

XI.
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

KING of France.
DUKE of Florence.
BERTRAM, Count of Rousillon.
LAFFEU, ¹) an old Lord.
PAROLLES, ²) a Follower of Bertram.
Several young French Lords, that serve with Bertram in the Florentine war.
Steward, }
Clown, } Servants to the Countess of Rousillon.

A Page.
Countess of ROUSILLON, Mother to Bertram.
HELENA, a Gentlewoman protected by the Countess.
An old Widow of Florence.
DIANA, Daughter to the Widow.
VIOLENTA, ³) } Neighbours and Friends to the
MARIANA, } Widow.
Lords attending on the King; Officers, Soldiers, &c.
French and Florentine.

SCENE — partly in France, and partly in Tuscany.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Rousillon. A Room in the Countess's Palace.

Enter BERTRAM, the Countess of ROUSILLON, HELENA, and LAFFEU, in mourning.

Countess.

In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

Ber. And I, in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew: but I must attend his majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, ⁴) evermore in subjection.

Laf. You shall find of the king a husband, madam; — you, sir, a father: He that so generally is at all times good, must of necessity hold his virtue to you; whose worthiness would stir it up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is such abundance.

Count. What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?

Laf. He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope; and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

Count. This young gentleman had a father, (O, that had! how sad a passage 'tis!) whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the king's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of the king's disease.

Laf. How called you the man you speak of, madam?

Count. He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Narbon.

Laf. He was excellent, indeed, madam; the king very lately spoke of him, admiringly, and mourningly: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

Ber. What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of?

Laf. A fistula, my lord.

Ber. I heard not of it before.

Laf. I would it were not notorious. — Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

Count. His sole child, my lord; and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good, that her education promises; her dispositions she inherits, which make fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, ⁵) there commendations go with pity, they are virtues and traitors too; in her they are the better for their simpleness; ⁶) she derives her honesty, and achieves her goodness.

Laf. Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

Count. 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart, but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood ⁷) from her cheek. No more of this, Helena, go to, no more; lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow, than to have.

Hel. I do affect a sorrow, indeed, but I have it too. ⁸)

Laf. Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living.

Count. If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal. ⁹)

Ber. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

Laf. How understand we that?

Count. Be thou blest, Bertram! and succeed thy father

In manners, as in shape! thy blood, and virtue, Contend for empire in thee; and thy goodness Share with thy birth-right! Love all, trust a few, Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy

Rather in power, than use; and keep thy friend Under thy own life's key: be check'd for silence, But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,

That thee may furnish, ¹⁰) and my prayers pluck down, Fall on thy head! Farewell. — My lord,

'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord, Advise him.

Laf. He cannot want the best That shall attend his love.

Count. Heaven bless him! — Farewell, Bertram.

[Exit Countess]

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Ber. The best wishes, that can be forged in your thoughts, [to HELENA] be servants to you! Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

Laf. Farewell, pretty lady: You must hold the credit of your father. [Exit BERTRAM and LAFFEU.]

Hel. O, were that all! — I think not on my father; ¹¹) And these great tears grace his remembrance more Than those I shed for him. What was he like?

I have forgot him: my imagination Carries no favour in it, but Bertram's.

I am undone; there is no living, none, If Bertram be away. It were all one,

That I should love a bright particular star, And think to wed it, he is so above me:

In his bright radiance and collateral light Must I be comforted, not in his sphere. ¹²)

The ambition in my love thus plagues itself; The hind, that would be mated by the lion,

Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague, To see him every hour: to sit and draw

His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls, In our heart's table; ¹³) heart, too capable

Of every line and trick of his sweet favour: ¹⁴) But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy

Must sanctify his relics. Who comes here?

Enter PAROLLES.

One that goes with him: I love him for his sake; And yet I know him a notorious liar,

Think him a great way fool, solely a coward; Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him,

That they take place, when virtue's steely bones Look bleak in the cold wind: withal, full oft we see

Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly. ¹⁵)

Par. Save you, fair queen.

Hel. And you, monarch.

Par. No.

Hel. And no. ¹⁶)

Par. Are you meditating on virginity?

Hel. Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you; let me ask you a question: Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him?

Par. Keep him out.

Hel. But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant in the defence, yet is weak: unfold to us some warlike resistance.

Par. There is none; man, sitting down before you, will undermine you, and blow you up.

Hel. Bless our poor virginity from underminers, and blowers up! — Is there no military policy how virgins might blow up men?

Par. Virginity, being blown down, man will quicklier be blown up: marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city.

It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature, to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase; and there was never virgin got, till virginity was first lost. That, you were made of, is metal to make virgins. Virginity, by being once lost, may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it is ever lost: 'tis too cold a companion: away with it.

Hel. I will stand for't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.

Par. There's little can be said in't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He, that hangs himself, is a virgin: virginity murders itself; and should be buried in highways, out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own

stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin ¹⁷) in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by't: Out with't: within ten years it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase: and the principal itself not much the worse: Away with't.

Hel. How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

Par. Let me see: Marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth: off with't while 'tis vendible: answer the time of request.

Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion; richly suited, but unsuitable: just like the broach and toothpick, which wear not now: Your date is better ¹⁸) in your pie and your porridge, than in your cheek: And your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears; it looks ill, it eats dryly; marry, 'tis a withered pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet, 'tis a withered pear: Will you any thing with it?

Hel. Not my virginity yet.

There shall your master have a thousand loves, A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,

A phoenix, ¹⁹) captain, and an enemy, A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,

A counsellor, a traitress, ²⁰) and a dear: His humble ambition, proud humility,

His jarring, concord, and his discord, dulcet, His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world

Of petty, fond, adoptious christendoms, ²¹) That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he — I know not what he shall: — God send him well! —

The court's a learning-place; — and he is one —

Par. What one, 'faith?

Hel. That I wish well. — 'Tis pity —

Par. What's pity?

Hel. That wishing well had not a body in't, Which might be felt: that we, the poorer born,

Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes, Might with effects of them follow our friends,

And show what we alone must think; ²²) which never Returns us thanks.

Enter a Page.

Page. Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you.

[Exit Page.]

Par. Little Helen, farewell: if I can remember thee, I will think of thee at court.

Hel. Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

Par. Under Mars, I.

Hel. I especially think, under Mars.

Par. Why under Mars?

Hel. The wars have so kept you under, that you must needs be born under Mars.

Par. When he was predominant.

Hel. When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

Par. Why think you so?

Hel. You go so much backward, when you fight.

Par. That's for advantage.

Hel. So is running away, when fear proposes the safety: But the composition, that your valour and fear makes in you, is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well.

Par. I am so full of business, I cannot answer thee acutely: I will return perfect courtier; in the which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none,

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remember thy friends: get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee: so farewell. [Exit.]
Hel. Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie, Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky Gives us free scope; only, doth backward pull Our slow designs, when we ourselves are dull. What power is it, which mounts my love so high; That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?²⁴⁾ The mightiest space in fortune nature brings To join like likes, and kiss like native things.²⁵⁾ Impossible be strange attempts, to those That weigh their pains in sense; and do suppose, What hath been cannot be: Who ever strove To show her merit, that did miss her love? The king's disease — my project may deceive me, But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

Paris. *A Room in the King's Palace.*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the KING of France, with letters; Lords and others attending.

King. The Florentines and Senoys²⁶⁾ are by the ears;

Have fought with equal fortune, and continue A braving war.

1 Lord. So 'tis reported, sir.

King. Nay, 'tis most credible; we here receive it A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria, With caution, that the Florentine will move us For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend Prejudicates the business, and would seem To have us make denial.

1 Lord. His love and wisdom, Approv'd so to your majesty, may plead For amplest credence.

King. He hath arm'd our answer, And Florence is denied before he comes: Yet, for our gentlemen, that mean to see The Tuscan service, freely have they leave To stand on either part.

2 Lord. It may well serve A nursery to our gentry, who are sick For breathing and exploit.

King. What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES.

1 Lord. It is the count Rousillon, my good lord, Young Bertram.

King. Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face; Frank nature, rather curious than in haste, Hath well compos'd thee. Thy father's mortal parts May'st thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

Ber. My thanks and duty are your majesty's.

King. I would I had that corporal soundness now, As when thy father, and myself, in friendship First try'd our soldiership! He did look far Into the service of the time, and was Disciple of the bravest: he lasted long; But on us both did haggish age steal on, And wore us out of act. It much repairs me²⁷⁾ To talk of your good father: In his youth He had the wit, which I can well observe To-day in our young lords; but they may jest, Till their own scorn return to them unnoted, Ere they can hide their levity in honour.²⁸⁾ So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were, His equal has awak'd them; and his honour, Clock to itself, knew the true minute when Exception bid him speak, and, at this time,

His tongue obey'd his hand:²⁹⁾ who were below him He us'd as creatures of another place; And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks, Making them proud of his humility, In their poor praise he humbled: Such a man Might be a copy to these younger times; Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now But goes backward.

Ber. His good remembrance, sir, Lies richer in your thoughts, than on his tomb; So in approval lives not his epitaph, As in your royal speech.³⁰⁾

King. 'Would, I were with him! He would always say,

(Methinks, I hear him now: his plausible words He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them, To grow there, and to bear,) — *Let me not live,* —

Thus his good melancholy oft began, On the catastrophe and heel of pastime, When it was out, — *let me not live,* quoth he, *After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses All but new things disdain; whose judgments are Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies Expire before their fashions: —* This he wish'd: I, after him, do after him wish too, Since I nor wax, nor honey, can bring home, I quickly were dissolved from my hive, To give some labourers room.

2 Lord. You are lov'd, sir: They, that least lend it you, shall lack you first.

King. I fill a place, I know't. — How long is't, count,

Since the physician at your father's died? He was much fam'd.

Ber. Some six months since, my lord.
King. If he were living, I would try him yet; — Lend me an arm; — the rest have worn me out With several applications: — nature and sickness Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count; My son's no dearer.

Ber. Thank your majesty. [Exit. Flourish.]

SCENE III.

Rousillon. *A Room in the Countess's Palace.*

*Enter COUNTESS, Steward, and Clown.*³²⁾

Count. I will now hear: what say you of this gentlewoman?

Stew. Madam, the care I have had to even your content,³³⁾ I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours: for then we wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

Count. What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah: The complaints, I have heard of you, I do not all believe; 'tis my slowness, that I do not: for, I know, you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.³⁴⁾

Clow. 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

Count. Well, sir.

Clow. No, madam, 'tis not so well, that I am poor; though many of the rich are damned: But, if I may have your ladyship's good-will to go to the world,³⁵⁾ Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

Count. Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

Clow. I do beg your good-will in this case.

Count. In what case?

Clow. In Isbel's case, and mine own. Service is no

heritage:³⁶⁾ and, I think, I shall never have the blessing of God, till I have issue of my body; for, they say, bears are blessings.

Count. Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

Clow. My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go, that the devil drives.

Count. Is this all your worship's reason?

Clow. Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

Count. May the world know them?

Clow. I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry, that I may repent.

Count. Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

Clow. I am out of friends, madam; and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

Count. Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

Clow. You are shallow, madam; e'en great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me, which I am a-weary of. He, that ears my land,³⁷⁾ spares my team, and gives me leave to inn the crop: if I be his cuckold, he's my drudge: He, that comforts my wife, is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he, that cherishes my flesh and blood, loves my flesh and blood; he, that loves my flesh and blood, is my friend; ergo, he that kisses my wife, is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage: for young Charbon the puritan, and old Poysam the papist, howso'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one, they may joll horns together, like any deer i'the herd.

Count. Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and callumious knave?

Clow. A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way:³⁸⁾

*For I the ballad will repeat,
 Which men full true shall find;
 Your marriage comes by destiny,
 Your cuckoo sings by kind.*

Count. Get you gone, sir: I'll talk with you more anon.

Stew. May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you; of her I am to speak.

Count. Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman, I would speak with her; Helen I mean.

Clow. Was this fair face the cause,³⁹⁾ quoth she, [Singing.]

*Why the Grecians sacked Troy?
 Fond done, done fond,
 Was this king Priam's joy.
 With that she sigh'd as she stood,
 With that she sigh'd as she stood,
 And gave this sentence then;
 Among nine bad if one be good,
 Among nine bad if one be good,
 There's yet one good in ten.*

Count. What, one good in ten? you corrupt the song, sirrah.

Clow. One good woman in ten, madam; which is a purifying o'the song: Would God would serve the world so all the year! we'd find no fault with the tythe-woman, if I were the parson: One in ten, quoth a! an we might have a good woman born but every⁴⁰⁾ blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well;⁴¹⁾ a man may draw his heart out, ere he pluck one.

Count. You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you?

Clow. That man should be at woman's command,

and yet no hurt done!⁴²⁾ — Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. — I am going, forsooth; the business is for Helen to come hither. [Exit Clown.]

Count. Well now.

Stew. I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

Count. Faith, I do: her father bequeathed her to me: and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds; there is more owing her, than is paid; and more shall be paid her, than she'll demand.

Stew. Madam, I was very late more near her than, I think, she wished me: alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own words to her own ears; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son: Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates; Love, no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were level; Diana, no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight to be surprised, without rescue, in the first assault, or ransom afterward: This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow, that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in: which I held my duty, speedily to acquaint you withal; sithence,⁴³⁾ in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it.

Count. You have discharged this honestly; keep it to yourself: many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance, that I could neither believe, nor misdoubt: Pray you, leave me: stall this in your bosom, and I thank you for your honest care: I will speak with you further anon. [Exit Steward.]

Enter HELENA.

Count. Even so it was with me, when I was young: If we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong:

Our blood to us, this to our blood is born; It is the show and seal of nature's truth, Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth: By our remembrances⁴⁴⁾ of days foregone, Such were our faults; — or then we thought them none. Her eye is sick on't; I observe her now.

Hel. What is your pleasure, madam?

Count. You know, Helen, I am a mother to you.

Hel. Mine honourable mistress.

Count. Nay, a mother; Why not a mother? When I said, a mother, Methought you saw a serpent: What's in mother, That you start at it? I say, I am your mother; And put you in the catalogue of those That were enwomb'd mine: 'Tis often seen, Adoption strives with nature; and choice breeds A native slip to us from foreign seeds: You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan, Yet I express to you a mother's care: — God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood, To say, I am thy mother? What's the matter, That this distemper'd messenger of wet, The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye?⁴⁵⁾ Why? — that you are my daughter?

Hel. That I am not.

Count. I say, I am your mother.

Hel. Pardon, madam;

The count Rousillon cannot be my brother:

I am from humble, he from honour'd name;

No note upon my parents, his all noble:

My master, my dear lord he is: and I

His servant live, and will his vassal die:
He must not be my brother.

Count. Nor I your mother?
Hel. You are my mother, madam; 'Would you were
(So that my lord, your son, were not my brother,)
Indeed, my mother!—or were you both our mothers,
I care no more for, ⁴⁶⁾ than I do for heaven,
So I were not his sister: Can't no other,
But, I your daughter, he must by my brother?

Count. Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-
in-law;

God shield, you mean it not! daughter, and mother,
So strive ⁴⁷⁾ upon your pulse: What, pale again?
My fear hath catch'd your fondness: Now, I see
The mystery of your loneliness, and find
Your salt tears' head. ⁴⁸⁾ Now to all sense 'tis gross,
You love my son; invention is asham'd,
Against the proclamation of thy passion,
To say, thou dost not: therefore tell me true;
But tell me then, 'tis so:—for, look, thy cheeks
Confess it, one to the other: and thine eyes
See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours,
That in their kind ⁴⁹⁾ they speak it: only sin
And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,
That truth should be suspected: Speak, is't so?
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clue;
If it be not, forswear't: how'er, I charge thee,
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
To tell me truly.

Hel. Good madam, pardon me!

Count. Do you love my son?

Hel. Your pardon, noble mistress!

Count. Love you my son?

Hel. Do not you love him, madam?

Count. Go not about; my love hath in't a bond,
Whereof the world takes note: come, come, disclose
The state of your affection; for your passions
Have to the full appeach'd.

Hel. Then, I confess,
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,
That before you, and next unto high heaven,
I love your son:—
My friends were poor, but honest; so's my love:
Be not offended; for it hurts not him,
That he is lov'd of me: I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit;
Nor would I have him, till I do deserve him;
Yet never know how that desert should be.
I know I love in vain, strive against hope;
Yet, in this captious and intenable sieve, ⁵⁰⁾
I still pour in the waters of my love,
And lack not to lose still: ⁵¹⁾ thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine honour, I adore
The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,
But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter with my love,
For loving where you do: but, if yourself,
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth, ⁵²⁾
Did ever, in so true a flame of liking,
Wish chastly, and love dearly, that your Dian
Was both herself and love; ⁵³⁾ O then, give pity
To her, whose state is such, that cannot choose
But lend and give, where she is sure to lose;
That seeks not to find that her search implies,
But, riddle-like, lives sweetly where she dies.
Count. Had you not lately an intent, speak truly,
To go to Paris?
Hel. Madam, I had.
Count. Wherefore? tell true.
Hel. I will tell truth; by grace itself, I swear.
You know, my father left me some prescriptions
Of rare and prov'd effects, such as his reading,
And manifest experience, had collected

For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me
In heedfullest reservation to bestow them,
As notes, whose faculties inclusive ⁵⁴⁾ were,
More than they were in note: amongst the rest,
There is a remedy, approv'd, set down,
To cure the desperate languishes, whereof
The king is render'd lost.

Count. This was your motive
For Paris, was it? speak.
Hel. My lord your son made me to think of this;
Else Paris, and the medicine, and the king,
Had, from the conversation of my thoughts,
Haply been absent then.

Count. But think you, Helen,
If you should tender your supposed aid,
He would receive it? He and his physicians
Are of a mind; he, that they cannot help him,
They, that they cannot help: How shall they credit
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,
Embowell'd ⁵⁵⁾ of their doctrine, have left off
The danger to itself?

Hel. There's something hints,
More than my father's skill, which was the greatest
Of his profession, that his good receipt
Shall, for my legacy, be sanctified
By the luckiest stars in heaven: and, would your
honour

But give me leave to try success, I'd venture
The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure,
By such a day, and hour.

Count. Dost thou believ't?

Hel. Ay, madam, knowingly.

Count. Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave,
and love,

Means, and attendants, and my loving greetings
To those of mine in court; I'll stay at home,
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt:
Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,
What I can help thee to, thou shalt not miss.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I. Paris. A Room in the King's Palace.

Flourish. Enter KING, with young Lords, taking
leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM, PAROLLES,
and Attendants.

King. Farewell, young lord, ¹⁾ these warlike prin-
ciples
Do not throw from you:—and you, my lord, ²⁾
farewell:—

Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all,
The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis receiv'd,
And is enough for both.

1 Lord. It is our hope, sir,
After well enter'd soldiers, to return
And find your grace in health.

King. No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart
Will not confess he owes the malady
That doth my life besiege. ³⁾ Farewell, young lords;
Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen: let higher Italy
(Those 'bated, that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy,) see, ⁴⁾ that you come
Not to woo honour, but to wed it; when
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,
That fame may cry you loud: I say, farewell.

2 Lord. Health, at your bidding, serve your ma-
jesty!

King. Those girls of Italy, take heed of them;

They say, our French lack language to deny,
If they demand; beware of being captives,
Before you serve. ⁵⁾

Both. Our hearts receive your warnings.

King. Farewell.—Come hither to me.

[*The KING retires to a couch.*]

1 Lord. O my sweet lord, that you will stay be-
hind us!

Par. 'Tis not his fault; the spark — —

2 Lord. O, 'tis brave wars!

Par. Most admirable; I have seen those wars.

Ber. I am commanded here, and kept a coil with,
Too young, and the next year, and 'tis too early.

Par. An thy mind stand to it, boy, steal away
bravely.

Ber. I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,
Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn,
But one to dance with! ⁶⁾ By heaven, I'll steal away.

1 Lord. There's honour in the theft.

Par. Commit it, count.

2 Lord. I am your accessory; and so farewell.

Ber. I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured
body.

1 Lord. Farewell, captain.

2 Lord. Sweet monsieur Parolles!

Par. Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin.
Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals:—
You shall find in the regiment of the Spinii, one
captain Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of
war, here on his sinister cheek; it was this very
sword entrenched it: say to him, I live; and ob-
serve his reports for me.

2 Lord. We shall, noble captain.

Par. Mars dote on you for his novices! [*Exeunt
Lords.*] What will you do?

Ber. Stay:—the king — — [*Seeing him rise.*]

Par. Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble
lords; you have restrained yourself within the list
of too cold an adieu: be more expressive to
them; for they wear themselves in the cap of the
time, there, do muster true gait, ⁷⁾ eat, speak, and
move under the influence of the most received star;
and though the devil lead the measure, ⁸⁾ such are
to be followed: after them, and take a more di-
lated farewell.

Ber. And I will do so.

Par. Worthy fellows; and, like to prove most
sinewy sword-men. [*Exeunt BERTRAM and PAROLLES.*]

Enter LAFEU.

Laf. Pardon, my lord, [*knocking*] for me and for
my tidings.

King. I'll fee thee to stand up.

Laf. Then here's a man
Stands, that has brought his pardon. I would, you
Had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy; and
That, at my bidding, you could so stand up.

King. I would I had; so I had broke thy pate,
And ask'd thee mercy for't.

Laf. Goodfaith, across: ⁹⁾
But, my good lord, 'tis thus; Will you be cur'd
Of your infirmity?

King. No.

Laf. O, will you eat
No grapes, my royal fox? yes, but you will,
My noble grapes, an if my royal fox
Could reach them: I have seen a medicine, ¹⁰⁾
That's able to breathe life into a stone;
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary, ¹¹⁾
With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch
Is powerful to araise king Pepin, nay,

To give great Charlemain a pen in his hand,
And write to her a love-line.

King. What her is this?
Laf. Why, doctor she; My lord, there's one arriv'd
If you will see her, — now, by my faith and honour,
If seriously I may convey my thoughts
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke
With one, that, in her sex, her years, profession, ¹²⁾
Wisdom, and constancy, hath amaz'd me more
Than I dare blame my weakness: ¹³⁾ Will you see her
(For that is her demand) and know her business?
That done, laugh well at me.

King. Now, good Lafeu,
Bring in the admiration; that we with thee
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine,
By wond'ring how thou took'st it.

Laf. Nay, I'll fit you,
And not be all day neither. [*Exit LAFEU.*]

King. Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Re-enter LAFEU, with HELENA.

Laf. Nay, come your ways.

King. This haste hath wings indeed.

Laf. Nay, come your ways;

This is his majesty, say your mind to him:
A traitor you do look like; but such traitors
His majesty seldom fears: I am Cressid's uncle, ¹⁴⁾
That dare leave two together; fare you well. [*Exit.*]

King. Now, fair one, does your business follow us?
Hel. Ay, my good lord. Gerard de Narbon was
My father; in what he did profess, well found. ¹⁵⁾

King. I knew him.
Hel. The rather will I spare my praises towards
him;

Knowing him, is enough. On his bed of death
Many receipts he gave me; chiefly one,
Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,
And of his old experience the only darling,
He bade me store up, as a triple eye,
Safer than mine own two, more dear; I have so:
And, hearing your high majesty is touch'd
With that malignant cause wherein the honour
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,
I come to tender it, and my appliance,
With all bound humbleness.

King. We thank you, maiden;
But may not be so credulous of cure, —

When our most learned doctors leave us; and
The congregated college have concluded
That labouring art can never ransom nature
From her inaidable estate, — I say we must not
So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To empirics; or to dissever so
Our great self and our credit, to esteem
A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

Hel. My duty then shall pay me for my pains;
I will no more enforce mine office on you;
Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts
A modest one, to bear me back again.

King. I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful:
Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I give,
As one near death to those that wish him live:
But, what at full I know, thou know'st no part;
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

Hel. What I can do, can do no hurt to try,
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy:
He that of greatest works is finisher,
Oft does them by the weakest minister:
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,
When judges have been babes. Great floods have
flow'd
From simple sources; and great seas have dried,

When miracles have by the greatest been denied.¹⁶⁾
 Oft expectation fails, and most oft there
 Where most it promises; and oft it hits,
 Where hope is coldest, and despair most sits.

King. I must not hear thee; fare thee well, kind maid;

Thy pains, not us'd, must by thyself be paid:
 Proffers, not took, reap thanks for their reward.

Hel. Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd:

It is not so with him that all things knows,
 As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows:
 But most it is presumption in us, when
 The help of heaven we count the act of men.

Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent:
 Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.

I am not an impostor, that proclaim

Myself against the level of mine aim;¹⁷⁾

But know I think, and think I know most sure,
 My art is not past power, nor you past cure.

King. Art thou so confident? Within what space
 Hop'st thou my cure?

Hel. The greatest grace lending grace,

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring

Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring;

Ere twice in murk and occidental damp

Moist Hesperus bath quench'd his sleepy lamp;

Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass

Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass;

What is infram from your sound parts shall fly,

Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

King. Upon thy certainty and confidence,

What dar'st thou venture?

Hel. Tax of impudence, —

A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame, —

Traduc'd by odious ballads; my maiden's name

Sear'd otherwise; no worse of worst extended,¹⁸⁾

With vilest torture let my life be ended.

King. Methinks, in thee some blessed spirit doth

speak

His powerful sound, within an organ weak:

And what impossibility would slay

In common sense, sense saves another way.¹⁹⁾

Thy life is dear; for all, that life can rate

Worth name of life, in thee hath estimate;²⁰⁾

Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, virtue, all

That happiness and prime²¹⁾ can happy call:

Thou this to hazard, needs must intimate

Skill infinite, or monstrous desperate.

Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try;

That ministers thine own death, if I die.

Hel. If I break time, or flinch in property²²⁾

Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die;

And well deserv'd: Not helping, death's my fee,

But, if I help, what do you promise me?

King. Make thy demand.

Hel. But will you make it even?

King. Ay, by my sceptre, and my hopes of heaven.

Hel. Then shalt thou give me, with thy kingly hand,

What husband in thy power I will command:

Exempted be from me the arrogance

To choose from forth the royal blood of France;

My low and humble name to propagate

With any branch or image of thy state;²³⁾

But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know

Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

King. Here is my hand; the premises observ'd,

Thy will by my performance shall be serv'd;

So make the choice of thy own time; for I,

Thy resolv'd patient, on thee still rely.

More should I question thee, and more I must;

Though, more to know, could not be more to trust;

From whence thou cam'st, how tended on, — But rest

Unquestion'd welcome, and undoubted blest. —

Give me some help here, ho! — If thou proceed
 As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.
 [Flourish. *Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Rousillon. *A Room in the Countess's Palace.*

Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN.

Count. Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

Clo. I will show myself highly fed, and lowly taught: I know my business is but to the court.

Count. To the court! why what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

Clo. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court: he that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and indeed, such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court: but, for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

Count. Marry, that's a bountiful answer, that fits all questions.

Clo. It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks; the pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn-buttock, or any buttock.

Count. Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

Clo. As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffata punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's fore-finger, as a pancake for Shrove-Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth; nay, as the pudding to his skin.

Count. Have you, I say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?

Clo. From below your duke, to beneath your constable, it will fit any question.

Count. It must be an answer of most monstrous size, that must fit all demands.

Clo. But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that belongs to't: Ask me, if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

Count. To be young again,²⁴⁾ if we could; I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

Clo. O Lord, sir,²⁵⁾ — There's a simple putting off; — more, more, a hundred of them.

Count. Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

Clo. O Lord, sir, — Thick, thick, spare not me.

Count. I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

Clo. O Lord, sir, — Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

Count. You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

Clo. O Lord, sir, — Spare not me.

Count. Do you cry, *O Lord, sir*, at your whipping, and spare not me? Indeed, your *O Lord, sir*, is very sequent to your whipping; your would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

Clo. I ne'er had worse luck in my life, in my —

O Lord, sir: I see, things may serve long, but not serve ever.

Count. I play the noble housewife with the time, to entertain it so merrily with a fool.

Clo. O Lord, sir, — why, there't serves well again.

Count. An end, sir, to your business: Give Helen this,

And urge her to a present answer back:

Commend me to my kinsmen, and my son;

This is not much.

Clo. Not much commendation to them.

Count. Not much employment for you: You understand me?

Clo. Most fruitfully; I am there before my legs.

Count. Haste you again. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

Paris. *A Room in the King's Palace.*

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES.

Laf. They say, miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern²⁶⁾ and familiar things, supernatural and causeless. Hence is it, that we make trifles of terrors; ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.²⁷⁾

Par. Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder, that hath shot out in our latter times.

Ber. And so 'tis.

Laf. To be relinquish'd of the artists, —

Par. So I say: both of Galen and Paracelsus.

Laf. Of all the learned authentic fellows, —²⁸⁾

Par. Right, so I say.

Laf. That gave him out incurable, —

Par. Why, there 'tis; so say I too.

Laf. Not to be helped, —

Par. Right: as 'twere a man assured of an —

Laf. Uncertain life, and sure death.

Par. Just, you say well; so would I have said.

Laf. I may truly say, it is a novelty to the world.

Par. It is, indeed: if you will have it in showing, you shall read it in — What do you call there? —

Laf. A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.

Par. That's it I would have said; the very same.

Laf. Why, your dolphin is not lustier:²⁹⁾ 'fore me I speak in respect —

Par. Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it; and he is of a most facinorous spirit,³⁰⁾ that will not acknowledge it to be the —

Laf. Very hand of heaven.

Par. Ay, so I say.

Laf. In a most weak —

Par. And debile minister, great power, great transcendence: which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made, than alone the recovery of the king, as to be —

Laf. Generally thankful.

Enter KING, HELENA, and Attendants.

Par. I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the king.

Laf. Lustic,³¹⁾ as the Dutchman says: I'll like a maid the better, whilst I have a tooth in my head: Why, he's able to lead her a coranto.

Par. *Mort du Vinaigre!* Is not this Helen?

Laf. 'Fore God, I think so.

King. Go, call before me all the lords in court. —

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side; And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense Thou hast repeal'd, a second time receive

The confirmation of my promis'd gift,

Which but attends thy naming.

Enter several Lords.

Fair maid, send forth thine eye: this youthful parcel Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,

O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice³²⁾ I have to use: thy frank election make;

Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

Hel. To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress Fall, when love please! — marry, to each, but one!³³⁾

Laf. I'd give bay Curtal,³⁴⁾ and his furniture, My mouth no more were broken³⁵⁾ than these boys', And writ as little beard.

King. Peruse them well: Not one of those, but had a noble father.

Hel. Gentlemen, Heaven hath, through me, restor'd the king to health.

All. We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

Hel. I am a simple maid; and therein wealthiest,

That, I protest, I simply am a maid: —

Please it your majesty, I have done already;

The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,

We blush, that thou should'st choose; but, be refus'd.

Let the white death³⁶⁾ sit on thy cheek for ever;

We'll ne'er come there again.

King. Make choice; and, see,

Who shuns thy love, shuns all his love in me.

Hel. Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly;

And to imperial Love, that god most high,

Do my sighs stream. — Sir, will you hear my suit?

1 **Lord.** And grant it.

Hel. Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.³⁷⁾

Laf. I had rather be in this choice, than throw anes-ace³⁸⁾ for my life.

Hel. The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes, Before I speak, too threateningly replies:

Love make your fortunes twenty times above

Her that so wishes, and her humble love!

2 **Lord.** No better, if you please.

Hel. My wish receive,

Which great love grant! and so I take my leave.

Laf. Do all they deny her?³⁹⁾ An they were sons of mine, I'd have them whipped; or I would send them to the Turk, to make eunuchs of.

Hel. Be not afraid [to a Lord] that I your hand should take;

I'll never do you wrong for your own sake: Blessing upon your vows! and in your bed Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

Laf. These boys are boys of ice, they'll none have her: sure, they are bastards to the English; the French ne'er got them.

Hel. You are too young, too happy, and too good, To make yourself a son out of my blood.

4 **Lord.** Fair one, I think not so.

Laf. There's one grape yet, — I am sure thy father drank wine. — But if thou be'st not an ass,

I am a youth of fourteen; I have known thee already.

Hel. I dare not say, I take you; [to BERTRAM] but I give

Me and my service, ever whilst I live, Into your guiding power. — This is the man.

King. Why then, young Bertram, take her, she's thy wife.

Ber. My wife, my liege? I shall beseech your highness,

In such a business give me leave to use The help of mine own eyes.

King. Know'st thou not, Bertram, What she has done for me?

Ber. Yes, my good lord; But never hope to know why I should marry her.

King. Thou know'st, she has rais'd me from my sickly bed.

Ber. But follows it, my lord, to bring me down Must answer for your raising? I know her well;

She had her breeding at my father's charge:

A poor physician's daughter my wife! — Disdain
Rather corrupt me ever!

King. 'Tis only title⁴⁰⁾ thou disdain'st in her,
the which

I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,
Of colour, weight, and heat pour'd all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
In differences so mighty: If she be
All that is virtuous, (save what thou dislik'st,
A poor physician's daughter,) thou dislik'st
Of virtue for the name: but do not so:
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed:
Where great additions swell,⁴¹⁾ and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour: good alone
Is good, without a name; vileness is so⁴²⁾
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;
In these to nature she's immediate heir;
And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn,
Which challenges itself as honour's born,⁴³⁾
And is not like the sire: Honours best thrive,⁴⁴⁾
When rather from our acts we them derive
Than our fore-goers; the mere word's a slave,
Debauch'd on every tomb; on every grave,
A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb,
Where dust, and damn'd oblivion, is the tomb
Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,
I can create the rest: virtue, and she,
Is her own dower; honour, and wealth, from me.

Ber. I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.

King. Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou should'st
strive to choose.

Hel. That you are well restor'd, my lord, I am glad;
Let the rest go.

King. My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,
I must produce my power: Here, take her hand,
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift,
That dost in vile misprision shackle up
My love, and her desert; that canst not dream,
We, poisoning in her defective scale,
Shall weigh thee to the beam;⁴⁵⁾ that wilt not
know,

It is in us to plant thine honour, where
We please to have it grow: Check thy contempt:
Obey our will, which travails in thy good:
Believe not thy disdain, but presently
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right,
Which both thy duty owes, and our power claims;
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever,
Into the staggers,⁴⁶⁾ and the careless lapse
Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate,
Loosing upon thee in the name of justice,
Without all terms of pity: Speak; thine answer.

Ber. Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit
My fancy to your eyes; When I consider,
What great creation, and what dole of honour,
Flies where you bid it, I find, that she, which late
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now
The praised of the king; who, so ennobled,
Is, as 'twere, born so.

King. Take her by the hand,
And tell her, she is thine: to whom I promise
A counterpoise; if not to thy estate,
A balance more replete.

Ber. I take her hand.

King. Good fortune, and the favour of the king,
Smile upon this contract; whose ceremony
Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,
And be perform'd to-night;⁴⁷⁾ the solemn feast
Shall more attend upon the coming space,

Expecting absent friends. As thou lov'st her,
Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.

[*Exit* KING, BERTRAM, HELENA, Lords,
and Attendants.]

Laf. Do you hear, monsieur? a word with you.

Par. Your pleasure, sir?

Laf. Your lord and master did well to make his
recantation.

Par. Recantation? — My lord? — my master?

Laf. Ay; Is it not a language, I speak?

Par. A most harsh one; and not to be understood
without bloody succeeding. My master?

Laf. Are you companion to the count Rousillon?

Par. To any count; to all counts; to what is man.

Laf. To what is count's man: count's master is
of another style.

Par. You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you
are too old.

Laf. I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to
which title age cannot bring thee.

Par. What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

Laf. I did think thee, for two ordinaries,⁴⁸⁾ to
be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable
vent of thy travel; it might pass: yet the scarfs
and the bannerets, about thee, did manifoldly dis-
suade me from believing thee a vessel of too great
a burden. I have now found thee; when I lose thee
again, I care not: yet art thou good for nothing
but taking up;⁴⁹⁾ and that thou art scarce worth.

Par. Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity
upon thee, — —

Laf. Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest
thou hasten thy trial; — which if — Lord have
mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good window of
lattice, fare thee well; thy casement I need not
open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.

Par. My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

Laf. Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy
of it.

Par. I have not, my lord, deserved it.

Laf. Yes, good faith, every dram of it: and I
will not bate thee a scruple.

Par. Well, I shall be wiser.

Laf. E'en as soon as thou canst, for thou hast
to pull at a smack o'the contrary. If ever thou
be'st bound in thy scarf, and beaten, thou shalt find
what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I have a
desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather
my knowledge; that I may say, in the default,⁵⁰⁾
he is a man I know.

Par. My lord, you do me most insupportable vex-
ation.

Laf. I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and
my poor doing eternal: for doing I am past; as I
will by thee, in what motion age will give me
leave.⁵¹⁾

[*Exit.*]

Par. Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace
off me; scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! — Well, I
must be patient; there is no fettering of authority.
I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with
any convenience, an he were double and double a
lord. I'll have no more pity of his age, than I
would have of — I'll beat him, an if I could but
meet him again.

Re-enter LAFEU.

Laf. Sirrah, your lord and master's married, there's
news for you; you have a new mistress.

Par. I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to
make some reservation of your wrongs: He is my
good lord: whom I serve above, is my master.

Laf. Who? God?

Par. Ay, sir.

HI.

Laf. The devil it is, that's thy master. Why dost
thou garter up thy arms o'this fashion? dost make
hose of thy sleeves? do other servants so? Thou
wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands.
By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger,
I'd beat thee: methinks, thou art a general offence,
and every man should beat thee. I think, thou wast
created for men to breathe themselves upon thee.

Par. This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

Laf. Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for
picking a kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a
vagabond, and no true traveller: you are more saucy
with lords, and honourable personages, than the
heraldry of your birth and virtue gives you com-
mission. You are not worth another word, else I'd
call you knave. I leave you. [Exit.]

Enter BERTRAM.

Par. Good, very good; it is so then. — Good, very
good; let it be concealed awhile.

Ber. Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!

Par. What is the matter, sweet heart?

Ber. Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,
I will not bed her.

Par. What? what, sweet heart?

Ber. O my Parolles, they have married me: —
I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

Par. France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits
The tread of a man's foot: to the wars!

Ber. There's letters from my mother; what the
import is,

I know not yet.

Par. Ay, that would be known: To the wars, my
boy, to the wars!

He wears his honour in a box unseen,
That hugs his kicksy-wicksy⁵²⁾ here at home;
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet
Of Mars's fiery steed: To other regions!
France is a stable; we, that dwell in't, jades;
Therefore, to the war!

Ber. It shall be so; I'll send her to my house.

Acquaint my mother with my hate to her,
And wherefore I am fled; write to the king
That which I durst not speak: His present gift
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields,
Where noble fellows strike: War is no strife
To the dark house,⁵³⁾ and the detested wife.

Par. Will this capricio hold in thee, art sure?

Ber. Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.
I'll send her straight away: To-morrow
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

Par. Why, these balls bound; there's no noise in
it. 'Tis hard;

A young man, married, is a man that's marr'd:
Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go:
The king has done you wrong: but, hush! 'tis so.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

The same. Another Room in the same.

Enter HELENA and CLOWN.

Hel. My mother greets me kindly: Is she well?
Clo. She is not well; but yet she has her health:
she's very merry; but yet she is not well: but
thanks be given, she's very well, and wants nothing
i'the world; but yet she is not well.

Hel. If she be very well, what does she ail, that
she's not very well?

Clo. Truly, she's very well, indeed, but for two
things.

Hel. What two things?

Clo. One, that she's not in heaven, whither God
send her quickly! the other, that she's in earth,
from whence God send her quickly!

Enter PAROLLES.

Par. Bless you, my fortunate lady!

Hel. I hope, sir, I have your good will to have
mine own good fortunes.

Par. You had my prayers to lead them on: and
to keep them on, have them still. — O, my knave!
How does my old lady?

Clo. So that you had her wrinkles, and I her mo-
ney, I would she did as you say.

Par. Why, I say nothing.

Clo. Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a
man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing: To
say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and
to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title;
which is within a very little of nothing.

Par. Away, thou art a knave.

Clo. You should have said, sir, before a knave
thou art a knave; that is, before me thou art a
knave: this had been truth, sir.

Par. Go to, thou art a witty fool, I have found
thee.

Clo. Did you find me in yourself, sir; or were you
taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable;
and much fool may you find in you, even to the
world's pleasure, and the increase of laughter.

Par. A good knave, i'faith, and well fed. —

Madam, my lord will go away to-night;
A very serious business calls on him.

The great prerogative and rite of love,
Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge;
But puts it off by⁵⁴⁾ a compell'd restraint;
Whose want, and whose delay, is strewd with sweets,
Which they distil now in the curbed time,
To make the coming hour o'er-flow with joy,
And pleasure drown the brim.

Hel. What's his will else?

Par. That you will take your instant leave o'the
king,

And make this haste as your own good proceeding,
Strengthen'd with what apology you think
May make it probable need.⁵⁵⁾

Hel. What more commands he?

Par. That, having this obtain'd, you presently
Attend his further pleasure.

Hel. In every thing I wait upon his will.

Par. I shall report it so.

Hel. I pray you. — Come, sirrah.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

Another Room in the same.

Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM.

Laf. But, I hope, your lordship thinks not him a
soldier.

Ber. Yes, my lord, and of very valiant proof.

Laf. You have it from his own deliverance.

Ber. And by other warranted testimony.

Laf. Then my dial goes not true; I took this lark
for a bunting.⁵⁶⁾

Ber. I do assure you, my lord, he is very great
in knowledge, and accordingly valiant.

Laf. I have then sinned against his experience,
and transgressed against his valour; and my state
that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in
my heart to repent. Here he comes; I pray you,
make us friends, I will pursue the amity.

HI.

Enter PAROLLES.

Par. These things shall be done, sir. [To BERTRAM.]
Laf. Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

Par. Sir?
Laf. O, I know him well: Ay, sir; he, sir, is a good workman, a very good tailor.

Ber. Is she gone to the king? [Aside to PAROLLES.]
Par. She is.

Par. Will she away to-night?

Par. As you'll have her.

Ber. I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure, Given order for our horses; and to-night, When I should take possession of the bride, — And, ere I do begin, —

Laf. A good traveller is something at the latter end of a dinner; but one that lies three-thirds, and uses a known truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should be once heard, and thrice beaten. — God save you, captain.

Par. Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?

Par. I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's displeasure.

Laf. You have made shift to run into't, boots and spurs and all, like him that leaped into the custard; ⁵⁷⁾ and out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer question for your residence.

Par. It may be, you have mistaken him, my lord.

Laf. And shall do so ever, though I took him at his prayers. Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of me, There can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes: trust him not in matter of heavy consequence; I have kept of them tame, and know their natures. — Farewell, monsieur: I have spoken better of you than you have or will deserve ⁵⁸⁾ at my hand; but we must do good against evil. [Exit.]

Par. An idle lord, I swear.

Par. I think so.

Par. Why, do you not know him?

Par. Yes, I do know him well; and common speech Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELENA.

Hel. I have, sir, as I was commanded from you, Spoke with the king, and have procur'd his leave For present parting; only, he desires Some private speech with you.

Par. I shall obey his will.

You must not marvel, Helen, at my course, Which holds not colour with the time, nor does The ministration and required office

On my particular: prepar'd I was not For such a business; therefore am I found So much unsettled: This drives me to entreat you, That presently you take your way for home; And rather muse, ⁵⁹⁾ than ask, why I entreat you: For my respects are better than they seem; And my appointments have in them a need, Greater than shows itself, at the first view, To you that know them not. This to my mother:

[Giving a letter.]
 'Twill be two days ere I shall see you; so I leave you to your wisdom.

Hel. Sir, I can nothing say, But that I am your most obedient servant.

Par. Come, come, no more of that.

Hel. And ever shall With true observance seek to eke out that, Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd To equal my great fortune.

Par. Let that go: My haste is very great: Farewell; hie home.

Hel. Pray, sir, your pardon.

Par. Well, what would you say?

Hel. I am not worthy of the wealth I owe; ⁶⁰⁾ Nor dare I say, 'tis mine; and yet it is; But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal What law does vouch mine own.

Par. What would you have?

Hel. Something; and scarce so much: — nothing, indeed. —

I would not tell you what I would: my lord — 'faith, yes: —

Strangers, and foes, do sunder, and not kiss.

Par. I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

Hel. I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

Par. Where are my other men, monsieur? — Farewell. [Exit HELENA.]

Go thou toward home; where I will never come, Whilst I can shake my sword, or hear the drum: — Away, and for our flight.

Par. Bravely, coragio! [Exit.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. Florence. A Room in the Duke's Palace.

Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, attended; two French Lords, and others.

Duke. So that, from point to point, now have you heard

The fundamental reasons of this war; Whose great decision hath much blood let forth, And more thirsts after.

1 Lord. Holy seems the quarrel Upon your grace's part; black and fearful On the opposer.

Duke. Therefore we marvel much, our cousin France Would, in so just a business, shut his bosom Against our borrowing prayers.

2 Lord. Good my lord, The reasons of our state I cannot yield, ¹⁾ But like a common and an outward man, ²⁾ That the great figure of a council frames By self-unable motion: therefore dare not Say what I think of it: since I have found Myself in my uncertain grounds to fail As often as I guess'd.

Duke. Be it his pleasure.

2 Lord. But I am sure, the younger of our nature, ³⁾ That surfeit on their ease, will, day by day, Come here for physic.

Duke. Welcome shall they be; And all the honours, that can fly from us, Shall on them settle. You know your places well; When better fall, for your avails they fell: To-morrow to the field. [Flourish. Exit.]

SCENE II.

Rousillon. A Room in the Countess's Palace.

Enter COUNTESS and Clown.

Count. It hath happened all as I would have had it, save, that he comes not along with her.

Clow. By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

Count. By what observance, I pray you?

Clow. Why, he will look upon his boot, and sing; mend the ruff, ⁴⁾ and sing; ask questions, and sing; pick his teeth, and sing: I know a man that had this trick of melancholy, sold a goodly manor for a song.

Count. Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come. [Opening a letter.]

Clow. I have no mind to Isbel, since I was at court: our old ling and our Isbels o'the country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o'the court: the brains of my Cupid's knocked out; and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

Count. What have we here?

Clow. E'en that you have there. [Exit.]

Count. [Reads.] *I have sent you a daughter-in-law: she hath recovered the king, and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her; and sworn to make the not eternal. You shall hear, I am run away; know it, before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.*

Your unfortunate son,
BERTRAM.

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy, To fly the favours of so good a king; To pluck his indignation on thy head, By the misprizing of a maid too virtuous For the contempt of empire.

Re-enter Clown.

Clow. O madam, yonder is heavy news within, between two soldiers and my young lady.

Count. What is the matter?

Clow. Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your son will not be killed so soon as I thought he would.

Count. Why should he be kill'd?

Clow. So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does: the danger is in standing to't; that's the loss of men, though it be the getting of children. Here they come, will tell you more: for my part, I only hear, your son was run away. [Exit Clown.]

Enter HELENA and two Gentlemen.

1 Gen. Save you, good madam.

Hel. Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

2 Gen. Do not say so.

Count. Think upon patience. — 'Pray you, gentlemen, —

I have felt so many quirks of joy, and grief, That the first face of neither, on the start, Can woman me ⁵⁾ unto't: — Where is my son, I pray you?

2 Gen. Madam, he's gone to serve the duke of Florence:

We met him thitherward; from thence we came, And after some despatch in hand at court, Thither we bend again.

Hel. Look on his letter, madam; here's my passport. [Reads.] *When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, ⁶⁾ which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body, that I am father to, then call me husband: but in such a then I write a never.*

This is a dreadful sentence.

Count. Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

1 Gen. Ay, madam; And, for the contents' sake, are sorry for our pains.

Count. I pry'thee, lady, have a better cheer; If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine, ⁷⁾ Thou robb'st me of a moiety: He was my son; But I do wash his name out of my blood, And thou art all my child. — Towards Florence is he?

2 Gen. Ay, madam.

Count. And to be a soldier?

2 Gen. Such is his noble purpose: and, believ't, The duke will lay upon him all the honour That good convenience claims.

Count. Return you thither?

1 Gen. Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed. *Hel.* [Reads.] *Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.*

'Tis bitter.

Count. Find you that there?

Hel. Ay, madam.

1 Gen. 'Tis but the boldness of his hand, haply, which

His heart was not consenting to.

Count. Nothing in France, until he have no wife! There's nothing here, that is too good for him, But only she; and she deserves a lord, That twenty such rude boys might tend upon, And call her hourly, mistress. Who was with him?

1 Gen. A servant only, and a gentleman Which I have some time known.

Count. Parolles, was't not?

1 Gen. Ay, my good lady, he.

Count. A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness. My son corrupts a well-derived nature With his inducement.

1 Gen. Indeed, good lady, The fellow has a deal of that, too much, Which holds him much to have. ⁸⁾

Count. You are welcome, gentlemen, I will entreat you, when you see my son, To tell him, that his sword can never win The honour that he loses: more I'll entreat you Written to bear along.

2 Gen. We serve you, madam, In that and all your worthiest affairs.

Count. Not so, but as we change our courtesies. ⁹⁾ Will you draw near? [Exit COUNTESS and Gentlemen.]

Hel. *Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.* Nothing in France, until he has no wife!

Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France, Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't I That chase thee from thy country, and expose Those tender limbs of thine to the event Of the none-sparing war? and is it I That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers, That ride upon the violent speed of fire, Fly with false aim; move the still-piecing air, That sings with piercing, ¹⁰⁾ do not touch my lord!

Whoever shoots at him, I set him there; Whoever charges on his forward breast, I am the catiff, that do hold him to it; And, though I kill him not, I am the cause His death was so effected: better 'twere I met the ravin lion ¹¹⁾ when he roar'd With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere That all the miseries, which nature owes, Were mine at once: No, come thou home, Rousillon, Whence honour but of danger wins a scar, ¹²⁾ As oft it loses all; I will be gone:

My being here it is, that holds thee hence: Shall I stay here to do't? no, no, although The air of paradise did fan the house, And angels offic'd all: I will be gone; That pitiful rumour may report my flight, To console thine ear. Come, night; end, day! For, with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

Florence. Before the Duke's Palace.

Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, BERTRAM, Lords, Officers, Soldiers, and others.

Duke. The general of our horse thou art; and we,

Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence,
Upon thy promising fortune.

Ber. Sir, it is
A charge too heavy for my strength; but yet
We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake,
To the extreme edge of hazard.

Duke. Then go thou forth;
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,
As thy auspicious mistress!

Ber. This very day,
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file;
Make me but like my thoughts; and I shall prove
A lover of thy drum, hater of love. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.

Rousillon. *A Room in the Countess's Palace.*

Enter COUNTESS and Steward.

Count. Alas! and would you take the letter of her?
Might you not know, she would do as she has done,
By sending me a letter? Read it again.

*Stew. I am St. Jaques's pilgrim, thither gone:
Ambitious love hath so in me offended,
That bare-foot plod I the cold ground upon,
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.
Write, write, that, from the bloody course of war,
My dearest master, your dear son may lie;
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far,
His name with zealous fervour sanctify:
His taken labours bid him me forgive;*

*I, his spiteful Juno, sent him forth
From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,
Where death and danger dog the heels of worth:
He is too good and fair for death and me;
Whom I myself embrace, to set him free.*

Count. Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words! —

Rinaldo, you did never lack advice ¹⁴⁾ so much,
As letting her pass so; had I spoke with her,
I could have well diverted her intents,
Which thus she hath prevented.

Stew. Pardon me, madam:
If I had given you this at over-night,
She might have been o'er-ta'en; and yet she writes,
Pursuit would be but vain.

Count. What angel shall
Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive,
Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear,
And loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath
Of greatest justice. — Write, write, Rinaldo,
To this unworthy husband of his wife:

Let every word weigh heavy of her worth,
That he does weigh too light: ¹⁵⁾ my greatest grief,
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.
Despatch the most convenient messenger: —
When, haply, he shall hear that she is gone,
He will return; and hope I may, that she,
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,
Led hither by pure love: which of them both
Is dearest to me, I have no skill in sense
To make distinction: — Provide this messenger: —
My heart is heavy, and mine age is weak;
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak. [Exit.]

SCENE V.

Without the Walls of Florence.

*A tucket afar off. Enter an old Widow of Flo-
rence, DIANA, VIOLENTA, MARIANA, and other
Citizens.*

Wid. Nay, come; for if they do approach the city,
we shall lose all the sight.

Dia. They say, the French count has done most
honourable service.

Wid. It is reported that he has taken their greatest
commander; and that with his own hand he slew
the duke's brother. We have lost our labour; they
are gone a contrary way: hark! you may know by
their trumpets.

Mar. Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves
with the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of
this French earl: the honour of a maid is her
name; and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

Wid. I have told my neighbour, how you have
been solicited by a gentleman his companion.

Mar. I know that knave; hang him; one Parolles:
a filthy officer he is in those suggestions ¹⁶⁾ for
the young earl. — Beware of them, Diana; their
promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these
engines of lust, are not the things they go under: ¹⁷⁾
many a maid hath been seduced by them; and the
misery is, example, that so terrible shows in the
wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade
succession, but that they are lined with the twigs
that threaten them. I hope, I need not to advise
you further; but, I hope, your own grace will keep
you where you are, though there were no further
danger known, but the modesty which is so lost.

Dia. You shall not need to fear me.

Enter HELENA, in the dress of a Pilgrim.

Wid. I hope so. — Look, here comes a pilgrim:
I know she will lie at my house: thither they send
one another; I'll question her. —

God save you, pilgrim! Whither are you bound?

Hel. To Saint Jaques le grand.
Where do the palmers ¹⁸⁾ lodge, I do beseech you?

Wid. At the Saint Francis here, beside the port.

Hel. Is this the way?

Wid. Ay, marry, is it. — Hark you!

[A march afar off.]
They come this way: — If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,
But till the troops come by,
I will conduct you where you will be lodg'd;
The rather, for, I think, I know your hostess
As ample as myself.

Hel. Is it yourself?

Wid. If you shall please so, pilgrim.

Hel. I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

Wid. You came, I think, from France?

Hel. I did so.

Wid. Here you shall see a countryman of yours,
That has done worthy service.

Hel. His name, I pray you.

Dia. The count Rousillon; Know you such a one?

Hel. But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him:
His face I know not.

Dia. Whatsoe'er he is,
He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,
As 'tis reported, for the king ¹⁹⁾ had married him
Against his liking: Think you it is so?

Hel. Ay, surely, mere the truth; ²⁰⁾ I know his lady.

Dia. There is a gentleman, that serves the count,
Reports but coarsely of her.

Hel. What's his name?

Dia. Monsieur Parolles.

Hel. O, I believe with him,
In argument of praise, or to the worth
Of the great count himself, she is too mean
To have her name repeated; all her deserving
Is a reserved honesty, and that
I have not heard examin'd. ²¹⁾

Dia. Alas, poor lady!

'Tis a hard bondage, to become the wife
Of a detesting lord.

Wid. A right good creature: ²²⁾ wheresoe'er she is,
Her heart weighssadly: this young maid might do her
A shrewd turn, if she pleas'd.

Hel. How do you mean?

May be, the amorous count solicits her
In the unlawful purpose.

Wid. He does, indeed;

And brokes ²³⁾ with all that can in such a suit
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid:

But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard
In honestest defence.

*Enter with drum and colours, a party of the Flo-
rentine Army, BERTRAM, and PAROLLES.*

Mar. The gods forbid else!

Wid. So, now they come: —

That is Antonio, the duke's eldest son;

That, Escalus.

Hel. Which is the Frenchman?

Dia. He;

That with the plume: 'tis a most gallant fellow;

I would, he lov'd his wife: if he were honest,

He were much goodlier: — Is't not a handsome
gentleman?

Hel. I like him well.

Dia. 'Tis pity, he is not honest: Yond's that same
knave,

That leads him to these places; were I his lady,
I'd poison that vile rascal.

Hel. Which is he?

Dia. That jack-an-apes with scarfs: Why is he
melancholy?

Hel. Perchance he's hurt i'the battle.

Par. Lose our drum! well.

Mar. He's shrewdly vexed at something: Look,
he has spied us.

Wid. Marry, hang you!

Mar. And your courtesies, for a ring-carrier!

[Exit BERTRAM, PAROLLES, Officers,
and Soldiers.]

Wid. The troop is past: Come, pilgrim, I will
bring you

Where you shall host: of enjoind penitents
There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,
Already at my house.

Hel. I humbly thank you:

Please it this matron, and this gentle maid,
To eat with us to-night, the charge, and thanking,
Shall be for me; and, to requite you further,
I will bestow some precepts on this virgin,
Worthy the note.

Both. We'll take your offer kindly. [Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

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[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

[Exit.]

at some great and trusty business, in a main dan-
ger fail you.

Ber. I would, I knew in what particular action
to try him.

2 Lord. None better than to let him fetch off his
drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake
to do.

1 Lord. I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly
surprize him; such I will have, whom I am sure,
he knows not from the enemy: we will bind and
hoodwink him so, that he shall suppose no other but
that he is carried into the leaguer ²⁵⁾ of the adver-
saries, when we bring him to our tents: Be but
your lordship present at his examination; if he do
not, for the promise of his life, and in the highest
compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you, and
deliver all the intelligence in his power against you,
and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon
oath, never trust my judgment in any thing.

2 Lord. O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch
his drum; he says, he has a stratagem for't: when
your lordship sees the bottom of his success in't,
and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will
be melted, if you give him not John Drum's enter-
tainment, ²⁶⁾ your inclining cannot be remov'd.
Here he comes.

Enter PAROLLES.

1 Lord. O, for the love of laughter, hinder not
the humour of his design: let him fetch off his
drum in any hand.

Ber. How now, monsieur? this drum sticks sorely
in your disposition.

2 Lord. A pox on't, let it go; 'tis but a drum.

Par. But a drum! Is't but a drum? A drum so
lost! — there was an excellent command! to charge
in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend
our own soldiers.

2 Lord. That was not to be blamed in the com-
mand of the service; it was a disaster of war that
Cæsar himself could not have prevented, if he had
been there to command.

Ber. Well, we cannot greatly condemn our suc-
cess; some dishonour we had in the loss of that
drum; but it is not to be recovered.

Par. It might have been recovered.

Ber. It might, but it is not now.

Par. It is to be recovered: but that the merit of
service is seldom attributed to the true and exact
performer, I would have that drum or another, or
his *jacet*. ²⁷⁾

Ber. Why, if you have a stomach to't, monsieur,
if you think your mystery in stratagem can bring
this instrument of honour again into his native
quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprize, and go
on; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit:
if you speed well in it, the duke shall both speak
of it, and extend to you what further becomes his
greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your
worthiness.

Par. By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

Ber. But you must not now slumber in it.

Par. I'll about it this evening: and I will pre-
sently pen down my dilemmas, ²⁸⁾ encourage myself
in my certainty, put myself into my mortal prepa-
ration, and, by midnight, look to hear further from me.

Ber. May I be bold to acquaint his grace you
are gone about it?

Par. I know not what the success will be, my
lord; but the attempt I vow.

Ber. I know, thou art valiant; and, to the possibility
of thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

Par. I love not many words. [Exit.]

1 Lord. No more than a fish loves water. — ²⁹) Is not this a strange fellow, my lord? that so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do, and dares better be damned than to do't.

2 Lord. You do not know him, my lord, as we do: certain it is, that he will steal himself into a man's favour, and, for a week, escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you find him out, you have him ever after.

Ber. Why, do you think, he will make no deed at all of this, that so seriously he does address himself unto?

1 Lord. None in the world; but return with an invention, and clap upon you two or three probable lies; but we have almost emboss'd him, ³⁰) you shall see his fall to-night; for, indeed, he is not for your lordship's respect.

2 Lord. We'll make you some sport with the fox, ere we case him. ³¹) He was first smoked by the old lord Lafau: when his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him; which you shall see this very night.

1 Lord. I must go look my twigs; he shall be caught.

Ber. Your brother, he shall go along with me.

1 Lord. As't please your lordship: I'll leave you. [Exit.]

Ber. Now will I lead you to the house, and show you the lass I spoke of.

2 Lord. But, you say, she's honest. Ber. That's all the fault: I spoke with her but once, and found her wondrous cold; but I sent to her, by this same coxcomb that we have i'the wind, ³²) tokens and letters which she did re-send; and this is all I have done: She's a fair creature; will you go see her?

2 Lord. With all my heart, my lord. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII.

Florence. *A Room in the Widow's House.*

Enter HELENA and WIDOW.

Hel. If you misdoubt me that I am not she, I know not how I shall assure you further, but I shall lose the grounds I work upon. ³³)

Wid. Though my estate be fallen, I was well born, nothing acquainted with these businesses; and would not put my reputation now in any staining act.

Hel. Nor would I wish you. First, give me trust, the count he is my husband; and, what to your sworn counsel I have spoken, is so, from word to word; and then you cannot, by the good aid that I of you shall borrow, err in bestowing it.

Wid. I should believe you; for you have show'd me that, which well approves you are great in fortune.

Hel. Take this purse of gold, and let me buy your friendly help thus far, which I will over-pay, and pay again, when I have found it. The count he woos your daughter,

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty, resolves to carry her; let her, in fine, consent, as we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it, now his important ³⁴) blood will nought deny that she'll demand: A ring the county wears, ³⁵) that downward hath succeeded in his house, from son to son, some four or five descents since the first father wore it: this ring holds in most rich choice; yet, in his idle fire,

To buy his will, it would not seem too dear, Howe'er repented after.

Wid. Now I see

The bottom of your purpose.

Hel. You see it lawful then: It is no more, but that your daughter, ere she seems as won, desires this ring; appoints him an encounter; in fine, delivers me to fill the time, herself most chastely absent; after this, to marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns to what is past already.

Wid. I have yielded: Instruct my daughter how she shall perséver, that time and place, with this deceit so lawful, may prove coherent. Every night he comes with musics of all sorts, and songs compos'd to her unworthiness: It nothing steads us, to chide him from our eaves; for he persists, as if his life lay on't.

Hel. Why then, to-night let us assay our plot; which, if it speed, is wicked meaning in a lawful deed, and lawful meaning in a lawful act; where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact: But let's about it. [Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Without the Florentine Camp.*

Enter first Lord, with five or six Soldiers in ambush.

1 Lord. He can come no other way but by this hedge' corner: When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will; though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to understand him; unless some one among us, whom we must produce for an interpreter.

1 Sold. Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

1 Lord. Art not acquainted with him? Knows he not thy voice?

1 Sold. No, sir, I warrant you.

1 Lord. But what linsy-woolsy hast thou to speak to us again?

1 Sold. Even such as you speak to me.

1 Lord. He must think us some band of strangers i'the adversary's entertainment. ¹) Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak to one another; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: ²) though's language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes; to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES.

Par. Ten o'clock; within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it: They begin to smoke me: and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find, my tongue is too fool-hardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it, and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

1 Lord. This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of. [Aside.]

Par. What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum; being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and say, I

SCENE II.

Florence. *A Room in the Widow's House.*

Enter BERTRAM and DIANA.

Ber. They told me, that your name was Fontibell.

Dia. No, my good lord, Diana. Ber. Titled goddess; and worth it with addition; But, fair soul, in your fine frame hath love no quality? If the quick fire of youth light not your mind, you are no maiden, but a monument;

When you are dead, you should be such a one as you are now, for you are cold and stern; and now you should be as your mother was, when your sweet self was got.

Dia. She then was honest.

Ber. So should you be. Dia. No:

My mother did but duty; such, my lord, as you owe to your wife.

Ber. No more of that! I pry'thee, do not strive against my vows:

I was compell'd to her; but I love thee by love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever do thee all rights of service.

Dia. Ay, so you serve us, till we serve you: but when you have our roses, you barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves, and mock us with our bareness.

Ber. How have I sworn? Dia. 'Tis not the many oaths, that make the truth; but the plain single vow, that is vow'd true.

What is not holy, that we swear not by, ⁶) but take the Highest to witness: Then, pray you,

tell me, if I should swear by Jove's great attributes,

I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths, when I did love you ill? this has no holding,

To swear by him whom I protest to love, that I will work against him: Therefore, your oaths are words, and poor conditions; but unseal'd;

at least in my opinion.

Ber. Change it, change it; be not so holy cruel; love is holy;

and my integrity ne'er knew the crafts, that you do charge men with: Stand no more off,

but give thyself unto my sick desires, who then recover: say, thou art mine, and ever

my love, as it begins, shall so perséver.

Dia. I see, that men make hopes, in such affairs, ⁷) that we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

Ber. I'll lend it thee, my dear, but have no power to give it from me.

Dia. Will you not, my lord? Ber. It is an honour 'longing to our house,

bequeathed down from many ancestors; which were the greatest obloquy i'the world in me to lose.

Dia. Mine honour's such a ring: my chastity's the jewel of our house,

bequeathed down from many ancestors; which were the greatest obloquy i'the world

in me to lose: Thus your own proper wisdom brings in the champion honour on my part,

against your vain assault. Ber. Here, take my ring:

My house, mine honour, yea, my life be thine, and I'll be bid by thee.

Dia. When midnight comes, knock at my chamber-window;

I'll order take, my mother shall not hear. Now will I charge you in the band of truth,

got them in exploit: Yet slight ones will not carry it: They will say, Came you off with so little? and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore? what's the instance? ³) Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth, and buy another of Bajazet's mule, ⁴) if you prattle me into these perils.

1 Lord. Is it possible, he should know what he is, and be that he is? [Aside.]

Par. I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn; or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

1 Lord. We cannot afford you so. [Aside.]

Par. Or the baring of my beard; ⁵) and to say, it was in stratagem.

1 Lord. 'T would not do. [Aside.]

Par. Or to drown my clothes, and say, I was stripped.

1 Lord. Hardly serve. [Aside.]

Par. Though I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel —

1 Lord. How deep? [Aside.]

Par. Thirty fathom.

1 Lord. Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed. [Aside.]

Par. I would, I had any drum of the enemy's; I would swear, I recovered it.

1 Lord. You shall hear one anon. [Aside.]

Par. A drum now of the enemy's! [Alarm within.]

1 Lord. *Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.*

All. *Cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.*

Par. O! ransom, ransom: — Do not hide mine eyes. [They seize him and blindfold him.]

1 Sold. *Boskos thromuldo boskos.*

Par. I know you are the Muskos' regiment. And I shall lose my life for want of language:

If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch, Italian, or French, let him speak to me,

I will discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

1 Sold. *Boskos vauvado:* I understand thee, and can speak thy tongue: —

Kerelybonto: — Sir, Betake thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards

are at thy bosom. Par. Oh!

O, pray, pray, pray. — *Manka revania dulce.*

1 Sold. *Oscorbi dulchos volivorca.*

1 Sold. The general is content to spare thee yet; and, hood-wink'd as thou art, will lead thee on

to gather from thee: haply thou may'st inform something to save thy life.

Par. O, let me live, and all the secrets of our camp I'll show,

their force, their purposes: nay, I'll speak that which you will wonder at.

1 Sold. But wilt thou faithfully? Par. If I do not, damn me.

1 Sol. *Acordo linta.* — Come on, thou art granted space. [Exit, with PAROLLES guarded.]

1 Lord. Go, tell the count Rousillon, and my brother,

We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled, till we do hear from them.

2 Sold. Captain, I will. 1 Lord. He will betray us all unto ourselves; — Inform 'em that. 2 Sold. So I will, sir. 1 Lord. Till then, I'll keep him dark, and safely lock'd. [Exeunt.]

When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me:
My reasons are most strong; and you shall know them,
When back again this ring shall be deliver'd:

Ber. A heaven on earth I have won, by wooing thee. [Exit.]
Dian. For which live long to thank both heaven and me!

SCENE III.

The Florentine Camp.

Enter the two French Lords, and two or three Soldiers.

1 Lord. You have not given him his mother's letter?
2 Lord. I have deliver'd it an hour since: there is something in't that stings his nature; for, on the reading it, he changed almost into another man.

2 Lord. Let it be forbid, sir! so should I be a great deal of his act.
1 Lord. Sir, his wife, some two months since, fled from his house: her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le grand; which holy undertaking, with most austere sanctimony, she accomplished: and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven.

Ber. Nothing of me, has he?
2 Lord. His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his face: if your lordship be in't, as I believe you are, you must have the patience to hear it.

Re-enter Soldiers, with PAROLLES.

Ber. A plague upon him! muffled! he can say nothing of me; hush; hush!
1 Lord. Hoodman comes! — Porto tartarossa.
1 Sold. He calls for the tortures: What will you say without 'em?

rupt him to a revolt. What say you to this? what do you know of it?
Par. I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the interrogatories: Demand them singly.
1 Sold. Do you know this captain Dumain?
Par. I know him: he was a butcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the sheriff's fool with child: a dumb innocent, that could not say him, nay.

Gent. The king's not here.

Hel. Not here, sir?

Gent. Not, indeed:
He hence remov'd last night, and with more haste
Than is his use.

Wid. Lord, how we lose our pains!
Hel. All's well that ends well; yet;
Though time seem so adverse, and means unfit.—
I do beseech you, whither is he gone?

Gent. Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon;
Whither I am going.

Hel. I do beseech you, sir,
Since you are like to see the king before me,
Commend the paper to his gracious hand;
Which, I presume, shall render you no blame,
But rather make you thank your pains for it:
I will come after you, with what good speed
Our means will make us means.²⁾

Gent. This I'll do for you.
Hel. And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd,
Whate'er falls more.— We must to horse again;—
Go, go, provide. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Rousillon. *The inner Court of the Countess's Palace.*

Enter CLOWN and PAROLLES.

Par. Good monsieur Lavatch,³⁾ give my lord Lafeu this letter: I have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes; but I am now, sir, muddied in fortune's moat,⁴⁾ and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

Clo. Truly, fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell so strong as thou speakest of: I will henceforth eat no fish of fortune's buttering. Pr'ythee, allow the wind.⁵⁾

Par. Nay, you need not stop your nose, sir; I spake but by a metaphor.

Clo. Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my nose; or against any man's metaphor. Pr'ythee, get thee further.

Par. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

Clo. Foh, pr'ythee, stand away; A paper from fortune's close-stool to give to a nobleman! Look, here he comes himself.

Enter LAFEU.

Here is a pur of fortune's, sir, or of fortune's cat, (but not a musk-cat,) that has fallen into the unclean fishpond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied withal: Pray you, sir, use the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my smiles of comfort, and leave him to your lordship. [Exit Clown.]

Par. My lord, I am a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched.

Laf. And what would you have me to do? 'tis too late to pare her nails now. Where have you played the knave with fortune, that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady, and would not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a *quart decu* for you: Let the justices make you and fortune friends; I am for other business.

Par. I beseech your honour, to hear me one single word.

Laf. You beg a single penny more, come, you shall ha't; save your word.⁶⁾

Par. My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

Laf. You beg more than one word then.— Cox' my passion! give me your hand:— How does your drum?

Par. O my good lord, you were the first that found me.

Laf. Was I, in sooth? and I was the first that lost thee.

Par. It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out.

Laf. Out upon thee, knave! dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil? one brings thee in grace, and the other brings thee out. [Trumpets sound.] The king's coming, I know by his trumpets.— Sirrah, inquire further after me; I had talk of you last night, though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat; ⁷⁾ go to, follow.

Par. I praise God for you. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

The same. A Room in the Countess's Palace.

Flourish. Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, LORDS, Gentlemen, Guards, &c.

King. We lost a jewel of her; and our esteem⁸⁾ was made much poorer by it: but your son, As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know Her estimation home.⁹⁾

Count. 'Tis past, my liege;
And I beseech your majesty to make it
Natural rebellion, done i'the blaze of youth;
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,
O'erbear it, and burns on.

King. My honour'd lady,
I have forgiven and forgotten all;
Though my revenges were high bent upon him,
And watch'd the time to shoot.

Laf. This I must say, —
But first I beg my pardon, — The young lord
Did to his majesty, his mother, and his lady,
Offence of mighty note; but to himself
The greatest wrong of all: he lost a wife,
Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes;¹⁰⁾ whose words all ears took
captive;

Whose dear perfection, hearts that scorn'd to serve,
Humbly call'd mistress.

King. Praising what is lost,
Makes the remembrance dear. — Well, call him
hither; —

We are reconcil'd, and the first view shall kill
All repetition: — ¹¹⁾ Let him not ask our pardon;
The nature of his great offence is dead,
And deeper than oblivion do we bury
The incensing relics of it: let him approach,
A stranger, no offender; and inform him,
So 'tis our will he should.

Gent. I shall, my liege.

[Exit Gentleman.]

King. What says he to your daughter? have you spoke?

Laf. All that he is hath reference to your highness.

King. Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me,

That set him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM.

Laf. He looks well on't.

King. I am not a day of season,¹²⁾
For thou may'st see a sun-shine and a hail
In me at once: But to the brightest beams
Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth,
The time is fair again.

HI.

Ber. My high-repent'd blames,¹³⁾
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

King. All is whole;
Not one word more of the consumed time;
Let's take the instant by the forward top;
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
The inaudible and noiseless foot of time
Steals ere we can effect them: You remember
The daughter of this lord?

Ber. Admiringly, my liege; at first
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue:
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stol'n;
Extended or contracted all proportions,
To a most hideous object: Thence it came,
That she, whom all men prais'd, and whom myself,
Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye
The dust that did offend it.

King. Well excus'd:
That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away
From the great compt: But love that comes too late,
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,
To the great sender turns a sour offence,
Crying, That's good that's gone: our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them, until we know their grave:
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust:
Our own love waking cries to see what's done,
While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.
Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.
Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin:
The main consents are had; and here we'll stay
To see our widower's second marriage-day.

Count. Which better than the first, O dear heaven,
bless!

Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature cease!

Laf. Come on, my son, in whom my house's name
Must be digested, give a favour from you,
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may quickly come. — By my old beard,
And every hair that's on't, Helen, that's dead,
Was a sweet creature; such a ring as this,
The last that e'er I took her leave at court,
I saw upon her finger.

Ber. Hers it was not.

King. Now, pray you, let me see it; for mine eye,
While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.—
This ring was mine; and, when I gave it Helen,
I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood
Necessitated to help, that by this token
I would relieve her: Had you that craft, to reave her
Of what should stead her most?

Ber. My gracious sovereign,
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,
The ring was never hers.

Count. Son, on my life,
I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it
At her life's rate.

Laf. I am sure, I saw her wear it.

Ber. You are deceiv'd, my lord, she never saw it.
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,¹⁴⁾
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name
Of her that threw it: noble she was, and thought
I stood ingaged:¹⁵⁾ but when I had subscribed
To mine own fortune, and inform'd her fully,
I could not answer in that course of honour
As she had made the overture, she ceas'd,
In heavy satisfaction, and would never
Receive the ring again.

King. Plutus himself,
That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,¹⁶⁾
Hath not in nature's mystery more science,
Than I have in this ring: 'twas mine, 'twas Helen's,
Whoever gave it you: Then, if you know
That you are well acquainted with yourself,
Confess 'twas hers,¹⁷⁾ and by what rough enforcement
You got it from her: she call'd the saints to surety,
That she would never put it from her finger,
Unless she gave it to yourself in bed,
(Where you have never come,) or sent it us
Upon her great disaster.

Ber. She never saw it.
King. Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour:

And mak'st conjectural fears to come into me,
Which I would fain shut out: If it should prove
That thou art so inhuman, — 'twill not prove so;—
And yet I know not: — thou didst hate her deadly,
And she is dead; which nothing, but to close
Her eyes myself, could win me to believe,
More than to see this ring. — Take him away. —
[Guards seize BERTRAM.]

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,
Shall tax my fears of little vanity,
Having vainly fear'd too little. — ¹⁸⁾ Away with
him; —

We'll sift this matter further.

Ber. If you shall prove
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,
Where yet she never was. [Exit BERTRAM, guarded.]

Enter a Gentleman.

King. I am wrapped in dismal thoughts.

Gent. Gracious sovereign,
Whether I have been to blame, or no, I know not;
Here's a petition from a Florentine,
Who hath, for four or five removes, come short ¹⁹⁾
To tender it herself. I undertook it,
Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech
Of the poor suppliant, who by this, I know,
Is here attending: her business looks in her
With an important visage; and she told me,
In a sweet verbal brief, it did concern
Your highness with herself.

King. [Reads.] Upon his many protestations to
marry me, when his wife was dead, I blush to
say it, he won me. Now is the count Rousillon
a widower; his vows are forfeited to me, and my
honour's paid to him. He stole from Florence,
taking no leave, and I follow him to his country
for justice: Grant it me, O king, in you it best
lies; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor
maid is undone.
DIANA CAPULET.

Laf. I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and
toll him:²⁰⁾ for this, I'll none of him.

King. The heavens have thought well on thee,
Lafeu,

To bring forth this discovery.— Seek these suitors:—
Go, speedily, and bring again the count.

[Exeunt Gentleman, and some Attendants.]
I am afeard, the life of Helen, lady,
Was foully snatch'd.

Count. Now, justice on the doers!

Enter BERTRAM, guarded.

King. I wonder, sir, since wives are monsters to
you,
And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,
Yet you desire to marry.— What woman's that?

HI.

Re-enter Gentleman, with Widow, and DIANA.

Dia. I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,
Derived from the ancient Capulet;
My suit, as I do understand, you know,
And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

Wid. I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour
Both suffer under this complaint we bring,
And both shall cease, ²¹⁾ without your remedy.

King. Come hither, count; Do you know these women?

Ber. My lord, I neither can, nor will deny
But that I know them: Do they charge me further?

Dia. Why do you look so strange upon your wife?
Ber. She's none of mine, my lord.

Dia. If you shall marry,
You give away this hand, and that is mine;
You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;
You give away myself, which is known mine;
For I by vow am so embodied yours,
That she, which marries you, must marry me,
Either both or none.

Laf. Your reputation [to BERTRAM] comes too short
for my daughter, you are no husband for her.

Ber. My lord, this is a fond and desperate creature,
Whom sometime I have laugh'd with: let your highness
Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour,
Than for to think that I would sink it here.

King. Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to
friend,

Till your deeds gain them: Fairer prove your honour,
Than in my thought it lies!

Dia. Good my lord,
Ask him upon his oath, if he does think
He had not my virginity.

King. What say'st thou to her?

Ber. She's impudent, my lord,
And was a common gamester to the camp.

Dia. He does me wrong, my lord; if I were so,
He might have bought me at a common price:
Do not believe him: O, behold this ring,
Whose high respect, and rich validity, ²²⁾
Did lack a parallel; yet, for all that,
He gave it to a commoner o'the camp,
If I be one.

Count. He blushes, and 'tis it:
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,
Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife:
That ring's a thousand proofs.

King. Methought, you said, ²³⁾
You saw one here in court could witness it.

Dia. I did, my lord, but loath am to produce
So bad an instrument; his name's Parolles.

Laf. I saw the man to day, if man he be.

King. Find him, and bring him hither.

Ber. What of him?
He's quoted ²⁴⁾ for a most perfidious slave,
With all the spots o'the world tax'd and debosh'd!
Whose nature sickens, but to speak a truth: ²⁵⁾
Am I or that, or this, for what he'll utter,
That will speak any thing?

King. She hath that ring of yours.

Ber. I think, she has: certain it is, I lik'd her,
And boarded her i'the wanton way of youth:
She knew her distance, and did angle for me,
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,
As all impediments in fancy's course ²⁶⁾
Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,
Her insult coming with her modern grace,
Subdued me to her rate: she got the ring;
And I had that, which any inferior might
At market-price have bought.

Dia. I must be patient;
You, that turn'd off a first so noble wife,
May justly diet me. ²⁷⁾ I pray you yet,
(Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband.)
Send for your ring, I will return it home,
And give me mine again.

Ber. I have it not.

King. What ring was yours, I pray you?

Dia. Sir, much like

The same upon your finger.

King. Know you this ring? this ring was his of late.

Dia. And this was it I gave him, being a-bed.

King. The story then goes false, you threw it him
Out of a casement.

Dia. I have spoke the truth.

Enter PAROLLES.

Ber. My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

King. You boggle shrewdly, every feather starts
you. —

Is this the man you speak of?

Dia. Ay, my lord.

King. Tell me, sirrah, but tell me true, I charge you,
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,
(Which, on your just proceeding, I'll keep off.)
By him, and by this woman here, what know you?

Par. So please your majesty, my master hath been
an honourable gentleman; tricks he hath had in him,
which gentlemen have.

King. Come, come to the purpose: Did he love
this woman?

Par. Faith, sir, he did love her; But how?

King. How, I pray you?

Par. He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves
a woman.

King. How is that?

Par. He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

King. As thou art a knave, and no knave: —

What an equivocal companion ²⁸⁾ is this?

Par. I am a poor man, and at your majesty's
command.

Laf. He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty
orator.

Dia. Do you know, he promised me marriage?

Par. Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

King. But wilt thou not speak all thou know'st?

Par. Yes, so please your majesty; I did go be-
tween them, as I said; but more than that, he loved
her — for, indeed, he was mad for her, and talked
of Satan, and of limbo, and of furies, and I know
not what; yet I was in that credit with them at
that time, that I knew of their going to bed; and
of other motions, as promising her marriage, and
things that would derive me ill-will to speak of,
therefore I will not speak what I know.

King. Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou
canst say they are married: But thou art too fine ²⁹⁾
in thy evidence; therefore stand aside. —

This ring, you say, was yours?

Dia. Ay, my good lord.

King. Where did you buy it? or who gave it you?

Dia. It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

King. Who lent it you?

Dia. It was not lent me neither.

King. Where did you find it then?

Dia. I found it not.

King. If it were yours by none of all these ways,
How could you give it him?

Dia. I never gave it him.

Laf. This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she
goes off and on at pleasure.

King. This ring was mine, I gave it his first wife.

Dia. It might be yours, or hers, for aught I know.

King. Take her away, I do not like her now;
To prison with her; and away with him. —
Unless thou tell'st me where thou had'st this ring,
Thou diest within this hour.

Dia. I'll never tell you.

King. Take her away.

Dia. I'll put in bail, my liege.

King. I think thee now some common customer. ³⁰⁾

Dia. By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

King. Wherefore hast thou accus'd him all this
while?

Dia. Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty;
He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't:
I'll swear, I am a maid, and he knows not.
Great king, I am no strumpet, by my life;
I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

[Pointing to LAFEU.]

King. She does abuse our ears; to prison with her.

Dia. Good mother, fetch my bail. — Stay, royal sir;

[Exit Widow.]

The jeweller, that owes the ring, is sent for,
And he shall surety me. But for this lord,
Who hath abus'd me, as he knows himself,
Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him:
He knows himself my bed he hath defil'd; ³¹⁾
And at that time he got his wife with child:
Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick;
So there's my riddle, One, that's dead, is quick;
And now behold the meaning.

Re-enter Widow, with HELENA.

King. Is there no exorcist ³²⁾
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes?
Is't real, that I see?

Hel. No, my good lord:
'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,
The name and not the thing.

Ber. Both, both: O, pardon!
Hel. O, my good lord, when I was like this maid,
I found you wond'rous kind. There is your ring,
And, look you, here's your letter; This it says,
When from my finger you can get this ring,
And are by me with child, &c. — This is done:
Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?

Ber. If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,
I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

Hel. If it appear not plain, and prove untrue,
Deadly divorce step between me and you! —
O, my dear mother, do I see you living?

Laf. Mine eyes smell onions, I shall weep anon:
— Good Tom Drum, [to PAROLLES] lend me a hand-
kerchief: So, I thank thee; wait on me home, I'll
make sport with thee: Let thy courtesies alone,
they are scurvy ones.

King. Let us from point to point this story know,
To make the even truth in pleasure flow: —

If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower, [To DIANA.]
Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower;
For I can guess, that by thy honest aid,
Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid. —
Of that, and all the progress, more and less,
Resolv'dly more leisure shall express:
All yet seems well; and, if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

[Flourish.]

(Advancing.)

The king's a beggar, now the play is done:
All is well ended, if this suit be won,
That you express content; which we will pay,
With strife to please you, day exceeding day:
Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts; ³³⁾
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

[Exeunt.]