeomen, appeared in disguise, each carrying his staff on his back ; for George had told Robin of the shoemakers' mad, merry custom, and brought him that way for sport's sake, to try the gentle craftsmen's mettle. The new-comers observed that the King, Leicester and Cuddy were trailing their staves ; at which sight George, much moved, exclaimed : 'See, Robin ! Here be three lusty, able fellows who dare not, for fear of the shoemakers, advance their staves ! What do you think of them, eh ?'

'Think of them ?' cried Robin. 'Why, that they are base cowards, and it is a pity such goodly shapes should hold such timorous and degenerate spirits !'

'So !' quoth George. 'I'll soon correct them.'

He then went close up to them and began first to upbraid them for their cowardice, and afterwards promised them that if they did not instantly raise their staves, in spite of any who dared to interfere, he would himself cudgel them more soundly than the townsmen were able to do. Even then, if they had shown spirit, they would have been let off, but the King asked to be excused, since they were peaceful travellers unacquainted with such customs.

'I was never put to so hard a choice, as to be beaten whether I would fight or no,' he concluded.

He had scarcely spoken when out came a crew of shoemakers, all well appointed, who told him that he and his comrades should obey their custom.

'So down with your maypoles!' they cried, and began to strike down their staves.

This was the sign for which the Pindar and his companions had been waiting. Forthwith began the greatest combat ever seen in the street of Bradstead, for Robin and George began to clear the street before them, insomuch that the whole town—masters, apprentices and journeymen—rose. Not a staff was to be found that was not used in defence of their liberty. The Pindar seemed to be himself impounded amongst them all, and many a shoemaker was brought to his last, many a staff shivered into skewers. Cracked crowns went current, for many had to take them against their wills. At last the shoemakers themselves, who had sworn to lose bodies and souls in the quarrel, thought fit to give ground, and shamefully ran to shelter. This put the King and Leicester in mind of the great conflicts between Christians and infidels; for no man could find favour or mercy, and the victory was still doubtful (since what the gentle craft lacked in strength, they had in numbers), yet neither party would sound the retreat, until, in the heat of battle, the Pindar's disguise fell off. No sooner was he seen and recognised than the shoemakers, with a shout of '*Trail!*' flung down their staves and threw up their caps, bidding him welcome, with a shout, to the merry town of Bradstead. After that no man remembered his bruises for joy at seeing the Pindar. As the Trojans thought those wounded by Achilles to be more honoured than harmed, so it was held

rather a dignity than a disgrace to own a scar made by George's hand.

The Pindar, having breathed himself a little, thanked the shoemakers, and commanded that a barrel of the best and strongest ale should be brought and set in the middle of the street, which was instantly done, at his expense. George then entreated them, as they loved him, to welcome his friends; and when he told them who these were—Robin Hood and his bold yeomen, who were come there from Sherwood expressly to prove the shoemakers' mettle—the news was as good as a plaister to every broken head, and a mighty shout went up, of welcome and acclaim. All this the King observed, and presently bade Cuddy bring the royal robe, which he had with him in case of need. In the meantime the champions stood in the middle of the street, surrounded on all sides. The Pindar, calling for a mighty wassail-bowl, filled it to the brim and fell upon his knees, all the rest doing likewise.

'Here,' said George, 'I drink a health to good King Richard; and thou, Robin, being the best man present, shalt first pledge it. That done, let it go round amongst the shoemakers. Only,' he added, looking round, 'I except from this toast those cowardly travellers who are unworthy to drink the health of so brave a prince, since they for fear durst not carry their staves upon their shoulders.'

The toast was drunk with another great shout, and the bowl refilled for Robin. No sooner had he emptied it again than the King in his royal mantle, with Leicester and Cuddy behind him, stepped into the circle.

'Come, Robin Hood,' quoth he; 'though you

were of late held to be the best man in this company, yet, by the Pindar's good leave, give King Richard licence to be the third man, at least, to drink his own health !'

These words, coupled with his royal bearing, struck them all dumb with astonishment, especially the shoemakers, who judged themselves to be no better than food for the gallows. The Pindar (whom nothing save Majesty could daunt) was the first to recover himself. Humbly kneeling before the King, he asked pardon for the insults he had unwittingly offered to his sacred person. The King graciously forgave him ; then, raising Robin Hood from his knees, he saluted him by the name of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, and assured him on his royal word that all his lands and revenues, which had been extorted from him by the Bishop of Ely and Prince John, should be restored to him ; and that his Matilda, daughter to the Earl Fitz-Walter, should be conferred on him despite the manner in which the Prince had sought to smirch her honour. This news was at once spread abroad, and the King called for George a Green and bade him kneel down to receive the accolade. But George humbly besought his Majesty that he might remain as his father was before him, who had lived and died a poor country yeoman, pointing out that his service showed better in that humble state than if he were burdened with titles of honour.

The shoemakers, meanwhile, firmly convinced that the King was terribly angry with them, had retired to consult together how they might best appease him. Whilst they were anxiously deliberating, Marian and Beatrice knelt before the King and

presented him, the one with a rich belt which she had wrought with her own hands for Robin, the other with a curious scarf. These gifts they begged his Majesty to accept, not for their worth, but for the sake of the love which tendered them. The King, wondering who these rare beauties might be, graciously accepted their presents, raised the maidens from their knees, and affectionately embraced them. Then entered Grymes, bringing with him Willy, the Pindar's boy, and first demanded justice against George for stealing his daughter, then that it would please his Majesty to grant that she who had been left in Beatrice's place should be at his free disposal. The King granted both his petitions, and having reconciled George with his father-in-law, demanded how he wished the other virgin to be disposed of; to which Grymes replied that he would have her for his wife. This also was granted, whereupon Willy revealed himself, to the huge delight of all the company save the old justice.

Then the shoemakers (as a result of their conference) came and presented a morris dance, in which nothing was omitted which could, on such short notice, be prepared to give pleasure. So well ordered was it that the King, much pleased, asked them what, within reason, they desired as a reward, to which they answered with a petition that the law of *Trail-staff*, which they held only by tradition, might still remain, and that it would please his Majesty—since he had himself lowered his staff to them—to secure the privilege to them for ever; to which his Majesty graciously and willingly consented.

# THE FAMOUS HISTORY OF FRIAR BACON

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*containing*

The wonderful things that he did in his life: also the manner of his death:

With the lives and deaths of the two conjurers, Bungay and Vandermast.

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# The Famous History of Friar Bacon

*Of the Birth and Parentage of Friar Bacon, and how he applied himself to Learning*

IN the opinion of most men, Friar Bacon was born in the west of England, and was the son of a worthy farmer, who put him to school with the parson of the town where he was born,* not, however, with the intent that he should become a friar (as he did) but that he might have sufficient knowledge to manage such wealth as his father had to leave him. But young Bacon learnt so fast that before long the priest could teach him no more, whereupon the boy urged his master to speak with his father about sending him to Oxford, lest he should lose the little knowledge he had gained. This his master was very willing to do, and, meeting the lad's father one day, told him that God had blessed him greatly in giving him a child so wise and hopeful as his son Roger. He therefore prayed him to do his duty and bring up his son in such a way as should show his thankfulness to God ; nor could he do this more satisfactorily than by making a scholar of him, since it seemed likely that the boy would prove a very great clerk. Old Bacon was not overpleased to hear this, for he proposed to bring up his son to follow the plough, as his forebears had

* *Note* A.

done; yet out of respect for the priest he concealed his anger and thanked him for his advice and trouble. At the same time he asked him to say no more, since he best knew what pleased himself, and would do it. So they broke off their talk and parted.

As soon as he reached home, the old man called for his son's books. Roger brought them to his father, who locked them up and gave him a cart whip in place of them.

'Boy,' said old Bacon, 'I will have you no priest, nor shall you be better learned than I. You can tell now by the almanac when it is time to sow wheat, barley, peas, and beans; and I will teach you when to sell grain and cattle, for I have all the fairs and market days in my memory as perfectly as our priest, Sir John, has mass without book. Take you this whip, and I will teach you the use of that also, for it will be more profitable to you than Latin. Make no reply, but follow my advice, or else, by the mass! you shall feel the smart hand of my anger.'

Though he thought this hard treatment, young Bacon obeyed his father insomuch that he made no reply. But within six or eight days he gave the old man the slip and went to a monastery some twenty miles off, where he was well received. There he continued his learning, and in a short time became so famous that he was sent for to the University of Oxford, where he studied for some years, until he became so versed in the secrets of art and of nature that not England only, but all Christendom admired him.

*How the King sent for Friar Bacon; and of the wonderful Things he showed their Majesties at Court*

The King [Henry III.] being in Oxfordshire at a nobleman's house, was very anxious to see the famous friar * of whom he had heard such wonderful things. He therefore sent Bacon a message inviting him to come to Court. The friar thanked the King through his messenger, and said he was at his Majesty's service and would attend him instantly.

'But I pray you make haste,' he added to the messenger, 'else I shall be at Court two hours before you.'

'For all your learning, I can hardly believe that,' scoffed the man. 'Still, scholars, old men and travellers have licence to tell lies.'

'To strengthen your belief I could show you your latest sweetheart,' said Friar Bacon. 'But I will not do it just now.'

'The one boast is as vain as the other, and I should laugh to see either fulfilled,' retorted the messenger.

'Within four hours you shall see both,' quoth the friar; 'therefore, make what haste you can.'

'By my speed I will frustrate your magic,' said the other, as he hurriedly departed. But it seemed he rode out of his way, for though he had only five miles to ride, he was more than three hours on his journey, and Friar Bacon was with the King long before him.

His Majesty welcomed the friar and said that he had long desired to see him. Bacon replied that fame had belied him and given of him a report such as his poor studies did not deserve, for he believed

* *Note* B.

that learning had many sons more excellent than he. The King commended his modesty, and told him that nothing became a wise man less than boasting ; yet he begged him to be no niggard of his knowledge, but to show his Queen (Eleanor of Provence) and himself something of his skill.

'I were unworthy both of art and of knowledge, were I to deny your Majesty this small request,' said Friar Bacon. 'I pray you seat yourselves, and you shall see what my poor skill can perform.'

So the King, his Queen, and his nobles sat themselves down ; and when all were seated the friar waved his wand. Immediately there was heard such music as astonished them all. Never before had they heard the like.

'This,' said the friar, 'is to delight the sense of hearing. Before you go I will please your other four senses in turn.'

He waved his wand again, the music waxed louder, and presently five dancers entered. The first was like a court laundress, the second like a footman, the third like a usurer, the fourth like a prodigal, the fifth like a fool. These, by their excellent dancing, gave pleasure to the beholders, and afterwards vanished in the same order as they had entered. Thus Friar Bacon feasted the senses of hearing and seeing.

He waved his wand a third time, and another kind of music was heard, softer and more languishing; and whilst it was being played there suddenly appeared before the assembled spectators a table covered with all sorts of delicacies which the friar desired the King and Queen to taste. This they did, with their nobles ; and when they were satisfied, the table vanished.

For the fourth time Bacon waved his wand, and there was wafted about the great hall an odour so sweet that it seemed as if the richest perfumes in the world were there gathered together. Whilst the sense of smell was thus being delighted, Bacon waved his wand once more, and there entered men of various nations (Russians, Poles, Indians, Armenians), in their proper costumes, each laden with such furs as their countries yielded, all which they presented to the King and Queen. These furs were so soft to the touch that all who handled them were pleased. After some odd, fantastic dances (in the national manner) the men disappeared, and Friar Bacon, approaching the King, asked if he desired to see more of his skill. The King graciously replied that he was for the time being fully satisfied, and his only thought now was how he could reward his entertainer in such a way as partly to requite the kindness he had received. To this the friar made answer that he desired nothing so much as the King's love. If he might be assured of that he would think himself happy.

'Rest assured as to that!' said the King, and in token of it, he handed the friar a costly jewel which he took from his own neck. Bacon received the jewel with great reverence, and said :

'As your Majesty's vassal, you shall find me ever ready to serve you in time of need.'

Then, turning himself about, he continued, with a smile :

'Amongst all these gentlemen I see not the messenger whom your Grace did send to fetch me. Surely he hath lost his way, or else met with some sport which doth detain him! I promised to be here

before him, and this noble assembly can bear witness I am as good as my word. But hark! Methinks I hear him coming.'

As he spoke, the messenger entered, covered with mud and in the most pitiful condition. With a scowl at the friar he cried a pox on all his devils, for they had led him out of his way, through ditches and quagmires, and well-nigh drowned him.

'Be not so angry, sir!' entreated the merry friar. 'Here is an old friend of yours who hath more cause than you to be wroth, for she hath waited these three hours for you.'

With that he pulled aside the arras, and revealed a kitchenmaid standing there with a basting-ladle in her hand, her face and clothes well smeared with grease and soot.

'Aha!' laughed Bacon. 'Now, am I not as good as my word? I promised to help you to your sweetheart. How like you this?'

'So ill, that I will be revenged of you!' returned the infuriated gentleman.

The friar became suddenly grave.

'Threaten me not, lest I shame you even more,' he said. 'And take heed how you give a scholar the lie again. Yet, because I do not know how well stored with money you are just now, I will bear your wench's charges home this time.'

With that he waved his wand, and the maid vanished. But the King and Queen and the whole company laughed so heartily to see with what shame the gentleman had viewed his sooty sweetheart that he fled from their presence.

Friar Bacon then took his leave of their Majesties,

who presented him with many gifts and thanks for having shown them his skill.

### *How Friar Bacon deceived his Man who for Conscience' Sake would fast*

Friar Bacon had only one servant, and him he kept more out of charity than for any service he had of him, since he was none of the wisest. This man, Miles by name, never could endure to fast as other religious people did, and always had, in some hiding-place or other, meat which he would eat when his master ate bread or abstained from food altogether. At last, however, the friar discovered this secret larder, and made up his mind to be even with Miles, which he accomplished, one Friday, in the following manner :—

Miles, on the previous night, had provided himself with a great black pudding * against Friday's fast. This pudding he put into his pocket, thinking —it may be—to heat it, for his master had no fire on Fridays. The next day, who so demure as Master Miles ? He would eat nothing, and when the friar offered him bread he refused it, saying that his sins deserved a greater penance than one day's fast in a whole week. His master praised him for this display of proper penitence, but at the same time bade him beware that he did not dissemble, for if he did it would surely be discovered.

With many protestations of his honesty Miles went away—as he said, to pray privately ; and indeed it was to *prey*—upon his black pudding ! He pulled it out from his pocket (half-roasted with the

* *Note* C.

heat), and fell to lustily. Horrible to relate! Having put one end into his mouth, he could neither bite it off nor get it out again! Half-suffocated, and unable to speak, he stamped his foot to summon assistance. Forthwith his master came in, and, seeing his plight, took hold of the other end of the pudding and led his crestfallen servant into the hall, where certain of his scholars were assembled, and there exhibited him to their amused and astonished gaze.

'See here, my good friends and fellow-students!' cried the friar, 'see what a devout, good man my servant is! He will not break a fast-day—witness this pudding, which his conscience will not let him swallow! He shall be an example to you all!'

So saying, he tied the man by the end of the pudding to a post; and there, like a bear fastened by the nose to a stake, stood poor Miles to endure many gibes; nor did his master release him from his penance until nightfall, when he, overjoyed to be free once more, vowed never to break another fast-day as long as he lived.

### *How Friar Bacon saved a Gentleman who had sold himself to the Devil*

There lived in Oxfordshire a gentleman who, through riotous extravagance, had wasted a fair inheritance, and was grown so poor that he had not the wherewithal to buy himself bread enough to maintain his miserable existence. The memory of his former state compared with his present want made him desperate and careless both of body and soul, which gave the devil occasion to work upon his weakness in the following manner:—

One day, as the prodigal sat alone, full of grief and care—grief for past follies and care for future troubles—the devil, in the guise of an old penny-father * came to him and asked him what he wanted. Amazed by his sudden appearance, yet taking courage as he heard the new-comer ask his desires, the poor gentleman made answer that he wanted all things.

'I want money to buy clothes, money to buy meat, money to redeem my land, money to pay my debts!' he said. 'Can you—and if you can, will you—help me in this misery?'

'On certain conditions,' the devil replied, 'I will help you to money enough to supply all your needs, and that instantly.'

'Only help me, and whatever the conditions I swear to perform them,' said the man.

'I take no oaths,' returned the pretended penny-father. 'I must have bonds. Meet me to-morrow morning at the entrance to the forest, and there I will have the money ready for you.'

Glad to have money on any conditions, the poor fellow eagerly assented to the devil's proposition, and next day was early at the trysting-place. He had not been there long before he beheld the devil approaching, followed by two serving-men laden with money-bags; and the prodigal's heart rejoiced as he thought how he should once more live like a man.

'Son,' said the devil, drawing near, 'I will perform my promise if you will set your seal to the conditions I have here drawn up upon this parchment.'

'Willingly!' cried the other. It was only on an

* *Note* D.

afterthought that he added : 'I pray you, read them to me.'

The devil then read out the conditions, to this effect : that he would lend the prodigal as much money as he needed, to be employed in the following uses :—First, to redeem his mortgaged land ; next, to pay his debts ; lastly, to buy such necessaries as he required. This sum was lent to him on condition that as soon as he had paid all debts he should be at the disposal of the lender, and freely, without delay, yield himself to him upon the first demand of the lender aforesaid.

To this document the gentleman affixed his seal. He then had the money carried to his chamber. With it he made haste to redeem his land and buy such things as he needed. He likewise paid all his debts, so that none could say he owed a penny to any man. Thus for a while he lived in great credit, and grew so thrifty that he increased his estate and became richer than his father was.

But his joy was short-lived. One day the devil appeared to him as he sat in his study, and told him that his land was redeemed and his debts paid, therefore it was time for him to yield himself up, as he was obliged, by his bond, to do. This greatly troubled the gentleman, even to hear ; but it troubled him more to think that he must become a slave to a stranger of whom he knew nothing (for as yet he did not know that it was the devil). Urged to give an answer, he made the excuse that he had not yet paid all his debts, and therefore was not liable, so far, to the conditions of the bond. At this the devil waxed wroth, and with a fearful noise transformed himself into his own terrible shape.

'Alas, poor wretch!' he exclaimed, in a loud voice, 'these are but poor excuses which you frame! I know them to be false, and will prove them so to your face to-morrow morning. Until then, I leave you to despair!'

So saying, he went his way, leaving the poor man half dead with fear.

When the devil was gone, his victim, reviving, bethought himself of the miserable state he was now in, and wished he had lived and died poor. First he cursed his ambition which led him to desire the wealth he had lost by riotous living; then he cursed his extravagance, which was the root of his present misery. Thus was he for a long while tormented in his mind, until at last he resolved to end his wretched life. So he went out, meaning to kill himself, and would have done so but for Friar Bacon, who, coming along just as he was about to fall upon his sword, called to him to stop, and asked why he was so desperate as to run headlong to hell.

'Sir,' returned the unfortunate man, 'the cause is great enough, and the relation so terrible to me that I entreat you to trouble me no more, but leave me to work my own will.'

This answer filled the friar with amazement and pity.

'Sir,' he said gently, 'should I leave you to this wilful damnation I were unfit hereafter to wear or to touch any robe belonging to the holy order whereof I am a brother! You know, I doubt not, that power is given to the Church to absolve penitent sinners. Let not your wilfulness deprive you of the benefit which you may receive of Holy Church, but

freely confess yourself to me, and fear not but that I shall give your troubled conscience ease.'

'Father,' returned the other, 'I know that all you say is true, and I have many times received comfort from the Mother Church—I dare not say *our* mother, for I fear she will never again receive me as her child! I have no part in her benediction; yet, since you so earnestly ask the cause of my despair, I will tell you. Hear, and tremble! Know, then, that for a little wealth I have given myself to the devil, and to-morrow in this wood he will have me. Now you know my grief—but I know not how to get comfort!'

'This is strange indeed!' mused Friar Bacon. 'Yet, be of good courage. Penitential tears may do much, therefore see you do not spare them. Soon I will visit you at your house, and give you (I hope) that comfort which shall restore you to well-being.'

Somewhat consoled by these words, the gentleman returned home, where, at night, Bacon came to him and found him full of tears for his heinous offences; for which tears the friar gave him fresh hopes of pardon. Then he demanded further what compact he had made with the devil. The man told him how he had promised himself, so soon as his debts were paid, to the Evil One, and it was now time to fulfil that promise, since he owed no man anything.

'Well,' said the friar, 'continue your sorrow for your sins, and go forth to-morrow without fear to meet your creditor. Only, be content then to abide by the judgment of the next man who passeth that way, who shall decide whether you do belong to the devil or no. Fear not, but do this, and rest assured

that I will be he that shall come by and give judgment on your behalf.'

With that Friar Bacon went home, and the penitent returned to his prayer in the morning. When he had prayed anew and blessed himself, the latter went to the wood, where he found the devil waiting for him.

'Aha!' cried the Evil One, as soon as his victim appeared. 'So, deceiver, you are come! Now you shall see that I can and will prove you have paid all your debts, and therefore, by the terms of our compact, your soul belongeth unto me.'

'It is you who are the deceiver!' returned the man hotly. 'You gave me money to cheat me of my soul. But why should you be your own judge? Let me have some other man to decide between us.'

'I am content!' grinned the devil. 'Have whom you will.'

'I will take the next man who cometh this way,' answered the man; and to this the devil agreed. No sooner was the arrangement concluded than Friar Bacon came by, whom the gentleman asked to act as judge in a weighty matter. The friar assented, if both parties were agreed to abide by his judgment. The devil said they were, and told Friar Bacon the facts of the case.

'Know, Friar,' said he,' that I, seeing this prodigal likely to starve for lack of food, lent him money not only to buy him victuals, but also to redeem his lands and pay his debts. This I did, on condition that so soon as his debts were paid he should give himself freely to me. Here'—producing the bond—'is his hand and seal. The time is now expired, for his debts are paid, which he cannot deny.

The case, therefore, is plain. His silence doth confirm it! Therefore, give him a just sentence.'

'I will,' replied Friar Bacon. 'But'—and he turned to the gentleman—'just tell me, did you never yet give the devil his money back, nor requite him in any way?'

'He hath never had aught of me,' answered the man.

'Then let him never have aught of you, and you are free!' said Friar Bacon.

He turned again to the devil, whose eyes flamed with rage.

'Deceiver of mankind!' said the friar. 'Your bargain was, never to meddle with this gentleman so long as he was indebted to anyone. How, therefore, can you demand anything of him whilst he is indebted to you for all that he hath? When he doth repay you your money, then take him as your due. Until then you have nothing to do with him, and so I charge you to be gone!'

At this, with a horrible noise the devil vanished; but Friar Bacon comforted the gentleman and sent him home with a quiet conscience, bidding him, as he valued his own safety, never to pay back the devil's money; which advice the other gladly promised to follow.

### *How Friar Bacon made a Brazen Head to speak, by which he would have walled England about with Brass*

Reading one day of the many conquests of England, Friar Bacon bethought himself how he might protect it in future from invasion, and so make himself

famous to all posterity. After great study, he found it might best be done by fashioning a head of brass; and if he could make this head speak (and hear it when it spoke), then he might be able to wall all England about with brass. With this aim in view he got a certain Friar Bungay, who was a great scholar and a magician (though not to be compared with Bacon) to assist him. With great study and care these two fashioned a brazen head * which, internally, was exactly like a real head. But this done, they were as far as ever from perfection, for they did not know how to make the head speak. Many books did they read, yet they could not find what they sought; and at last they decided to raise a spirit and ask him to tell them that which they could not, by their own studies, discover.

Having prepared all things in readiness, they went one evening to a wood hard by, and after using many mystic ceremonies they spoke the words of conjuration, which the devil at once obeyed, and appeared, asking what they desired of him.

'We have made a head of brass, and would have it speak,' replied Bacon. 'In furtherance of our wish have we raised thee; and being raised, we will keep thee here until thou tell us how to make this head speak.'

'I have no power——' began the devil.

'Beginner of lies!' said Bacon, interrupting him, 'I know that thou dost dissemble, therefore tell us quickly, or else we shall bind thee to remain during our pleasure.'

Thus threatened, the devil gave way, and told the magicians that with a continual fume of the six hottest simples the head would have motion and

* *Note* E.

speak within the space of one month; but upon what day or in what hour he knew not. Moreover, if they did not hear it speak, all their labour would be in vain. Satisfied, they suffered the spirit to depart, and themselves sped home to prepare the simples and make the fume, and with constant watching awaited the time when the brazen head should speak.

Three weeks they watched without rest, until at last they were so weary that they could no longer refrain from sleep. Friar Bacon then called his man Miles, and told him he knew what trouble his master and Friar Bungay had taken to make the brazen head, and how for three weeks they had been waiting to hear it speak, since, if they heard it not, their labour would be in vain, and England would thereby sustain a great loss. He therefore desired Miles to watch whilst he slept, and to call them instantly if the head began to speak.

'Good master, fear not!' quoth sturdy Miles. 'I will not sleep, but hearken to and attend upon the head. If it do chance to speak, I will call you; until then, take your rest. Trust me, I will watch well!'

Reiterating his solemn charge to his servant, Friar Bacon and his companion went to sleep, leaving Miles on guard. That worthy, to keep himself awake, got a tabor and pipe, and being merrily disposed, sang this song to the tune of '*Cam'st thou not from Newcastle?*' *

'To couple is a custom,
All things thereto agree:
Why then should I not love,
Since love to all is free?

* *Note* F.

But I'll have one that's pretty,
  Her cheeks like roses bright,
Her lips red as the cherry,
  To breed in me delight.

Though virtue be a dowry,
  Yet I'll choose wealth in store,
For if my love prove false to me,
  With that I can get more!

The fair is oft inconstant,
  The black is often proud.
I'll choose a lovely brown.
  Come, fiddler, scrape thy crowd.

Come, fiddler, scrape thy crowd,
  For Peggy the brown is she,
So she must be my bride. God grant
  That Peggy and I agree!'

With such songs as this Miles spent his time and kept himself wide awake, until at last, after some noise, the head uttered these two words:

'TIME IS.'

But it said no more; and Miles, thinking his master would be angry if he roused him only for that, let him sleep on, and began to mock the head.

'Thou brazen-faced head!' cried he. 'Hath my master taken such pains to fashion thee, and now dost thou requite him with two words? *Time is!*' Had he watched with a lawyer as long as he hath watched with thee, he would have given him more and better words than these! If thou canst speak no wiser, they shall sleep until doomsday, for me. *Time is!* I know Time is, and that you shall hear, good Master Brazen-face.'

Then he began to sing again, to the tune of '*Dainty, come thou to me*' :

'Time is for some to plant,
Time is for some to sow,
Time is for some to reap,
And time is for much mo'e.

Time is for some to eat,
Time is for some to sleep,
Time is for some to laugh,
Time is for some to weep.

Time is for some to sing,
Time is for some to pray——

nay, will you be telling us, Copper-nose, that Time is?' Miles broke off. 'I hope we scholars know our times, when to drink deep, when to kiss our hostess, when to pay our score—and that time, i' faith, cometh but seldom!'

Thus Miles mocked and sang. Half-an-hour afterwards the head uttered two words more :

'TIME WAS.'

Miles respected these words as little as he had the former ; nor would he rouse the sleepers, but scoffed at the brazen head for having learnt no better speech with such a tutor as his master. In scorn, he then sang this song, to the tune of '*A Rich Merchant Man*' :

'Time was when thou, a kettle,
Wert filled with better matter;
But Friar Bacon did thee spoil
When he thy sides did batter.

Time was when conscience dwelt
With men of occupation:
Time was when lawyers did not thrive
So well by man's vexation.

Time was when beggars and kings
Of one poor stuff had being;
Time was when office kept no knaves.
That time it was worth seeing!

Time was, a bowl of water
Did give the face reflection;
Time was when women knew not paint,
Which now they call *complexion*!'

*Time was!* I know that, Brazen-face, without your telling! I know Time was, and I know what things did happen when Time was. But if you'll speak no wiser, no master shall be waked, for me!'

Thus Miles talked and sang for another half-hour. Then the brazen head said: 'TIME IS PAST!' and fell down with a terrible noise and flashes of fire, so that Miles nearly died of fear.

The noise aroused the two friars, who were amazed to see the room full of smoke. But when they perceived the brazen head lie broken on the floor their grief knew no bounds, and they distinctly called Miles to tell them what had happened. Still half dead with fear, he explained how the head had fallen of its own accord, and how the noise and fire which accompanied its fall had nearly frightened him out of his wits.

'Did it not speak?' demanded Friar Bacon.

'Yes!' answered Miles, trembling in every limb. 'It spoke, but to no purpose. I'd have a parrot

speak better in the time you have been teaching this brazen head!'

'Out on thee, villain!' roared Friar Bacon. 'Thou hast undone us both! Hadst thou but called us when it spoke, all England had been walled about with brass, to her glory and our eternal fame! Ah, woe is me!' he added sadly, gazing at the broken head. 'What were the words it uttered?'

'Very few, and those none of the wisest,' returned Miles promptly. 'First he said: "TIME IS."'

Friar Bacon groaned.

'Hadst thou called us then, we had been made for ever!' he said.

'Then,' continued Miles, 'half-an-hour later he spoke again, and said: "TIME WAS."'

'Why didst thou not call us then?' asked Bungay.

'Alas!' said Miles. 'I thought he was about to tell me some long tale, and then I purposed to have called you. But he did not speak again for half-an-hour more, and then he cried: "TIME IS PAST!" and made such a noise that he awakened you himself!'

At this Friar Bacon flew into such a rage that he would have beaten his man had not Bungay restrained him. Nevertheless, for a punishment, by his art he struck Miles dumb for the space of a whole month.

Thus, to their great grief, was the work of the two learned friars overthrown by the folly of this simpleton.

*How Friar Bacon, by his Art, took a Town, after the King had for three Months laid Siege to it and done it no Hurt*

In the days when Friar Bacon did all his strange

tricks, the kings of England held a great part of France, and contrived to do so for a long time, until civil wars at home made them lose it. It chanced that the King [Henry III.] of England (for some cause best known to himself) went into France with a great army, and there laid siege to a strong town, before which he lay fully three months without doing any great damage to it, but rather receiving hurt to himself. This so vexed him that he determined to take the town in any way, either by policy or strength. With this intent, he made a proclamation that whosoever could deliver the town into his hands should have ten thousand crowns for his pains. Yet, though this was proclaimed with great flourish of trumpets, none could be found willing to undertake such an enterprise, until at length the news of the promised rich reward reached England ; and Friar Bacon, hearing of it, went to France.

'Your Majesty,' said he, when he had been admitted into the King's presence, 'I am sure you have not quite forgotten your poor subject, Bacon ? The love you showed me when I was last in your presence hath drawn me now to leave my country and my studies to do you service, I beseech your Grace to command me in so far as my poor life or art may do you pleasure.'

The King thanked the friar for his love, but told him he had at that time more need of arms than of art, and wanted brave soldiers more than learned scholars.

'Your Grace saith well,' replied Bacon, 'but, under correction, let me tell you that art can oftentimes do those things which to arms are impossible ;

as I will prove by some few examples. I will speak only of things performed by art and nature, wherein shall be nothing magical. First, then: by the figuration of art there may be made instruments of navigation whereby great ships may cross the seas without men to row in them, and only one man to steer them; and thus shall they sail far more swiftly than if they were full of men [*i.e.* of rowers]. There shall also be made chariots which shall move with incredible speed, with no living creature to stir them. Likewise an instrument may be made to fly withal, if one sit in the midst of it and turn an engine by which the wings, artfully contrived, are made to beat the air after the manner of a bird's wings as it flieth. By an instrument but three fingers high and three broad, a man may rid himself and others from all imprisonment.* Also an instrument may easily be made whereby a man may violently draw to him a thousand men, will they nill they. By art an instrument may be made wherewith men may without danger walk at the bottom of the sea. This Alexander the Great did use (as the ethic philosopher [Aristotle] reporteth) in order that he might behold the secrets of the ocean. But physical figurations are far more strange, for by these may be framed perspective† looking-glasses, so that one thing shall appear to be many, one man an army, and one sun or moon a constellation of suns and moons. By perspective glasses distant things may be brought close to our vision. With one of these Julius Cæsar, from the sea-coast of France, did mark and observe the situation of the castles in England. They may also be made to deceive the eye, so as to make a man

* *Note* G. † *Note* H.

believe he seeth great store of wealth where there is none. In like manner may all things which are done in cities or by armies be discovered by their enemies. Again, bodies may be so framed that the greatest shall appear the least,* the highest lowest, the most secret to be the most manifest, and so on. Bodies may also be framed in order that venomous and infectious influences shall be brought whithersoever a man listeth. Thus Socrates perceived that the dragon which, with its noisome breath and contagious influence, destroyed the city and country adjoining, did lurk in dens in the mountains. In this did Aristotle instruct Alexander; and through his instruction the poison of a basilisk † being lifted up to the wall of a city, the poison was conveyed into the town, to the destruction of its inhabitants. It belongeth to a higher power of figuration that beams should be brought and assembled by divers flexions and reflexions in any distance that we will, to burn anything that is opposite to it; as is witnessed by those glasses which burn before and behind. ‡ But the greatest and chief of all figurations is to describe the heavenly bodies, according to their length and breadth in a corporeal figure, wherein they may move with daily motion.§ These things are worth a kingdom to a wise man.

'This,' concluded Bacon, 'may suffice, my royal lord, to show what art can do; and these things, with many more as strange, I am able by my art to perform. Therefore, take no thought for winning this town, for by my art, ere many days be past, it shall be yours.'

The King all this while had listened with admira-

* *Note* I. † *Note* J. ‡ *Note* K. § *Note* L.

tion ; but when he heard Bacon say that he would undertake to win the town, he burst forth :

'Most learned Bacon, only do what you have said, and I will give you what you most desire, either wealth or honour ! Choose what you will, and I will be as ready to perform as I have been to promise.'

'Your Majesty's love is all I seek,' said the friar. 'Let me have that, and I have honour enough. As for wealth, I have content ; and the wise man seeketh no more. But now to the purpose in hand ! Let your pioneers raise a mound as high, or rather higher than the wall ; and you shall then see some probability of success in that which I have promised.'

In two days the mound was raised. Then Friar Bacon went to the top of it with the King and with a perspective-glass showed him the town as plainly as if he had been in it. At this the King marvelled, but Friar Bacon told him he should marvel more at noon next day, when he desired him to have his whole army in readiness to scale the wall upon a signal given by him from the mound. This the King promised to do, and returned to his tent, full of joy at the thought that he should gain the town.

In the morning Friar Bacon ascended the mound and set up his glasses and other instruments. In the meantime the King ordered his army to stand in readiness to give the assault when the signal (which should be the waving of a flag) was given. Before nine o'clock Friar Bacon, with his burning glass, had set fire to the state-house and several other houses as well, which set the whole town in an uproar, for none knew whence the fire came. Whilst they were busy quenching it, Friar Bacon waved his

flag, upon which signal the army assaulted the town and took it with little or no resistance.

Thus, through this wise man's art, the King got this strong town which otherwise, with all his men, he could not have taken.

### *How Friar Bacon overcame the German Conjurer, Vandermast, and made a Spirit carry him home to Germany*

The King of England, after he had taken the town, showed great mercy to the inhabitants, giving some their lives freely, whilst others he set free in return for their gold. The town he kept as his own, and swore the chief citizens to be his true subjects.

Soon afterwards, the King of France sent an ambassador to the King of England to entreat for a peace between them. According to custom, the King welcomed the ambassador with feasting and good sport. The latter, seeing his Majesty so hospitable, desired likewise to give him a taste of his good will, and to that intent sent for one of his fellows, a German named Vandermast, who was a famous conjurer. When he was come, the ambassador told the King that since his Grace had been so bountiful to him, he would, by a servant of his, show him wonderful things such as his Majesty had never seen before. The King demanded the nature of these things, to which the ambassador replied that they were things done by the art of magic. Hearing this, the King at once sent for Friar Bacon, who came promptly, bringing with him Friar Bungay.

The banquet over, Vandermast asked the King if

he desired to see the spirit of any man deceased, and, if he did, promised to raise him as he was when he lived. The King replied that above all other men he desired to see Pompey the Great, who could brook no rival. Him Vandermast by his art raised, armed in such manner as he was when slain at the battle of Pharsalia.* At this all present were highly pleased. But when Friar Bacon (without revealing himself) raised the ghost of Julius Cæsar, who also could bear no man to excel him, and who had himself slain Pompey at Pharsalia, they were all amazed, with the exception of the King, who had sent for Bacon ; and Vandermast said that there was present some man of magic art whom he desired to see.

Friar Bacon then showed himself, saying :

'It was I, Vandermast, who raised Cæsar, partly to give pleasure to this royal company, but chiefly to conquer your Pompey as he did once before at that great battle of Pharsalia, and as he shall do once again.'

With that a fight began between Cæsar and Pompey, which continued for some time to the content of all save Vandermast. At last Pompey was overcome and slain by Cæsar, and both vanished away.

'My lord, methinks my Englishman hath beaten your German!' laughed King Henry, turning to the ambassador. 'Hath your man no greater cunning than this?'

'Yes!' answered Vandermast stoutly. 'Your Grace shall see me vanquish your Englishman before you go from hence. Prepare yourself, Friar, to withstand me with the best of your art!'

* *Note* M.

'Alas!' said Bacon. 'But a very little thing will serve to resist you. I have here'—he pointed to Friar Bungay—'one who is my inferior. Try your skill against his, and if you put him to the worse, then I will deal with you, but not before.'

Friar Bungay then commenced to show his skill. After some turning of the leaves of a book of magic he had with him, he conjured up before that great assembly the tree of the Hesperides * with its golden apples, guarded by a dragon which lay beneath the branches. Having done this, Bungay told Vandermast to find someone who would dare to gather the fruit. Vandermast at once raised Hercules, with his club over his shoulder.

'Here is one who shall gather fruit from yonder tree,' said Vandermast. ''Tis Hercules, who in his lifetime conquered the dragon and gathered the apples of the Hesperides; and now he shall gather them again, in spite of opposition.'

Thus Vandermast boasted. But as brave Hercules advanced to pluck the fruit, Friar Bacon held up his wand, whereupon the hero paused and seemed afraid. Vandermast angrily bade him proceed, or he would torment him; but Hercules, seeming more and more fearful, replied:

'I cannot, nor dare, for great Bacon standeth in my path! His charms are far more powerful than yours, Vandermast. I must obey him.'

Then Vandermast cursed Hercules and threatened him; but Friar Bacon laughed and urged him not to chafe himself before his journey was done.

'For,' said he, 'since Hercules will do nothing

* *Note* N.

at your command, I will have him do you some service at mine.'

With that he bade Hercules carry the conjurer home again to Germany. The spirit obeyed, took Vandermast on his back in the sight of all that goodly company, and sped away with him.

'Hold, Friar!' cried the ambassador. 'Not for half my land would I lose Vandermast!'

'Content yourself, my lord,' answered Bacon. 'I have only sent him home to see his wife! He will return ere long.'

The King of England thanked Friar Bacon, and forced upon him gifts for the service he had done him; for the friar cared so little for money that he would never take it from his King.

### *How Friar Bacon through his Wisdom saved the Lives of three Brethren* *

When the treaty of peace between the kings of England and France was concluded, the King of England returned to his own land, where he was joyfully received by his subjects. During his absence a quarrel, the like of which had not often been heard before, had occurred between three brethren. It was this: A rich Englishman died and left behind him three sons. Now for some reason (which was best known to himself) he appointed none of them by name to be his heir, but spoke thus to all of them:

'You are all my sons, and as a father should, I love you all, none better than the other; and because I would always do right as nearly as I can, I leave my lands and goods to him that loveth me best.'

* *Note* O.

These were the last words he spoke concerning worldly affairs. After he was dead and buried there arose great controversy amongst the sons as to which of them should inherit, each pleading for himself that he loved his father best. All the cunning lawyers in the kingdom could say nothing to the purpose, with regard to the case ; and the brothers were obliged, at last, to beg the King's permission for a combat, since they would not agree to share the lands and goods between them. Each one desired for himself all or nothing. The King, seeing no other way to settle the question, gave his permission for a trial by combat. The two eldest were to fight first, the conqueror to fight with the youngest, and the survivor to have the land.

On the day appointed, the brothers entered the lists, fully armed for the fight. Friar Bacon, who was present, grieved much to see three such lusty lads likely to perish, and that by each other's hands. He therefore went to the King and desired him to stop the combat, as he would find a way to settle the affair without bloodshed. His Majesty rejoiced to hear it, and having caused the combatants to be brought before him, said to them : 'Gentlemen, I have found a way to end your controversy, and that without bloodshed. Are you willing to abide by the judgment of him whom I shall appoint ?'

They answered that they were willing, and the King bade them go, to return in three days' time. In the interval Friar Bacon caused their father's dead body to be taken out of the ground and brought to the court, where he had it bound, naked from the waist upwards, to a stake. He likewise prepared three bows and shafts, which he kept secretly until the

third day. Then, the brethren being come, in the presence of the King Bacon handed to each of them a bow and arrow.

'Be not offended by what I have done, for there was no other way save this to decide your quarrel,' he said. 'See, here is the body of your dead father. Go now, shoot at him; and he that cometh nearest to his heart shall have his lands and his goods.'

The two eldest made ready, and shot; and their arrows stuck close together in the dead man's breast. But the youngest refused to shoot.

'I would liefer lose all than wound the body which, alive, I loved so well!' he cried. 'Had you ever had in you but half the love for him that I have, you would rather have had your own bodies mangled than suffer his lifeless corpse to be used thus! But alas! not only do you suffer it—you are yourselves the actors in this deed of shame.'

So saying, he wept before them all. Then Friar Bacon gave judgment in his favour because he loved his father best. So he had the inheritance, and his brothers fled, covered with shame for what they had done.

This deed of Friar Bacon's was highly commended by all, for not only did he give a true judgment, but he also saved much blood which must have been shed had the brethren been allowed to fight.

### *How Friar Bacon served the Thieves who robbed him; and of the Sport his Man Miles had with them*

It was rumoured, about this time, that the King had given Friar Bacon great store of treasure. The

report of so much wealth spread throughout the country, and three rogues plotted to rob him, which thing they set out, one evening, to do.

They first knocked at the gate, and they were let in by Miles. No sooner were they in than they seized him and led him into the house, where, finding Friar Bacon, they said they had come for money, which they must and would have ere they departed thence. He told them that he was but poorly stored with money just then, and desired them therefore to wait until some future time. They answered that they knew he had plenty, and it was folly to delay them. He would be wise if he let them have it by fair means, since, if he did not, they would certainly have it by foul, and he would be sorry for it.

Seeing them so resolute the friar told them that they should have all he had, and gave them each one hundred pounds, with which they seemed content, and would have gone on their way.

'Nay,' said Friar Bacon. 'Prithee, good gentlemen, tarry a while and hear some of my man's music! You are requited reasonable well, and I hope you will not in courtesy deny so small a request.'

'That we will not!' they cheerily responded.

Miles, who expected sport, played lustily on his tabor and pipe. As soon as they heard him they began involuntarily to dance, in such a heavy manner that they very quickly wearied themselves (for they had all the while the bags of money in their hands). But Friar Bacon had not yet taken his full revenge. He bade Miles lead them 'a larger measure'; and the player led them straight out of the house into the fields. Still he piped and still they followed, dancing in a wild and antic manner. Presently they

came to a broad dyke full of water, and over they went—but Miles went by the bridge dryshod, whereas they fell off it and danced through the water. Then he led them along a path where a horse would have been up to the belly in mud; willy-nilly they followed, dirty as swine which have wallowed in the mire. Sometimes he let them rest, but it was only to laugh at them, for they were so weary that when he ceased playing they fell to the ground; then he would suddenly play again, and they had perforce to rise and follow him. Thus he kept them dancing the better part of the night.

At last, in pity, he ceased, and let them rest. Utterly tired out, they fell asleep on the bare ground, and Miles, taking their moneybags from them, gave them for farewell this song, to the tune of '*O do me no harm, good man.*'

'They snorting lie like hogs in sty,
But hardly are so warm;
If all that cheat such hap should meet
To true men 'twere no harm.

They money had, which made them glad;
Their joy did not endure:
Were all thieves served as these have been,
I think there would be fewer!

When they awake their hearts will ache
To think upon their loss,
And though the gallows they escape
They go by Weeping Cross.*

* *Note* P.

Your maids expect your coming home
With full and heavy purse;
When that they see 'tis nothing so,
Oh, how they'll rail and curse!

For he that loves to keep a wench
Must have a giving hand;
Which makes a many knaves be choked
For bidding true men stand.'

They were but little impressed by this song, for they slept all through it; so Miles left them to their rest; yet they had small cause to sleep so soundly, for they were wetter than ever was any scold with ducking.

Miles gave his master his money again, and told the story of that merry pilgrimage, at which the friar laughed heartily and wished all men had power to serve such knaves in the same way. The thieves, when they awoke in the morning and saw themselves in such a plight, thought they had been served thus by some divine agency because they had tried to rob a Churchman; they therefore made a vow never to meddle with a priest again.

*How Vandermast, in Revenge, sent a Soldier to kill Friar Bacon; and how Friar Bacon escaped, and turned the Soldier from an Atheist into a good Christian*

As Friar Bacon sat one day in his study, he looked over all the dangers which were to happen to him that month, and found that in the second week of the month, between sunrise and sunset, a great danger should befall him which, if he took no

measures to prevent it, would cost him his life. This evil which he foresaw was threatened by the German conjurer, Vandermast, who had vowed revenge on Bacon for the disgrace he had received at his hands. In order to execute the same, Vandermast hired a Walloon * soldier and gave him one hundred crowns to do the deed—fifty beforehand, and fifty when he had killed Bacon.

To guard against a surprise, Friar Bacon, when he read, held in his hand a brass ball. Beneath it he set a basin of brass, so that if he chanced to sleep over his reading the fall of the ball out of his hand into the basin would arouse him. One day, as he sat thus, asleep, the Walloon soldier got into his study and had drawn his sword to kill him ; but just as he was about to strike, down fell the ball from Friar Bacon's hand, and roused him. Seeing the soldier with his sword drawn he asked who he was and why he came there.

'I am a Walloon, and a soldier, and more than this, a villain,' replied the man boldly. 'I am come hither because I was sent ; I was sent because I was hired ; I was hired because I durst do it. The thing I should do is not done. The thing to be done is to kill you. Now you have heard what I am and why I came.'

Friar Bacon, wondering at the man's resolution, demanded who had set him to a murderer's work. He answered, 'Vandermast, the German conjurer.' Friar Bacon next asked him what religion he was of ; and he replied : 'Of that which many profess, the first principles of which are these : to go to an alehouse and to a church with equal devotion ; to

* *Note* Q.

abstain from evil for lack of opportunity; and to do good against their wills.'

'It is a good profession—for a devil!' said Bacon dryly. 'Dost thou believe in hell?'

'I believe in no such thing,' answered the soldier.

'Then I will show thee that thou art wrong,' said Bacon, and raised the ghost of Julian the Apostate,* who came up with his body burning and so full of wounds that the sight almost frightened the soldier out of his wits. Then Bacon commanded the spirit to speak and to tell who he was and why he was thus tormented.

'I was some time a Roman emperor,' returned the apparition. 'There be some who count greatness a happy thing. I had happiness beyond my empire. Had I kept that I had been a happy man. Would that I had lost my empire when I lost that! I was a Christian—that was my happiness. But my self-love and pride made me fall from it, for which I am now punished with never-ending torments, which I must still endure, and the like of which await unbelieving wretches like myself.'

So saying, he vanished.

All this while the soldier stood quaking and sweating, as if he felt the torment himself; and falling on his knees he entreated Friar Bacon to instruct him in a better course of life than he had yet followed. Friar Bacon told him that he should not want his help in anything, which promise he performed, for he set the man's feet in the right path. Then he gave him money and sent him to the wars in the Holy Land, where he was slain.

* *Note* R.

### *How Friar Bacon deceived an old Usurer*

Not far from Friar Bacon dwelt an old man who had great store of money which he let out to usury * ; but he would never help the poor with it, though Friar Bacon had often exhorted him to do some good whilst he lived. Seeing that his teaching was in vain, the friar by his art made an iron pot which seemed to be full of gold. He then went to the usurer and told him that he had some gold which he had gained during his lifetime ; but, as it was worth a large sum, he feared, if it were known that he had it, it would be taken from him, because it was unbefitting for a priest to have so much wealth. He therefore desired the usurer to let him have one hundred pounds, which was not equal to the sixth part of his gold, and he should keep the treasure for him.

The delighted usurer told the friar he should have the money, and promised to keep his gold for him as safely as if it were his own. Friar Bacon, equally delighted (though for a different reason), fetched the pot, at sight of which the usurer laughed as he thought to himself how all that gold should be his, for he was determined to gull the friar.

Instead, he gulled himself.

'See, here is the gold,' said Friar Bacon. 'Now let me have one hundred pounds, and keep you this gold until I pay it back again.'

'Very willingly!' said the usurer. He then counted out the hundred pounds, which Friar Bacon took, and so went his way. This money he gave to certain

* *Note* S.

poor scholars and others, and bade them pray for old Goodgatherer's (the usurer's) soul ; which they did, and would give the usurer their thanks and prayers when they met him, at which he wondered, knowing full well that he deserved no man's prayers.

At last old Goodgatherer went to look at the pot of gold. But instead of gold he found nothing but earth, at which sight he would have died, had not the thought of his other gold, which he would have been forced to leave behind him, hindered him. Plucking up spirit, he went to Friar Bacon and told him he had abused and cheated him, but—unless he made restitution—he would have the law of him. Friar Bacon replied that he had not cheated him. On the contrary, he had been his faithful steward to the poor, of which fact the usurer, through their prayers and thanks, could not fail to be aware ; and as for the law, the friar feared it not, but bade the old man do his worst.

The usurer, seeing Friar Bacon's resolution, went his way, vowing that hereafter he would be his own steward.

### *How Miles, Friar Bacon's Man, conjured for Meat, and got Food for himself and his Host* *

It chanced one day that Miles had to go some six miles from home, on business, and being loath to part with the company he was in, was belated, and could only get half way home that night. To save his purse he went to the house of an acquaintance of his master's ; but when he got there, the goodman of the house was not at home, and the wife would

* *Note* T.

not, in his absence, admit Miles. Seeing that such cold entertainment was to be his portion, Miles wished he had not troubled her; yet, being there, he was loath to go any farther, and so with fair words persuaded her to give him lodging for that night. She told him that she would willingly do so, were her husband at home, but since he was away, it was unfitting that she should entertain a strange man.

'You need not mistrust me,' pleaded Miles. 'Lock me in any place where there is a bed, and I will not trouble you until to-morrow when I arise.'

At last, thinking her husband would be angry if she denied so small a request from one of his friends, the woman consented to give him a bed on condition he was locked in. Miles was willing, and presently went to bed, whereupon she locked the door of his room.

He had not long been in bed when he heard the house-door open. Nimbly he hopped out to peep through a chink in the partition, and saw an old man come in. The new-comer set down a basket which he carried, and gave the woman of the house three or four sweet kisses, which made Miles' mouth water. Then he undid his basket and pulled out of it a fat capon ready roasted, bread, and a bottle of good old sack. These he gave to the woman, saying:

'Sweetheart, hearing thy husband was out of town, I thought good to visit thee. I am not come empty-handed, but have brought something to be merry withal. Lay the cloth, sweet honey, and let us banquet.'

She thanked him kindly, and did as he bade her; but scarcely had they sat down to the table when

her husband, unexpectedly returning, knocked at the door. The woman, hearing this, was amazed, and knew not what to do with her elderly lover; but looking at her apron-strings (as women do) she found a trick to save herself, and straightway hid her lover under the bed, the capon and bread under a tub, and the bottle of wine behind the chest. Then she opened the door, and with a dissembling kiss welcomed her husband home. In reply to her inquiry as to why he had so quickly returned, he told her that he had forgotten the money he should have carried with him, but that he would be gone again early in the morning.

All this Miles saw and heard, and having a desire to taste the capon and the wine, he called the goodman by name. The latter asked his wife who that was, and she told him, an acquaintance of his, who had asked for a night's lodging. The man then bade her open the door and let Miles out, which she did. The goodman welcomed him, and told his wife to set food on the table for them. She answered that there was none ready, but prayed him keep his appetite until the morning, when she would provide a good breakfast.

'Since that is so, Miles, we must rest contented and sleep out our hunger!' said the goodman ruefully.

'Nay, stay!' returned Miles. 'If you can eat, I can find you good meat. I am a scholar, and have some art.'

'I would fain see it!' grinned his host.

'You shall,' said Miles, 'and that instantly.'

With that he pulled forth a book from his bosom and began his conjuration.

*'From the fearful lake below*
*From whence spirits come and go;*
*Straightway come one, to attend*
*Friar Bacon's man and friend.'*

He paused.

'Cometh there none yet?' quoth he. 'Then I must use some other charm.'

*'Now the owl is flown abroad,*
*For I hear the croaking toad,*
*And the bat that shuns the day,*
*Through the dark doth make her way.*
*Now the ghosts of men do rise,*
*And with fearful, hideous cries*
*Seek revengement (from the good)*
*On their heads that spilt their blood.*
*Come, some spirit—quick, I say!*
*Night's the Devil's holiday.*
*Where'er you be, in den or lake,*
*In the ivy, yew, or brake,*
*Quickly come and me attend*
*Who am Bacon's man and friend.*
*But I'll have you take no shape*
*Of a bear, a horse, or ape;*
*Nor will I have you terrible,*
*Therefore come invisible.'*

'Now he is come!' said Miles. 'Tell me, mine host, what meat will you have?'

'Anything,' said the goodman. 'What you will.'

'Why, then, what say you to a capon?' asked Miles.

'I love it above all meat,' returned the goodman.

'Then a capon you shall have, a fat one too. Bemo, my spirit, whom I have raised to do me

service, I charge thee seek and search about the earth, and bring me hither the best of capons, ready roasted.'

After a pause, during which he pretended to await the spirit's return, Miles said: 'Well done, my Bemo! He hath brought me, mine host, a fat capon from the King of Tripoli's own table, and bread with it.'

'Ay,' said the goodman, unmoved. 'But where is it, Miles? I see neither spirit nor capon.'

'Look under the table,' retorted Miles. His host did so, and (to his wife's grief) discovered the capon and bread.

'Stay!' said Miles. 'We do yet lack something good and comfortable to drink. I think a bottle of Malaga sack would not be amiss. I will have it! Bemo, haste thee to Malaga and fetch me a bottle of the best sack from the Governor's own table.'

The poor woman, who thought he would betray her and her lover, wished Miles had been hanged before he came into her house; but he, after waiting a while as before, said: 'Well done, Bemo! Mine host, look behind the great chest.'

The goodman did so, and brought out the bottle of sack.

'Now,' quoth he, 'Miles, sit down and welcome, to thine own cheer! You see, wife,' he added, 'what a man of art can do—get a fat capon and a bottle of good sack in a quarter of an hour, and all for nothing! That's the best of it—all for nothing! Come, goodwife, sit down and be merry at our guest's expense.'

She sat down, though she could not eat a morsel for anger, but wished every mouthful the others

took might choke them. Her old lover, too, beneath the bed, was ready to die of fright, for he thought Miles would betray him. When they had eaten their fill, the goodman begged Miles to let him see the kind spirit who had fetched this good cheer. Miles seemed unwilling, and told him that it was against the laws of art to let an illiterate man see a spirit. Then he relented, saying that for this once he should behold it ; and bade the man open the door, adding that he must soundly beat the spirit or he would be troubled by it afterwards. In order that the goodman should not be alarmed, Miles said he would show him the spirit in the shape of one of his neighbours. His host answered that he need not doubt his valour—he would trounce the rascal soundly ; and to that purpose he took a good stout cudgel in his hand and stood ready. Miles then went to the side of the bed, under which the old man lay, and began to conjure him with these words :

*'Bemo, quickly come! Appear*
*Like an old man who dwells near.*
*Quickly rise, and in his shape*
*From this house make your escape.*
*Quickly rise, or else I swear*
*I'll put you in a deadlier fear!'*

At that, seeing there was nothing else for it, the old man put a good face on it and rose from beneath the bed.

'Behold my spirit, who brought me all that you have had!' said Miles. 'Now be as good as your word, and thrash him soundly.'

'I protest, your devil is as like Goodman Stump the tooth-drawer as a tomato is like an apple!'

said his host. 'Is it possible that your spirits can take other men's shapes? I'll teach this one to keep his own shape!'

With that he began to beat the old man so vigorously that Miles was obliged to pull him away and to thrust his victim out of doors.

Then, after some laughing, they all went to bed; but the woman could not sleep for grief because her old lover had suffered such ill-usage for her sake.

*How Friar Bacon helped a Young Man to his Sweetheart, whom Friar Bungay would have married to another; and of the Mirth at the Wedding*

An Oxfordshire gentleman had long loved a fair maid, called Millicent, and his love was as kindly received as it was freely given; so that there wanted nothing save the consent of her father to complete their joy. But this he would not give (though at one time he had tried to further the match) because a knight was also desirous of making fair Millicent his wife, though he never obtained from her the slightest token of good will, so loyal was she to her true lover. Seeing himself thus despised, the knight went to Friar Bungay and promised him a goodly sum of money if he could get the maid for him, either by his art or advice. Bungay, who was covetous, told him there was no better way, in his mind, than to persuade her to take the air in a coach, with her father; and if the knight could manage that, the friar would by his art so direct the horses that they should go to an old chapel, where he would be waiting to perform the marriage ceremony. The knight rewarded Bungay for his counsel and

told him that if it took effect he would be more bountiful to him. He then went to the girl's father and told him of this plan. The old man approved, and forced the poor maid to ride with them. As soon as they were in the coach, the horses set off at a gallop, never stopping until they reached the chapel, where Friar Bungay was waiting. At sight of church and priest the girl knew that she was betrayed, and fell down in a swoon, which grieved her father and the knight, who did their best to revive her.

In the meantime the gentleman whom she loved best had gone to her father's house to visit her, but finding her absent, and hearing that she was gone with the knight and her father, he suspected foul play, and hastened to Friar Bacon, desiring his help to recover his love again, though he feared she was utterly lost to him.

Friar Bacon, who knew him for a virtuous gentleman, pitied him ; and to help him, showed him a glass in which might be seen anything (within the space of fifty miles) that one desired to see. Directly the gentleman looked into the glass he saw his love Millicent, with her father and the knight, about to be married by Friar Bungay. At this sight he cried out that he was undone, for he should lose his life in losing his love. But Friar Bacon bade him be comforted, for he would prevent the marriage. Then, taking the gentleman on his knees, he seated himself in a magic chair, which immediately transported them through the air to the chapel. They entered just as Bungay was joining the hands of the couple, but Friar Bacon spoilt his speech by striking him dumb, so that he could not utter another word. Then

Bacon raised such a mist in the chapel that the father could not see his daughter, nor the daughter her father, nor could the knight see either of them. But the friar took Millicent by the hand and led her to the man whom she most desired to see. They both wept for joy at meeting once more, which touching sight greatly pleased Friar Bacon, who married them at the chapel door, whilst the maid's father, the knight, and Friar Bungay were groping about inside, trying in vain to find the way out.

After the wedding Friar Bacon bade the couple get lodgings at the next village, promising to send his man with money, as the gentleman had come away unprovided and they were far from his house. They did as he bade them, and at nightfall he sent Miles with the money ; but he kept the old father, the knight, and Bungay in the chapel until the next day at noon, when he released them.

That evening the newly married pair made a great supper to celebrate their wedding, and invited most of the village to it. Nothing was wanting save music, for which they made great moan. This, too, Friar Bacon (though absent) supplied ; and after supper there entered such a masquerade as had never before been seen in that village. First there was heard soft, sweet music ; then wind music. Then came three apes and three monkeys dressed in fantastic coats. These six danced in such an odd manner that they moved all beholders to laughter. After various antic changes, they bowed to the bride and bridegroom, and went out as they had come in. Everybody wondered whence they came ; and only the bridegroom knew that it was Friar Bacon's art which had added this grace to the feast. When all was over,

they went to bed ; and the next day the bridegroom returned with his bride to his own house, many of the townsfolk accompanying them part of the way, in return for the good cheer bestowed on them at the feast.

Miles was one of this merry crowd. He, for his master's sake, was given so much to drink that for three days he was never sober. In thanks for his welcome, he gave them at his departure this song, to the tune of '*I have been a fiddler*' :

'And did you not hear of a mirth which befell
The morning after a wedding day,
At carrying a bride at home to dwell,
And away to Twiver, away, away ?

The Quintain * was set and the garlands were made,
('Tis a pity old customs should ever decay !)
And woe be to him that was horsed on a jade,
For he carried no credit away, away !

We met with a concert of fiddle-de-dees,
We set them a-cock-horse, and made them to play
*The winning of Bullen*, and *Upse freese*,†
And away to Twiver, away, away !

There was ne'er a lad in all the parish
That would go to follow the plough that day,
But on his forehorse his wench he carries,
And away to Twiver, away, away !

The butler was quick, and the ale he did tap,
The maidens did make the scene full gay.
The serving-men gave me a fudding-cap,
And I did carry it away, away.

* *Note* U. † *Note* V.

The smith of the town his liquor so took
That he was persuaded the ground looked blue,
And I dare boldly to swear on a book
Such smiths as he there are but a few.

A posset was made, and the women did sip,
And simpering said they could eat no more:
Full many a maid was kiss'd on the lip.
I'll say no more, but give o'er, give o'er!'

They thanked Miles for his song and sent him home with a fox at his tail.* His master asked him where he had been so long. He told him, at the wedding.

'I know it,' said Friar Bacon. 'I know that thou hast been there, and I know also—thou beast!—that thou hast been drunk every day!'

'That is the worst you can say of me, master,' said Miles. 'Poor men must be drunk if they take a cup more than usual; but it is not so with the rich.'

'Why, how is it with the rich, then?' asked Bacon.

'I will tell you, in a few words,' returned Miles.

'Lawyers they are sick,
And friars are ill at ease;
But poor men they are drunk!
And all is one disease.'

'Well, sirrah,' said Bacon, 'do not let me hear that you are infected any more with this disease, lest I give you some sauce to your sweet meat!'

Thus Friar Bacon helped those poor lovers, who soon afterwards were reconciled with the old father, and lived in great joy. Friar Bungay's tongue was again let loose, and all were friends once more.

* *Note* W.

*How Miles conjured for Money, and broke his Leg*

One day, finding his master's study open, Miles stole from it one of Friar Bacon's conjuring books. With this he set about conjuring for money, for he saw that his master had plenty, and desired the same for himself; otherwise he would never have been bold enough to meddle with his master's devils. Thinking it best to do the deed in private, he went up to the roof of the house and there began to read. He had not read long before a devil appeared in an ugly shape and asked him what he wanted. Miles was in such a fright that he could not speak, but stood quaking like an aspen leaf. Seeing this the devil, to increase his fear, raised a tempest and hurled fire about. This was too much for Miles, who leapt off the leads, and in his fall broke his leg.

Hearing the noise, Friar Bacon ran out and found his man on the ground and the devil hurling fire on the housetop. The friar first laid the devil, then went to Miles and asked how he got that broken leg. Miles told him the devil had done it, for he had frightened him and made him leap down from the housetop.

'What were you doing there?' asked his master.

'I went to conjure for money, sir,' confessed Miles. 'But I got nothing, save a broken leg, to cure which I must now beg for money, if you will not take pity on me!'

'I have often warned you not to meddle with my books,' said the friar, 'and yet you would do it. You had better take heed how you deal with the devil again, for he that hath power to break your

leg will break your neck if you meddle further with him! But your broken limb hath paid for your sauciness! For this reason I forgive you, and instead of a broken head will give you a plaister.'

So saying, he sent him to the doctor's.

*How Vandermast and Friar Bungay met and strove to excel one another in their Conjurations; and of their Deaths*

Vandermast, thinking that Friar Bacon was dead, came over to England, where, at a Kentish inn, he met Friar Bungay, to whom, for Bacon's sake,* he owed no good will; so he took his horse out of the stable, and left in its place a spirit resembling it. In the morning Friar Bungay rose, and, mounting the pretended horse, rode on his journey. But as he forded a stream the spirit left him in the middle of it. Wet and angry, Bungay returned to his inn, where Vandermast met him.

'Oho!' cried that worthy. 'Is it swimming-time o' the year, then?'

Bungay retorted that had he been as well horsed as Vandermast was when Friar Bacon sent him into Germany, he might have escaped drenching; at which Vandermast bit his lip and said no more, but went indoors. That night Bungay, in order to be even with him, played this trick on him: There was at the inn a wench whom Vandermast loved and had long sought to win with gold and promises. Bungay, who knew this, shaped a spirit to resemble this girl, and sent it to Vandermast, who was overjoyed. But his joy was soon turned to sorrow. No sooner were

* See *ante*, p. 205 *et seq.*

they together than Bungay, by his art, transported spirit and friar through the air and let them fall into a deep pond, in which Vandermast would have been drowned if he had not been able to swim. He got out as quickly as he could and shook himself like a rough water-spaniel; but being out, he was not much better off, for he could not find the way home, and was glad to keep himself warm by walking all that night. Next day, when he returned to the inn, Bungay asked him how he liked his wench. Vandermast replied: 'So well, that I wish you had such another for yourself.' But Bungay told him that his order forbade such practices, therefore he left them to his friends. Thus did they continually vex one another, both by words and actions.

At last Vandermast, desiring to do Friar Bungay a mischief, challenged him to the field, not to fight with sword and dagger, rapiers or poniards, but with a far worse weapon: to wit, the art of magic. Bungay accepted the challenge, and both provided themselves with the things belonging to their art and went to the field, there to show which of them was the more cunning or had most power over the devil.

They made their circles about a hundred feet from one another, and after some ceremonies Vandermast began. By his charms he raised up a fiery dragon which ran about Friar Bungay's circle and scorched him so that he was ready to melt. Then Bungay tormented Vandermast with another element, for he raised up the sea-monster which Perseus killed when he saved the fair Andromeda.* This monster ran to Vandermast's circle and sent such floods of water out of his wide mouth that the conjurer was

* *Note* X.

nearly drowned. Friar Bungay next raised a spirit like St George, who fought with Vandermast's dragon and killed it. Following this example, Vandermast raised up Perseus, who also fought with the sea-monster and killed it; and both conjurers were released from their peril. Not content with this, however, they proceeded with their conjurations, and each raised a devil. Bungay charged his to assist him with all his power to overcome Vandermast. The devil promised to do so if he would give him three drops of blood from his left arm; but if he refused, then Vandermast should have power over him to do what he would. Vandermast's devil made the same bargain, and both magicians agreed, thinking thus to overcome each other. But the devil overthrew both of them.

Having given the devils the drops of blood, they fell again to their conjurations. First, Bungay raised up Achilles with his Greeks, who marched against Vandermast and threatened him. The latter at once raised Hector with his Trojans, who defended him from Achilles and the Greeks. Then began a great battle between the Greeks and Trojans, which continued until Hector was slain and the Trojans fled. A fearful tempest followed, with thunder and lightning, which made the two conjurers wish themselves elsewhere. But wishes were in vain. The time was come when the devil sought payment for the knowledge he had lent them. He would tarry no longer, but took them in the height of their wickedness and bereft them of their lives.

The tempest greatly alarmed the townsfolk; and when it was over, they found the bodies of Vandermast and Bungay, breathless, and strangely burnt

with fire. The latter had Christian burial for the sake of his order, the former because he was a stranger.

Such was the end of these famous conjurers.

*How two young Gentlemen, who came to inquire of Friar Bacon how their Fathers fared, killed one another; and how Bacon for Grief broke his rare Glass in which he could see Anything which was done within Fifty Miles*

It has been mentioned already that Friar Bacon had a wonderful glass in which a man might behold anything (within the radius of fifty miles) he desired to see. With this glass he had delighted many people, for fathers often wished to see therein how their children were, and children how their parents fared. Relations, friends, enemies, from far and wide they used to come to consult this glass.

It happened one day that two young gentlemen, who were friends and neighbours, came to find out, by Bacon's glass, how their fathers were. The friar, no niggard of his skill, let them see that which they desired to see—a wish which, through their own folly, they bought with their lives, as you shall hear.

The fathers of these two had, in their sons' absence, become great foes. The hatred between them was so intense that whenever they met they exchanged not words only, but blows. Just at the time when their sons were looking into the glass to see if they were well, they had met, drawn their swords, and were together by the ears. At this sight the sons, who had always been great friends, did not know what to say to one another, but glared at each other angrily. At last they saw in the glass that the

father of one of them had fallen, and the other, taking advantage, stood over him ready to strike. The son of the fallen man, no longer able to restrain himself, told the other young man that there had been foul play. The latter returned that it was a fair fall. At last there grew such foul words between them and their blood became so heated that they stabbed one another with their daggers and both fell down dead.

Seeing them fall, Friar Bacon ran to them ; but it was too late—they were breathless before he came. At this he grieved bitterly ; and judging that the glass had caused their deaths, he took it in his hand and spoke these words :

'Wretched Bacon ! Wretched in thy knowledge, and in thine understanding wretched, for thine art hath been the ruin of these two gentlemen ! Had I been busied in those holy things to which mine order bindeth me, I had not had time to make this wicked glass ! Wicked I may well call it, since it hath caused an act so vile ! Would it were sensible, for then it could feel my wrath ! As it is, I'll ruin it for ruining them.'

With that he broke his rare and wonderful glass, whose like was not in all the world. In the midst of his grief came news of the deaths of Vandermast and Friar Bungay. This increased his sorrow, and for three days he would eat nothing, but shut himself in his room, grieving sore.

*How Friar Bacon burnt his Books of Magic and gave himself solely to the Study of Divinity ; and how he turned Anchorite*

Whilst Friar Bacon remained shut up in his

chamber, he meditated, sometimes upon the vanity of arts and sciences, sometimes condemning himself for studying things so contrary to his order and to his soul's health. Then he would say that magic made man a devil. Sometimes, again, he would meditate on divinity, and reproach himself for having neglected the study of it in favour of the study of magic. At other times he would meditate on the shortness of human life, and blame himself for having spent his little span so ill. Thus he would go from one thing to another, always condemning his former studies. At last, that the world might know how truly he repented of his wicked life, he caused a great fire to be made, and sending for his friends, scholars, and others, spoke to them as follows :—

'My good friends and fellow-students, it is not unknown to you how, through my art, I have attained to such renown as few men living enjoy. Of the wonders that I have done, all England, both king and common, can speak. I have unlocked the secrets of art and of nature, and shown to the world things which have lain hid since the death of Hermes, that rare and profound philosopher.* By my studies I have discovered the secret of the stars, and the books I have made thereon do serve as precedents to our greatest doctors, so excellent has my judgment proved. Likewise I have found out the secrets of trees, plants, and stones, with their several uses. Yet I esteem all my knowledge so lightly that I wish I were ignorant and knew nothing ; for the knowledge of these things (as I have found) doth not increase a man's virtue, but only maketh him proud. What hath my knowledge

* *Note* Y.

of nature's secrets gained for me? Only this—the loss of a better knowledge, the loss of divine studies such as make blessed the immortal part of man—his soul. I have found that my knowledge hath been a heavy burden which hath weighed down the better part of me. But I will remove the cause—namely, these books—which I purpose now to burn before you all.'

His friends entreated him to spare the books because they contained things which might benefit future ages. He would not be persuaded, but threw all the books into the fire. In that flame perished the greatest learning the world had ever known.

After this the friar disposed of his goods, some part of which he gave to poor scholars, the remainder to other poor folk. He kept nothing for himself. He then caused to be made in the church wall a cell, into which he locked himself and there remained until his death.* He spent his time in prayer, meditation, and such pious exercises, and sought by all the means in his power to dissuade others from the study of magic. For the space of two years he lived thus, never leaving his cell. His meat and drink he received through a window, and through the same orifice discoursed with those who visited him. He dug his grave with his nails, and was laid therein when at last he died.

Such was the life and death of this famous friar, who lived the greater part of his life as a magician, but died a truly penitent sinner and an anchorite.

* *Note* Z.

# THE HISTORY OF FRIAR RUSH

# THE HISTORY OF FRIAR RUSH.

How he came to a house of religion to seek service, and being entertained by the Prior, was first made under-cook.

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*Being full of pleasant mirth and delight for young people.*

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# The History of Friar Rush

*How a Devil named Rush came to a Religious House to seek Service*

THERE was once founded and endowed, beyond the sea,* a certain house of religious men. It was built, on the outskirts of a great forest, to maintain the service of Almighty God, to whom prayer was daily to be made by the monks on behalf of the abbey's founders and benefactors, and for the salvation of their own souls. The abbey, thanks to its founders and other well-disposed people who gave largely of their possessions, increased in riches, and every monk had gold and silver, meat and drink in plenty ; insomuch that they were so well at ease and grew so lazy that the service of God became a matter of small account to them. Often they omitted to say both matins and evensong, and through their negligence forgot their vows and lived more like beasts without reason than men of good and holy conversation. Evilly did they live, spending in rioting and excess the wealth given them for their abbey.

When the great prince of devils, who was the patron of all vice, knew of the misrule which prevailed amongst these so-called holy men, he plotted

* *Note* A.

with certain other devils to keep them in that state, or worse—if worse might be.

These are the names of the devils who gathered in conclave and rejoiced at the disorder amongst the monks: Belphegor, Prince of Gluttony; Asmodeus, Prince of Lechery; and Beelzebub, Prince of Envy.* As a result of their consultation they chose a devil to go and dwell with the monks to encourage them in their wickedness. This devil, whose name was Rush,† was arrayed like a man, and set out forthwith on his journey. Arrived at the abbey-gates, he stood there for a long time all alone, with a sorrowful countenance. At last the prior came out and saw him.

'What dost thou here, and what wouldst thou have?' demanded the monk.

'Sir,' answered the supposed young man reverently, 'I am a poor youth out of service, and I would fain have a master. If it would please you to take me, I will serve you diligently and do so well that you and all your brethren shall be glad of me. I shall keep your secrets so closely, too, that I trust I shall soon gain the love and favour of all.'

The prior, when he heard him speak thus, was moved with pity, and said: 'Go into the kitchen to the cook. Tell him I sent thee, and bid him show thee what to do; for thou shalt be with him a while until something better can be found for thee.'

The young man thanked the prior and made his reverence to him, then hastened to the kitchen, where he found the master-cook. Before him also Rush louted low, and said: 'Sir, the prior hath sent me hither to you, and commandeth you to show me what I shall do; for I am to help you in the kitchen.'

* *Note* B. † *Note* C.

'You be welcome!' answered the master-cook, and straightway set him to work.

Thus the devil became under-cook in the place assigned to him by the prince of the devils and laughed to himself as he thought of his success.

'I am right glad that my purpose is so well achieved, for I doubt not that all shall be ours ere long,' he told himself. 'I will make such strife and debate amongst the friars that they shall never be at peace; and I will make for them good staves wherewith to beat one another. Ay, I will so set them by the ears that never was there heard tell of such discord in any cloister in the world! Yet I will conduct myself throughout in such a way as to gain the favour of all.'

Indeed, his scheme prospered so well that very soon the monks held him in high esteem and love, being so blinded with ignorance that they never perceived he was a devil.

### *How Rush threw the Master-cook into a Kettle of Boiling Water, wherein he died*

One day Rush played truant from his work. It was very late when he came home again, and the master-cook, angered by his long absence, began to chide him the moment he appeared in the kitchen.

'Thou whoreson knave!' cried the cook. 'Where hast thou been?'

Then he beat Rush with a great staff until he was sore.

'Thou whoreson villain, why dost thou beat me thus?' exclaimed Rush, enraged by this treatment. 'I will be revenged on thee!'

So saying, he suddenly caught hold of the master-cook and flung him into a great kettle which stood, full of boiling water, upon the fire.

'Lie there, in the devil's name!' quoth Rush. 'Now thou shalt scold and fight with me no more.'

Thus he killed the master-cook, and, having done so, went out of the kitchen on an errand for the prior. During his absence some of the friars came into the kitchen to speak to him, but finding the place deserted, they stood by the fire to await his return, for they thought he would not tarry long. As they stood talking and warming themselves by the hearth, they saw, to their horror, a man in the kettle, whom they soon found to be the master-cook. They rushed off, full of ejaculations more profane than pious, to the prior, and told him that the cook had drowned himself in a kettle of boiling water; at which tidings the prior was much grieved.

In the meantime Rush had come home. When the monks told him of the great misfortune which had befallen the master-cook, he pretended to be very sorry; and in such favour was he with the brethren that they never suspected him of having done the deed.

And so no more of the hapless master-cook!

After this, the prior ordered that Rush should be cook, at which the whole monastery rejoiced, and Rush also, for this was just what he wanted. So he became master-cook and dressed the monks' meat exactly to their taste, for in Lent and Advent, on Fridays and all fast-days he put bacon in the pottage-pot, which gave the soup a delicious flavour, insomuch that the prior and all the monks wondered at his good cooking and declared he did it much better

than the old cook had done, and was far more skilled in his business.

For seven years Rush held the post of master-cook, during which time he pleased everybody. At the end of that time, the prior, being in counsel with his brethren, spoke thus concerning Rush :

'Friends, we have as our master-cook an old servant who hath done us good service and been with us longer than any other servant we ever had. I think it only right that he should be promoted and made a brother amongst us.'

The whole assembly with one voice agreed to this proposal, and the prior sent for Rush, who presently appeared.

'Thou hast been with us long, Rush,' said the prior to him ; 'and we have found thee hitherto a trusty and diligent servant, wherefore we desire to promote thee to wear our habit and to become a brother amongst us.'

Rush thanked them all, and the prior gave him a robe, which he donned at once. So the devil became a monk, though he still retained his office as cook.

### *How Friar Rush made Truncheons for the Monks*

After Rush became a monk he had more holidays than before ; and, as a king or a great prince in peace prepares the munitions of war, so likewise did Friar Rush. When his work in the kitchen was done and he had leisure, he would sit in the porch of the outer gate and fashion big truncheons of oak, with hilts to slip over the hands. This made the monks curious, and they asked why he made these truncheons.

'Fair sirs,' answered Rush, 'I make them for this

purpose, that if thieves should come hither to rob us we shall have weapons to defend ourselves withal. Moreover, should the need arise, come to me, and every man of you shall have his truncheon.'

The monks praised his forethought, and left him to himself. Soon afterwards it chanced that the prior and sub-prior fell out and were angry with each other, so that but for shame they would have fought together. Nevertheless, their wrath was not quenched, but still smouldered in their hearts ; and all for the sake of a woman. A rumour of their quarrel spread amongst the brethren, who at once took sides—some with the prior, others with the sub-prior. At last the disturbance came to a head. To settle it, each man went secretly to Friar Rush to ask the loan of one of his staves. Soon there was not a monk in the place who had not a truncheon hidden under his robe, unknown to the rest. This was a great joy to Friar Rush, for he knew the upshot would be a great fight sooner or later.

On the next feast-day the monks, according to custom, were assembled in the chapel, ready to celebrate the midnight mass, and only waiting for the prior to come before they began. Presently he entered and took his seat ; but as he looked about him his eyes fell on the sub-prior, the sight of whom awakened his anger. It came into his head, then and there, that he would never again have such an opportunity for revenge ; so he rose up suddenly and struck the sub-prior a buffet on the head. The sub-prior, infuriated, retaliated ; and then they set to work with all their might. As soon as the others saw what was going on, they rose in their stalls and drew their truncheons, whereupon Friar Rush blew out

all the lamps and candles in the chapel, plunging it into total darkness; then, grasping his own truncheon, he dashed into the thickest of the fray and there laid about him so vigorously that many were felled to the ground and left for dead. Next, he stole away towards an old desk which stood in the choir, seized it with both hands, and heaved it into the midst of the crowd, doing great damage. Some had broken arms, some broken legs, some had their noses cut off, whilst a broken head was accounted no rarity when all had the same complaint. It would have been rare sport for an onlooker, had anyone been there, to see the monks creeping about in the dark aisles, crying—instead of '*Domine labia*'—'Alas and lackaday!'

When at last the fight was over and the uproar ceased, Rush appeared with a lighted candle in his hand.

'Fie for shame, sirs!' he cried, as though he knew nothing of the commotion. 'How came you thus to quarrel amongst yourselves? I see well that you regard neither your own honour nor the good name of this house! I should grieve to hear it said that you are not honest nor religious men, and I cannot bear that our house should win an evil name; therefore, good masters, I pray you calm yourselves and put the matter into my hands. I will do all I can, and all shall be well and you good friends together again, and no more shall be said.'

At that each one of them complained to him of their great hurts, whilst he pretended to sympathise. Then those who could, walked to their cells, and those who could not, crawled to their beds as best they could and lay there until they were whole

again. For the space of three weeks or more God was ill served, for during that time they sang neither matins nor evensong, nor entered the church. All services were suspended, since for shame they dared not let the story be known outside. But when they were well once more, and could go about the house, they brought their staves to Friar Rush and thanked him for them, to which he replied that if they ever wanted them again they had only to say so. They thanked him once more, and fled.

'Aha!' laughed Rush, as he counted his staves. 'I am overjoyed to find all my enterprises so successful! Many mischievous deeds have I done since first I came here; and more will I do, ere I depart. Ay, I will cause them all to be damned, and I will bring their souls and bodies into the burning flames of hell, there to remain for ever and ever. And of me it shall be said, a thousand years hence, that I did this thing.'

### *How Friar Rush befouled the Waggon with Tar; and what he did in the Country*

One day it chanced that the prior had to journey into the country on business; so he called his servant Rush, and said to him: 'Rush, go into the courtyard, and take with thee a dish full of grease to rub on the wheels and axle-trees of the waggon; for I must ride forth betimes to-morrow.'

Off went Rush; but instead of grease he took a bucket of tar and anointed the waggon all over with it, inside and out, especially the place where the prior was to sit. When he had finished, he went back to his master, who asked if he had done as he ordered.

'Yes, sir,' answered Rush meekly. 'You may ride now when you like.'

Then they went to bed. In the morning the prior, with Rush and the rest of his company, rose early and went out to the waggon. But directly the prior got in he found himself smothered in tar.

'Thou rascal, Rush!' he shouted. 'What hast thou done to the waggon? My clothes are all besmeared with pitch!'

'Sir, I have done nothing but what you told me to do,' said Rush.

'That is untrue!' returned the angry prior. 'I bade thee grease the wheels and axle-trees, but thou hast tarred the waggon inside and out. Why hast thou done so?'

'Because I understood you bade me do so, sir!' answered Rush.

Seeing there was nothing else for it, the prior ordered his men to make ready another waggon whilst he went indoors to put on another robe. This done, they mounted into the second waggon and set forth on their journey, at the end of which they alighted at their lodging, where the prior at once called for supper and wine of the very best. This was soon ready, and the prior and the goodman of the house sat down together and made a hearty meal. When they had finished, Rush and his fellows sat down to eat what their masters had left; but there was no wine for them, which made Rush very sad. For some time he pondered how he should get some, and presently called the goodwife, bidding her fill a pottle [four pints] of wine for him and his companions. She did so, and when that was gone, he called for another pottle, and a third. On the

morrow, when the prior had finished his business and was ready to return home, he asked for his bill. The goodwife gave it to him; so much for horse meat and man's meat, and, at the end, '*three pottles of wine for the servants*.' At this the prior was very angry, and asked who told her to give them wine.

'Your servant Rush told me to bring it,' she answered. 'He said you would pay for it.'

The prior called Rush to him.

'Thou rascal!' he cried. 'Would nothing less than pottles serve thee and thy fellows?'

'Sir, we have not drunk so much as that,' returned Rush unabashed. 'Your horses had two of those pottles.'

'*My horses?*' spluttered the prior. 'What should my horses want with wine?'

'Why, sir,' said Rush, 'they laboured more than we did, and were very weary, and had nothing but hay and oats, wherefore methought it needful to give them some good strong drink with their meat, to put fresh heart into them and make them the lustier to take you home again!'

When the prior heard the answer, he saw there was nothing for it but patience; so he paid for the wine and everything else, and rode home in his waggon.

But Friar Rush never travelled with his master again.

*How the Prior made Friar Rush Sexton, and charged him to tell him how many Friars were absent from Service at Midnight, and who they were*

When the prior got home again, he made Friar

Rush sexton of the church. His duty was to ring the bell, to light the candles, and to call the monks to mass at midnight. The prior also charged him to see that none of the friars absented themselves from that service, and, if they did, to let him know of it. Three or four nights later Rush saw that certain friars were not in their places. He put down their names, and the next morning the prior ordered them to come before him, and he rebuked them. Very soon Rush had reported all of them, which caused the prior to be greatly offended. When they saw that Rush was spying on them, they were wroth with him, but had no remedy, for they were so afraid of him that they never dared to be absent after that.

Seeing them in such fear of him, Rush determined to play a fresh trick upon them ; so one night, just before he rang the bell for midnight mass, he went and broke the steps leading to the dormitory. Then he slipped away to ring the bell and light the lamps and candles in the church. This done, he returned to sit, as he was wont to do, at the foot of the steps. Presently came one who suspected no harm but thought to go soberly and as usual to the chapel. But when he came in the dark to the broken steps, down he fell with a crash.

'Thou art *One*!' quoth Rush ; and, as another came rolling down : 'Thou art *Two*!' said he.

A third approached—a great fat fellow, this, in a mighty hurry because he thought himself the last ; and when he fell on the top of his companions he nearly killed them.

'Thou art *Three*!' chuckled Rush.

But now seven or eight came together, and all fell down in a heap.

'Softly, good masters!' cried Rush. 'For shame! Ye come too many at a time! Ye were not wont to be so hasty! But I see what it is—ye would deceive me, and one would shield the other, therefore ye come thus thickly to blind me. How shall I be able now to give account to the prior of those who are absent? Alas, I do not know! Ye be too subtle for me! I would another had my office. Woe is me!'

Presently, those monks who could walk got up and limped into the chapel. But those who fell first and lay underneath—especially the fat friar—were almost too bruised and sore to move; yet they too crawled in as best they could. When they were all assembled in the chapel they made great moan, and with that began the service. In truth they sang a heavy song and a sorrowful, for they were not merry in their hearts—their pains were too great! After the service, those who could do so returned to their cells. The rest stayed in the chapel all night. Next morning, word was brought to the prior of the great misfortune which had befallen the friars at midnight. He was much displeased at the news, believing it to be Rush's deed, since he had served him so many tricks already. He sent for him, therefore, and asked him how the accident had happened.

'Sir, I will tell you,' said Rush frankly. 'It is not unknown to you that when you first put me into this office [of sexton] you commanded me to tell you when any of my brethren were absent from mass. This I have done, several times, and many of them have been punished by you. For this reason they bear me no good will, and would fain have me out

of this office, if they knew how to manage it. To accomplish their desire, and to make you displeased with me, last night they did as follows : When it was time, I rang the bell, lighted candles, and made all things ready, then went to the dormitory to call the brethren, and afterwards stood at the stairs' foot to count them, as I always do, to see who came to mass and who did not. For spite, and so that I should not be able to reckon them, they all came in a cluster, and in their haste pushed one another down the stairs. He that was heaviest had the hardest fall. Now, if they hurt themselves, what is that to do with me ? '

The prior could find no answer to this, but to avoid further trouble he put Rush out of his office and sent him back to the kitchen again. There, when he was alone, the naughty little devil laughed and laughed.

' This, too, was well done ! ' quoth he to himself. ' And well have I excused myself to the prior. But I will do better yet, ere I depart ! '

*How Rush went forth to Sport, and was late in coming Home. How, on his Return, he found a Cow, which he divided into two Parts, one of which he took with him ; and how quickly he made it ready for the Monks' Supper*

Once upon a time Rush, having finished his kitchen work, went out to enjoy himself and to pass the time in good company. Wandering aimlessly, he came to a village too or three miles from the monastery, where he found an alehouse and merry fellows playing cards and drinking within. Rush

greeted them and sat down amongst them to play and drink, and was soon the merriest there. He played so long and the time passed so quickly that he clean forgot what he had to do, until he looked up and found that it was almost dark. Then he remembered that there was nothing ready for the prior's supper, and it was almost meal-time. So he paid for his drink and hastily took his leave. As he went along, he saw a fat cow grazing in a field. He caught her, cut her in two, left one half lying on the ground, and carried the other home, where he speedily made it ready for cooking. Some he put in the pot, some on the spit. Then he kindled a huge fire and made excellent soup, roasted the meat, and all with such despatch that everything was ready at the appointed hour ; whereat the prior and his brethren (who knew he was late home, for some of them had been into the kitchen not long before, and found there neither cook nor fire, nor anything prepared for supper) wondered, and praised Rush, who, they said, was very quick in his work.

*How a Farmer sought his Cow, and how he lost himself and was obliged to take Shelter in a hollow Tree ; and of the Vision he had*

There dwelt beside the monastery walls a poor husbandman, a tenant of the prior's. This same poor man had a cow, which used to come home from the fields at a certain hour every night, without fail. This was the cow which Friar Rush slew ; and so she failed at last to come home at her usual hour. When the poor man found that she did not return,

he thought something must be wrong with her; so he set out to look for her, and searched the fields until he found her divided into two parts, so neatly that he felt sure it could only have been the work of human hands, for a wild beast would have torn the flesh asunder. Only half of her could he find—the other portion was clean gone.

Very miserable, he returned homeward again; but night overtook him before half the journey was done, and it was so dark that he missed his way, nor could he find a house of any sort. At last he came to a hollow tree, in which he took refuge, meaning to rest there all night. But he had not been there long before a great company of devils appeared, with Lucifer at their head. He was the first to speak. With a loud voice he summoned Beelzebub and asked what he had done.

'Sir,' answered Beelzebub, 'I have caused strife between brother and brother, insomuch that one hath slain the other.'

'Well said!' returned Lucifer. 'Thou shalt be rewarded.'

Then he called another devil, named Incubus,* and demanded of him what he had done.

'Sir,' said Incubus, 'I have caused great strife between two lords, through which they have gone to war, and many men have been slain.'

'Thou art a trusty servant,' said the master devil. 'Thou too shalt be rewarded for thy trouble.'

Next he asked a devil named Norpell what he had done; and the answer was that he had been with gamblers and caused them to swear great oaths and

* *Note* D.

to fight with one another; that he had also made strife between husband and wife, wherefore the wife cut the husband's throat.

'Well done!' said the master. 'Thou shalt be rewarded.'

Another devil, named Downesnest, came forward and told how he had made two old women fight and scratch each other's eyes out.

Last of all Friar Rush appeared to tell his tale.

'Sir,' said he, 'I am in a religious house, and I govern the prior and his brethren, who hold me in love and high favour, for I do them many benefits. Many a time, too, have I caused debate and strife to fall among them; and I have made them staves with which they stoutly fought together and broke each other's heads and arms and legs. But I will do more before I leave them, for I will make such strife among them that one shall slay the other, and all shall come to dwell with us in hell, where they shall burn in perpetual fire for ever.'

'If you have indeed done as you say, you have done well,' said Lucifer. 'I pray you be diligent and stir them to sin, and so make a swift end of your enterprise. When you have done all, come home, and you shall be well rewarded for your labour, and exalted.'

Then the master-devil sent them all about their business, and they parted, some one way, some another, to finish what they had begun. As soon as they were gone, the poor husbandman (who all this while had sat and shivered in the tree) rejoiced greatly, for he had been terribly afraid lest they should discover him. But he prayed God to be his protector and to save him from that evil company,

and to send him the light of day to guide him from that place. Ever and anon he looked out for a glimmer of dawn, for he dared not stir until then, lest the devils should still be near. At last daylight began to appear, and he started up and looked around him. No one was stirring, for which he thanked God and departed; nor did he rest until he had seen the prior and told him all.

'Take heed, therefore, of this Rush,' he concluded, 'for he is a very devil, and he will cause you to kill each other. Then shall you be damned, body and soul, in hell.'

The prior thanked him and returned to his cell, much abashed and deeply penitent. With great contrition he knelt down to ask mercy of God, and pardon for the grievous offences which he had committed against Him, and for so vilely misusing the order of his religion. Having done this, he went to the cloisters, where he ordered all his brethren to assemble; and when they were all gathered together before him, he told them the husbandman's story of how Rush was a devil and no earthly creature. They were sore astonished at this, and sorry that they had followed Rush's evil counsels; and were altogether penitent for their abominable sins, for which they desired forgiveness of Almighty God. The prior then ordered them to retire for meditation and prayer. So they went to the chapel; and whilst they were at their devotions the prior went to the kitchen, where he found Rush very busy. In the name of God and all the company of heaven the prior commanded him to stand still, and forthwith transformed Rush into a horse, and bade him stand at the gate, as he did when first he came, and there

remain until service was done. Rush, in the likeness of a horse,* went out and stood at the gate until service was over, when the prior and his brethren went to see him, and asked why he came there to trouble them.

'I came to cause you to sin,' he answered. 'I would have done more—for I would have made you slay one another and so be damned, body and soul.'

When they heard this they held up their hands and praised God for their wonderful escape. Then Rush asked permission to go, promising that he would never return nor do any more mischief; on which condition the prior allowed him to depart.

After he was gone, the monks retired to their cells, and lived solitary and chaste lives thereafter, serving God as they had never done before.

### *The Lamentation of Rush*

After he was banished from the monastery Rush wandered abroad with a heavy heart, crying: 'Alas, alas! what shall I do? I know not where to go, and all my seven years' labour is lost.'

As he walked here and there, he happened to meet his master Lucifer, from whom he tried to hide. But Lucifer saw him and asked his news.

'Sir,' said Rush dolefully, 'I have worked seven years in vain.'

'How so?' asked his master.

'I will tell you,' replied Rush. 'The last time we met, there was in a tree hard by a poor man who overheard what we said, and who went straightway

* *Note* E.

to the prior, to whom he revealed all. So my labour is lost, and I am banished.'

'Well,' said Lucifer, 'you must go elsewhere and see what you can do.'

Rush wandered about the country, but it was long before he could find another place. At last he came to the house of a husbandman who wanted a servant; and there Rush was employed, though against the wife's wishes. Now this woman was very fair, and she loved the parish priest, who in turn loved her. Many a time they supped together and made good cheer; and so secretly did they meet that no one suspected anything. As for the goodman, they were safe enough from him, for it was his wont to rise early in the morning and spend the whole day working in the fields. To prevent him from coming home to dinner, his wife used to give him his food in a bag, and a bottle of drink. She would not keep a servant lest her secret should be discovered; and the goodman himself feared that no servant would stop, for the devil himself could never have endured his wife's evil temper. By this means she kept him for a long time without a helper, well knowing that whilst her husband was away she and her priest might meet without fear.

But she was to be found out at last; and it happened thus.

Rush, as we have said, wandering up and down, came upon the goodman working in the fields and gave him a friendly greeting.

'Rest you merry, sir! Methinks you take great pains, to work so hard. Will it please you to have me as a servant; I am a poor young man out of service, and would willingly serve you if you would have me.'

'*I* would have you, and gladly too,' answered the husbandman, 'but my wife will never allow it.'

'Sir, let me alone to manage that,' said Rush. 'I will so contrive things that she shall be pleased with me.'

'Very well,' said the husbandman. 'Wait until I have done my work, and you shall go home with me.'

When he had finished his day's toil, they went home together. But no sooner were they in the house than the wife, seeing Rush, began to glower and glare at him.

'Dame,' said her husband, perceiving her angry looks, 'I pray you, be content! You know well enough that I have more work than I can manage alone, therefore I have hired this young man to help me.'

At this his wife grew the more furious, and began to brawl and scold as though possessed by the devil.

'What a plague do you want with a servant?' she screamed. 'You are able to do all the work we have to do. Why should we run ourselves into more expense than we can bear? But I see what it is—you are a lazy oaf, and have no mind to work yourself!'

'Dame, be content,' urged her husband again. 'The young man is honest, and hath promised to be a good servant.'

But the more he said, the louder she brawled, until at last Rush broke silence.

'Be not angry with me, dame, for you have no cause,' he said quietly. 'My master hath but hired me for a while on trial, and I trust in that time to behave myself in such a way as shall please you.

Afterwards, if you are pleased with my service, you shall have it always. Otherwise, I will depart.'

Somewhat pacified by these words, the woman said no more, and her husband rejoiced. Whilst they sat at supper, Rush asked what he was to do next day, and was told he must rise early and go to the field to finish what the goodman had been about that day. Early in the morning, therefore, he arose and went to the field, where he worked so hard that when his master brought him his breakfast he had finished everything, which made the goodman stare. Breakfast over, they went home and did what they had to do there. The dame, seeing Rush work so quickly, said little, but left him alone. In the evening he again asked what he should do on the morrow, and his master apportioned to him twice as much as he did the day before. But Rush got up early and set to work. His master followed later on with his breakfast, thinking to help him (and directly he left the house the priest came to see his wife, who prepared a noble meal for him) ; but when he arrived in the field, lo ! Rush had finished his task. They sat down to breakfast, and as they sat together Rush looked at his master's shoes and perceived that they were very hard for lack of greasing.

'Why are not your shoes better greased ?' he asked. 'I wonder you can walk in them, they are so hard ! Have you no others at home ?'

'Yes,' said his master. 'I have another pair lying under a chest in my chamber.'

'I will go back and grease them, so that you may wear them to-morrow,' said Rush.

With that, he walked back, singing as he went.

As he approached the house he sang louder, and his mistress looked out at the window.

'Alas!' cried she to the priest, 'what shall we do? Here cometh our servant, and my husband will not be long after!'

With all speed she popped the meat into the oven and bade the priest go hide under the great chest, amongst her husband's old shoes. When Rush came into the house she met him and asked why he was back so soon.

'Because I have finished my work, and my master bade me come home and grease his shoes,' was the reply. Then Rush went upstairs and looked under the chest, where he found the priest.

'Ha, thou whoreson rogue!' he cried, pulling him out by the heels. 'What dost *thou* here?'

The priest held up his hands, begging for mercy and promising him that if he would save his reputation he would come there no more. So Rush let him go, for that once.

*How Rush came Home to clean the Stable, and found the Priest under the Manger, covered with Straw*

It was not long, however, before the priest waxed bold and determined once more to venture to the husbandman's house. Seizing the opportunity when Rush and the goodman were at work in the fields, he hurried off to see his lady love, who joyously welcomed him and set food before him. Then she drew drink, and sat down beside him; but they had not been together many minutes when Rush came along, singing. Directly she heard him, the goodwife thrust the meat into the oven, as she had done before.

'Alas, where shall I hide?' cried the priest in a fluster.

'Come with me into the stable, and wait there until he is gone,' said she. 'You can creep under the manger, and I will cover you with straw.'

This done, she turned back to the house, where she found Rush and demanded of him the reason for his quick return. He replied that he had finished his work, and was now going to clean out the stable; which news caused the woman no little anxiety, for she thought he would again discover the priest.

Still singing, Rush went into the stable and began to shake up the straw with a fork. When he came to the heap beneath which the priest lay trembling, he thought it seemed a great deal, but he took it up on his fork and carried it outside, where he flung it on the midden. Then he shook the straw about, and at last laid bare a corner of the priest's gown.

'What the devil is this?' cried Rush; and forthwith turned the heap over, and found the priest.

'Aha!' he cried, striking him four or five times with the fork. 'Thou whoreson knave, what dost thou here, eh? Thou didst promise never to come again! I see thou art a false priest! but now I will make an end of thee, and thou shalt deceive me never again.'

At this the priest fell on his knees and begged Rush to spare him once more, adding that if he ever came there again, the servant might do what he pleased with him. So Rush let him go a second time. Yet, within a fortnight or three weeks the priest was back, and the goodwife prepared food for him as usual, thinking they were really safe this time. But they were wrong. It so happened that when the

husbandman and Rush sat down in the field that morning to break their fast on bread and cheese, Rush found in the latter a hair.

'I trow my dame would poison us, or else she does not wash the basket that the cheese doth lie in,' said he. 'Look—it is full of hairs! I will go home and wash the basket.'

Off he went, singing merrily all the way. As he approached the house the goodwife recognised his voice and wrung her hands in despair.

'Go, hide, or you are a dead man!' cried she to the priest. 'Go up into the bedchamber, and jump into the basket which hangeth outside the window. I will call you when he is gone.'

The priest fled, just as Rush came in and explained his errand. He then went upstairs, cut the rope by which the basket hung; and down it fell, priest and all, into a great pool of water below. Rush, taking a horse from the stable, rode into the pool, seized the rope which trailed from the basket, tied it to the horse's tail and rode three or four times through the pool. After this, he rode through the town, where everybody stared at his captive; and so home again, where, as though he knew nothing of him, he dismounted and looked at the priest.

'Thou shalt not escape me this time!' he roared. 'Thy life is lost.'

But the priest held up his hands.

'Here is gold—a hundred pieces!' he wailed. 'Take them, and let me go.'

So Rush took the gold and let the priest go. When his master returned, he gave him half the money and bade him farewell, for he wished to see the world.

*How Rush became Servant to a Gentleman, and how the Devil was conjured out of the Gentleman's Daughter*

After Rush left the husbandman he went in search of adventures, and at last espied a gentleman's house, towards which he bent his steps. When he got there the gentleman himself chanced to be walking up and down before his gate.

'Rest you merry, sir!' said Rush, unbonneting.

'Welcome!' returned the other shortly.

'Sir, I am a poor young man out of service,' said Rush, 'and I would fain have a good master.'

'What country are you of, and from whence come you?' asked the gentleman.

'I was born far from here,' was the answer. 'Many a weary mile have I gone in search of work, but I can find none.'

'What can you do?' asked the gentleman. 'What is your name?'

'Sir, I can do anything you like to set me; and my name is Rush.'

'Then, Rush, tarry here with me. I will take you into my service.'

Rush thanked him, and as they talked together the gentleman said: 'Rush, you have travelled far and gone through many strange places. Can you show me where to find a man who is able to conjure a spirit out of a woman?'

'Why do you ask me that question?' inquired Rush warily.

'Because,' returned the other sadly, 'I have a daughter who is very fair, but she is distraught in her mind, and I suppose she is possessed by some devil.'*

* *Note* F.

'Prithee let me see her,' said Rush. 'I trust speedily to find a remedy.'

The gentleman took him indoors and showed him his daughter. Directly he saw her Rush knew what was the matter with her.

'There is a remedy for this,' he said.

'Well said!' exclaimed the father. 'If you can find me anyone able to help her, I will reward him and you also.'

'Sir, this is what you must do. Forty or fifty miles hence there is a house of religion, wherein I was for a long time a servant. The prior is a cunning man, and I doubt not but that if he were here your daughter would be well, within the hour.'

At these good tidings the gentleman rejoiced, and on the following day sent a servant with a letter to the prior, desiring that he would come to see him. Having read the letter, the prior made himself ready to ride back with the messenger, and they arrived next day at the gentleman's house. The anxious father met them at the gate, received the prior with all reverence, and commanded his servant to bring wine, that they might drink together. Afterwards they walked in the garden, talking of many things.

'Sir,' said the gentleman at last, 'the cause of my sending for you is this: I have a daughter grievously vexed and troubled in her mind, wherefore I suppose she hath an evil spirit. It was told me, by one who was long a servant at your house, that you could help her.'

'What is his name?' asked the prior.

'Rush,' was the reply.

When the prior heard it, he knew well enough

with whom he had to deal, and said to the gentleman: 'Sir, let the lady be brought to me. I trust in Almighty God shortly to find a remedy for her.'

The maid was at once brought before the prior. When she came, he bade her and her father and mother, and all present, to kneel down and pray unto God for her. He himself said certain prayers over her, then blessed her; and immediately there flew out of her mouth a great devil. Thus was she restored to her right mind again, and for joy the gentleman would have given the prior a great sum of money; but he would not take it.

'Sir,' he said, 'I have a new church being built; and to cover the roof I lack lead, which I am told is plentiful in this country. If it please you to give me as much as I need, I and my brethren will be your daily bedesmen, and you shall be prayed for as long as the world endureth.'

'You shall have all the lead you need,' returned the gentleman. 'But how will you get it carried?'

'Have no fear of that,' said the prior. 'I shall manage well enough.'

The gentleman then brought him to a great heap of lead, and bade him take what he wanted. The prior promptly called Rush and commanded him to take on his back as much lead as would cover the church, bear it home, and return. Rush at once did as he was ordered, and was back within half-an-hour. Then the prior said good-bye to the gentleman and departed, bidding Rush carry him home also. So Rush took him on his shoulder and within a quarter of an hour bore him home. There the prior conjured

him into his proper shape and commanded him to go into an old castle which stood in the heart of the forest. There he was to remain for ever, and never come out again.*

From such a devil, and all other devils, defend us, Good Lord ! Amen.

* *Note* G.

# NOTES

# Notes

## THE SIX WORTHY YEOMEN OF THE WEST

(A). *The first Parliament.*—Before the Conquest the great council of the King, consisting only of the nobles, was called *Magnatum Conventus* or *Praelatorum Procerumque Concilium*, and, by the Saxons, *Witenagemote*—'The Council of the Wise Men.' After the Conquest it was called *Parlementum*, from *parler* = to talk. The first *recorded* application of the term to a national assembly is found in 1246.

(B). *Clothmaking trade.*—'In ancient times the great trade of this nation consisted in unmanufactured wool, which foreigners bought of us; insomuch that the customs of English wool exported in Edward III.'s reign amounted, at fifty shillings a pack, to 250,000*l* per annum. This excessive custom on unmanufactured wool gave encouragement to the making of cloth here more effectually than the laws against exportation of wool are now found to do' (CHAMBERLAYNE's 'Present State of Great Britain'). Reading was famous for clothmaking until 1640, when the civil wars ruined trade.

(C). *Bosom's Inn.*—'Farther west is St Laurence Lane, so called of St Laurence's Church, which standeth directly over against the north end thereof. Antiquities in this lane I find none other than that among many fair houses there is one large inn for receipt of travellers, called Blossom's Inn, but corruptly Bosom's Inn, and hath to sign St Laurence the Deacon, in a border of blossoms or flowers' (STOWE's 'Survey of London') (edition 1598).

(D). *Gerard's Hall.*—'On the south side of this lane [Basing Lane] is one great house of old time builded upon arched vaults, and with arched gates; now a common hostelry for receipt of travellers, commonly and corruptly called Gerard's Hall, of a giant said to have dwelt there. In the high-roofed hall of this house sometime stood a large fir-pole which reached to the roof thereof, and was said to be one of the staves that Gerard the giant used in the wars to run withal' (STOWE).

(E). *Robert of Normandy.*—'By the treaty of peace concluded between William and Robert, and sworn to by the Norman chiefs, the functions of King of England devolved on the duke. But he was then absent on a journey to the Holy Land, whither he was one of the first to go in arms at the invitation of Pope Urban II.' (THIERRY's 'Norman Conquest').

(F). *Wales.*—The Welsh, after the Conquest, retired to their mountain fastnesses, whence at intervals they issued to harry their Norman oppressors. To prevent this, a system of colonisation was introduced, and from many parts the old inhabitants were ruthlessly expelled. At the time of Henry I.'s accession, practically all southern and western Wales had been

conquered, and the Celtic power flourished in Gwynedd alone, whose chiefs then began to call themselves kings or princes of Wales.

(G). *The Earl of Shrewsbury.*—Robert de Belesme, the eldest son of Roger, Earl of Shrewsbury, and one of the most powerful counts in Normandy and England, was the leader of the disaffected barons against the Norman kings. He has been cited as an example of the feudal nobility at its worst. Ordericus Vitalis, speaking of his banishment in 1101, exclaims: 'Rejoice, King Henry, and give thanks to the Lord God, for you became a free ruler from the day when you banished Robert of Belesme from your realm.'

(H). *Gloucester.*—'Its manufacture, clothing, the trade of which amounts to 500,000*l per annum*, for which the sheep of Cotswold have so fine a wool, that the Spanish strain (it is said) came from a present of these sheep given by Edward I. to Alphonso, King of Spain' (Chamberlayne).

(I). *Neat's-leather.*—From A.S. *neat* = cattle.

(J). *Margaret.*—Greek, *margarites* = a pearl.

(K). *Bishop of Salisbury.*—Roger, a poor priest of Caen who won favour with Henry by the rapidity with which he performed mass. He died in 1139.

(L). *A yard.*—A.S. *gyrd* = a rod.

(M). *The Gibbet-law of Halifax.*—Supposed to have originated when the manor of Wakefield (of which Halifax formed part) was bestowed on Earl Warren. The law was to the following effect:—

1. The thief was to be taken within the liberty, and if he escaped thence he could not be brought back for execution; but if he ever returned and was taken, he was to suffer the penalty.

2. The theft was to be proved, and the offender to be taken *handhabend* or *backberand*—that is, with the stolen goods in his hand or on his back; or *confessand*—confessing that he took them.

3. The value of the goods must be not less than thirteenpence halfpenny.

4. The accused was to be executed on the Saturday after his condemnation.

The last malefactors to suffer under this law were Abraham Wilkinson and Andrew Mitchell, executed on 30th April 1650.

(N). *Rejor* (so called by our author).—Rahere was the founder and first prior of St Bartholomew's. Stowe mentions him as having been 'a pleasant-witted gentleman, and therefore, in his time called the king's minstrel, about the year of Christ 1102.' He was buried in St Bartholomew's Church, 'in a fair monument,' which is still in existence.

(O). *Liveries.*—The practice is first mentioned in statutes of Richard II.'s reign. In the time of Edward IV. the terms *livery* and *badge* seem to have been synonymous.

(P). *Lobcock.*—A dull, sluggish fellow.

(Q). *Flurts.*—A provincial word, from A.S. *flitan* = to quarrel. *Cf.* Montaigne's essay on 'Democritus and Heraclitus' (Florio's translation): 'Even so Diogenes . . . flurting at Alexander.'

(R). *As much credit as a crocodile.*—The crocodile was said to weep over its victims before it devoured them.

(S). *Candlewick Street* (or *Candlewright Street*).—It took its name, says

Stowe, from chandlers or makers of candles who dwelt there. Wike = a working place.

(T). *Blackwell-hall.*—'On the west side [of Basing's-hall Street] almost at the south end thereof, is Bakewell-hall, corruptly called Blackwell-hall' (Stowe).

(U). *Cripplegate.*—'The postern of Cripplegate so called long before the conquest. For I read in the history of Edmund, king of the East Angles, written by Abbo Floriacens, Burchardus . . . that in the year 1010 the Danes spoiling the kingdom of the East Anglians, Alwyne, bishop of Helmeham, caused the body of King Edward the Martyr to be brought from Bedrisworth [Bury St Edmunds] through the kingdom of the East Saxons, and so to London in at Cripplegate; a place, saith my author, so called of cripples begging there; at which gate, it was said, the body entering, miracles were wrought, as some of the lame to go upright, praising God' (Stowe).

The name is derived from A.S. *crepel* = an underground way, and *gat* = a gate or street. Recent excavations have brought to light, beneath the site of the old gate, an underground passage running towards the Barbican, and in a south-easterly direction towards the city.

(V). *Quill.*—The small reed on which weavers wind their thread.

(W). *The King's book.*—Domesday, the great rate-book, a return sent in to the royal commissioners by each hundred and township. The bailiffs here mentioned were probably the *bailiffs of the hundreds*, who represented the King's interest and collected his fines and fee-farm rents. The term was in common use amongst the Normans, and was loosely applied to many officials under the Crown.

(X). *Grey russet.*—'Northern russet, half a yard and half a quarter broad I have seen sold for 4d. the yard, and was good cloth of a mingled colour' (Stowe).

(Y). *Robert of Normandy.*—The eldest son of William the Conqueror. He was surnamed 'Curthose' on account of his short legs. In 1106 he was taken prisoner by his brother at the battle of Tenchebrai, and confined in Cardiff Castle. At first he enjoyed a sort of liberty on *parole*; but one day, attempting to escape, he was by his brother's orders deprived of his sight. He died in 1135, after a captivity of twenty-nine years.

(Z). *Reading Abbey.*—Founded by Henry I. in 1121. A religious house is said to have been previously built there by Elfrida in expiation of the murder of Edward the Martyr. The Abbey was not consecrated until 1164, when the ceremony was performed by Thomas à Becket. The monks were of the Benedictine order, and by royal charter were immune from tolls and customs. Henry I. was buried there, in 1135, before the high altar, but his tomb was destroyed at the Reformation. During the civil wars the ruins of the north transept were blown up. The county gaol now stands on the site of the once-famous abbey.

(AA). *Exeter.*—It is supposed that Exeter was a hill-fort of the Celtic inhabitants of Damnonia. Its original name, *Caer Wisc*, became *Isca Damnoniorum* in Latin, *Exanceaster* in Anglo-Saxon.

(BB). *Gloucester.*—An old Roman station, deriving its name from the British camp, Caer Gloui.

(CC). *The first Earl of Gloucester.*—Robert, natural son of Henry I., was created Earl of Gloucester in 1109, on his marriage with Mabel, daughter of Robert Fitz-Hamon, lord of Gloucester.

(DD). *Lord Mayor of London.*—'There were sometimes two bailiffs of London, until Richard I. in the year 1189 changed the name of *bailiff* into *Mayor*' (CHAMBERLAYNE). The first Lord Mayor was Henry Fitz-Alwyn Fitz-Liefstane, goldsmith, who remained in office from the first year of Richard I.'s reign until the fifteenth of King John's. In 1215 John granted the citizens the right to elect their mayor annually.

(EE). *Catchpole.*—A constable.

(FF). *Stammell.*—A kind of woollen cloth.

(GG). *Thales.*—An Ionic philosopher, one of the first to introduce the study of mathematics and philosophy into Greece. Plato tells the story of how, walking along with his eyes lifted to heaven, he fell into a well.

(HH). *'Tis but ten shillings.*'—The shilling was first struck in the reign of Henry VII. In early times calculations were made in *money of account*, which was not represented by coin of the same denomination—a reminiscence of still earlier days when money was computed by weight.

(II). *The King wished to be buried at Reading.*—'It was not unfit that the victor of Tenchebrai should sleep on a spot all whose associations were purely English, a spot which had won its earlier place in history as the scene of some of the greatest exploits of Alfred' (PROFESSOR FREEMAN). See also *Note* Z.

## GEORGE A GREEN

(A). *The many signs of him.—Cf.* 'Drunken Barnaby':

Veni Wakefield peramænum
Ubi querens Georgium Greenum,
Non inveni, sed in lignum
Fixum reperi Georgii signum,
Ubi allam bibi feram
Douee Georgio fortior eram.

[Straight at Wakefield I was seen a,
Where I sought for George a Green a;
But could not find such a creature,
Yet on a sign I saw his feature,
Where strength of ale had so much stirr'd me,
That I grew stouter far than Geordie.]

In Ritson's 'Robin Hood' we find mention of the Pindar; and there is in the Roxburghe collection an old black-letter ballad called 'The Jolly Pindar' of Wakefield, with Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John, to which Shakespeare makes allusion. (See the second part of *Henry IV.*, Act v., scene 3; also *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act i., scene 1.) Drayton and Brathwaite make mention of George, whose name has passed into a proverb.

(B). *Robin Hood*—No historical evidence of Robin Hood's existence is forthcoming. *The Scotichronicon* (of fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) is the earliest chronicle in which his name is mentioned. The earliest ballads on the subject date from Edward III.'s reign.

(C). *Hudibras.*—A satire on the Presbyterians and Independents. It was published in three parts, during 1663-78, and is of great historical interest. The author, Samuel Butler, died in extreme poverty, 1680.

(D). *He subdued Ireland by the sword.*—Henry II., alarmed by the rapid conquests of Robert Fitz-Stephen, Maurice Fitz-Gerald and Richard de Clare ('Strongbow'), and fearful lest they should establish in Ireland an independent Norman state, went over himself to that 'distressful country' in 1172, when many of the native chiefs did him feudal homage, in blissful ignorance of the obligations thereby incurred. *Hinc illae lachrymae!*

(E). *William, King of Scots.*—William the Lion was taken prisoner (1174) in his attempt to regain the earldom of Northumberland. To obtain his liberty he agreed to the Convention of Falaise, by which he held Scotland as a fief from the King of England. He died in 1214.

(F). *From the south ocean to the Orcades.—i.e.* from the Atlantic to the Orkney Islands.

(G). *His wife Eleanor.*—Eleanor of Aquitaine, daughter of William, Count of Poitou, married Louis VII. (not VIII.), who divorced her in 1152. In the same year she married Henry of Anjou, who became King of England two years later. It was by this marriage that he became possessed of Auvergne, Guienne and Gascony.

(H). *King Henry was prosperous in the beginning of his reign.*—The first ten years of Henry's reign were prosperous, thanks to his own energy and tact and to the help of Archbishop Theobald, the Chancellor Becket, and the Earl of Leicester. With Becket's accession to the archbishopric, Henry's troubles began, and were brought to a climax by the murder of that prelate. His sons were his worst enemies. Influenced by their mother and Louis VII. they persistently rebelled against their father, embittering his last years by their ingratitude, whilst their hostility was a serious check on home reforms and did much to diminish Henry's prestige in Europe.

(I). *Gerald the chronicler.*—Gerald de Barry—'Giraldus Cambrensis' (1147-1220).

(J). *He reigned twenty-six years*, etc.—'The reign of Henry has been divided by Bishop Stubbs into four epochs—from his accession, to the Becket quarrel (1154-64); the period of his strife with the archbishop (1164-70); from Becket's death to the death of the younger Henry in 1183; and from thence to Henry's own death in 1189' (*Dictionary of English History*).

(K). *Imprisonment of Queen Eleanor.*—The Queen, having incited her sons to rebellion, was seized and imprisoned (1173). She remained in captivity for sixteen years, and on her husband's death was released by Richard.

(L). *Fair Rosamond.*—Rosamond Clifford, daughter of Walter, Lord Clifford. There is no authority for the story of her being poisoned by Queen Eleanor. She died at Woodstock, and was buried in Godstow nunnery. According to Stowe the following distich appeared on her tomb:—

'*Hic jacet in tumba, rosa mundi, non rosa munda;*
*Non redolet, sed olet, quæ redolere solet.*'

(M). 'Many men of Norman race declared themselves on the side of the sons. The Saxon population collectively remained indifferent. . . . Individually the serfs and serving-men of English birth attached themselves to the party followed by their master' (THIERRY).

(N). *Siege of Alnwick.*—1174. The Saxons saw in this victory proof of the good will of St Thomas à Becket, at whose shrine Henry had recently done penance.

(O). *To serve seven years in a shop.*—The Statute of Apprentices, which enacted that no one should be allowed to practise a trade until he had served seven years as an aprentice, was not passed until 1563 (repealed in 1814); but the system of apprenticeship is of very early date, probably coeval with the institution of trade guilds.

(P). *Who cast figures.*—*i.e.* made calculations as to the positions of the heavenly bodies at the moment of a man's birth.

(Q). *Hercules fighting with Hydra.*—One of the twelve labours of Hercules. The Hydra was a serpent which ravaged Lerna, near Argos. This monster had nine heads, of which the middle one was immortal. For each head struck off by Hercules, two more appeared. He finally burned them off, and buried the immortal one under a rock.

(R). *The death of Henry II.*—Contemporary writers declare that when Richard went to view his father's corpse in the abbey-church at Fontevrault, blood flowed incessantly from the dead king's nostrils, from the moment his son entered the church until he left; thus proving (to the satisfaction of the aforesaid historians, and according to the Ordeal by Bier-right) that the ingratitude of his sons was the cause of his death.

(S). *The Earl of Gloucester's heiress.*—John was afterwards divorced from her, and married Isabella of Angoulême.

(T). *The Bishop of Ely.*—William Longchamp. He was appointed Justiciar of England, 1190, and became Papal Legate in the following year. It is said that nothing—from a Jew's merchandise to a knight's silver baldric or a woman's necklace—was safe from his rapacity.

(U). *The devil's Pater Noster.*—The Lord's Prayer, repeated backwards, was supposed to invoke a terrible curse upon those against whom it was uttered.

(V). *All contracts were first confirmed*, etc.—An extremely roundabout way of saying that 'Marriages are made in heaven'!

(W). *This sack, too*, etc.—Sack is a dry Spanish wine; from the Latin *siccus* = dry.

(X). *Sherwood.*—(A.S. *Sire-wode.*) The largest forest in England, extending from Nottingham to the centre of Yorkshire. It was at this period the haunt of bands of armed Saxons who denied the Conquest and chose to live outside the pale of the usurper's law.

(Y). *Lord Fitz-Walter.*—A northern lord, afterwards chosen by the barons as their leader in the struggle with King John.

(Z). *Slathbatch.*—Will Scarlet, variously named Scadlock, Scathelocke (in the ballad printed by Wynken de Worde), Sharlock and Scarlock.

(AA). *He being outlawed.*—An outlaw was said to bear 'a wolf's head,' and might therefore be lawfully slain by anyone who happened to meet him.

(BB). *Of that which took place between Robin Hood and George.*—The chief incident in this chapter is taken from a ballad entitled 'The Jolly Pindar of Wakefield, with Robin Hood, Scarlet and John,' of which there is a black-letter copy in Anthony à Wood's collection, and two copies in the British Museum, one of which is also in black-letter. This is the ballad alluded to by Shakespeare. (See *Note* A.)

(CC). *Richard Cœur de Lion.*—The first Richard was in his day as fearsome a bogey to naughty children as was the first Napoleon in his; and many a small rebel was hushed to rest with the assurance that all babies who remained awake when it was fit and proper for them to be asleep were the lawful prey of the terrible Cœur de Lion.

(DD). *Otherwise known as Robin Hood.*—The outlaw's name was Robert Fitzooth. There have been several attempts to explain how this came to be altered to *Robin Hood.* Ritson rejects as absurd the theory that Hood is a corruption of 'o' the wood,' and maintains that if the name were a matter of conjecture it might in all probability refer to some sort of hood worn by way of distinction or disguise. Analogies have been drawn between Robin Hood and Robin Goodfellow, that 'tricksy sprite' who is the Scottish *Red Cap*, the Swedish *Nisse*, and the Saxon *Hudken*, so named from the little hood which he is always represented as wearing.

## THE FAMOUS HISTORY OF ROGER BACON

(A). *The town where he was born.*—Ilchester, in Somersetshire.

(B). *The famous friar.*—Bacon entered the order of St Francis, before 1233, whilst he was still at Oxford.

(C). *Black pudding.*—A species of sausage made of blood and meat.

(D). *Penny-father.*—A penurious person. *Cf.* Topsell's 'Beasts': 'The great men, the rich mysers and penny-fathers . . . sent packing out of their doors the schoole-mistresse of all labour, diligence and vertue, and will not permit a webbe, the very patterne, index, and anathema of supernaturall wisedome, to remain untouched.'

(E). *The brazen head.*—Stowe speaks of an earthenware head made at Oxford in Edward II.'s reign, which said '*Caput decidetur*' (the head shall be cut off); '*Caput elevabitur*' (the head shall be lifted up); and '*Pedes elevabuntur supra caput*' (the feet shall be lifted above the head). William of Malmesbury makes mention of such a head, which he declares to have been constructed by Pope Sylvester II.; and Yepes has an account of another, made at Madrid by Henry de Villeine and broken to pieces by order of King John II. of Castile. Gower attributes the head to Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln (a great patron of Bacon's); others, to Albertus Magnus, who was also contemporary with Bacon.

The brazen head is said to have been set up in a field at Bothwell, near Leeds.

(F). *Cam'st thou from Newcastle?*—This ballad being of the sixteenth century, one is inclined to doubt Miles' knowledge of it!

(G). *An instrument three fingers high.*—'It is possible to invent an engine of a little bulk, yet of great efficacy, either to the depressing or elevation of the very greatest weight, which would be of much consequence in several accidents: for hereby a man may either ascend or descend any walls, delivering himself or comrades from prison; and this engine is only three fingers high and four broad' (Roger Bacon, 'Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature and Magic').

(H). *Perspective glasses.*—*i.e.* the telescope, which Bacon, who was famous for his skill in optics, is said to have invented.

'It is reported that Julius Cæsar when he came to conquer Britain, stood on the French shore and viewed the whole region with the cities and castles therein, that he might better inform himself of the place'(Anthony a Wood).

(I). *The greatest shall appear least.*—From some of Bacon's notes in MS., it appears that he understood the properties of convex and concave glasses.

(J). *The poison of a basilisk.*—'The cockatrice hight *Basiliscus* in Greek, and *Regulus* in Latin; and hath that name Regulus of a little king, for he is king of serpents, and they be afraid and flee when they see him. For he slayeth them with his smell and with his breath: and slayeth also anything that hath life with breath and with sight' (Bartholomew Anglicus).

A kind of large cannon was also called a basilisk. Coryat, the traveller (1577-1617), mentions that he saw, in Milan citadel, 'an exceeding huge basiliske, which was so great that it would easily contayne the body of a very corpulent man.' The analogy between this piece of ordnance and the monster whose breath was fatal to life, is easily seen.

(K). *Burning glasses.*—In his 'Discovery of Miracles,' Bacon writes: 'We may have an artificial composition of Saltpeter and other ingredients, or of the oil of Red Petrolei and other things, or with Maltha, Naptha, with such like, which will burn at what distance we please, with which Pliny reports that he kept a city against the whole Roman Army.' Anthony à Wood, writing on the same subject, says that Archimedes, 'within the town of Syracuse, commonly called Saragossa,' devised such glasses, by means of which he destroyed the enemy's ships whilst they were still at some distance from the town. Peter de Maharncourt, or Peter Peregrine as he is sometimes called, made a burning glass in three years, having vowed never to leave his study until he had accomplished it.

(L). *Daily motion.*—The Copernicans attributed three motions to the Earth —viz. the diurnal, round her own axis, causing night and day; the annual, round the sun; and the motion of libration, 'whereby the earth so proceeds in her orbit as that her axis is constantly parallel to the axis of the world.' According to the Ptolemaic theory the earth was the centre of the universe, and the sun, moon and stars moved round it once in twenty-four hours.

(M). *The battle of Pharsalia.*—Pharsalus is a town in Thessaly. The Pharsalian plains lie along the Apidanus. There Cæsar vanquished Pompey (48 B.C.) and the Roman Republic became the Roman Empire.

(N). *The tree of the Hesperides.*—On the marriage of Juno with Jupiter the Earth presented her with some golden apples, which were placed in the

guardianship of the Hesperides, the three daughters of Atlas and Hesperis. To obtain these apples was the last but one of the twelve labours of Hercules. Having done so, he dedicated them to Minerva, who afterwards restored them to their former place on Mount Atlas.

(O). *The three brethren.*—This stratagem of the friar's is borrowed from a story in the Gesta Romanorum.

(P). *They go by Weeping Cross.*—Crosses were erected by the highway, where penitents offered their devotions. 'To come home by Weeping Cross' = to meet with defeat, or to repent for having taken a certain course. *Cf.* Montaigne's Essays: 'Few have wedded their sweethearts or mistresses but have come by Weeping Crosse and ere long repented their bargaine.'

(Q). *A Walloon.*—A descendant of the Celtic Belgae in Flanders.

(R). *Julian the Apostate.*—Nephew of Constantine. He abjured the Christian faith, A.D. 361. Died A.D. 363, in his thirty-second year, having reigned about twenty months.

(S). *Usury in the Middle Ages.*—The mediæval Church set its face against usury when no other body had the power to protect the poor against the rich. Thus usury became a recognised offence in the spiritual courts; but it was not until Henry VII.'s reign that the State really took the matter up and instituted a fixed rate of interest.

(T). *How Miles conjured for meat.*—The incidents in this chapter recall those of a poem supposed to have been written by Dunbar (1465-1530 (?)), called 'The Friers of Berwick.' (See 'Pinkerton's Scotch Poems,' vol. i., p. 65.) See also Hans Andersen's 'Great Klaus and Little Klaus.'

(U). *The Quintain.*—A game formerly in great request at weddings, especially in Shropshire. A thick plank was set in the ground and poles provided, with which the young men ran a tilt on horseback. He who broke the most poles won the garland. *Cf.* Herrick:

> 'Thy wakes, thy quintels, here thou hast,
> Thy may-poles two with garlands grac'd.'

(V). *Upse freese.*—A heavy kind of beer imported from Friesland and formerly much used in England. 'To be Upse freese' = to be drunk.

(W). *A fox at his tail.—i.e.* made a fool of him. A fox-tail was, at one time, the badge of a fool. *To fox* = a cant term, to make drunk. *Cf.* PEPYS' 'DIARY,' 10th July 1665: 'Met at the waterside with Mr Charnocke . . . who had been with company, and was quite foxed.'

(X). *The sea-monster which Perseus killed.*—Jealous of Cassiopea's boast that her daughter Andromeda was more beautiful than his Nereids, Neptune sent a sea-monster to ravage Æthopia. To deliver her country, Andromeda, on the advice of an oracle, was chained to a rock and left to the monster's fury. Perseus slew the monster, and married the maiden, who, at her death, was placed amongst the stars.

(Y). *That rare and profound philosopher.*—Trismegistus Hermes, an Egyptian priest and philosopher. He flourished A.M. 2076, and instructed his countrymen in the cultivation of the olive, the measurement of land, and the knowledge of hieroglyphics.

(Z). *Friar Bacon's cell.*—According to tradition, Friar Bacon acquired his magical skill by promising himself to the devil after death, provided he died *in the church or out of it.* This contract he managed to evade by causing a cell to be built in the wall of the church. There—neither in nor out of the church—he died and was buried.

## THE HISTORY OF FRIAR RUSH

(A). *Beyond the sea.*—There is an old Danish poem on the subject of 'Brother Rus, how he did service as cook and monk in the monastery of Esserom.' In the poem Rus travels through the air to England and gains the King's daughter. There seems little reason to doubt that the Danish story was drawn from the same source as the English legend.

(B). *Belphegor*, etc.—Belphegor, or Baalpeor, was a Moabitish divinity whose worship was celebrated with peculiarly abominable rites.

Beelzebub, the lord of flies, was a god of the Philistines. It has been said, as Galtruchius mentions in his 'History of the Heathen Gods,' that the name Beelzebub was given to this divinity because in the sacrifices offered to him his priests were tormented by swarms of flies, whereas in the sacrifices of the true God not a fly was to be seen.

Asmodeus.—The evil spirit who persecuted Sara, the daughter of Raguel, with his unwelcome attentions. See Apocrypha, Tobit viii.

(C). *This devil, whose name was Rus.*—It is worthy of note that *Rush* (A.S. *risce*) signifies a thing proverbially worthless. *Cf.* the old saying: 'It is not worth a rush.'

(D). *Incubus.*—A demon fabled to cause oppression. See Milton's 'Paradise Regained,' Book II:

> 'Belial, the dissolutest spirit that fell,
> The sensualest, and after Asmodai
> The fleshliest Incubus.'

(E). *The form of a horse.*—*Cf.* the old song of 'The Mad Pranks of Robin Goodfellow':

> 'Sometimes I meete them like a man,
> Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound,
> And to a horse turn me I can,
> To trip and trot about them round.'

(F). *I suppose she is possessed by some devil.*—The old Scriptural belief in possession died hard. In the reign of Charles the Second we read that the poor wretches confined in Bedlam were treated with the utmost cruelty 'to drive out their devils.'

(G). *Conjured him into his proper shape . . . never to come out again.*—Why the prior did not act thus at an earlier stage of the proceedings was best known to himself!