

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Sicilia. A Room in the Palace.**Enter* HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, and Ladies.

*Herm.* Take the boy to you : he so troubles me,  
'Tis past enduring.

*1 Lady.* Come, my gracious lord,  
Shall I be your playfellow?

*Mam.* No, I'll none of you.

*1 Lady.* Why, my sweet lord?

*Mam.* You'll kiss me hard, and speak to me as if  
I were a baby still. — I love you better.

*2 Lady.* And why so, my lord?

*Mam.* Not for because  
Your brows are blacker ; yet black brows, they say,  
Become some women best, so that there be not  
Too much hair there, but in a semicircle,  
Or a half-moon made with a pen.

*2 Lady.* Who taught ye this?

*Mam.* I learn'd it out of women's faces. — Pray now  
What colour are your eyebrows?

*1 Lady.* Blue, my lord.

*Mam.* Nay, that's a mock : I've seen a lady's nose  
That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.

*Herm.* Come, sir, now

I am for you again : pray you, sit by us,  
And tell's a tale.

*Mam.* Merry or sad shall't be?

*Herm.* As merry as you will.

*Mam.* A sad tale's best for Winter : I have one  
Of sprites and goblins.

*Herm.* Let's have that, good sir.  
Come on, sit down : come on, and do your best  
To fright me with your sprites ; you're powerful at it.

*Mam.* There was a man, —

*Herm.* Nay, come, sit down ; then on.

*Mam.* — Dwelt by a churchyard : — I will tell it softly ;  
Yond crickets shall not hear it.

*Herm.* Come on, then,  
And give't me in mine ear.

*Enter* LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, Lords, and Guards.

*Leon.* Was he met there? his train? Camillo with him?

*1 Lord.* Behind the tuft of pines I met them ; never  
Saw I men scour so on their way : I eyed them  
Even to their ships.

*Leon.* How blest am I  
In my just censure,<sup>1</sup> in my true opinion !  
Alack, for lesser knowledge !<sup>2</sup> how accursed  
In being so blest ! There may be in the cup  
A spider<sup>3</sup> steep'd, and one may drink, depart,  
And yet partake no venom ; for his knowledge  
Is not infected : but, if one present  
Th' abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known  
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,

<sup>1</sup> *Censure* is judgment in old language. This use of the word is well  
instanced in Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, i. 2 : "Should I say more, you well  
might *censure* me a flatterer."

<sup>2</sup> "O that my knowledge were less!"

<sup>3</sup> Spiders were commonly thought poisonous in Shakespeare's time ; a  
belief not altogether extinct even now.



With violent hefts :<sup>4</sup> I've drunk, and seen the spider.  
 Camillo was his help in this, his pander :  
 There is a plot against my life, my crown ;  
 All's true that I mistrusted : that false villain  
 Whom I employ'd was pre-employ'd by him :  
 He has discover'd my design, and I  
 Remain a pinch'd thing ;<sup>5</sup> yea, a very trick  
 For them to play at will. — How came the posterns  
 So easily open ?

*Lord.* By his great authority ;  
 Which often hath no less prevail'd than so,  
 On your command.

*Leon.* I know't too well. —  
 Give me the boy : I'm glad you did not nurse him :  
 Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you  
 Have too much blood in him.

*Herm.* What is this ? sport ?

*Leon.* Bear the boy hence ; he shall not come about her ;  
 Away with him ! — [*Exit MAMILLIUS with some of the Guards.*]

You, my lords,  
 Look on her, mark her well ; be but about  
 To say, *She is a goodly lady*, and  
 The justice of your hearts will thereto add,  
 'Tis *pity she's not honest-honourable* :  
 Praise her but for this her without-door form, —  
 Which, on my faith, deserves high speech, — and straight

<sup>4</sup> *Hefts* is *heavings* ; the strainings of nausea. — *Gorge* is *throat* or *gullet*.  
 So in *Hamlet*, v. 1 : " And now how abhorred in my imagination it is ! my  
*gorge* rises at it."

<sup>5</sup> *Pinch'd thing* probably signifies a *puppet* ; puppets being moved or  
 played by pinching them. *Leontes* means that others are making game of  
 him, and sporting themselves in his dishonour.

The shrug, the hum, or ha, — these petty brands  
 That calumny doth use ; — O, I am out,  
 That mercy does ; for calumny will sear<sup>6</sup>  
 Virtue itself ; — these shrugs, these hums and ha's,  
 When you have said *she's goodly*, come between,  
 Ere you can say *she's honest* : but be't known,  
 From him that has most cause to grieve it should be,  
 She's an adultrous.

*Herm.* Should a villain say so,  
 The most replenish'd villain in the world,  
 He were as much more villain : you, my lord,  
 Do but mistake.

*Leon.* You have mistook, my lady,  
 Polixenes for Leontes : O thou thing,  
 Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,  
 Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,  
 Should a like language use to all degrees,  
 And mannerly distinguishment leave out  
 Betwixt the prince and beggar ! — I have said  
 She's an adultrous ; I have said with whom :  
 More, she's a traitor ; and Camillo is  
 A fedary<sup>7</sup> with her ; and one that knows,  
 What she should shame to know herself  
 But with her most vile principal.<sup>8</sup>

*Herm.* How will this grieve you,  
 When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that  
 You thus have publish'd me ! Gentle my lord,

<sup>6</sup> *Sear* has the sense of *brands*, second line before. The image is of burn-  
 ing marks upon the person with a hot iron.

<sup>7</sup> *Fedary* for *confederate*, *partner*, or *accomplice*. Repeatedly so.

<sup>8</sup> One that knows what she would be ashamed to know herself, even if  
 the knowledge of it were shared *but with* her paramour.



You scarce can right me thoroughly<sup>9</sup> then, to say  
You did mistake.

*Leon.*

No, no ; if I mistake  
In those foundations which I build upon,  
The centre<sup>10</sup> is not big enough to bear  
A schoolboy's top. — Away with her to prison !  
He who shall speak for her's afar off guilty  
But that he speaks.<sup>11</sup>

*Herm.*

There's some ill planet reigns :  
I must be patient till the Heavens look  
With an aspect more favourable. — Good my lords,  
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex  
Commonly are ; the want of which vain dew  
Perchance shall<sup>12</sup> dry your pities ; but I have  
That honourable grief lodged here which burns  
Worse than tears drown : beseech you all, my lords,  
With thoughts so qualified as your charities  
Shall best instruct you, measure me ; — and so  
The King's will be perform'd !

*Leon.* [To the Guards.] Shall I be heard ?

*Herm.* Who is't that goes with me ? — Beseech your High-  
ness,

My women may be with me ; for, you see,

<sup>9</sup> *Thoroughly* and *thoroughly* are but different forms of the same word. To be thorough in a thing, or to do a thing thoroughly, is to *go through* it. — To say is here an instance of the infinitive used gerundively, and so is equivalent to *by saying*.

<sup>10</sup> *Centre* here is the *Earth*, which the old astronomy regarded as literally the centre of the solar system. The Copernican astronomy was not received in England till many years later. See page 47, note 21.

<sup>11</sup> The mere act of speaking in her behalf makes the speaker remotely guilty of her crime.

<sup>12</sup> *Shall* where we should use *will* ; the two being often used indiscriminately in the Poet's time. Repeatedly so in this play.

My plight requires it. — Do not weep, good fools ;<sup>13</sup>  
There is no cause : when you shall know your mistress  
Has deserved prison, then abound in tears  
As I come out : this action I now go on  
Is for my better grace. — Adieu, my lord :  
I never wish'd to see you sorry ; now  
I trust I shall. — My women, come ; you have leave.

*Leon.* Go, do our bidding ; hence !

[*Exeunt Queen and Ladies, with Guards.*]

*1 Lord.* Beseech your Highness, call the Queen again.

*Ant.* Be certain what you do, sir, lest your justice  
Prove violence ; in the which three great ones suffer,  
Yourself, your Queen, your son.

*1 Lord.* For her, my lord,

I dare my life lay down, and will do't, sir,  
Please you t' accept it, that the Queen is spotless  
T' the eyes of Heaven and to you ; I mean,  
In this which you accuse her.

*Ant.* If it prove

She's otherwise, I'll keep my stable where  
I lodge my wife ;<sup>14</sup> I'll go in couples with her ;  
Than when I feel and see her no further trust her ;  
For every inch of woman in the world,  
Ay, every dram of woman's flesh, is false,  
If she be.

<sup>13</sup> *Fool* was much used as a term of loving, or playful, familiarity. So, in *King Lear*, v. 3, the old King says of his Cordelia, when he brings her in dead, " And my poor fool is hang'd."

<sup>14</sup> The meaning of this passage has been much disputed. The Poet often uses to *keep* for to *guard*, to *watch* ; and such is no doubt the meaning here. Dr. Ingleby, in his *Shakespeare Hermeneutics*, says, and, I think, shows, that *keeping one's stable* was a familiar phrase in the Poet's time, meaning to keep personal watch over the fidelity of one's wife or one's mis-



Leon. Hold your peaces.<sup>15</sup>

1 Lord.

Good my lord,—

Ant. It is for you we speak, not for ourselves:  
You are abused, and by some putter-on,<sup>16</sup>  
That will be damn'd for it; would I knew the villain,  
I would lant-dam him.<sup>17</sup> Be she honour-flaw'd,—  
I have three daughters; the eldest is eleven;  
The second and the third, nine and some five;  
If this prove true, they'll pay for't.

Leon.

Cease; no more.

You smell this business with a sense as cold

gress. He aptly quotes from *Much Ado*, iii. 4: "Then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll look he shall lack no barns"; whereupon he remarks as follows: "Of course there is a pun on *barns*; and there is a like pun on *stables*, which like *barns* had two meanings. When we know that *stables* was the condition precedent to *barns*, we have already pretty nearly determined its cant meaning. But a man's stable may be kept by his wife, by himself, or by a third party: by the wife, if she be chaste; by the husband, if he be suspicious; by a third party, if she be unchaste and her husband be absent." Then, as an instance of the first, he quotes from Chapman's *All Fools*, iv. 2: "But, for your wife that keeps the stable of your honour, let her be lockt in a brazen towre, let Argus himselfe keepe her, yet can you never bee secure of your honour." Of course Dr. Ingleby regards the passage in the text as an instance of the second. It is hardly needful to remark how well this explanation accords with the context. For so the meaning comes thus: "I will trust my wife no further than I can see her; will myself, in my own person, keep watch and ward over her virtue, and not confide her to any other guardianship." See Critical Notes.

<sup>15</sup> *Peaces* where we should say *peace*. This use of the plural, when speaking to or of more than one person, was common in Shakespeare's time. So near the opening of this play: "We will be justified in our *loves*." And a little before in this scene: "Perchance shall dry your *pities*."

<sup>16</sup> A *putter-on*, as the word is here used, is an *instigator*. So the Poet repeatedly has to *put on* for to *incite*, to *instigate*, or to *set on*.—Here, as often, *abused* is *cheated*, *deceived*, or *practised upon*.

<sup>17</sup> Punishment by *lant-damming* would involve a peculiar sort of mutilation, and cause a slow and dreadful death. See Critical Notes.

As is a dead man's nose: but I do see't and feel't,  
As you feel doing this, and see withal [Grasping his arm.  
The instruments that you feel.<sup>18</sup>

Ant. If it be so,

We need no grave to bury honesty:  
There's not a grain of it the face to sweeten  
Of the whole dungy Earth.

Leon.

What! lack I credit?

1 Lord. I had rather you did lack than I, my lord,  
Upon this ground; and more it would content me  
To have her honour true than your suspicion,  
Be blamed for't how you might.

Leon.

Why, what need we

Commune with you of this, but<sup>19</sup> rather follow  
Our forceful instigation?<sup>20</sup> Our prerogative  
Calls not your counsels; but our natural goodness  
Imparts this: which if you—or stupefied,

<sup>18</sup> "I see and feel my disgrace, as you now feel my doing this to you, and as you now see the instruments that you feel;" that is, *my fingers*.

<sup>19</sup> Shakespeare has divers instances of *but* so used as to be hardly reducible under any general rules: often in the adversative sense, often in the exceptive; and often with various shades of meaning lying between these two, and partaking, more or less, of them both. Here it seems to have the force of *and not*. Perhaps the instance nearest to this is in *Richard III.*, ii. 1: "Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate upon your Grace, but with all duteous love doth cherish you and yours, God punish me with hate in those where I expect most love." Here the meaning seems to be "*and doth not cherish*." Sometimes, however, *but* seems to have the force of *instead of*. So, in the passage just quoted, the sense may well be *instead of cherishing*, &c. And so in the text, "*instead of following* rather," &c. A like use of the word occurs in *Cymbeline*, iii. 6: "Were you a woman, I should woo hard *but* be your groom;" that is, "*rather than not* be your groom," or "rather than be any thing *except* your groom."

<sup>20</sup> *Instigation* is here to be taken in a good sense: "the strong prompting of our own judgment or understanding."



Or seeming so in skill<sup>21</sup> — cannot or will not  
Relish as truth, like us, inform yourselves  
We need no more of your advice: the matter,  
The loss, the gain, the ordering on't, is all  
Properly ours.

*Ant.* And I do wish, my liege,  
You had only in your silent judgment tried it,  
Without more overture.<sup>22</sup>

*Leon.* How could that be?  
Either thou art most ignorant by age,  
Or thou wert born a fool. Camillo's flight,  
Added to their familiarity, —  
Which was as gross as ever touch'd conjecture,<sup>23</sup>  
That lack'd sight only, nought for approbation  
But only seeing, all other circumstances  
Made up to th' deed, — doth push on this proceeding:  
Yet, for a greater confirmation, —  
For in an act of this importance 'twere  
Most piteous to be wild, — I have dispatch'd in post<sup>24</sup>  
To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple,  
Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know  
Of stuff'd sufficiency:<sup>25</sup> now, from the oracle  
They will bring all; whose spiritual counsel had,  
Shall stop or spur me on. Have I done well?

<sup>21</sup> Skill in the sense of art, craft, or cunning.

<sup>22</sup> Overture is disclosure, or publishment. So in *King Lear*, iii. 7: "It was he that made the overture of thy treasons to us."

<sup>23</sup> To touch sometimes means to stir, to move, to rouse. So in *King Lear*, ii. 4: "Touch me with noble anger." — Approbation, in the next line, is proof or attestation. Repeatedly so.

<sup>24</sup> In post is in haste; with the speed of a postman.

<sup>25</sup> That is, of full, ample, or complete ability. See *Much Ado*, page 25, note 8.

*1 Lord.* Well done, my lord.

*Leon.* Though I am satisfied, and need no more  
Than what I know, yet shall the oracle  
Give rest to th' minds of others;<sup>26</sup> such as he  
Whose ignorant credulity will not  
Come up to th' truth. So have we thought it good  
From our free person she should be confined,  
Lest that the treachery of the two fled hence  
Be left her to perform. Come, follow us;  
We are to speak in public; for this business  
Will raise us all.

*Ant.* [*Aside.*] To laughter, as I take it,  
If the good truth were known.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *The Same.* *The outer Room of a Prison.*

*Enter* PAULINA and Attendants.

*Paul.* The keeper of the prison, call to him;  
Let him have knowledge who I am. — [*Exit an Attendant.*]  
Good lady!

No Court in Europe is too good for thee;  
What dost thou, then, in prison? —

*Re-enter* Attendant, with the Jailer.

Now, good sir,

You know me, do you not?

*Jail.*

For a worthy lady,

<sup>26</sup> Observe, Leontes consults the oracle only for convincing others, not for correcting himself. And so, of course, he quarrels with the answer as soon as he finds it against him: if the god agree with him in opinion, all right; if not, then he is no god.



And one who much I honour.

*Paul.* Pray you, then,  
Conduct me to the Queen.

*Jail.* I may not, madam : to the contrary  
I have express commandment.

*Paul.* Here's ado,  
To lock up honesty and honour from  
Th' access of gentle visitors ! Is't lawful,  
Pray you, to see her women ? any of them ?  
Emilia ?

*Jail.* So please you, madam,  
To put apart these your attendants, I  
Shall bring Emilia forth.

*Paul.* I pray now call her. —  
Withdraw yourselves.

*Jail.* And, madam,  
I must be present at your conference.

*Paul.* Well, be't so, pr'ythee. —  
Here's such ado to make no stain a stain,  
As passes colouring.<sup>1</sup> —

*Re-enter Jailer, with EMILIA.*

Dear gentlewoman,  
How fares our gracious lady ?

*Emil.* As well as one so great and so forlorn  
May hold together :<sup>2</sup> on her frights and griefs, —  
Which never tender lady hath borne greater, —

<sup>1</sup> As *desfes palliation*. To *pass* is, in one sense, to *outstrip*, to *go beyond*, to *surpass*. To *colour* often means to *palliate*, to *disguise*, to *make specious*.  
<sup>2</sup> An odd expression, but probably meaning "As well as is *consistent* with the state of one so high-minded and so desolate"; or of one so high-placed and cast down so low. To *hold together*, to *stand together*, is to *be consistent*, and so to *be possible*.

She is, something before her time, deliver'd.

*Paul.* A boy ?

*Emil.* A daughter ; and a goodly babe,  
Lusty, and like to live : the Queen receives  
Much comfort in't ; says, *My poor prisoner*,  
*I'm innocent as you*.

*Paul.* I dare be sworn :  
These dangerous unsafe lunes<sup>3</sup> i' the King, beshrew them !  
He must be told on't, and he shall : the office  
Becomes a woman best ; I'll take't upon me :  
If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister,  
And never to my red-look'd anger be  
The trumpet any more. Pray you, Emilia,  
Commend my best obedience to the Queen :  
If she dares trust me with her little babe,  
I'll show't the King, and undertake to be  
Her advocate to th' loud'st. We do not know  
How he may soften at the sight o' the child :  
The silence often of pure innocence  
Persuades, when speaking fails.

*Emil.* Most worthy madam,  
Your honour and your goodness is so evident,  
That your free undertaking cannot miss  
A thriving issue : there's no lady living  
So meet for this great errand. Please your ladyship  
To visit the next room, I'll presently  
Acquaint the Queen of your most noble offer ;

<sup>3</sup> *Lunes*, I believe, is not met with in any other English writer ; but is used in old French for *fits of lunacy* and *mad freaks*. It occurs again in *The Merry Wives*, iv. 2 : "Why, woman, your husband is in his old *lunes* again." Also in *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. 3 : "Yea, watch his pettish *lunes*, his ebbs, his flows," &c.



Who but to-day hammer'd of this design,  
But durst not tempt a minister of honour,  
Lest she should be denied.

*Paul.* Tell her, Emilia,  
I'll use that tongue I have : if wit flow from't,  
As boldness from my bosom, let 't not be doubted  
I shall do good.

*Emil.* Now be you bless'd for it !  
I'll to the Queen : please you, come something nearer.

*Jail.* Madam, if't please the Queen to send the babe,  
I know not what I shall incur to pass it,  
Having no warrant.

*Paul.* You need not fear it, sir :  
The child was prisoner to the womb, and is,  
By law and process of great Nature, thence  
Freed and enfranchised ; not a party to  
The anger of the King, nor guilty of,  
If any be, the trespass of the Queen.

*Jail.* I do believe it.

*Paul.* Do not you fear : upon mine honour, I  
Will stand 'twixt you and danger.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — *The Same.* A Room in the Palace.

*Enter* LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, Lords, and Attendants.

*Leon.* Nor night nor day no rest : it is but weakness  
To bear the matter thus, mere weakness. If  
The cause were not in being, — part o' the cause,  
She the adultrous ; for the harlot King  
Is quite beyond mine arm, out of the blank

And level of my brain,<sup>1</sup> plot-proof ; — but she  
I can hook to me,<sup>2</sup> say that she were gone,  
Given to the fire, a moiety of my rest  
Might come to me again. — Who's there ?

*I Atten.* [*Advancing.*]

My lord.

*Leon.* How does the boy ?

*I Atten.*

He took good rest to-night ;

'Tis hoped his sickness is discharged.

*Leon.* To see his nobleness !

Conceiving the dishonour of his mother,  
He straight declined, droop'd, took it deeply,  
Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself,  
Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,  
And downright languish'd. — Leave me solely ; go,  
See how he fares. [*Exit* *I Attend.*] — Fie, fie ! no thought  
of him ;<sup>3</sup>

The very thought of my revenges that way  
Recoil upon me : in himself too mighty,  
And in his parties, his alliance ; let him be,  
Until a time may serve : for present vengeance,  
Take it on her. Camillo and Polixenes  
Laugh at me, make their pastime at my sorrow :  
They should not laugh, if I could reach them ; nor  
Shall she, within my power.

<sup>1</sup> *Blank* is the white spot in the centre of the target ; and *level* is aim, direction, or reach. The language of archery or gunnery.

<sup>2</sup> That is, "she whom I have within my grasp or reach." Such ellipses of pronouns are very frequent. — *Moiety*, next line, properly means *half*, but was used for *part* or *portion* generally.

<sup>3</sup> *Him* refers to Polixenes. — The Poet's art is wisely apparent in representing Leontes's mind as all disordered by jealousy into jerks and spasms. Collier informs us that Coleridge, in his lectures in 1815, "called this an admirable instance of propriety in soliloquy, where the mind leaps from one object to another, without any apparent interval."



Enter PAULINA, with a Child.

1 Lord. You must not enter.

Paul. Nay, rather, good my lords, be second to me :  
Fear you his tyrannous passion more, alas,  
Than the Queen's life? a gracious innocent soul,  
More free<sup>4</sup> than he is jealous.

Ant. That's enough.

2 Atten. Madam, he hath not slept to-night ; commanded  
None should come at him.

Paul. Not so hot, good sir :  
I come to bring him sleep. 'Tis such as you, —  
That creep like shadows by him, and do sigh  
At each his needless heavings, — such as you  
Nourish the cause of his awaking : I  
Do come, with words as med'cinal as true,  
Honest as either, to purge him of that humour  
That presses him from sleep.

Leon. What noise there, ho?

Paul. No noise, my lord ; but needful conference  
About some gossips<sup>5</sup> for your Highness.

Leon. How !

Away with that audacious lady ! — Antigonus,  
I charged thee that she should not come about me :  
I knew she would.

Ant. I told her so, my lord,  
On your displeasure's peril and on mine,  
She should not visit you.

<sup>4</sup> In old language *free* often occurs in the sense of *chaste, pure*. So in *Measure for Measure*, i. 2: "Whether thou art tainted or free."

<sup>5</sup> *Gossip* is an old word for *sponsor*, or *God-parent*; from *God* and *sib*, the latter meaning *kin*. A christening used to be a time for social jollity and good cheer; hence grew the present meaning of the word.

Leon. What, canst not rule her?

Paul. From all dishonesty he can : in this, —  
Unless he take the course that you have done,  
Commit me for committing honour, — trust it,  
He shall not rule me.

Ant. Lo you now, you hear :  
When she will take the rein, I let her run ;  
But she'll not stumble.

Paul. Good my liege, I come, —  
And, I beseech you, hear me, who profess  
Myself your loyal servant, your physician,  
Your most obedient counsellor ; yet that dare  
Less appear so, in comforting your evils,<sup>6</sup>  
Than such as most seem yours ; — I say, I come  
From your good Queen !

Leon. Good Queen !

Paul. Good Queen, my lord, good Queen ; I say good  
Queen ;  
And would by combat make her good, so were I  
A man, the worst<sup>7</sup> about you.

Leon. Force her hence.

Paul. Let him that makes but trifles of his eyes  
First hand me : on mine own accord I'll off ;

<sup>6</sup> The old meaning of *to comfort* is *to encourage, fortify, or make strong*. So in the *Litany*: "That it may please Thee to *comfort* and help the weak-hearted." And such is the right sense of *Comforter* as the English equivalent of *Paraclete*. In *Ephesians*, vi. 10, Wickliffe translates "be *counfortid* in the Lord"; where our version has it, "be *strong* in the Lord." — *Evils*, in the text, means *wicked courses*.

<sup>7</sup> *Worst* here is *weakest, most unwarlike*. And so, in *King Henry V.*, iii. 1, we have *best* used for *bravest*: "For Nym, he hath heard that men of the fewest words are the *best* men; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers, lest 'a should be thought a *coward*." — "Make her good" is *maintain* her to be good.



But first I'll do my errand. — The good Queen —  
For she is good — hath brought you forth a daughter;  
Here 'tis; commends it to your blessing.

Leon.

[Laying down the Child.

Out!

A mankind<sup>8</sup> witch! Hence with her, out o' door:  
A most intelligencing bawd!

Paul.

Not so:

I am as ignorant in that as you  
In so entitling me; and no less honest  
Than you are mad; which is enough, I'll warrant,  
As this world goes, to pass for honest.

Leon.

Traitors!

Will you not push her out? Give her the bastard. —  
[To ANTIQ.] Thou dotard, thou art woman-tired,<sup>9</sup> unroosted  
By thy Dame Partlet here: take up the bastard;  
Take't up, I say; give't to thy crone.<sup>10</sup>

Paul.

For ever

Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou  
Takest up the princess by that forcèd baseness  
Which he has put upon't!

Leon.

He dreads his wife.

Paul. So I would you did; then 'twere past all doubt  
You'd call your children yours.

Leon.

A nest of traitors!

<sup>8</sup> *Mankind* was sometimes used for *masculine*. In *Junius' Nomenclator*, by Abraham Fleming, 1585, *Virago* is interpreted "A manly woman, or a mankind woman."

<sup>9</sup> *Henpecked*. To *tire* in falconry is to *tear* with the beak. *Partlet* is the name of the hen in the old story of *Reynard the Fox*. The term seems to have been proverbial for the wife of a *henpecked* husband.

<sup>10</sup> A *crone* was originally a toothless old *ewe*; and thence became a term of contempt for an old woman.

Ant. I'm none, by this good light.

Paul.

Nor I; nor any,

But one, that's here, and that's himself; for he  
The sacred honour of himself, his Queen's,  
His hopeful son's, his babe's, betrays to slander,  
Whose sting is sharper than the sword's; and will not —  
For, as the case now stands, it is a curse  
He cannot be compell'd to't — once remove  
The root of his opinion, which is rotten  
As ever oak or stone was sound.

Leon.

A callet<sup>11</sup>

Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband,  
And now baits<sup>12</sup> me! — This brat is none of mine:  
Hence with it; and, together with the dam,  
Commit them to the fire!

Paul.

It is yours;

And, might we lay th' old proverb to your charge,  
So like you, 'tis the worse. — Behold, my lords,  
Although the print be little, the whole matter  
And copy of the father: eye, nose, lip;  
The trick of's frown; his forehead; nay, the valleys,  
The pretty dimples of's chin and cheek; his smiles;  
The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger. —  
And thou, good goddess Nature, which hast made it  
So like the father of it, if thou hast  
The ordering of the mind too, 'mongst all colours

<sup>11</sup> *Callet* is an old term of reproach applied to women. Skinner derives it from the French *calotte*, "a coife or half kerchief for a woman; also a little light cap or night-cap, worn under a hat." — "A trull, a drab, a jade," says Dyce.

<sup>12</sup> To *bait* is to *bark at*, *worry*, or *harass*; especially as in *bear-baiting*. So in *Macbeth*, v. 8: "And to be *baited* with the rabble's curse."



No yellow<sup>13</sup> in't, lest she suspect, as he does,  
Her children not her husband's!

*Leon.* A gross hag! —  
And, losel,<sup>14</sup> thou art worthy to be hang'd,  
That wilt not stay her tongue.

*Ant.* Hang all the husbands  
That cannot do that feat, you'll leave yourself  
Hardly one subject.

*Leon.* Once more, take her hence.

*Paul.* A most unworthy and unnatural lord  
Can do no more.

*Leon.* I'll ha' thee burn'd.

*Paul.* I care not:  
It is an heretic that makes the fire,  
Not she which burns in't. I'll not call you tyrant;  
But this most cruel usage of your Queen —  
Not able to produce more accusation  
Than your own weak-hinged fancy — something savours  
Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,  
Yea, scandalous to the world.

*Leon.* On your allegiance,  
Out of the chamber with her! Were I a tyrant,  
Where were her life? she durst not call me so,  
If she did know me one. Away with her!

*Paul.* I pray you, do not push me; I'll be gone. —  
Look to your babe, my lord; 'tis yours: Jove send her  
A better-guiding spirit!<sup>15</sup> — What need these hands?

<sup>13</sup> Yellow was the colour of jealousy.

<sup>14</sup> "A losel," says Verstegan in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, "is one that hath lost, neglected, or cast off his own good and welfare, and so is become lewd, and careless of credit and honesty." From the Anglo-Saxon *losian*, to lose. *Lorel* and *lozel* are other forms of the same.

<sup>15</sup> Meaning, apparently, "a spirit who will guide her better, or take bet-

You, that are thus so tender o'er his follies,  
Will never do him good, not one of you.  
So, so: — farewell; we're gone.

[*Exit.*

*Leon.* Thou, traitor, hast set on thy wife to this. —  
My child? away with't! — even thou, that hast  
A heart so tender o'er it, take it hence,  
And see it instantly consumed with fire;  
Even thou, and none but thou. Take it up straight:  
Within this hour bring me word 'tis done,  
And by good testimony; or I'll seize thy life,  
With what thou else call'st thine. If thou refuse,  
And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;  
The bastard's brains with these my proper hands  
Shall I dash out. Go, take it to the fire;  
For thou sett'st on thy wife.

*Ant.* I did not, sir:  
These lords, my noble fellows, if they please,  
Can clear me in't.

*I Lord.* We can: — my royal liege,  
He is not guilty of her coming hither.

*Leon.* You're liars all.

*I Lord.* Beseech your Highness, give us better credit:  
We've always truly served you; and beseech you  
So to esteem of us: and on our knees we beg, —  
As recompense of our dear services  
Past and to come, — that you do change this purpose;  
Which being so horrible, so bloody, must  
Lead on to some foul issue: we all kneel.

*Leon.* I am a feather for each wind that blows.  
Shall I live on, to see this bastard kneel

ter care of her, than you whose daughter she is"; for *her*, I take it, must refer to *babe*.



And call me father? better burn it now  
Than curse it then. But be it; let it live:—  
It shall not neither. — [To ANTIPO.] You, sir, come you  
hither;

You that have been so tenderly officious  
With Lady Margery, what will you adventure  
To save this brat's life?

*Ant.* Any thing, my lord,  
That my ability may undergo,  
And nobleness impose; at least, thus much:  
I'll pawn the little blood that I have left,  
To save the innocent: any thing possible.

*Leon.* It shall be possible. Swear by this sword  
Thou wilt perform my bidding.

*Ant.* I will, my lord.

*Leon.* Mark, and perform it; see'st thou? for the fail  
Of any point in't shall not only be  
Death to thyself, but to thy lewd-tongued wife,  
Whom for this time we pardon. We enjoin thee,  
As thou art liegeman to us, that thou carry  
This female bastard hence; and that thou bear it  
To some remote and desert place, quite out  
Of our dominions; and that there thou leave it,  
Without more mercy, to its own protection  
And favour of the climate. As by strange fortune  
It came to us, I do in justice charge thee,  
On thy soul's peril and thy body's torture,  
That thou commend it strangely to some place<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Commend it strangely to some place" means *commit* it to some *strange*, that is, *foreign*, place. Leontes maintains the child to be the offspring of a *foreigner*. The Poet has many such peculiarities, not to say loosenesses, of language. — *Commend* for *commit* occurs repeatedly. So in

Where chance may nurse or end it. Take it up.

*Ant.* I swear to do this, though a present death  
Had been more merciful. — Come on, poor babe:  
Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens  
To be thy nurses! Wolves and bears, they say,  
Casting their savageness aside, have done  
Like offices of pity. — Sir, be prosperous  
In more than this deed does require! — and blessing,  
Against this cruelty, fight on thy side,  
Poor thing, condemn'd to loss! [*Exit with the Child.*]

*Leon.* No, I'll not rear

Another's issue.

*2 Atten.* Please your Highness, posts  
From those you sent to th' oracle are come  
An hour since: Cleomenes and Dion,  
Being well arrived from Delphos, are both landed,  
Hasting to th' Court.

*1 Lord.* So please you, sir, their speed  
Hath been beyond account.

*Leon.* Twenty-three days  
They have been absent: 'tis good speed; foretells  
The great Apollo suddenly will have  
The truth of this appear. Prepare you, lords;  
Summon a session, that we may arraign  
Our most disloyal lady; for, as she hath  
Been publicly accused, so shall she have  
A just and open trial. While she lives,  
My heart will be a burden to me. Leave me;  
And think upon my bidding. [*Exeunt.*]

iii. 2, of this play: "To the certain hazard of all incertainties himself *commended*."