

# The Blind Beggar of Alexandria.\*

*Enter Queen Ægiale, Ianthe her maid,  
two councillors.*

*Ægi.* Leave me awhile, my lords, and  
wait for me

At the black fountain, by Osiris' grove,  
I'll walk alone to holy Irus' cave,  
Talking a little while with him and then  
return.

*[Exeunt omnes. Manet Ægiale.*

*Ianthe, begone.*

Now, Irus, let thy mind's eternal eye,  
Extend the virtue of it past the Sun.

Ah! my Cleanthes, where art thou be-  
come?

But since I saved thy guiltless life from  
death,

And turn'd it only into banishment,  
Forgive me, love me, pity, comfort me.

*Enter Irus the Beggar with Pego.*

*Pe.* Master.

*Ir.* Pego.

*Pe.* Wipe your eyes and you had them.

*Ir.* Why, Pego.

*Pe.* The Queen is here to see your  
blindness.

*Ir.* Her Majesty is welcome, Heavens  
preserve,

And send her highness an immortal reign.

*Ægi.* Thanks, reverent Irus, for thy  
gentle prayer,

Dismiss thy man awhile and I will lead  
thee,

For I have weighty secrets to impart.

*Pe.* Would I were blind that she might  
lead me. *[Exit.]*

*Ægi.* Irus, thy skill to tell the drifts of  
fate,

\* "The Blinde begger of Alexandria, most  
pleasantly discoursing his variable humours  
in disguised shapes full of conceite and plea-  
sure. As it hath beene sundry times publickly  
acted in London, by the right honorable the  
Earle of Nottingham, Lord High Admirall his  
seruantes. By George Chapman: Gentleman.  
Imprinted at London for William Iones, dwelling  
at the signe of the Gun, neere Holburne Con-  
duct. 1598."

Our fortunes and things hid from sensual  
eyes,

Hath sent me to thee for advertisement  
Where Duke Cleanthes lives, that was  
exiled

This kingdom for attempting me with love,  
And offering stain to Egypt's royal bed.

*Ir.* I hope your majesty will pardon me,  
If conscience make me utter what I think,  
Of that high love-affairs 'twixt him and you.

*Ægi.* I will, sweet Irus, being well  
assured

That whatsoever thy sharp wisdom sees  
In my sad frailty, thou wilt have regard  
To my estate and name and keep it close.

*Ir.* Of that your highness may be well  
assured :

Then I am bound, madam, to tell you this,  
That you yourself did seek Cleanthes'  
love,

And to aspire it, made away his Duchess,  
Which he well knowing and affecting her  
Dear as his life, denied to satisfy

That kindness offer'd 'twixt yourself and  
him ;

Therefore did you in rage inform the Duke  
He sought your love, and so he banish'd  
him.

*Ægi.* Too true it is, grave Irus, thou  
hast told :

But for my love's sake, which not gods  
can rule,

Strike me no more of that wound yet too  
green,

But only tell me where Cleanthes is,  
That I may follow him in some disguise,  
And make him recompence for all his  
wrong.

*Ir.* Cleanthes is about this city oft,  
With whom your majesty shall meet ere  
long,  
And speak with him, if you will use such  
means

As you may use, for his discovery.

*Ægi.* What shall I use then, what is in  
my power

I will not use for his discovery?

I'll bind the wings of love unto mine arms,

And like an eagle prying for her prey,  
Will overlook the earth's round face for  
him,

Were this sufficient.

Or I will Moorlike learn to swim and dive  
Into the bottom of the sea for him,  
Lest being the sun of Egypt, and now set,  
Thetis in rage with love would ravish him,  
Were this sufficient.

*Ir.* But, madam, this must be the like-  
liest mean

To seek him out, and have him at your  
will.

Let his true picture through your land be  
sent,

Proposing great rewards to him that finds  
him,

And threatening death to them that  
succour him,

So I'll assure your grace shall meet with  
him.

*Agi.* Happy and blest be Irus for his  
skill

He sweetly plants in my contentious mind,  
For which, most reverent and religious  
man,

I give this jewel to thee, richly worth  
A quintal or an hundred weight of gold.  
Bestow it as thou list on some good work,

For well I know thou nothing dost reserve  
Of all thy riches men bestow on thee.

But wouldst thou leave this place and poor  
man's life,

The Count of Egypt should embrace thy  
feet,

And topless honours be bestow'd on thee.

*Ir.* I thank your highness for thus rais-  
ing me ;

But in this barrenness I am most renown'd.  
For wisdom and the sight of heavenly  
things

Shines not so clear as earthly vanities.

*Agi.* Most rich is Irus in his poverty !

Oh, that to find his skill my crown were  
lost ;

None but poor Irus can of riches boast.

Now, my Cleanthes, I will straight advance  
Thy lovely pictures on each monument  
About the city and within the land.

Proposing twice five thousand crowns to  
him

That finds him, to be tender'd by my hands,  
And a kind kiss at my imperial lips.

To him that succours him I'll threaten  
death,

But he that doth not succour him shall die,  
For who is worthy life will see him want ?

To all his pictures when they be dispersed  
Will I continual pilgrimages make,

As to the saints and idols I adore,  
Where I will offersighs, and vows, and tears.  
And sacrifice a hecatomb of beast,  
On several altars built where they are  
placed,

By them shall Isis' statue gently stand,  
And I'll pretend my jealous rites to her ;

But my Cleanthes shall the object be,  
And I will kneel and pray to none but he.

[*Exit.*

*Ir.* See, Earth and Heaven, where her  
Cleanthes is.

I am Cleanthes and blind Irus too,

And more than these, as you shall soon  
perceive,

Yet but a shepherd's son at Memphis born ;  
And I will tell you how I got that name.

My father was a fortune-teller and from  
him I learnt his art,

And knowing to grow great, was to grow  
rich,

Such money as I got by palmistry,  
I put to use and by that means became  
To take the shape of Leon, by which name,  
I am well known a wealthy usurer,  
And more than this I am two noblemen :  
Count Hermes is another of my names,  
And Duke Cleanthes whom the Queen so  
loves.

For till the time that I may claim the crown,  
I mean to spend my time in sports of love,  
Which in the sequel you shall plainly see,  
And joy, I hope, in this my policy.

*Enter* Pego, Elimine, Samathis, and  
Martia, with their men Menippus,  
Pollidor, and Druso.

*Pe.* Oh, master, here comes the three  
wenches ! now strike it dead, for a  
fortune.

*Ir.* These are the nymphs of Alexandria,  
So call'd because their beauties are so rare.  
With two of them at once am I in love  
Deeply and equally ; the third of them,  
My silly brother here as much affects,  
Whom I have made the Burgomaster of  
this rich town,

With the great wealth, I have bestow'd on  
him.

All three are maids kept passing warily,  
Yet lately being at their father's house,

As I was Leon the rich usurer,  
I fell in love with them, and there my  
brother too,

This fitly chancoeth that they have liberty  
To visit me alone : now will I tell their  
fortunes so

As may make way to both their loves at  
once ;

The one as I am Leon the rich usurer,  
The other as I am the mad-brain Count,  
And do the best too for my brother's love.

*Pe.* Thanks, good master brother, but  
what are they  
That talk with them so long? are they  
wocers trow?

I do not like it, would they would come  
near.

*Ir.* Oh, those are three servants that  
attend on them;

Let them alone, let them talk awhile.

*Eli.* Tell us, Menippus, Druso, and  
Pollidor,

Why all our parents gave you three such  
charge,

To wait on us and oversee us still,  
What do they fear, think you, that we  
would do?

*Me.* Their fear is lest you should ac-  
company

Such as love wanton talk and dalliance.

*Eli.* Why, what is wanton talk?

*Me.* To tell you that were to offend  
ourselves

And those that have forbidden you should  
hear it.

*Sa.* Why, what is dalliance, says my  
servant, then?

*Dru.* You must not know, because you  
must not dally.

*Sa.* How say you by that? well, do you  
keep it from us, as much as you can, we'll  
desire it nevertheless, I can tell ye.

*Ma.* Lord, what strait keepers of poor  
maids are you,

You are so chaste you are the worse again.

*Eli.* Pray you, good servants, will you  
do us the service,

To leave us alone awhile?

*Me.* We are commanded not to be from  
you,

And therefore to leave you alone,  
Were to wrong the trust your parents put  
in us.

*Ma.* I cry you mercy, sir, yet do not  
stand all on the trust our parents put in  
you, but put us in a little too, I pray.

*Sa.* Trust us, good servants, by ourselves  
awhile.

*Dru.* Let us, my masters, and you say  
the word,

They'll but to Irus for to know their  
fortunes,

And he's a holy man, all Egypt knows.

*Me.* Stay not too long, then, mistress,  
and content.

*Eli.* That's my good servant, we will  
straight return.

*Po.* And you, mistress.

*Ma.* And I, trusty servant.

*Po.* Faith then I'll venture my charge  
among the rest. [*Exeunt.*

*Ma.* A mighty venture! you shall be  
chronicled in Abraham's asses' catalogue  
of coxcombs for your resolution.

*Eli.* Now the great fool take them all!  
Who could have pick'd out three such  
lifeless puppies,

Never to venture on their mistresses.

*Sa.* One may see by them it is not meet  
choice men should have offices.

*Ma.* A pretty moral! work it in the sam-  
pler of your heart.

*Eli.* But are we by ourselves?

*Ma.* I think so, unless you have alone\*  
in your belly.

*Eli.* Not I, God knows; I never came  
where they grew yet,

Since we are alone let's talk a little merrily,  
Methinks I long to know what wanton talk  
and dalliance is.

*Sa.* I'll lay my life 'tis that my mother  
uses when she and others do begin to talk,  
and that she says to me, "Maid, get ye  
hence, fall to your needle: what, a maid  
and idle?"

*Ma.* A maid and idle! Why, maids must  
be idle, but not another thing.

*Sa.* Then do not name it, for I fear 'tis  
naught.

For yesterday I heard Menippus say  
As he was talking with my mother's maid,  
And I stood hearkening at the chamber  
door,

That with that word a maid was got with  
child.

*Eli.* How, with the very word?

*Sa.* I mean with that the word seems to  
express.

*Ma.* Nay, if you be so fine you will not  
name it now,

We are all alone, you are much too nice.

*Eli.* Why, let her choose, let us two  
name it.

*Ma.* Do then, Elimine.

*Eli.* Nay do you, Martia.

*Ma.* Why, woman, I dare.

*Eli.* Do then, I warrant thee.

*Ma.* I'll warrant myself, if I list, but  
come let it alone,

Let us to Irus for our fortunes.

*Eli.* God save grave Irus!

*Ir.* Welcome, beauteous nymphs.

*Sa.* How know you, Irus, we are beautiful,  
And cannot see?

\* Sic in Orig.

*Ir.* Homer was blind, yet could he best discern

The shapes of everything, and so may I.

*Eli.* Indeed, we hear your skill can beautify

Beauty itself, and teach dames how to deck

Their heads and bodies fittest to their forms,

To their complexions and their countenances.

*Ir.* So can I,auteous nymphs, and make all eyes

Sparkle with love-fire from your excellence.

*Eli.* How think you we are tyred to tempt men's looks,

Being thus nymphlike is it not too strange?

*Ir.* It is the better so it doth become.

But that I may disclose to you your fortunes,

Tell me first, Pego, their true faces' forms?

*Pe.* Marry, sir, this that speaks to you has a face thin like unto water gruel, but yet it would do your heart good if you could see it.

*Ir.* I know and see it better than thyself, The blaze whercof doth turn me to a fire, Burning mine entrails with a strong desire.

*Eli.* Why turn'st thou from us, Irus? tell my fortune.

*Ir.* I wonder at the glory it presents To my soul's health, that sees upon your head

A coronet, and at your gracious feet, Nobles and princes in their highest state, Which state shall crown your fortune ere you die,

And ere the heart of Heaven, the glorious sun,

Shall quench his roseate fires within the west.

You shall a husband have noble and rich.

*Sa.* Happy, Elimine, oh that I might too.

*Eli.* Thanks for this news, good Irus, but disclose

The means to this, if it be possible.

*Ir.* When you come home ascend your father's tower,

If you see a man come walking by, And looking up to you, descend, And issue, for you shall have leave, And if he woo you, choose him from the world.

Though he seem humorous and want an eye,

Wearing a velvet patch upon the same, Choose him your husband, and be blest in him.

*Eli.* I'll do as thou advisest, gentle Irus, And proving this, I'll love thee whilst I live.

*Sa.* My fortune now, sweet Irus.

*Ir.* What face hath this nymph, Pego?

*Pe.* Marry, sir, a face made in form like the ace of hearts.

*Ir.* And well compared, for she commands all hearts;

Equal in beauty with that other nymph, And equally she burns my heart with love.

*Sa.* Say, say, sweet Irus, what my fortune is,

Thou turn'st from me, as when thou didst admire

The happy fortune of Elimine.

*Ir.* So might I well, admiring yours no less.

Then when the light-crown'd monarch of the heavens

Shall quench his fire within the Ocean's breast,

Rise you and to your father's garden hie, There in an harbour do a banquet set, And if there comes a man that of himself Sits down, and bids you welcome to your feast,

Accept him, for he is the richest man That Alexandria or Egypt hath; And soon possessing him with all his wealth,

In little time you shall be rid of him, Making your second choice 'mongst mighty kings.

*Sa.* Blest be thy lips, sweet Irus, and that light

That guides thy bosom with such deep foresight!

Sleep shall not make a closet for these eyes

All this succeeding night, for haste to rise.

*Ma.* My fortune now, sweet Irus, but i'faith,

I have some wrong to be the last of all, For I am old as they, and big enough To bear as great a fortune as the best of them.

*Ir.* What face hath this nymph, Pego?

*Pe.* Oh! master, what face hath she not? If I should beg a face, I would have her face.

*Ir.* But is it round, and hath it ne'er a blemish,

A mouth too wide, a look too impudent?

*Pe.* Oh! master, 'tis without all these, and without all cry.

*Ir.* Round faces and thin-skinn'd are happiest still.

And unto you, fair nymph,

Shall fortune be exceeding gracious too.  
When the next morning therefore you  
shall rise,

Put in your bosom rosemary, thyme, and  
rue,

And presently stand at your father's door.  
He that shall come offering kindness there,  
And crave for favour those same wholesome  
herbs,

Bestow them on him ; and if meeting him,  
He keep the nuptial rosemary and thyme,  
And tread the bitter rue beneath his feet,  
Choose him your husband, and be blest in  
him.

*Ma.* I will, sweet Irus ; nothing grieves  
me now

But that Elimine this night shall have  
Her happy husband, and I stay till morning.

*Eli.* Nought grieves me, Irus, but that  
we are maids,

Keep short of all things, and have nought  
to give thee ;

But take our loves, and in the wished proof  
Of these high fortunes thou foretellest us,  
Nothing we have shall be too dear for thee.

*Sz.* We that are sisters, Irus, by our vow,  
Will be of one self blood and thankful  
mind

To adore so clear a sight in one so blind.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Ir.* Farewell, most beauteous nymphs,  
your loves to me

Shall more than gold or any treasure be.  
Now to my wardrobe for my velvet gown ;  
now doth the sport begin ;

Come, gird this pistol closely to my side,  
By which I make men fear my humour  
still,

And have slain two or three, as 'twere my  
mood,

When I have done it most advisedly

To rid them as they were my heavy foes ;  
Now am I known to be the mad-brain  
Count,

Whose humours twice five summers I have  
held,

And said at first I came from stately Rome,  
Calling myself Count Hermes, and assuming  
The humour of a wild and frantic man,

Careless of what I say or what I do ;  
And so such faults as I of purpose do

Is buried in my humour and this gown I  
wear

In rain, or snow, or in the hottest summer,  
And never go nor ride without a gown,

Which humour does not fit my frenzy well,  
But hides my person's form from being  
known,

When I Cleanthes am to be descried.

*Enter Pego, like a Burgomaster.*

*Pe.* How now, master brother ?

*Ir.* Oh, sir, you are very well suited.  
Now, master Burgomaster, I pray you re-  
member

To seize on all Antistenes his goods,  
His lands and chattels, to my proper use,  
As I am Leon, the rich usurer ;  
The sun is down, and all is forfeited.

*Pe.* It shall be done, my noble Count.

*Ir.* And withal, sir, I pray you, forget  
not your love—

To-morrow morning, at her father's door.

*Pe.* Ah, my good Count, I cannot that  
forget,

For still to keep my memory in order,  
As I am Burgomaster, so love is my  
recorder. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Elimine, above, on the walls.*

Now see a morning in an evening rise,  
The morning of my love and of my joy,  
I will not say of beauty, that were pride ;  
Within this tower I would I had a torch  
To light, like Hero, my Leander hither.  
Who shall be my Leander ? Let me see,  
Rehearse my fortune.

When you see one clad in a velvet gown,  
And a black patch upon his eye, a patch,  
Patch that I am, why, that may be a patch  
Of cloth, of buckram, or of fustian cloth,  
Say, with a velvet patch upon his eye,  
And so my thoughts may patch up love  
the better ;

See, where he comes, the Count ; what,  
girl, a countess ?

*Enter Count.*

See, see, he looks as Irus said he should :  
Go not away, my love, I'll meet thee  
straight.

*Count.* Oh, I thank you, I am much  
beholding to you,

I saw her in the tower, and now she is  
come down,

Luck to this patch and to this velvet gown.

*Enter Elimine and Bragadino, a Spaniard,  
following her.*

*Count.* How now, shall I be troubled  
with this rude Spaniard now ?

*Brag.* One word, sweet nymph.

*Count.* How now, sirrah, what are  
you ?

*Brag.* I am Signor Bragadino, the  
martial Spaniard, the aid of Egypt in  
her present wars ; but, Jesu, what art thou  
that hast the guts of thy brains griped with  
such famine of knowledge not to know me ?

*Count.* How now, sir! I'll try the proof of your guts with my pistol, if you be so saucy, sir.

*Brag.* Oh, I know him well: it is the rude Count, the uncivil Count, the unstaid Count, the bloody Count, the Count of all Counts; better I were to hazard the dissolution of my brave soul against an host of giants than with this loose Count, otherwise I could tickle the Count; i'faith, my noble Count, I do descend to the craving of pardon—love blinded me; I knew thee not.

*Count.* Oh, sir, you are but bonaventure, not right Spanish, I perceive; but do you hear, sir, are you in love?

*Brag.* Surely the sudden glance of this lady nymph hath suppld my Spanish disposition with love that never before dreamt of a woman's concavity.

*Count.* A woman's concavity, 'sblood, what's that?

*Brag.* Her hollow disposition which you see sweet nature will supply, or otherwise stop up in her with solid or firm faith.

*Count.* Give me thy hand, we are lovers both: shall we have her both?

*Brag.* No, good sweet Count, pardon me.

*Count.* Why then, thus it shall be; we'll strike up a drum, set up a tent, call people together, put crowns apiece, let's rifle for her.

*Brag.* Nor that, my honest Count.

*Count.* Why then, thus it shall be: we'll woo her both, and him she likes best shall lead her home through streets, holding her by both her hands, with his face towards her; the other shall follow with his back towards her, biting of his thumbs. How sayest thou by this?

*Brag.* It is ridiculous, but I am pleased; for, upon my life, I do know this, the shame will light on the neck of the Count.

*Count.* Well, to it; let's hear thee.

*Brag.* Sweet nymph, a Spaniard is compared to the great elixir, or golden medicine.

*Count.* What, dost thou come upon her with medicines? Dost thou think she is sore?

*Brag.* Nay, by thy sweet favour, do not interrupt me.

*Count.* Well, sir, go forward.

*Brag.* I say a Spaniard is like the philosopher's stone.

*Count.* And I say another man's stone may be as good as a philosopher's, at all times,

*Brag.* By thy sweet favour.

*Count.* Well, sir, go on.

*Brag.* Sweet nymph, I love few words; you know my intent, my humour is in-sophistical and plain; I am Spaniard a born, my birth speaks for my nature, my nature for your grace, and should you see a whole battail ranged by my skill, you would commit your whole self to my affection; and so, sweet nymph, I kiss your hand.

*Count.* To see a whole battail, ha, ha, ha! what a jest is that; thou shalt see a whole battail come forth presently of me, fa, fa, fa!

*Brag.* Put up thy pistol, 'tis a most dangerous humour in thee.

*Count.* Oh, is that all? why, see 'tis up again: now thou shalt see I'll come to her in thy humour. Sweet lady, I love sweet words, but sweet deeds are the noble sounds of a noble Spaniard, noble by country, noble by valour, noble by birth; my very foot is nobler than the head of another man; upon my life I love, and upon my love I live, and so, sweet nymph, I kiss your hand; why, lo, here we are both, I am in this hand, and he is in that: handy dandy prickly prandy, which hand will you have?

*Eli.* This hand, my lord, if I may have my choice.

*Count.* Come, Spaniard, to your penance; bite your thumbs.

*Brag.* Oh, base woman!

*Count.* 'Sblood! no base woman; but bite your thumbs quickly.

*Brag.* Honour commands; I must do it.

*Count.* Come on, sweet lady, give me your hands if you are mine, I am yours; if you take me now at the worst, I am the more beholding to you, if I be not good enough, I'll mend; what would you more?

*Eli.* It is enough, my lord, and I am yours.

Since I well know my fortune is to have you.

Now must I leave the pleasant maiden chase,

In hunting savage beasts with Isis' nymphs,  
And take me to a life which I, God knows,  
Do know no more than how to scale the heavens.

*Count.* Well, I'll teach you, fear not you; what, signior, not bite your thumbs?

*Brag.* Pardon me, sir, pardon me.

*Count.* By God's blood, I will not pardon you; therefore bite your thumbs.

*Brag.* By thy sweet let me speak one

word with thee : I do not like this humour in thee in pistoling men in this sort, it is a most dangerous and stigmatal humour ; for, by thy favour, 'tis the most finest thing of the world for a man to have a most gentlemanlike carriage of himself, for otherwise I do hold thee for the most tall, resolute, and accomplished gentleman on the face of the earth ; hark ye, we'll meet at Corrucus, and we'll have a pipe of tobacco. Adieu, adieu.

*Count.* Do you hear, sir? Put your thumbs in your mouth without any more ado; by the heavens, I'll shoot thee through the mouth.

*Brag.* It is base and ridiculous.

*Count.* Well, thou shalt not do it ; lend me thy thumbs, I'll bite them for thee.

*Brag.* Pardon me.

*Count.* 'Swounds and you had I would have made such a woful parting betwixt your fingers and your thumb, that your Spanish fists should never meet again, in this world. Will you do it, sir?

*Brag.* I will, I will ; presto and I will follow thee.

*Count.* Why so ! Oh, that we had a noise of musicians to play to this antic as we go. Come on, sweet lady, give me your hands, we'll to church and be married straight ; bear with my haste now, I'll be slow enough another time, I warrant you. Come spaniola questo, questo, spaniola questo. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Ægiale, Herald, Euribates, Clearchus with a picture.*

*Ægi.* Advance that picture on this fatal spring.  
And Herald, speak, uttering the king's edict.

*He.* Ptolemy, the most sacred king of Egypt, first of that name, desiring peace and amity with his neighbour princes, hath caused this picture of Cleanthes to be set up in all places, proposing great rewards to him that finds him, and threatening death to him that succours him.

*Ægi.* Which gods forbid, and put it in his mind  
Not so to stomach his unjust exile  
That he convert the fury of his arm,  
Against forsaken Egypt taking part,  
With those four neighbour kings that threaten him,  
And have besieged his most Imperial town.

*Clear.* Now may it please your highness to leave your discontented passions,

and take this morning's pride to hunt the boar.

*Ia.* We have attended on your grace thus far,  
Out of the city, being glad to hear  
Your highness had abandon'd discontent,  
And now will bend yourself to merriment.

*Ægi.* So will I, lovely Ianthe, come then,

Let us go call forth sacred Isis' nymphs  
To help us keep the game in ceaseless view,

That to the busy brightness of his eyes  
We may so intervent his shifts to 'scape  
That giddy with his turning he may fall,  
Slain with our beauties more than swords  
or darts.

[*Exit with a sound of horns.*

*Enter Leon with his sword.*

*Le.* Now I am Leon, the rich usurer,  
And here, according to the king's command

And mine own promise, I have brought my sword,

And fix it by the statue she set up.

By this am I known to be Cleanthes,  
Whose sudden sight I now will take upon me,

And cause the nobles to pursue my shadow,  
As for my substance they shall never find,  
Till I myself do bring myself to light.

Cleanthes, Cleanthes ; stop, Cleanthes, see Cleanthes,

Pursue Cleanthes, follow Cleanthes.

*Enter three Lords with swords drawn.*

*1st Lord.* Where is Cleanthes, Leon? sawest thou him?

*Le.* Ay, why should I else have thus cried out on him?

I saw him even now, here did he fix his sword,

And not for dastard fear or cowardice,

For know all Egypt rings of his renown,

But fearing for his noble service done,

To be rewarded with ingratitude,

He fled from hence fearing to be pursued.

*2nd Lord.* Come on, my lords, then, let us follow him,

And pursue him to the death. [*Exeunt.*

*Le.* O, do not hurt him, gentle citizens !  
See how they fly from him whom they pursue,

I am Cleanthes, and whilst I am here,

In vain they follow for to find him out.

But here comes my love bright Samathis,

Whom I love equally with fair Elimine ;

See, here she comes, as I appointed her.

*Enter Samathis and her maids with a banquet.*

*Jaquine.* But 'i' faith, mistress, is this for a wooer?

*Sa.* Not for a wooer only, my Jaquine, But a quick speeder, girl; for this is he, That all my fortune runs upon, I tell thee.

*Ja.* Oh, dainty mistress, send for some more banquet.

*Sa.* No, my fine wench, this and myself is well.

And let him not sit down like the ox and the ass,

But give God thanks, for we are worthy of it, though we say't.

*Ja.* Mistress, 'tis true. And that he may be good,

I conjure him by these three things a cross, Now let him come he shall be good, I warrant ye.

*Le.* Nay, do not fly me, gentle Samathis.

*Sa.* Pardon me, sir, for if I see a man, I shall so blush still that I warrant you I could make white wine claret with my looks.

*Le.* But do not blush and fly an old man's sight.

*Sa.* From whom if not from old men should I fly?

*Le.* From young men rather that can swift pursue,

And then it is some credit to outgo them, Yet though my years would have me old I am not,

But have the gentle jerk of youth in me, As fresh as he that hath a maiden's chin. Thus can I bend the stiffness of my limbs, Thus can I turn and leap and hoise my gate,

Thus can I lift my love as light as air.

Now say, my Samathis, am I old or young?

*Sa.* I would have my love neither old nor young

But in the middle, just between them both.

*Le.* Fit am I then for matchless Samathis; And will be bold to sit. For bachelors, Must not be shamefaced when they meet with maids;

My sweet love, now let me entreat you sit, And welcome you to your own banquet here.

*Sa.* Even thus did Irus say that he should say:

Then by your leave, sir, I will sit with you.

*Le.* Welcome as gold into my treasury. And now will I drink unto my love, With the same mind that drinking first began to one another.

*Sa.* And what was that, I pray, sir?

*Le.* I'll tell my love the first kind cause of it,

And why 'tis used as kindness still amongst us:

If it be used aright 'tis to this end, When I do say "I drink this, love, to you,"

I mean I drink this to your proper good, As if I said "What health this wine doth work in me;

Shall be employ'd for you at your command and to your proper use;"

And this was first th'intent of drinking to you.

*Sa.* 'Tis very pretty, is it not, Jaquine?

*Ja.* Oh! excellent, mistress; he's a dainty man.

*Le.* Now to your use, sweet love, I drink this wine,

And with a merry heart that makes long life,

Over the cup I'll sing for my love's sake.

#### SONG.

*Health, fortune, mirth, and wine,*

*To thee, my love divine.*

*I drink to my darling,*

*Give me thy hand, sweeting.*

*With cup full ever plied,*

*And hearts full never dried.*

*Mine own, mine own dearest sweeting,*

*Oh, oh, mine own dearest sweeting.*

What frolic, love! mirth makes the banquet sweet.

*Sa.* I love it, sir, as well as you love me.

*Le.* That is as well as I do love myself.

I will not joy, my treasure, but in thee, And in thy looks I'll count it every hour, And thy white arms shall be as bands to me,

Wherein are mighty lordships forfeited;

And all the dames of Alexandria

For their attire shall take their light from thee.

*Sa.* Well, sir, I drink to you and pray you think

You are as welcome to me as this wine.

*Le.* Thanks, gentle Samathis, but delicious love,

Hath been the fig I eat before this wine, Which kills the taste of these delicious cates:

Will you bestow that banquet, love, on me?

*Sa.* Nay, gentle Leon, talk no more of love,

If you love God or a good countenance, For I shall quite be out of countenance then.

*Le.* Love decks the countenance, spirit-  
eth the eye,  
And tunes the soul in sweetest harmony:  
Love then, sweet Samathis.

*Sa.* What shall I do, Jaquine?

*Ja.* Faith, mistress, take him.

*Sa.* Oh, but he hath a great nose.

*Ja.* 'Tis no matter for his nose, for he  
is rich.

*Sa.* Leon, I love, and since 'tis forth,  
farewell.

*Le.* Then triumph, Leon, richer in thy  
love,

Than all the heaps of treasure I possess :  
Never was happy Leon rich before,  
Nor ever was I covetous till now,  
That I see gold so fined in thy hair.

*Sa.* Impart it to my parents, gentle  
Leon,  
And till we meet again at home, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Le.* Soon will I talk with them and follow  
thee,

So now is my desire accomplished.  
Now was there ever man so fortunate  
To have his love so sorted to his wish ?  
The joys of many I in one enjoy.  
Now do I mean to woo them crossly both,  
The one as I am Leon the rich usurer,  
The other as I am the mad-brain  
Count.

Which if it take effect, and rightly prove,  
'Twill be a sport for any emperor's love.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter* Ptolemy, Ægiale, Doricles, Aspasia,  
Ianthe, Euphrosyne, Clearchus, Euri-  
bates, *with sound.*

*Pto.* Prince of Arcadia, lovely Doricles,  
Be not discouraged that my daughter here,  
Like a well-fortified and lofty tower,  
Is so repulsive and unapt to yield.  
The royal siege of your heroic parts  
In her achievement will be more renown'd,  
And with the greater merit is employ'd.  
The beauteous queen, my wife, her mother  
here,  
Was so well mann'd, and yet had never  
man  
So main a rock of chaste and cold dis-  
dain.

*Ægi.* My lord, what mean ye? go,  
Aspasia,  
Send for some ladies to go play with you,  
At chess, at billiards, and at other game ;  
Ianthe, attend her.  
You take a course, my lord, to make her coy,  
To urge so much the love of Doricles,  
And frame a virtue of her wanton hate,

We must persuade her that he loves her  
not,

But that his services and vows of love  
Are but the gentle compliments of court,  
So would she think that if she would have  
loved,

She might have won him. And with that  
conceit

Of hardness to be won, his merit's grace  
Will shine more clearly, in her turning  
eyes:

Things hard to win with ease makes love  
incited,

And favours won with ease are hardly  
quited ;

Then make as if you loved her not, my lord.

*Do.* Love that has built his temple on  
my brows

Out of his battlements into my heart,  
And seeing me to burn in my desire,  
Will be I hope appeased at the last.

*Ægi.* Be ruled by me yet, and I warrant  
you

She quickly shall believe you love her not.

*Do.* What shall I do, madam?

*Ægi.* Look not on her so much.

*Do.* I cannot choose, my neck stands  
never right,

Till it be turn'd aside and I behold her.

*Ægi.* Now trust me such a wry-neck'd  
love was never seen,

But come with me, my lord, and I'll in-  
struct you better.

*Pto.* So, madam, I leave you; now from  
our love-sports,

To Antistenes and his great suit with Leon.

*Enter* Antistenes, Leon, and Burgo-  
master.

See the Burgomaster, Antistenes, and Leon  
come together. Stay, master Burgo-  
master, what reason made you use your  
office on the Lord Antistenes, seizing on  
all his moveables and goods at the suit of  
Leon?

*Pe.* I will tell your grace the reason of  
it or anything else ; for I know you are a  
wise prince, and apt to learn.

*Pto.* I thank you for your good opinion,  
sir ; but the reason of your office done upon  
this nobleman and his lands ?

*Pe.* The reason why I have put in office  
or execution my authority upon this noble-  
man consisteth in three principal points or  
members, which indeed are three goodly  
matters.

*Pto.* I pray you let's hear them.

*Pe.* The first is the credit of this honest  
man, because he is rich.

*Pto.* Why is he honest because he is rich?

*Pe.* Oh, I learn that in any case; the next is the forfeit of his assurance, and the last I will not trouble your grace withal.

*An.* But this it is whereof I most complain unto your grace, that having occasion in your grace's service, to borrow money of this Leon here, for which I mortgaged all my lands and goods, he only did agree that paying him four thousand pound at the day I should receive my statute safely, Which now not only falsely he denies, But that he hath received one penny due, Which this my friend can witness I repaid, Upon the stone of Irus the blind man, Four thousand pound in jewels and in gold, And therefore crave I justice in this case.

*Le.* Vouchsafe, dread sovereign, an unpartial ear

To that I have to say for my reply.

He pleads the payment of four thousand pound

Upon the stone before blind Irus' cave.

To which I answer and do swear by heaven,  
He spake with me at the aforesaid place,  
And promised payment of four thousand pound,

If I would let him have his statutes in,  
And take assurance for another thousand,  
Some three months to come or thereabouts.  
Which I refusing he repaid me none,  
But parted in a rage and cared not for me.

*Gen.* Oh monstrous! who ever heard the like?

My lord, I will be sworn he paid him,  
On poor Irus' stone four thousand pound,  
Which I did help to tender; and hast thou  
A hellish conscience and such a brazen forehead,

To deny it against my witness,  
And his noble word?

*Le.* Sir, against your witness and his noble word

I plead mine own and one as good as his,  
That then was present at our whole conference.

*An.* My lord, there was not any but ourselves:

But who was it that thou affirm'st was there?

*Le.* Count Hermes, good my lord, a man well known,

Though he be humorous, to be honourable.

*Pto.* And will he say it?

*Le.* He will, my gracious lord, I am well assured,

And him will I send hither presently,  
Entreating your gracious favour if the impediment

Of a late sickness cause me not return,  
For I am passing ill.

*Pto.* Well, send him hither and it shall suffice.

*Le.* I will, my gracious lord, and stand  
To any censure passing willingly,  
Your highness shall set down or command  
Worshipful master Burgomaster, your officer,

To see perform'd betwixt us. [Exit.]

*Pe.* We thank you heartily; alas, poor soul,

How sick he is!

Truly I cannot choose but pity him,  
In that he loves your gracious officers.

Enter Count.

*Pto.* Oh, I thank you, sir.

*Count.* King, by your leave, and yet I need not ask leave, because I am sent for; if not, I'll begone again, without leave. Say, am I sent for, yea or no?

*Pto.* You are to witness 'twixt Antistenes and wealthy Leon.

*Count.* I know the matter, and I come from that old miser Leon, who is suddenly fallen sick of a knave's evil; which of you are troubled with that disease, masters?

*Pto.* Well, say what you know of the matter betwixt them.

*Count.* Then thus I say: my Lord Antistenes came to the stone of the blind fool Irus, that day when four thousand pounds were to be paid, where he made proffer of so much money if Leon would return the mortgage of his lands, and take assurance for another thousand to be paid I trow some three months to come or thereabout; which Leon, like an old churl as he was, most uncourteously refused: my Lord Antistenes, as he might very well, departed in a rage; but if it had been to me I would have pistoled him, i'faith.

*An.* But you are wondrously deceived, my lord,

And was not by when he and we did talk.

*Count.* 'Swounds, then I say you are deceived, my lord,

For I was by now, by my honour and by all the gods.

*An.* Then you stood close, my lord, unseen to any.

*Count.* Why, I stood close to you and seen of all,

And if you think I am too mad a fellow  
To witness such a weighty piece of work,  
The holy beggar shall perform as much,  
For he was by at our whole conference.

*Pto.* But say, Count Hermes, was the beggar by?

*Count.* I say he was and he shall say he was.

*Eu.* But he is now they say lock'd in his cave,

Fasting and praying, talking with the gods,  
And hath an iron door 'twixt him and you:  
How will you then come at him?

*Count.* I'll fetch him from his cave in spite of all his gods and iron doors, or beat him blind when as I do catch him next. Farewell, my lords, you have done with me. I'll send the beggar presently, for I am now riding to Corrucus. [*Exit.*]

*Pto.* I know not what to think in these affairs:

I cannot well condemn you, my lord,  
And your sufficient witness, being a gentleman,

Nor yet the other two, both men of credit,  
Though in his kind this Count be humorous;

But stay, we shall hear straight what Irus will depose.

*Enter Irus.*

*Ir.* Oh, who disturbs me in my holy prayers?

Oh that the king were by that he might hear,  
What thundering there is at my farther door,

Oh, how the good of Egypt is disturb'd in my devotion!

*Pto.* I am here, Irus, and it was Count Hermes

That was so rude to interrupt thy prayers.  
But I suppose the end of thy repair,

Being so weighty could not have displeas'd,  
For on thy witness doth depend the living  
Of Lord Antistenes, who doth affirm

That three days past he tender'd at thy stone

Four thousand pounds to Leon, and desired

His mortgage quitted, which he promising  
On such assurance, more as he propos'd,  
Received at that time his four thousand pounds.

*Ir.* I then was in the hearing of them both,

But heard no penny tender'd, only promised

By Lord Antistenes, if he would bring him in

His mortgage, and take assurance for another thousand

Some three months to come, or thereabouts,

Which Leon most uncourteously refused.  
My lord was angry, and I heard no more,  
And thus must I crave pardon of your grace. [*Exit.*]

*Pto.* Farewell, grave Irus.

*An.* Gods are become oppressors of the right.

*Eu.* Never had right so violent a wrong.  
For let the thunder strike me into hell,  
If what I have reported be not true.

*Pto.* This holy man no doubt speaks what he heard,

And I am sorry for Antistenes.

But I'll relieve your low estate, my lord,  
And for your service done me, guerdon you.

Master Burgomaster, let the lord have liberty,

And I will answer Leon what is due.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Elimine, Martia, Samathis.*

*Eli.* Soft, Mistress Burgomaster, pray you stay,

Your heart is greater than your person far,  
Or your state either; do we not know ye, trow?

What woman you are but a Burgomaster's wife,

And he no wiser than his neighbours neither?  
Give me the place according to my calling.

*Ma.* What skill for places, do we not all call sisters?

*Eli.* No, by my faith, I am a countess now,

I should have one to go before me bare,  
And say "stand by there" to the best of them,

And one to come behind and bear my train,  
Because my hands must not be put unto it.  
My husband is a lord, and past a lord.

*Sa.* And past a lord; what is that past, I pray?

*Eli.* Why, he's a what-you-call't.

*Ma.* A what-you-call't? Can you not name it?

*Eli.* I think I must not name it.

*Sa.* And why so, I pray?

*Eli.* Because it comes so near a thing that I know.

*Ma.* Oh, he is a Count, that is, an Earl.

*Sa.* And yet he is not known to have much land.

*Eli.* Why, therefore he is an unknown man.

*Ma.* Ay, but my husband is the king's officer.

*Sa.* Ay, but my husband is able to buy both yours.

*Eli.* You say husband—I may say my lord.  
*Ma.* And methinks husband is worth ten of lord.

*Eli.* Indeed, I love my lord to call me wife

Better than madam, yet do I not mean  
 To lose my lady's titles at your hands ;  
 I may for courtesy, and to be term'd  
 A gentle lady, call you sisters still,

But you must say, "and, please your  
 ladyship,  
 'Tis thus and so," and, "as your honour  
 please,"

Yet shall my husband call me wife, like  
 yours ;  
 For why made God the husband and the  
 wife

But that those terms should please us more  
 than others ?

New-fashion terms I like not ; for a man  
 To call his wife cony, forsooth, and lamb :  
 And pork, and mutton, he as well may say.

*Ma.* Well, madam, then, and please  
 your ladyship,

What gowns and head-tires will your honour  
 wear ?

*Eli.* Twenty are making for me, head-  
 tires and gowns,  
 Head-tires enchased, in order like the stars,  
 With perfit, great, and fine-cut precious  
 stones ;

One hath bright Ariadne's crown in it,  
 Even in the figure it presents in heaven ;  
 Another hath the fingers of Diana,  
 And Berenice's ever-burning hair ;  
 Another hath the bright Andromeda  
 With both her silver wrists bound to a rock,  
 And Perseus that did loose her and save  
 her life,

All set in number and in perfect form,  
 Even like the Asterisms fix'd in heaven ;  
 And even as you may see in moonshine  
 nights,

The moon and stars reflecting on their  
 streams,  
 So from my head shall you see stars take  
 beams.

*Ma.* Oh, brave ! God willing, I will  
 have the like.

*Sa.* And so will I, by God's grace, if I  
 live.

*Eli.* Come up to supper, it will become  
 the house wonderful well.

*Ma.* Well, if my husband will not, let  
 him not look for one good look of me.

*Sa.* Nor mine, I swear.

*Ma.* I'll ask my husband when I am  
 with child,  
 And then I know I shall be sped, i'faith.

*Eli.* But every pleasure hath a pain,  
 they say ;

My husband lies each other night abroad.

*Sa.* And so doth mine, which I like but  
 little.

*Ma.* Well, time, I hope, and change of  
 company

Will teach us somewhat to bear out the  
 absence. [Exit.

*Eli.* I know not what to say :

My husband makes as if each other night  
 he had occasion

To ride from home : at home serves not  
 his turn ;

To my good turn it, Cupid, I beseech you.

*Enter Leon, and Druso following him.*

*Le.* Now will I try to make myself, the  
 Count,

An arrant cuckold and a wittol too.

*Dru.* Now may I chance to prove a  
 cunning man,

And tell my mistress where my master  
 haunts.

*Le.* Bright nymph, I come in name of  
 all the world

That now sustains dead winter in the  
 spring,

To have a grace from thy summer darted.  
 Thy love, sweet soul, is all that I desire,

To make a general summer in this heart,  
 Where winter's double wrath hath tyrann-  
 ized.

*Eli.* How dare you, Leon, thus solicit  
 me,

Where if the Count my husband should  
 come now,

And see you courting you were sure to die ?

*Le.* Oh, but he is safe, for at my house,  
 Booted and spurr'd and in his velvet gown,  
 He took his horse and rode unto Corruceus,  
 And therefore, beauteous lady, make not  
 strange

To take a friend and add unto thy joys  
 Of happy wedlock : the end of every act  
 Is to increase contentment and renown,  
 Both which my love shall amply joy in you.

*Eli.* How can renown ensue an act of  
 shame ?

*Le.* No act hath any shame within itself,  
 But in the knowledge and ascription

Of the base world, from whom shall this  
 be kept,

As in a labyrinth or a brazen tower.

*Eli.* But virtue's sole regard must hold  
 me back.

*Le.* The virtue of each thing is in the  
 praise,

And I will rear thy praises to the skies.

Out of my treasury choose the choice of gold,

Till thou find some matching thy hair in brightness,

But that will never be, so choose thou ever.

Out of my jewelry, choose thy choice of diamonds,

Till thou find some as brightsome as thine eyes,

But that will never be, so choose thou ever. Choose rubies out until thou match thy lips,

Pearl till thy teeth, and ivory till thy skin. Be match'd in whiteness, but that will never be.

Nor never shall my treasury have end, Till on their beauties ladies loathe to spend; But that will never be, so choose thou ever.

*Eli.* Now what a God's name would this vain man have?

Do you not shame to tempt a woman thus? I know not what to say, nor what to do; He would have me do that I fear I should not,

Something it is he seeks that he thinks good,

And methinks he should be more wise than I;

I am a foolish girl, though I be married, And know not what to do, the gods do know.

*Le.* Are you content, sweet love, to grant me love?

*Eli.* And what then, sir?

*Le.* To grant me lodging in your house this night?

*Eli.* I think the man be weary of his life;

Know you the Count my husband?

*Le.* Marvellous well, and am assured of him.

*Eli.* Faith, that you are, assure as I myself: So you did talk of gold and diamonds.

*Le.* Ay, and gold and diamonds shall my sweet love have.

*Eli.* Well, I'll not bid you, sir, but if you come,

At your own peril, for I'll wash my hands. [*Offer to go out.*]

*Le.* A plague of all sanguine simplicity! *Eli.* But do you hear, sir, pray you do not think that I granted you in any case.

*Le.* No, I warrant you I'll have no such thought.

Oh, this is old excellent.

Now who can desire better sport?

This night my other wife must lie alone, And next night this wife must do the like.

Now will I woo the other as the Count, Which if she grant and they do break their troth,

I'll make myself a cuckold 'twixt them both. [*Exit.*]

*Dru.* I'll follow him until he take the earth,

And then I'll leave him. [*Exit.*]

*Enter Samathis alone.*

*Sa.* Now if my husband be not all alone, He is from home and hath left me alone, So I must learn to lie, as children go, All alone, all alone, which lesson now I am able to bear a child is worse to me Than when I was a child; the moral this, Strength without health a disadvantage is.

*Enter Druso.*

*Dru.* Mistress, what will you say if I can tell you where my master is?

*Sa.* Where, Druso, I pray thee?

*Dru.* Even close with the young countess i'faith.

*Sa.* Out on her, strumpet; doth she brag so much

Of her great Count, and glad to take my husband?

Hence comes her head-tires and her fair gowns,

Her train borne up and a man bare before her.

Was this my fortune that should be so good?

I'faith, you beggar you, you old false knave,

You holy villain, you prophetic ass, Know you no better what shall come to pass?

I'll be revenged i'faith, i'faith I'll be revenged. [*Exit.*]

*Enter Ægiale with the guard.*

*Ægi.* Oh, Irus, shall thy long approved skill,

Fail in my fortunes only, when shall I meet With my Cleanthes? What a world of time,

Is it for me to lie as in a swound, Without my life Cleanthes! can it be,

That I shall ever entertain again, Having the habit of cold death in me,

My life, Cleanthes?

*Count* [*knock within*]. Let me come in, you knaves, I say let me come in.

*1st Guard.* Sir, we are set to guard this place as our lives, and none without a warrant from the King or the Queen must enter here.

*Count.* 'Swounds, tell not me of your warrants; let me come in, I say.

*1st Guard.* My lord, we are commanded to keep out all comers, because of the branch wherein the king's life remains.

*Count.* Let me come in, you knaves; how dare you keep me out? 'Twas my gown to a mantle of rug, I had not put you all to the pistol.

*Ægi.* Shall we be troubled now with this rude Count?

*Count.* How now, Queen! what art thou doing? passioning over the picture of Cleanthes, I am sure; for I know thou lovest him.

*Ægi.* What's that, you traitor?

*Count.* No traitor neither, but a true friend to you, for had I been otherwise I should have disclosed the secret talk thou hadst with Cleanthes in the arbour, the night before he was banished, whilst I stood close and heard all.

*Ægi.* The man is mad: chains and a whip for him!

*Count.* Be patient, my wench, and I'll tell thee the very words: "Oh! my Cleanthes, love me, pity me, hate me not for love, and it is not lust that hath made me thus importunate, for then there are men enough besides Cleanthes." Go to, tell me, were not these your words, and I like no traitor to you, but a trusty friend? Now by this pistol, which is God's angel, I never uttered them till now.

*Ægi.* I spake them not; but had you been so bad

As some men are, you might have said as much

By fictions only, therefore I must needs think much the better of you to conceal it.

*Count.* Oh, you're a cunning wench, and am not I a mad slave to have such virtue as secrecy in me and none never looked for any such thing at my hands? and here's a branch forsooth of your little son turned to a Mandrake tree, by Hella the sorceress.

*Ægi.* 'Tis true, and kills me to remember it.

*Count.* Tut, tut, remember it and be wise; thou wouldst have Cleanthes come again, wouldst thou not?

*Ægi.* The king is so advised to give him death.

*Count.* The king!—come, come, 'tis you rule the king. Now, would any wise woman in the world be so hunger-starved for a man, and not use the means to have him? Think'st thou Cleanthes will come again to have his head chopped off so soon

as he comes? but had you plucked up this branch wherein the king thy husband's life consists and burnt it in the fire, his old beard would have stunk for't in the grave ere this, and then thou shouldst have seen whether Cleanthes would have come unto thee or no.

*Ægi.* Oh, execrable counsel!

*Count.* Go to, 'tis good counsel, take the grace of God before your eyes, and follow it: to it, wench, coraggio; I know I have gotten thee with child of a desire, and thou long'st but for a knife to let it out; hold, there 'tis; serve God and be thankful. Now, you knaves, will you let me come out, trow?

*1st Guard.* Please your lordship to bestow something on us, for we are poor knaves.

*Count.* Hark you, be even knaves still, and if you be poor long, you're foolish knaves, and so I'll leave you.

*2nd Guard.* Nay, 'swounds, my lord; no knaves neither.

*Count.* Then he was a knave that told me so; what dost thou tell me that? [*Exit.*]

*Ægi.* This serpent's counsel stings me to the heart,

Mounts to my brain, and binds my prince of sense,

My voluntary motion and my life, Sitting itself triumphing in their thrones,

And that doth force my hand to take this knife,

That bows my knees and sets me by thy branch,

Oh! my Diones, oh! my only son, Canst thou now feel the rigour of a knife?

No, thou art senseless, and I'll cut thee up, I'll shroud thee in my bosom safe from storms,

And trust no more my trustless guard with thee.

Come then, return unto thy mother's arms, And when I pull thee forth to serve the fire,

Turn thyself wholly into a burning tongue Invoking furies and infernal death,

To cool thy torments with thy father's breath.

*Enter Elimine and Samathis.*

*Sa.* Now, madam countess, do you make account

To take up husbands by your countess-ship?

Have you the broad seal for it, are you so high,

And stoop to one so low as is my husband?

Hence come your head-tires and your costly gowns,

Your train borne up and a man bare before you,

Now fie on pride when women go thus naked!

I ever thought that pride would have a fall, But little thought it would have such a fall.

*Eli.* What fall, I pray you?

*Sa.* There you lay last, forsooth, there you lay last.

*Eli.* Be not so angry, woman; you are deceived.

*Sa.* I know I am deceived, for thou deceivedst me,

Thou mightest as well have pick'd my purse, I tell thee;

"Oh," would my mother say, "when you have a husband,

Keep to him only;" but now one may see How horrible a thing it is to change,

Because it angers one so horribly,

You must have ushers to make way before you.

*Eli.* The dame is mad: I'll stay no longer with her. [*Exit Elimine.*]

*Sa.* Well, madam short-heels, I'll be even with you,

See, where the mad-brain Count, her husband, comes.

*Enter Count.*

*Sa.* I will begone.

*Count.* Here, you usurer's wife, stay—a plague on you, stay; whither go you so fast? Why, did I ever hurt any of your sex yet?

*Sa.* Why no, my lord.

*Count.* Why no, my lord—why the devil do you turn tail when you should not? When you should, you will not be half so hasty. A man must love you, woo you, spend upon you, and the devil of one of you is worthy to kiss the hem of my riding-gown here.

*Sa.* Is this your riding-gown, my lord?

*Count.* 'Tis no matter what it is, talk not to me: what the devil did I mean to call thee back again?

*Sa.* Why, my lord, I mean not to trouble you.

*Count.* Go to, stay, I say, 'tis against my will that I use you so kindly, I can tell you.

*Sa.* Why, you may choose, my lord.

*Count.* Ay, but I cannot choose: there you lie now; 'tis love, forsooth, that entails me to you, for if it had not been for love, I had not been here now; for the gods do

know I hold thee dearer than the pomegranate of mine eye, and that's better, by threepence, than the apple of mine eye.

*Sa.* My lord, I am sorry for your heaviness.

*Count.* Nay, 'tis no matter. I am not the first ass that hath borne Cupid's treasury.

*Sa.* My lord, 'tis enough to make an ass wise to bear treasure.

*Count.* Why then, be you that wise ass, and bear me, for I have some treasure about me: will you love me?

*Sa.* Love you, my lord? It is strange you will ask it.

*Count.* I am not the first hath desired you.

*Sa.* Nor you shall not be the last I will refuse.

*Count.* Nor are you the fairest I have seen.

*Sa.* Nor the foulest you have loved.

*Count.* Nor the fittest to be beloved.

*Sa.* Nor the unfittest to hate.

*Count.* Do and you dare, but, sirrah, and thou wilt not love, I pray thee be proud.

*Sa.* Why so, my lord?

*Count.* Because I would have thee fall, for pride must have a fall.

*Sa.* Do you delight in my fall so much?

*Count.* As much as in mine own rising, i'faith; but do not you think it strange that I do love you; for before I did love you, Cupid pricked me a Spanish leather jerkin with shooting at me, and made it so full of holes that I was fain to leave it off, and this loss have I had for your sake.

*Sa.* My lord, I'll bestow an old jerkin on you.

*Count.* Nay, that shall not serve your turn, for I have had a greater loss than that: I lost my left eye for your sake.

*Sa.* I do not think so.

*Count.* Ay, but I'll tell you how: as I was hunting in the park, I saw Cupid shooting a cockhye into your face, and gazing after his arrow, it fell into mine eye.

*Sa.* A pretty fiction.

*Count.* But I find this no fiction, and you shall make me amends with love, or by this patch of mine eye, and the patch thou wottest where, I will swear to all the city I have lain with thee.

*Sa.* I hope your lordship will not do me that wrong.

*Count.* Then do you me right, and let me lie with you; I have made the bottle-nosed knave your husband so drunk that

he is not able to stand ; go, get you home, I'll follow you.

*Sa.* Why, my lord, what will you do there ?

*Count.* Go to, make no more questions, but say I shall be welcome ; or, by mine honour, I'll do as I say ; otherwise, be as secret as death.

*Sa.* Twenty to one he will : well, my lord, if you come, you come.

*Count.* Oh, I thank you heartily ; oh, excellent, or never trust me.

*Enter Menippus and Elimine.*

*Me.* Madam, your honour is come somewhat too soon.

*Eli.* Why so, Menippus ?

*Me.* Had you stayed never so little longer, you should have met my lord coming out of Leon's house, and out of his moveables.

*Eli.* How, out of his moveables ?

*Me.* Even in plain troth, I see him woo her, win her, and went in with her.

*Eli.* Now, of mine honour, I will be revenged. Fetch me the Burgomaster, Menippus ; I'll have them both whipped about the town.

*Me.* Nay, madam, you must not dishonour him so.

*Eli.* What shall mine honour do, then ?

*Me.* Do but tongue-whip him, madam, and care not,  
And so I leave him to the mercy of your tongue.

*Eli.* My tongue shall have hell, and no mercy in it.

*Enter the Count.*

*Count.* Excellent music, excellent music.

*Eli.* And the devil take the instrument !

*Count.* What, art thou so nigh ?

*Eli.* Ay, and it were a good deed to be a little nigher too ; you make a Count ass of me, indeed, as if I were too little for you ; but bigness is my fault, unless I were a little better used at your hands.

*Count.* Why, thou wilt be too perfit if I should use thee much, for use makes perfitness.

*Eli.* Ay, but I cannot be too perfit, and therefore I'll spoil her perfections that helps to spoil mine, I warrant her.

*Count.* Why may not I lie with her, as well as thou layest with her husband ?

*Eli.* I defy you and all the world, that can say black is mine eye.

*Count.* I think so indeed, for thine eye is grey, but thou didst lie with him by

that same token he gave thee a carcanet, and thou told'st me that thy mother sent it thee : thou didst promise to banquet him when I was next abroad, thou didst say he could not be so old as he made himself to be, thou didst say 'twas pity of his nose, for he would have been a fine man else, and that God did well to make him a rich man, for he was a good man too ; and these tokens I think are sufficient, for these he told me with his own mouth.

*Eli.* He lied like an old knave as he was, and that he shall know the next time these lips open, in faith ! oh, wicked perjured man would he disclose my secrets ? i'faith, what woman would trust any man alive with her honesty ? *[Exit.*

*Count.* Ha, ha, ha, I have sent her in a pelting chase, but I'll follow her and make her mad with anger.

*Enter Porus king of Æthiopia, Rhesus king of Arabia, Bion king of Phasiaca, Bebritius king of Bebritia, with soldiers and drum and ensign.*

*Po.* Thus have we trod the sandy vales of Egypt,

Adjoining to the plains of Alexandria,  
Where proud King Ptolemy keeps his residence,

Securely trusting to his prophecies,  
Which hath foretold him many years ago,  
That if the young Arcadian Doricles  
Should link in marriage with his lovely daughter,

He then should conquer all our bordering lands,

And make us subject to his tyranny.

*Rhe.* Trusting to his fond fantastic dreams,

He hath exiled the warlike Duke Cleanthes,  
Whose name was terror to our valiant troops.

*Bi.* Cleanthes exiled gives us easy way  
To our attempts where had he stay'd,  
And been a friend to him, yet should he not

Escape subjection.

*Be.* We will divide his kingdom 'twixt us four,

And reave from him his four chief ornaments,

And for to grieve his aged mind the more,

He shall be kept in lasting servitude,  
So to fulfil what fate to him assign'd.

*Po.* Come, let us march and brave him at the walls.

If Porus live to wield his martial sword,

His city walls shall not preserve him safe,  
But he shall die by Porus and his friends.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Doricles and Aspasia.*

*Do.* Sweet madam, grant me once a cheerful look

To glad my dying heart with sorrow kill'd :  
Your father hath resign'd his free consent ;  
You bound by duty to obey his will.

*As.* Nay, rather let him hail me to my death,

Than 'gainst my will constrain me match myself.

*Enter Count.*

*Count.* Die, thou vile wretch, and live,  
Aspasia ;

Even now I heard thy father Ptolemy,  
With words that still do tingle in mine ears,  
Pronounce him heir to Alexandria.

'Tis time for me to stir when such young boys

Shall have their weak necks over-poised  
with crowns,

Which must become resolved champions,  
That for a crown's exchange will sell their souls.

[*He kills him.*]

*As.* Wicked Count Hermes, for this monstrous deed,

Egypt will hate thee and thou sure must die :

Then hie thee to the hills beyond the Alps,  
Fly to unknown and unfrequented climes,  
Some desert place that never saw the sun.

For if the king or any of his friends  
Shall find Count Hermes, thou art surely dead.

*Count.* I'll fly no more than doth a settled rock,

No more than mountains or the steadfast poles ;

But come, sweet love, if thou wilt come with me,

We two will live amongst the shadowy groves,

And we will sit like shepherds on a hill,  
And with our heavenly voices 'tice the trees

To echo sweetly our celestial tunes.  
Else will I angle in the running brooks,

Seasoning our toils with kisses on the banks ;

Sometime I'll dive into the murmuring springs,

And fetch thee stones to hang about thy neck.

Which by thy splendour will be turn'd to pearl.

Say, fair Aspasia, wilt thou walk with me ?

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*As.* No, bloody Count, but I will clear myself,

And tell thy murders to the amazed court.

*Count.* Nay, if thou wilt not choose, you

peevish girl,

Thou canst not say but thou wert offer'd fair.

But here must end Count Hermes' strange disguise.

My velvet gown, my pistol, and this patch  
No more must hide me in the Count's attire.

Now will I turn my gown to usurer's coats,

And thus appear unto the world no more.  
Farewell, Aspasia.

[*Exit Count.*]

*As.* Go, wretched villain, hide thy hated head

Where never heaven's light may shine on thee,

Who's there? come forth, for here is murder done,

Murder, murder of good prince Doricles.

*Enter Euribates.*

*Eu.* Who calls out murder?—lady, was it you?

*As.* As I was walking in the pleasant weeds,

With Doricles, the young Arcadian prince,  
Rush'd in Count Hermes and in desperate words

Hath slain this prince.

*Eu.* A baleful deed! Pursue the murderer,

And tell the king of this foul accident.

*Enter Ptolemy.*

*Pto.* Oh, tell no more ; instead of tears,  
My beating heart dissolves in drops of blood,

And from mine eyes that stare upon this corpse

Leaps out my soul and on it I will die.

Oh, Doricles, oh, dear Arcadian prince,  
The bulwark and supporter of my life,

That by decree of fates was promised  
To add four neighbour kingdoms to my crown,

And shield me from a most abhorred death,

Now shall my kingdom leave me with my life,

And suddenly look for some monstrous fate,  
Shall fall like thunder on my wretched state.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mes.* Arm, arm, my lord ! my lords, to instant arms,

Four mighty kings are landed in thy coast,  
And threaten death and ruin to thy land,  
Black Porus, the Ethiopian king,  
Comes marching first with twenty thousand  
men,

Next Rhesus, king of sweet Arabia,  
In warlike manner marcheth after him,  
In equal number and in battle 'ray.  
Next Bion, king of rich Phasiaca,  
And stern Bebritius of Bebritia,  
With each of them full twenty thousand  
strong,  
All which hath vow'd the death of Ptolemy,  
And thus they hither bend their speedy  
feet.

*Pto.* How suddenly is weather overcast,  
How is the face of peaceful Egypt  
changed,  
Like as the smiling flowers above the  
ground  
By keenest edge of Eurys' breath is cut.

*Eu.* To arms, my lord, and gather up  
your strength,  
Your bands in Memphis and in Caspia,  
Join'd with your power of Alexandria,  
Will double all the forces of these kings.

*Pto.* All shall be done we may, mean-  
while  
Bury the body of this slaughter'd prince,  
Lest with the view my senses follow his.  
Curs't be his hand that wrought the  
damned deed,  
Cold and uncover'd may his body lie,  
Let storm and hail and thunder beat on him,  
And every bird and beast run over him,  
That robb'd poor Ptolemy of such a hope.  
Pursue the desperate Count that murder'd  
him,  
A thousand kingdoms shall not save his  
life.

*Enter Leon.*

*Le.* A miracle, a miracle, a dreadful  
miracle!

*Pto.* What miracle, oh! what will heavens  
do more,  
To punish Egypt and her hapless king?

*Le.* As I was walking through the Syrian  
groves,  
I saw the desperate Count, the murderer  
Of good prince Doricles, as I hear say,  
Fly through the deserts to the Memphic  
shades,  
Where hell to interrupt his passage thither,  
Raving beneath the groundwork of the  
earth  
As if ten thousand vapours burst in her,  
Sever'd her womb and swallow'd quick  
miserable Count.

*Pto.* Just are the heavens in his most  
dreadful end.

But come, my lords, let us to instant arms,  
To drive away more mischiefs from our  
land. *[Exeunt.*

*Le.* So get you gone and perish all with  
him,

Now shall you know what want you have  
of me.

Now will I gather up my sums of money,  
And of my creditors borrow what I can.  
Because as Leon I'll be seen no more,  
This day they promised for to meet me  
here,  
And here comes some of them.

*Enter First Messenger.*

*1st Mess.* My master, sir, your friend  
Calatus, hath sent you, sir, your five hun-  
dred crowns for the rich jewel that he  
bought of you.

*Le.* I thank him heartily; this jewel of  
so many thousand crowns the Queen of  
Egypt did bestow on me, when that I told  
her in poor Irus' shape where her Clean-  
thes was; but soft, who have we here?

*Enter Second Messenger.*

*2nd Mess.* Druso, the Italian merchant,  
hath sent by me,  
Hath sent you, sir, in diamonds and in  
pearls

So much as mounteth to five thousand  
crowns,  
And craves no more assurance but your  
word.

*Le.* There's my bill, and thank thy mas-  
ter; he shall have more than word.

*[Exeunt. Manet Leon.]*

Never shall he nor they see this again,  
Nor me neither, as I am this present man;  
This, with the rest I have will make a  
pretty sum,

With this will I employ me in these wars.  
Now will I take on me the form and shape  
Of Duke Cleanthes; but what intends this  
alarum? *[Alarum.]*

*Enter Clearchus.*

*Clear.* Where may I seek to find Clean-  
thes out,  
That martial prince whom Ptolemy, un-  
kind,  
Hath banished from out the Egyptian  
land;  
Our warlike troops are scatter'd and o'er-  
thrown,  
And his dear friends Acates and Acanthes

Lie in the field besmired in their bloods.  
I'll run through all these groves to find him  
out. [Exit.

*Le.* My sweet Acates and Acanthes  
slain!

Grief to my heart and sorrow to my soul.  
Then rouse thyself, Cleanthes, and re-  
venge  
Their guiltless blood on these base mis-  
creants.

Oh, let the canker'd trumpet of the deep  
Be rattled out and ring into their ears  
The dire revenge Cleanthes will inflict  
On these four kings and all their 'com-  
plices. [Alarum. Excursions.

*Enter Cleanthes, leading Porus, Rhesus,  
Bion, Bebritius; Pego, Clearchus,  
Euribatus.*

*Cle.* Thus have you strove in vain  
against those gods,

That rescue Egypt in Cleanthes' arms;  
Come, yield your crowns and homages to  
me.

Though Ptolemy is dead, yet I survive,  
Elect and chosen by the peers to scourge  
The vile presumption of your hated lives;  
Then yield as vanquish'd unto Egypt's  
king.

*Po.* First by thy valour and the strength  
of arms,

Porus, the wealthy Ethiopian king,  
Doth yield his crown and homage unto  
thee,

Swearing by all my gods whom I adore,  
To honour Duke Cleanthes whilst he live,  
And in his aid with twenty thousand men,  
Will always march 'gainst whom thou  
mean'st to fight.

*Bi.* Bion, whose neck was never forced  
to bow,

Doth yield him captive to thy warlike  
sword.

Command whatso thou list, we will per-  
form,  
And all my power shall march at thy com-  
mand.

*Rhe.* Rhesus doth yield his crown and  
dignity

To great Cleanthes, Egypt's only strength;  
For if Cleanthes lives, who ever lived  
More likelier to be monarch of the world?  
Then here accept my vow'd allegiance,  
Which as the rest I render unto thee.

*Be.* So saith Bebritius of Bebritia,  
And lays his crown and homage at thy  
feet.

*Cle.* Hold, take your crowns again,  
And keep your oaths and fealties to me.

So shall you live as free as heretofore,  
And ne'er hereafter stoop to conquest more.

*Enter Elimine and Samathis with child.*

*Pe.* Here comes the two widows of the  
beggar and the king; little know they that  
both their husbands are turned into one  
king; there would be old striving who  
should be queen, i'faith.

*Eli.* Pity, dread sovereign.

*Sa.* Pity, gracious lord.

*Cle.* What are your suits?

*Eli.* I, the poor Countess and the widow  
left

Of late Count Hermes, having all my goods  
Seized to our late king's use, for murder  
done,

Of young prince Doricles, humbly pray  
your grace

I may have somewhat to maintain my  
state,

And this poor burthen which I go withal,  
The hapless infant of a hapless father.

*Sa.* And I, my lord, humbly entreat  
your grace,

That where my husband Leon is deceased,  
And left me much in debt, his creditors  
Having seized all I have into their hands,  
And turn'd me with this hapless burthen  
here,

Into the streets, your highness will descend  
To my relief by some convenient order.

*Cle.* Poor souls, I most extremely pity  
them.

But say, is Leon dead?

*Cle.* Men say, my lord he cast his  
desperate body

From th' Alexandrian Tower into the sea.

*Cle.* Who saw the sight, or gave out  
this report?

You, master Burgomaster?

*Pe.* I did, my gracious lord.

*Cle.* So I devised indeed that he should  
say,

That none should never look for Leon  
more.

But these my widows here must not be left,  
Unto the mercy of the needy world,  
Nor mine own issue that they go withal  
Have such base fortunes and their sire so  
great.

Widows, in pity of your widowhood,  
And the untimely ends of both your hus-  
bands,

The slaughter of the Count, your husband,  
madam,

Shall be remitted, and yourself enjoy  
The utmost of the living he possess'd,  
So will I pay your husband Leon's debt,

And both shall live fitting their wonted states,  
Kings in their mercy come most near the gods,

And can no better show it than in ruth,  
Of widows and of children fatherless.  
Myself will therefore be to both your births  
A careful father in their bringing up.

*Am.* The gods for ever bless your majesty!

*Cle.* But tell me, were your husbands such bad men,  
That every way they did deserve such ends?

*Eli.* Mine was a husband to my heart's content,

But that he used the privilege of men.

*Cle.* What privilege of men?

*Eli.* To take some other love besides his wife,

Which men think by their custom they may do,

Although their wives be strictly bound to them.

*Cle.* With whom suspect you he was great withal?

*Eli.* With this poor widow here, the world supposeth.

*Sa.* So thinks the world my husband was with you.

*Pe.* Fair dames, what will you say to me,

If I can tell you where your husbands be?

*Cle.* What! can you, sir?

*Pe.* Nay nothing, sir, I did but jest with you; I feared\* him, i' faith; but I'll be secret, that's flat.

*Cle.* Well, master Burgomaster, see that you restore

The goods and lands you seized  
Both of the Countess and rich Leon's wife.

Not pity of their widowhoods alone,  
But their rare beauties move me to this good;

Oh, master Burgomaster, see here's your wife,

Come to welcome you home from wars.

*Enter Martia with a child.*

*Mar.* Oh husband, husband, will you go to war, and leave me in this taking?

*Pe.* This taking! why, this is a very good taking; how say you, is it not, and like your majesty?

*Cle.* 'Tis very well, master Burgomaster.

\* Feared him—i.e., frightened. Or perhaps a misprint for *scared*.

*Pe.* But shall I entreat one boon of your majesty?

*Cle.* What's that, master Burgomaster?

*Pe.* Marry, even to be godfather to my young Burgomaster here.

*Cle.* With all my heart, sir.

*Mar.* Come on, sweet husband, for my time draws near.

*Pe.* Fear not, thou shalt be a joyful mother, I warrant thee.

*Cle.* How say you, my lords; is not our Burgomaster a tall man every way? Did you not mark how manfully he behaved himself in our late battle?

*Po.* We did, my lord, and wonder at his courage.

*Rhe.* His merit doth deserve a better place

Than to be Burgomaster of Alexandria.

*Cle.* Then say, my lords, how shall we deal with him?

*Bi.* Had he been widower he might have wedded with this Countess here.

*Pe.* Oh! I have one of mine own, I thank you, sir; here's one has the sweet of them, i' faith.

*Po.* My lord, the offer had been too high a grace,

For ne'er did eye behold a fairer face.

*Be.* So saith mine eye that hath my heart incensed.

*Bi.* And, Rhesus, methinks this exceeds her far.

*Rhe.* No question of it, as the sun a star.

*Po.* As suddenly as lightning beauty wounds.

*Be.* None ever loved, but at first sight they loved.

*Po.* Love's darts are swift as is the lightning-fire.

*Rhe.* See, he shoots arrows burning from her eyes.

*Po.* Why, which loves Rhesus?

*Rhe.* This celestial dame.

*Po.* And which loves Bion?

*Bi.* Even the very same.

*Po.* Then may I freely joy the Countess here.

*Beb.* No, Porus, for Bebritius loves her too.

*Cle.* Are they in love? oh! gods would that were true,

My loving joy the fresh desire of kings.

How now, my lords, doth beauty startle you?

*Po.* More than dead stocks would startle at such beauty.

*Be.* In vain do I resist my passions.  
Mighty Cleanthes, to annex my heart

In love to thee as well as victory,  
Grant this fair Countess here may be my  
queen.

*Po.* No, great Cleanthes, give her to my  
hand,

Whose heart was first the subject of her  
graces.

*Rhe.* Then let the Arabian king make  
this his queen.

*Bi.* Nay, this, Cleanthes, let my love  
enjoy.

*Cle.* How fatal are these loves ; now I  
perceive,

Their fortunes that I told as I was Irus  
Will now in force, I see, be come to pass.

*Sa.* Oh ! holy Irus, blessed be thy  
tongue,

That like an orator hath told our fortunes.

*Fli.* He told us we should soon lose our  
first loves,

Making our second choice 'mongst greatest  
kings.

*Cle.* I did indeed, but God knows knew  
not how.

*Pe.* How say you, master brother, am  
not I secret now ?

*Cle.* Thou art, and be so still, for not the  
world

Shall ever know the mad pranks I have  
play'd.

Now stand fair, my lords, and let these  
ladies view you.

*Eli.* In my eye now the blackest is the  
fairest,

For every woman chooseth white and red.  
Come, martial Porus, thou shalt have my  
love.

*Be.* Out on thee, foolish woman, thou  
hast chose a devil.

*Pe.* Not yet, sir, till he have horns.

*Sa.* 'Tis not the face and colour I regard,  
But fresh and lovely youth allures my  
choice,

And thee, most beauteous Bion, I affect.

*Rhe.* Hapless is Rhesus !

*Bebri.* Accursed Bebritius !

*Cle.* Have patience, gentle lords ; I will  
provide

Other Egyptian ladies for your turn,  
So will we link in perfit league of love.

So shall the victory you lost to me  
Set double glory on your conquer'd heads.

So let us go to frolic in our Court,  
Carousing free whole bowls of Greekish  
wine,

In honour of the conquest we have made,  
That at our banquet all the gods may  
'tend,

Plauding our victory and this happy end.

[*Exeunt.*]