

## ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Sicilia. A Street in some Town.**Enter* CLEOMENES, DION, *and an Attendant.*

*Cleo.* The climate's delicate; the air most sweet;  
Fertile the isle;<sup>1</sup> the temple much surpassing  
The common praise it bears.

*Dion.* I shall report,  
For most it caught me, the celestial habits —  
Methinks I so should term them — and the reverence  
Of the grave wearers. O, the sacrifice!  
How ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly  
It was i' the offering!

*Cleo.* But, of all, the burst  
And the ear-deafening voice o' the oracle,  
Kin to Jove's thunder, so surprised my sense,  
That I was nothing.

*Dion.* If th' event o' the journey  
Prove as successful to the Queen. — O, be't so! —  
As it hath been to us rare, pleasant, speedy,  
The time is worth the use on't.<sup>2</sup>

*Cleo.* Great Apollo  
Turn all to th' best! These proclamations,

<sup>1</sup> So in Greene's novel: "That it would please his majestie to send sixe of his noblemen whome he best trusted to the *Iste of Delphos*, there to enquire of the oracle of Apollo." The Poet probably knew that Delphi was a *town*, and not an *island*.

<sup>2</sup> "The event of our journey will recompense us for the time we spent in it." So in Florio's Montaigne, 1603: "The common saying is, the *time* we live is worth the *money* we pay for it."

So forcing faults upon Hermione,  
I little like.

*Dion.* The violent carriage of it  
Will clear or end the business: when the oracle —  
Thus by Apollo's great divine seal'd up —  
Shall the contents discover, something rare  
Even then will rush to knowledge. — [*To Attendant.*] Go, —  
fresh horses: —  
And gracious be the issue! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *The Same. A Court of Justice.*LEONTES, Lords, *and Officers, discovered.*

*Leon.* This session — to our great grief, we pronounce —  
Even pushes 'gainst our heart: the party tried,  
The daughter of a king, our wife, and one  
Of us too much beloved. Let us be clear'd  
Of being tyrannous, since we so openly  
Proceed in justice; which shall have due course,  
Even<sup>1</sup> to th' guilt or the purgation. —  
Produce the prisoner.

*1 Offi.* It is his Highness' pleasure that the Queen  
Appear in person here in court.

*Crier.* Silence!

HERMIONE *is brought in guarded; PAULINA and Ladies attending.*

*Leon.* Read the indictment.

*1 Offi.* [*Reads.*] *Hermione, Queen to the worthy Leontes, King of Sicilia, thou art here accused and arraigned of high*

<sup>1</sup> *Even* in the sense of *equally* or *indifferently*.

treason, in committing adultery with Polixenes, King of Bohemia, and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the King, thy royal husband: the pretence<sup>2</sup> whereof being by circumstances partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of a true subject, didst counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to fly away by night.

*Herm.* Since what I am to say must be but that Which contradicts my accusation, and The testimony on my part no other But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me To say, *Not guilty*: mine integrity Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it, Be so received. But thus: If Powers divine Behold our human actions, as they do, I doubt not, then, but innocence shall make False accusation blush, and tyranny Tremble at patience. — You, my lord, best know — Who least will seem to do so — my past life Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true, As I am now unhappy; which is more Than history can pattern, though devised And play'd to take spectators: for, behold me, — A fellow of the royal bed, which owe<sup>3</sup> A moiety of the throne, a great king's daughter, The mother to a hopeful prince, — here standing To prate and talk for life and honour 'fore Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare often uses *pretence* for *design* or *intention*. The usage was common. See *Macbeth*, page 93, note 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Owe* and *own* are but different forms of the same word.

As I weigh grief, which I would spare: <sup>4</sup> for honour, 'Tis a derivative from me to mine; And only that I stand for. I appeal To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes Came to your Court, how I was in your grace, How merited to be so; since he came, With what encounter so uncurrent I Have strain'd,<sup>5</sup> t' appear thus: if one jot beyond The bound of honour, or in act or will That way inclining, harden'd be the hearts Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin Cry *Fie* upon my grave!

*Leon.* I ne'er heard yet That any of these bolder vices wanted Less impudence to gainsay what they did Than to perform it first.<sup>6</sup>

*Herm.* That's true enough;

<sup>4</sup> "I prize my life no more than I value grief, which I would willingly be rid of, or free from."

<sup>5</sup> *Encounter* was formerly used for any sort of meeting or intercourse; and *uncurrent* must here be taken in the sense of *unlawful* or *unallowable*; that which has not the stamp of moral currency. — *Strain'd*, if it be the right word, is no doubt used here in the same sense as the substantive *strain* in *The Merry Wives*, ii. 1: "Unless he know some *strain* in me, that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury." Also in iii. 3: "I would all of the same *strain* were in the same distress." Here *strain* evidently means some native streak, vicious trait, or inborn aptness to evil. So that the meaning in the text apparently is, "I appeal to your own conscience to specify by what improper act of intimacy, since he came, I have so far evinced an innate streak of evil, as to seem guilty of the sin you charge me with." — For this explanation I am mainly indebted to Mr. Joseph Crosby. See Critical Notes.

<sup>6</sup> The sense is somewhat entangled here; the construction being such as to leave it uncertain whether *less* is an adverb qualifying *wanted* or an adjective qualifying *impudence*. But *less* is doubtless to be taken in the latter

Though 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me.

*Leon.* You will not own it.

*Herm.*

More than mistress of

Which comes to me in name of fault, I must not  
At all acknowledge. For Polixenes, —  
With whom I am accused, — I do confess  
I loved him, as in honour he required;  
With such a kind of love as might become  
A lady like me; with a love even such,  
So and no other, as yourself commanded:  
Which not to have done, I think had been in me  
Both disobedience and ingratitude  
To you and toward your friend; whose love had spoke,  
Even since it could speak, from an infant, freely,  
That it was yours. Now, for conspiracy,  
I know not how it tastes; though it be dish'd  
For me to try how: all I know of it  
Is, that Camillo was an honest man;  
And why he left your Court, the gods themselves,  
Wotting no more than I, are ignorant.

*Leon.* You knew of his departure, as you know what  
You've underta'en to do in's absence.

*Herm.*

Sir,

You speak a language that I understand not:  
My life stands in the level<sup>7</sup> of your dreams,  
Which I'll lay down.

*Leon.*

Your actions are my dreams:

way; so that the meaning comes thus: "I never heard that those who had impudence enough to be guilty of these bolder vices wanted the less impudence necessary for denying them."

<sup>7</sup> *Level*, again, as a term in gunnery for *range* or *line of aim*. The phrase, "I levelled at him," is still in use for "I aimed at him." See page 75, note 1.

You had a bastard by Polixenes,  
And I but dream'd it: as you were past all shame, —  
Those of your fact are so, — so past all truth:  
Which to deny concerns more than avails; for as  
Thy brat hath been cast out, left to itself,  
No father owning it, — which is, indeed,  
More criminal in thee than it, — so thou  
Shall feel our justice; in whose easiest passage<sup>8</sup>  
Look for no less than death.

*Herm.*

Sir, spare your threats:

The bug<sup>9</sup> which you would fright me with I seek.  
To me can life be no commodity:  
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,  
I do give lost; for I do feel it gone,  
But know not how it went: my second joy  
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence  
I'm barr'd, like one infectious: my third comfort,  
Starr'd most unluckily,<sup>10</sup> is from my breast,  
The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,  
Haled out to murder: myself on every post  
Proclaim'd a harlot; with immodest hatred  
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs  
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried  
Here to this place, i' the open air, before

<sup>8</sup> "Whose easiest passage" is whose *lightest sentence*; whose referring to *justice*. "Death is the mildest sentence that justice can pass upon you."

<sup>9</sup> The old meaning of *bug* survives in our *bugbear*. The word is Celtic, and properly signifies a ghost, goblin, or any thing that causes "terror by night." So, in Psalm xci. 5, Mathew's Bible, 1537, has "Thou shalt not be afraid for the *bug* by night." Here our authorized version reads "Thou shalt not be afraid for the *terror* by night."

<sup>10</sup> Ill-starred; born under an inauspicious planet.

I have got strength of limit.<sup>11</sup> Now, my liege,  
 Tell me what blessings I have here alive,  
 That I should fear to die? Therefore, proceed.  
 But yet hear this; mistake me not: My life,  
 I prize it not a straw; but, for mine honour,  
 Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd  
 Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else  
 But what your jealousies awake, I tell you,  
 'Tis rigour, and not law. — Your Honours all,  
 I do refer me to the oracle:  
 Apollo be my judge!

*1 Lord.* This your request  
 Is altogether just: — therefore, bring forth,  
 And in Apollo's name, his oracle. [*Exeunt certain Officers.*]

*Herm.* The Emperor of Russia was my father:  
 O, that he were alive, and here beholding  
 His daughter's trial! that he did but see  
 The flatness of my misery; yet with eyes  
 Of pity, not revenge!

*Re-enter Officers, with CLEOMENES and DION.*

*1 Offi.* You here shall swear upon this sword of justice,  
 That you, Cleomenes and Dion, have  
 Been both at Delphos; and from thence have brought  
 This seal'd-up oracle, by th' hand deliver'd  
 Of great Apollo's priest; and that, since then,  
 You have not dared to break the holy seal,

<sup>11</sup> "Strength of *limit*" is explained by Mason "the *limited degree* of strength necessary for persons in my situation." I suspect, however, that *of* is merely equivalent here to *by*; as the prepositions *by*, *of*, and *with* were often used indiscriminately. This would make the sense to be, "before I have got strength *by seclusion*."

Nor read the secrets in't.

*Cleo.* } All this we swear.  
*Dion.* }  
*Leon.* Break up the seals, and read.

*1 Offi.* [*Reads.*] *Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten; and the King shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found.*

*Lords.* Now blessèd be the great Apollo!  
*Herm.* Praisèd!

*Leon.* Hast thou read truth?

*1 Offi.* Ay, my lord; even so  
 As it is here set down.

*Leon.* There is no truth at all i' the oracle:  
 The session shall proceed: this is mere falsehood.

*Enter an Attendant hastily.*

*Atten.* My lord the King, the King!

*Leon.* What is the business?

*Atten.* O sir, I shall be hated to report it!  
 The Prince your son, with mere conceit and fear  
 Of the Queen's speed,<sup>12</sup> is gone.

*Leon.* How! gone?

*Atten.* Is dead.

*Leon.* Apollo's angry; and the Heavens themselves  
 Do strike at my injustice. — [*HERMIONE faints.*] How now  
 there!

<sup>12</sup> *Conceit* is used by Shakespeare for nearly all the forms of mental action. Here it seems to have the sense of *apprehension*. So that the meaning is, "with fearful apprehension of how the Queen's fortune would turn at the trial."

*Paul.* This news is mortal to the Queen : look down,  
And see what death is doing.

*Leon.* Take her hence :  
Her heart is but o'ercharged ; she will recover.  
I have too much believed mine own suspicion :  
Beseech you, tenderly apply to her  
Some remedies for life. —

[*Exeunt PAUL. and Ladies, with HERM.*  
Apollo, pardon

My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle ! —  
I'll reconcile me to Polixenes ;  
New woo my Queen ; recall the good Camillo,  
Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy ;  
For, being transported by my jealousies  
To bloody thoughts and to revenge, I chose  
Camillo for the minister, to poison  
My friend Polixenes : which had been done,  
But that the good mind of Camillo tardied  
My swift command, though I with death and with  
Reward did threaten and encourage him,  
Not doing it and being done : he, most humane,  
And fill'd with honour, to my kingly guest  
Unclasp'd my practice ; quit his fortunes here,  
Which you knew great ; and to the certain hazard  
Of all incertainties<sup>13</sup> himself commended,  
No richer than his honour.<sup>14</sup> How he glisters

<sup>13</sup> So in Sidney's *Arcadia* : " To know the certainty of things to come, wherein there is nothing so *certain* as our continual *uncertainty*." Lettsom quotes divers other passages, showing that such phraseology was common in the Poet's time.

<sup>14</sup> Meaning, apparently, enriched with nothing, or carrying no riches with him, but his honour.

Thorough<sup>15</sup> my rust ! and how his piety  
Does my deeds make the blacker !

*Re-enter PAULINA.*

*Paul.* Woe the while !  
O, cut my lace, lest my heart, cracking it,  
Break too !

*1 Lord.* What fit is this, good lady ?

*Paul.* What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me ?  
What wheels, racks, fires ? what flaying, or what boiling  
In lead or oil ? what old or newer torture  
Must I receive, whose every word deserves  
To taste of thy most worst ? Thy tyranny  
Together working with thy jealousies, —  
Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle  
For girls of nine, — O, think what they have done,  
And then run mad indeed, stark mad ! for all  
Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it.  
That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing ;  
That did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant,<sup>16</sup>  
And damnable ingrateful : nor was't much,  
Thou wouldst have poison'd good Camillo's honour,  
To have him kill a king : poor trespasses,  
More monstrous standing by ; whereof I reckon  
The casting forth to crows thy baby daughter,

<sup>15</sup> *Thoroughly* for *thoroughly* has occurred in this play. Here we have *thorough* for *through*. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, ii. i. : " Over park, over pale, *thorough* flood, *thorough* fire."

<sup>16</sup> " Show thee, being a fool naturally, to have improved thy folly by inconstancy." A similar expression occurs in Phaer's *Virgil* : " When this the young men heard me speak, *of wild they waxed wood*." Also in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, i. : " He doubted the philosopher of a Stoic would turn to be a Cynic."

To be or none or little ; though a devil  
 Would have shed water out of fire <sup>17</sup> ere done't :  
 Nor is't directly laid to thee, the death  
 Of the young Prince, whose honourable thoughts—  
 Thoughts high for one so tender— cleft the heart  
 That could conceive a gross and foolish sire  
 Blemish'd his gracious dam : this is not, no,  
 Laid to thy answer : but the last, — O lords,  
 When I have said, cry *Woe!* — the Queen, the Queen,  
 The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead ; and vengeance for't  
 Not dropp'd down yet.

*1 Lord.* The higher powers forbid !

*Paul.* I say she's dead ; I'll swear't. If word nor oath  
 Prevail not, go and see : if you can bring  
 Tincture or lustre in her lip, her eye,  
 Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you  
 As I would do the gods. — But, O thou tyrant !  
 Do not repent these things ; for they are heavier  
 Than all thy woes can stir : therefore betake thee  
 To nothing but despair. A thousand knees  
 Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,  
 Upon a barren mountain, and still Winter  
 In storm perpetual, could not move the gods  
 To look that way thou wert.

*Leon.* Go on, go on :

Thou canst not speak too much ; I have deserved  
 All tongues to talk their bitterest.

*1 Lord.* Say no more :

Howe'er the business goes, you have made fault

<sup>17</sup> Though a devil would have shed tears of pity *from amidst* the flames sooner than done such an act.

I' the boldness of your speech.

*Paul.* I'm sorry for't :

All faults I make, when I shall come to know them,  
 I do repent. Alas, I've show'd too much  
 The rashness of a woman ! he is touch'd  
 To th' noble heart. — What's gone, and what's past help,  
 Should be past grief ; do not revive affliction :  
 At my petition, I beseech you, rather  
 Let me be punish'd,<sup>18</sup> that have minded you  
 Of what you should forget. Now, good my liege,  
 Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman :  
 The love I bore your Queen, — lo, fool again !  
 I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children ;  
 I'll not remember you of my own lord,  
 Who is lost too : take you your patience to you,  
 And I'll say nothing.

*Leon.* Thou didst speak but well,  
 When most the truth ; which I receive much better  
 Than to be pitied of thee. Pr'ythee, bring me  
 To the dead bodies of my Queen and son :  
 One grave shall be for both ; upon them shall  
 The causes of their death appear, unto  
 Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit  
 The chapel where they lie ; and tears shed there  
 Shall be my recreation : so long as nature  
 Will bear up with this exercise, so long  
 I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me  
 Unto these sorrows.

[*Exeunt.*]

<sup>18</sup> Meaning, apparently, "I beseech you, rather let me be punished as *at my own request*"; that is, at her request, and not as by the sentence of the King. In her struggle of feelings, Paulina, noble soul! is not altogether correct and classical in her language.

SCENE III. — *Bohemia. A desert Country near the Sea.*

*Enter* ANTIGONUS *with the Child, and a Mariner.*

*Ant.* Thou'rt perfect,<sup>1</sup> then, our ship hath touch'd upon  
The deserts of Bohemia?

*Mar.* Ay, my lord ; and fear  
We've landed in ill time : the skies look grimly,  
And threaten present blusters. In my conscience,  
The Heavens with that we have in hand are angry,  
And frown upon's.

*Ant.* Their sacred wills be done ! Go, get aboard ;  
Look to thy bark : I'll not be long before  
I call upon thee.

*Mar.* Make your best haste ; and go not  
Too far i' the land : 'tis like to be loud weather ;  
Besides, this place is famous for the creatures  
Of prey that keep upon't.

*Ant.* Go thou away :  
I'll follow instantly.

*Mar.* I'm glad at heart  
To be so rid o' the business.

[*Exit.*

*Ant.* Come, poor babe :  
I've heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead  
May walk again : if such thing be, thy mother  
Appear'd to me last night ; for ne'er was dream  
So like a waking. To me comes a creature,  
Sometimes her head on one side, some another ;  
I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare has *perfect* repeatedly in the sense of *certain* or *well assured*. So in *Cymbeline*, iii. 1: "I am *perfect* that the Pannonians and Dalmatians for their liberties are now in arms."

So fill'd and so o'er-running : in pure white robes,  
Like very sanctity, she did approach  
My cabin where I lay ; thrice bow'd before me ;  
And, gasping to begin some speech, her eyes  
Became two spouts : the fury spent, anon  
Did this break from her : *Good Antigonus,*  
*Since fate, against thy better disposition,*  
*Hath made thy person for the thrower-out*  
*Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,*  
*Places remote enough are in Bohemia ;*  
*There wend, and leave it crying ; and, for the babe*  
*Is counted lost for ever, Perdita,<sup>2</sup>*  
*I pr'ythee, call't. For this ungentle business,*  
*Put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see*  
*Thy wife Paulina more : and so, with shrieks,*  
She melted into air. Affrighted much,  
I did in time collect myself ; and thought  
This was so, and no slumber. Dreams are toys :<sup>3</sup>  
Yet, for this once, yea, superstitiously,  
I will be squared by this. I do believe  
Hermione hath suffer'd death ; and that  
Apollo would, this being indeed the issue  
Of King Polixenes, it should here be laid,  
Either for life or death, upon the earth  
Of its right father. — Blossom, speed thee well !

[*Laying down the Child, with a scroll.*  
There lie ; and there thy character :<sup>4</sup> there these ;

[*Laying down a bundle.*

<sup>2</sup> *Perdita* is a Latin word literally meaning *lost*.

<sup>3</sup> *Toys*, as the word is here used, are *trifles, fancies*, or things of no importance.

<sup>4</sup> This *character* is the *description*, a written scroll, afterwards found with *Perdita*.

Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee, pretty,  
And still rest thine. The storm begins: poor wretch,<sup>5</sup>

[*Thunder.*]

That, for thy mother's fault, art thus exposed  
To loss and what may follow! Weep I cannot,  
But my heart bleeds: and most accursed am I,  
To be by oath enjoin'd to this. Farewell!  
The day frowns more and more: thou'rt like to have  
A lullaby too rough: I never saw  
The heavens so dim by day. — A savage clamour!

[*Noise of hunters, dogs, and bears within.*]

Well may I get aboard! — This is the chase:

I'm gone for ever.

[*Exit, pursued by a bear.*]

*Enter an old Shepherd.*

*Shep.* I would there were no age between sixteen and three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is nothing in the between but wronging the ancients, stealing, fighting. Hark you now! Would any but these boil'd brains<sup>6</sup> of nineteen and two-and-twenty hunt this weath'èr? They have scared away two of my best sheep, which I fear the wolf will sooner find than the master: if anywhere I have them, 'tis by the seaside, browsing of ivy. — [*Seeing the Child.*] Good luck, an't be thy will! what have we here? Mercy on's, a barn; a very pretty barn! A god, or a child,<sup>7</sup> I wonder? A pretty one; a

<sup>5</sup> *Wretch* was the strongest expression of tenderness or endearment in the language. Shakespeare has it repeatedly so.

<sup>6</sup> Love, madness, and melancholy are imaged by Shakespeare under the figure of *boil'd brains*, or *boiling brains*. Here the phrase means the same as our "mad-brained youth." See *The Tempest*, page 135, note 10.

<sup>7</sup> The best comment on this is furnished by Greene's novel: "The Shepherd, who before had never seen so fair a babe nor so rich jewels, thought

very pretty one: sure, some 'scape:<sup>8</sup> though I am not bookish, yet I can read waiting-gentlewoman in the 'scape. This has been some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind-door-work. I'll take it up for pity: yet I'll tarry till my son come; he halloo'd but even now. — Whoa, ho, ho!

*Clo.* [*Within.*] Hilloo, loa!

*Shep.* What, art so near? If thou'lt see a thing to talk on when thou art dead and rotten, come hither.

*Enter the Clown.*

What ailest thou, man?

*Clo.* I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land! but I am not to say it is a sea, for it is now the sky: betwixt the firmament and it you cannot thrust a bodkin's point.

*Shep.* Why, boy, how is it?

*Clo.* I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes up<sup>9</sup> the shore! but that's not to the point. O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls! sometimes to see 'em, and then not to see 'em; now the ship boring the Moon with her main-mast, and anon swallowed with yest and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hogshead. And then, for the land-service, to see how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone; how he cried to me for help, and said his name was Antigonus, a nobleman. But, to make an end of the ship, to see how the sea flap-dragon'd it:<sup>10</sup> but, first, how the poor

assuredly that it was some *little god*, and began with great devotion to knock on his breast. The babe, who writhed with the head to seek for the pap, began again to cry afresh, whereby the poor man knew it was a *child*."

<sup>8</sup> 'Scape here means a *secret lapse* or *transgression*; "an escape from the limits of rule, a trick, a wanton deviation," says Nares.

<sup>9</sup> *Take up* appears to be used something in the sense of *devour*; as in *Hamlet*, iv. 2: "The ocean, overpeering of his list, eats not the flats with more impetuous haste," &c.

<sup>10</sup> That is, swallowed it, as toppers did *flap-dragons*, which were some in-



souls roared, and the sea mock'd them; and how the poor gentleman roared, and the bear mock'd him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather.

*Shep.* Name of mercy, when was this, boy?

*Clo.* Now, now; I have not wink'd since I saw these sights: the men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half dined on the gentleman; he's at it now.

*Shep.* Would I had been by, to have help'd the nobleman!

*Clo.* I would you had been by the ship-side, to have help'd her: [*Aside.*] there your charity would have lack'd footing.

*Shep.* Heavy matters! heavy matters! but look thee here, boy. Now bless thyself: thou mett'st with things dying, I with things new-born. Here's a sight for thee; look thee, a bearing-cloth<sup>11</sup> for a squire's child! look thee here; take up, take up, boy; open't. So, let's see: it was told me I should be rich by the fairies; this is some changeling:<sup>12</sup> open't. What's within, boy?

*Clo.* You're a made old man:<sup>13</sup> if the sins of your youth are forgiven you, you're well to live. Gold! all gold!

*Shep.* This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so; up with't, keep it close: home, home, the next way.<sup>14</sup> We are

flammable substances set on fire, put afloat in the liquor, and gulped down blazing.

<sup>11</sup> The mantle of fine cloth, in which a child was carried to be baptized.

<sup>12</sup> In the olden time the fairies had a naughty custom of stealing away fine, bright children, and leaving ugly or stupid ones in their stead. Both the child so stolen and the child so left were called *changelings*. Here the changeling is the child stolen. The old poets have many allusions to this sharp practice of the fairy nation. See *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, page 40, note 5.

<sup>13</sup> To *make* a man is, in old language, to set him up in the world, or to endow him with wealth. See *The Tempest*, page 93, note 9.

<sup>14</sup> "The *next way*" is the *nearest way*. Often so.

lucky, boy; and to be so still, requires nothing but secrecy. Let my sheep go: come, good boy, the next way home.

*Clo.* Go you the next way with your findings. I'll go see if the bear be gone from the gentleman, and how much he hath eaten: they are never curst,<sup>15</sup> but when they are hungry: if there be any of him left, I'll bury it.

*Shep.* That's a good deed. If thou mayst discern by that which is left of him what he is, fetch me to the sight of him.

*Clo.* Marry, will I; and you shall help to put him i' the ground.

*Shep.* 'Tis a lucky day, boy, and we'll do good deeds on't. [*Exeunt.*]

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ACT IV.

*Enter TIME, as Chorus.*

*Time.* I — that please some, try all; both joy and terror  
Of good and bad; that make and unfold error —  
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,  
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime  
To me or my swift passage, that I slide  
O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried  
Of that wide gap;<sup>1</sup> since it is in my power

<sup>15</sup> *Curst* here signifies *mischievous*. An old adage says, "Curst cows have short horns."

<sup>1</sup> Leave unexamined the progress of the time which filled up the gap in Perdita's story. The reasoning of Time is not very clear; he seems to mean, that he who overthrows every thing, and makes as well as overwhelms custom, may surely infringe the laws of his own making.