

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps: Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[*Exeunt HERO and URSULA.*]

Beat. [*Advancing.*] What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu! No glory lives behind the back of such.

And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band;

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—A Room in LEONATO'S House.

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, and LEONATO.

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth: he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him. He hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I: methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love. If he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ache.

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D. Pedro. What! sigh for the tooth-ache?

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worm?

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love.

D. Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: a' brushes his hat a mornings; what should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been

seen with him; and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, a' rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say the sweet youth's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lute-string, and new-governed by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D. Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and in despite of all, dies for him.

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache. Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt BENEDICK and LEONATO.*]

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter DON JOHN.

D. John. My lord and brother, God save you!

D. Pedro. Good den, brother.

D. John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private?

D. John. If it please you; yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

D. Pedro. What's the matter?

D. John. [*To CLAUDIO.*] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

D. Pedro. You know he does.

D. John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

D. John. You may think I love you not: let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearth of heart hath help to effect your ensuing marriage; surely suit ill-spent, and labour ill bestowed!

D. Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

D. John. I came hither to tell you; and circumstances shortened,—for she hath been too long a talking of,—the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who, Hero?

D. John. Even she: Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

D. John. The word's too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say, she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day: if you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

D. John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D. Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

D. John. I will disparage her no further till you are my witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

D. John. O plague right well prevented! So will you say when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A Street.

Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES, with the Watch.

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desertless man to be constable?

First Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

Sec. Watch. Both which, Master constable,—

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

Watch. How, if a' will not stand?

Dogb. Why, then, take no note of him, but let

him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets: for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

Sec. Watch. We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend; only have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then, let them alone till they are sober: if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

Watch. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

Sec. Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

Sec. Watch. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You constable, are to present the prince's own person: if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by 'r lady, that I think, a' cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By 'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ah, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night. Come, neighbour.

Sec. Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all go to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu; be vigilant, I beseech you. [Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES.]

Enter BORACHIO and CONRADE.

Bora. What, Conrade! 101
Watch. [Aside.] Peace! stir not.
Bora. Conrade, I say!
Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow. 104
Bora. Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale. 108

Bora. Stand thee close then under this penthouse, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [Aside.] Some treason, masters; yet stand close. 113

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear? 117

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will. 121

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man. 125

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion. 128

Bora. Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. [Aside.] I know that Deformed; a' has been a vile thief this seven years; a' goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name. 135

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No: 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometime fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting; sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window; sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-piece seems as massy as his club? 146

Con. All this I see, and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion? 151

Bora. Not so, neither; but know, that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed

and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter. 160

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband. 173

First Watch. We charge you in the prince's name, stand!

Sec. Watch. Call up the right Master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

First Watch. And one Deformed is one of them: I know him, a' wears a lock. 181

Con. Masters, masters!

Sec. Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you. 184

Con. Masters,—

First Watch. Never speak: we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills. 189

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—A Room in LEONATO'S House.

Enter HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA.

Hero. Good Ursula, wakemy cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither. 4

Urs. Well. [Exit.]

Marg. Troth, I think your other rabato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this. *Marg.* By my troth's not so good; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this. 12

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so. 16

Hero. O! that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth's but a night-gown in respect of yours: cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts round, underborne with a bluish tinsel; but for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy. 25

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee! art not ashamed? 28

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say, 'saving your reverence, a husband:' an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody. Is there any harm in 'the heavier for a husband?' None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife; otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy: ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero. 40

Hero. Why, how now! do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap's into 'Light o' love:' that goes without a burden: do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Ye light o' love with your heels! then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barns. 48

Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; 'tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill. Heigh-ho! 53

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turned Turk, there's no more sailing by the star. 57

Beat. What means the fool, trow?

Marg. Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire! 60

Hero. These gloves the count sent me; they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuffed, cousin, I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuffed! there's goodly catching of cold. 65

Beat. O, God help me! God help me! how long have you professed apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely! 69

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus! why Benedictus? you have some moral in this Benedictus. 77

Marg. Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think, perchance, that I think you are in love: nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he swore he would never marry; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging: and how you may be converted, I know not; but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps? 93

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, withdraw: the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church. 97

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—Another Room in LEONATO'S House.

Enter LEONATO with DOGBERRY and VERGES.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly. 4

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir. 8

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man and no honestest than I. 17

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous: palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious. 20

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship. 25

Leon. All thy tediousness on me! ha?

Dogb. Yea, an't were a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear a good exclamation on your worship, as of any man in the city, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I. 31

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina. 35

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, 'when the age is in, the wit is out.' God help us! it is a world to see! Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges: well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread: but God is to be worshipped: all men are not alike; alas! good neighbour. 44

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you. 48

Dogb. One word, sir: our watch, sir, hath indeed comprehended two aspicuous persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship. 52

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and

bring it me: I am now in great haste, as may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance. 56

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband. 60

Leon. I'll wait upon them: I am ready.

[Exeunt LEONATO and Messenger.]

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol: we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely. 65

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here's that shall drive some of them to a non-come: only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV

SCENE I.—The Inside of a Church.

Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR FRANCIS, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE, &c.

Leon. Come, Friar Francis, be brief: only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady? 5

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her, friar; you come to marry her. 8

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count? 11

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment, why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero? 16

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count? 17

Leon. I dare make his answer; none.

Claud. O! what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? Why then, some be of laughing, as ah! ha! he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave:

Will you with free and unconstrained soul 24
Give me this maid, your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift? 28

D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.

There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend; 32

She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold! how like a maid she blushes here.

O! what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal. 36

Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,

All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? But she is none: 40

She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord?

Claud. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton. 44

Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,

And made defeat of her virginity,—

Claud. I know what you would say: if I have
known her, 48

You'll say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin:

No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large; 52

But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on thee! Seeming! I will write
against it: 56

You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;

But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals 60

That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so
wide?

Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you?

D. Pedro. What should I speak?

I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about 64
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but
dream?

D. John. Sir, they are spoken, and these
things are true. 68

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.

Hero. True! O God!

Claud. Leonato, stand I here?

Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?

Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own? 72

Leon. All this is so; but what of this, my lord?

Claud. Let me but move one question to your
daughter;

And by that fatherly and kindly power

That you have in her, bid her answer truly. 76

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my
child.

Hero. O, God defend me! how am I beset!
What kind of catechizing call you this?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your
name. 80

Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that
name

With any just reproach?

Claud. Marry, that can Hero:
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.

What man was he talk'd with you yesternight 84
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one?

Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my
lord.

D. Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden.
Leonato, 88

I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this griev'd count,

Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window; 92

Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had

A thousand times in secret.
D. John. Fie, fie! they are not to be nam'd, 96

my lord,

Not to be spoke of;
There is not chastity enough in language

Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty
lady, 100

I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.
Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been,

If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!

But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! fare-
well, 104

Thou pure impiety, and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,

And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm, 108

And never shall it more be gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point
for me? *[HERO swoons.]*

Beat. Why, how now, cousin! wherefore sink
you down?

D. John. Come, let us go. These things,
come thus to light, 112

Smother her spirits up.

[Exeunt DON PEDRO, DON JOHN and CLAUDIO.]

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think! help, uncle!
Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick!

Friar! 116

Leon. O Fate! take not away thy heavy hand:
Death is the fairest cover for her shame

That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero!
Friar. Have comfort, lady. 120

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea; wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore! Why, doth not every
earthly thing

Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood? 124

Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes;
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,

Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy
shames, 127

Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?

Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O! one too much by thee. Why had I one? 132

Why ever wast thou lovely in mine eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand

Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirch'd thus, and mir'd with infamy,

I might have said, 'No part of it is mine; 136
This shame derives itself from unknown loins?'

But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much

That I myself was to myself not mine, 140

Valuing of her; why, she—O! she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea

Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give 144

To her foul-tainted flesh.

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,

I know not what to say.

Beat. O! on my soul, my cousin is belie'd!
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last 149

night?

Beat. No, truly, not; although, until last
night, 152

I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O! that is
stronger made, 152

Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the two princes lie? and Claudio lie,

Who lov'd her so, that, speaking of her foul-
ness, 156

Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her! let her
die.

Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,

And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady: I have mark'd 160

A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent

shames
In angel whiteness bear away those blushes;

And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire, 164

To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;

Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant 168

The tenour of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,

If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be. 172

Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left
Is, that she will not add to her damnation

A sin of perjury: she not denies it.
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse 176

That which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are ac-
cus'd of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know
none; 180

If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,

Let all my sins lack mercy! O, my father!
Prove you that any man with me convers'd

At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight 184
Maintain'd the change of words with any crea-
ture,

Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.
Friar. There is some strange misprision in 188

the princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of
honour; 188

And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,

Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.
Leon. I know not. If they speak but truth 192

These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,

The proudest of them shall well hear of it. Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine, Nor age so eat up my invention, 196 Nor fortune made such havoc of my means, Nor my bad life left me so much of friends, But they shall find, awak'd in such a kind, Both strength of limb and policy of mind, 200 Ability in means and choice of friends, To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pause awhile, And let my counsel sway you in this case. Your daughter here the princes left for dead; Let her awhile be secretly kept in, 205 And publish it that she is dead indeed: Maintain a mourning ostentation; And on your family's old monument 208 Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? What will this do?

Friar. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf 212

Change slander to remorse; that is some good: But not for that dream I on this strange course, But on this travail look for greater birth.

She dying, as it must be so maintain'd, 216 Upon the instant that she was accus'd, Shall be lamented, pitied and excus'd

Of every hearer; for it so falls out That what we have we prize not to the worth

Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost, Why, then we rack the value, then we find 222 The virtue that possession would not show us

Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio: When he shall hear she died upon his words, The idea of her life shall sweetly creep

Into his study of imagination, And every lovely organ of her life 228 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit, More moving-delicate, and full of life

Into the eye and prospect of his soul, Than when she liv'd indeed: then shall he 232 mourn,—

If ever love had interest in his liver,— And wish he had not so accused her, No, though he thought his accusation true.

Let this be so, and doubt not but success 236 Will fashion the event in better shape Than I can lay it down in likelihood.

But if all aim but this be levell'd false, The supposition of the lady's death 240 Will quench the wonder of her infamy:

And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,— As best befits her wounded reputation,—

In some reclusive and religious life, 244 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you: And though you know my inwardness and love

Is very much unto the prince and Claudio, 248 Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this As secretly and justly as your soul Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,

The smallest twine may lead me. 252

Friar. 'Tis well consented: presently away; For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.

Come, lady, die to live: this wedding day Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and endure. 256

[*Exeunt FRIAR, HERO, and LEONATO.* *Bene.* Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that. 260

Beat. You have no reason; I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is

wronged.

Beat. Ah! how much might the man deserve

of me that would right her. 265

Bene. Is there any way to show such friend-

ship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it? 269

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well

as you: is not that strange? 272

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not.

It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing

so well as you; but believe me not, and yet I lie

not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I

am sorry for my cousin. 277

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me;

and I will make him eat it that says I love

not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to

it. I protest I love thee. 285

Beat. Why then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stay'd me in a happy hour:

I was about to protest I loved you. 289

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart

that none is left to protest. 292

Bene. Come, bid me do anything for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it. Farewell. 296

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here: there is

no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go. 300

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me

than fight with mine enemy. 304

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a

villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishon-

oured my kinswoman? O! that I were a man.

What! bear her in hand until they come to take

hands, and then, with public accusation, un-

covered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O God,

that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the

market-place. 313

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice,—

SCENE I]

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window! a proper saying! 316

Bene. Nay, but Beatrice,—

Beat. Sweet Hero! she is wronged, she is

slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat— 320

Beat. Princes and counties! Surely, a princely

testimony, a goodly Count Comfekt; a sweet

gallant, surely! O! that I were a man for his

sake, or that I had any friend would be a man

for my sake! But manhood is melted into

curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are

only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he

is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a

lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wish-

ing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand,

I love thee. 332

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than

swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count

Claudio hath wronged Hero? 336

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or

a soul.

Bene. Enough! I am engaged, I will challenge

him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you.

By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear

account. As you hear of me, so think of me.

Go, comfort your cousin: I must say she is

dead; and so, farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Prison.

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and SEXTON, in gowns; and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Verg. O! a stool and a cushion for the

sexton. 340

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain: we have the exhi-

bition to examine. 347

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are

to be examined? let them come before Master

constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me.

What is your name, friend? 352

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down Borachio. Yours,

sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is

Conrade. 357

Dogb. Write down Master gentleman Con-

rade. Masters, do you serve God?

Con. } Yea, sir, we hope. 360

Bora. } Write down that they hope they serve

God: and write God first; for God defend but

God should go before such villains! Masters, it

is proved already that you are little better than

false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so

shortly. How answer you for yourselves? 366

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure

you; but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear: sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you we are none. 372

Dogb. Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are

both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they

are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the

way to examine: you must call forth the watch

that are their accusers. 378

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the efiest way. Let

the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in

the prince's name, accuse these men.

First Watch. This man said, sir, that Don

John, the prince's brother, was a villain. 383

Dogb. Write down Prince John a villain.

Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's

brother villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like

thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else? 390

Sec. Watch. Marry, that he had received a

thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the

Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow? 396

First Watch. And that Count Claudio did

mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before

the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into

everlasting redemption for this. 401

Sexton. What else?

Sec. Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you

can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly

stolen away: Hero was in this manner accused,

in this very manner refused, and, upon the grief

of this, suddenly died. Master constable, let

these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's:

I will go before and show him their examina-

tion. [*Exit.*]

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned. 407

Verg. Let them be in the hands—

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dogb. God's my life! where's the sexton? let

him write down the prince's officer coxcomb.

Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet! 413

Con. Away! you are an ass; you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place?

Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he

were here to write me down an ass! but,

masters, remember that I am an ass; though it

be not written down, yet forget not that I am an

ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as

shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I

am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer;

and, which is more, a householder; and, which

is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Mes-

sina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a

rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that

hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns,

and everything handsome about him. Bring him

away. O that I had been writ down an ass! 93

[*Exeunt.*]