

KING LEAR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LEAR, King of Britain.
KING OF FRANCE.
DUKE OF BURGUNDY.
DUKE OF CORNWALL.
DUKE OF ALBANY.
EARL OF KENT.
EARL OF GLOUCESTER.
EDGAR, Son to Gloucester.
EDMUND, Bastard Son to Gloucester.
CURAN, a Courtier.
OSWALD, Steward to Goneril.
Old Man, Tenant to Gloucester.
Doctor.

Fool.
An Officer, employed by Edmund.
A Gentleman, Attendant on Cordelia.
A Herald.
Servants to Cornwall.

AGONIL,
REGAN,
CORDELIA, } Daughters to Lear.

Knights of Lear's Train, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers,
and Attendants.

SCENE.—Britain.

ACT I

SCENE I.—A Room of State in KING LEAR'S Palace.

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, and EDMUND.

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord? 8

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you. 12

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault? 16

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Glo. But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund? 26

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My Lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better. 32

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glo. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The king is coming.

Sennet. Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants.

Lear. Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester. 36

Glo. I shall, my liege.

[Exeunt GLOUCESTER and EDMUND.]

Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided

In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent To shake all cares and business from our age, 41
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we Unburden'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany, 44
We have this hour a constant will to publish Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love, 48
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,

And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,—

Since now we will divest us both of rule, Interest of territory, cares of state,— 52

Which of you shall we say doth love us most? That we our largest bounty may extend Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,

Our eldest-born, speak first. 56

Gon. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;

Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty; Beyond what can be valu'd, rich or rare; 60

No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;

As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found; A love that makes breath poor and speech 64

unable; Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. [Aside.] What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent. 64

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,

With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,

With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads, We make thee lady; to thine and Albany's issue

ACT I, SCENE I]

Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter, 69

Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak. Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,

And prize me at her worth. In my true heart I find she names my very deed of love; 73

Only she comes too short: that I profess Myself an enemy to all other joys

Which the most precious square of sense possesses 76

And find I am alone felicitate In your dear highness' love.

Cor. [Aside.] Then, poor Cordelia! And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's

More richer than my tongue. 80

Lear. To thee and thine, hereditary ever, Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,

No less in space, validity, and pleasure, Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our 84

joy, Although our last, not least; to whose young love

The vines of France and milk of Burgundy Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to 88

draw A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak. Cor. Nothing, my lord. 89

Lear. Nothing? Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again. 92

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty

According to my bond; nor more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little, 96

Lest you may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord, You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I Return those duties back as are right fit,

Obey you, love you, and most honour you. 100

Why have my sisters husbands, if they say They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,

That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry 104

Half my love with him, half my care and duty: Sure I shall never marry like my sisters, 105

To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this? Cor. Ay, good my lord. 108

Lear. So young, and so untender? Cor. So young, my lord, and true. 112

Lear. Let it beso; thy truth then be thy dower: For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,

The mysteries of Hecate and the night, 116

By all the operation of the orbs From whom we do exist and cease to be,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care, Propinquity and property of blood, 116

And as a stranger to my heart and me Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous

Scythian, Or he that makes his generation messes To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom 120

Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,

As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege,— Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath. 124

I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!

So be my grave my peace, as here I give Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs? 128

Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany, With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;

Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her. I do invest you jointly with my power, 132

Pre-eminence, and all the large effects That troop with majesty. Ourself by monthly

course, With reservation of a hundred knights, By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode 136

Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain The name and all th' addition to a king;

The sway, revenue, execution of the rest, Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm, 140

This coronet part between you.

Kent. Royal Lear, Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,

Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd, As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft. 145

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly

When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man? 148

Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak

When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound

When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state; And, in thy best consideration, check 152

This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,

Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least; Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound

Reverbs no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more. Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn 157

To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,

Thy safety being the motive. Out of my sight! 160

Lear. See better, Lear; and let me still remain

The true blank of thine eye. Lear. Now, by Apollo,—

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king, Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O vassal! miscreant! [Laying his hand on his sword.]

Alb. } Dear sir, forbear. 164

Cor. } Do;

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;

Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat, I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant! 169
On thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our
vow,—
Which we durst never yet,—and, with strain'd
pride 172
To come betwixt our sentence and our power,—
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,—
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee for provision 176
To shield thee from diseases of the world;
And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day follow-
ing
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revok'd. 182
Kent. Fare thee well, king; sith thus thou
wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
[*To CORDELIA.*] The gods to their dear shelter
take thee, maid, 185
That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!
[*To REGAN and GONERIL.*] And your large
speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of
love. 188
Thus Kent, O princes! bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new.
[*Exit.*]

Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, with FRANCE,
BURGUNDY, and Attendants.

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble
lord.

Lear. My Lord of Burgundy, 192
We first address toward you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What, in the
least,

Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal majesty, 196
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us we did hold her so.
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she
stands: 200

If aught within that little-seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer. 204
Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she
owes,

Unfriended, new-adapted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with
our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir; 208
Election makes not up on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power
that made me,
I tell you all her wealth.—[*To FRANCE.*] For
you, great king,
I would not from your love make such a stray

To match you where I hate; therefore, beseech
you 213

To avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange, 216
That she, who even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle 220
So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall into taint; which to believe of her, 224
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your majesty—
If for I want that glib and oily art
To speak and purpose not; since what I will
intend, 228

I'll do't before I speak—that you make known
It is no vicious blot nor other foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour,
But even for want of that for which I am richer,
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou 236
Hadst not been born than not to have pleas'd
me better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love is not love 241
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal Lear, 244
Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing; I have sworn; I am firm. 248
Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a
father

That you must lose a husband.
Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife. 252

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich,
being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:

Be it lawful I take up what's cast away. 256
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st
neglect

My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my
chance,

Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France: 260
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Shall buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou lovest here, a better where to find. 264

Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine,
for we

Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again, therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison. 268
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORN-
WALL, ALBANY, GLOUCESTER, and
Attendants.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd
eyes 272
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you
are;

And like a sister am most loath to call
Your faults as they are nam'd. Use well our
father:

To your professed bosoms I commit him:
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace, 276
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Reg. Prescribe not us our duties.
Gon. Let your study

Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms; you have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have
wanted. 282

Cor. Time shall unfold what plighted cun-
ning hides;
Who covers faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.
[*Exit* FRANCE and CORDELIA.]

Gon. Sister, it is not little I have to say of
what most nearly appertains to us both. I think
our father will hence to-night. 288

Reg. That's most certain, and with you;
next month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is;
the observation we have made of it hath not
been little: he always loved our sister most; and
with what poor judgment he hath now cast her
off appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he
hath ever but slenderly known himself. 297

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath
been but rash; then, must we look to receive
from his age, not alone the imperfections of
long-engraffed condition, but, therewithal the
unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric
years bring with them. 303

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to
have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-
taking between France and him. Pray you, let
us hit together: if our father carry authority
with such dispositions as he bears, this last
surrender of his will but offend us. 310

Reg. We shall further think on't.
Gon. We must do something, and i' the heat.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Hall in the EARL OF GLOUCESTER'S Castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a letter.

Edm. Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy
law

My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me, 4
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-
shines

Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore
base?

When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true, 8
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base,
base?

Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
More composition and fierce quality 12
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,

Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land: 16
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate. Fine word, 'legitimate!'

Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base 20
Shall top the legitimate:—I grow, I prosper;
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER.

Glo. Kent banished thus! And France in
choler parted!

And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd his
power! 24

Confin'd to exhibition! All this done
Upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?
Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[*Putting up the letter.*]
Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up
that letter? 29

Edm. I know no news, my lord.
Glo. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord. 32
Glo. No? What needed then that terrible
dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of
nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's
see; come; if it be nothing, I shall not need
spectacles. 37

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me; it is a
letter from my brother that I have not all o'er-
read, and for so much as I have perused, I find
it not fit for your o'er-looking. 41

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give
it. The contents, as in part I understand them,
are to blame. 45

Glo. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification,
he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my
virtue. 49

Glo. This policy and reverence of age makes
the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps
our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot
relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond
bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who
sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered.
Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If
our father would sleep till I waked him, you
should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live
the beloved of your brother, EDGAR.—Hum!

Conspiracy! 'Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue.'—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came this to you? Who brought it?

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glo. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glo. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Glo. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord; but I have often heard him maintain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declined, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glo. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him. Abominable villain! Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger.

Glo. Think you so?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster—

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glo.—to his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glo. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time:

machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing: do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange!

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under ursa major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Foot! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar—

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! *Fa, sol, la, mi.*

Edg. How now, brother Edmund! What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you the effects he writes of succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state; menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edg. The night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him; and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower, and, as I say, retire with me to my

lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak. Pray you, go; there's my key. If you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother!

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed; I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you; I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it; pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.

[Exit EDGAR.]

A credulous father, and a brother noble, Whose nature is so far from doing harms That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty

My practices ride easy! I see the business. Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit: All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.—A Room in the DUKE OF ALBANY'S Palace.

Enter GONERIL and OSWALD her Steward.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Osw. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night he wrongs me; every hour He flashes into one gross crime or other, That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it: His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us

On every trifle. When he returns from hunting I will not speak with him; say I am sick: If you come slack of former services, You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

Osw. He's coming, madam; I hear him.

[Horns within.]

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,

You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:

If he distaste it, let him to my sister, Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one, Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,

That still would manage those authorities That he hath given away! Now, by my life, Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd.

Remember what I have said.

Osw. Well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you;

What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:

I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall, That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—A Hall in the Same.

Enter KENT, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow, That can my speech diffuse, my good intent

May carry through itself to that full issue For which I raz'd my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,

If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,

So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st, Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner: go, get it ready. *[Exit an Attendant.]* How now! what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Whom wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly; that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing; I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee no worse after dinner I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho! dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you and call my fool hither.

[Exit an Attendant.]

Enter OSWALD.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Osw. So please you,—

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. *[Exit a Knight.]* Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep. How now! where's that mongrel?

Re-enter Knight.

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I called him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!
Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! sayest thou so?
Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

Lear. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined him away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you and tell my daughter I would speak with her.

[Exit an Attendant.
 Go you, call hither my fool. [Exit an Attendant.

Re-enter OSWALD.

O! you sir, you, come you hither, sir. Who am I, sir?

Osw. My lady's father.
Lear. 'My lady's father!' my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Osw. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

Osw. I'll not be struck, my lord.
Kent. Nor tripped neither, you base football player.

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry; but away! Go to; have you wisdom? so.

[Pushes OSWALD out.
Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.

[Gives KENT money.

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.

[Offers KENT his cap.
Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.
Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? for taking one's part that's out of favour. Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will: if thou follow him thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. [To KENT.] Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.
Fool. Mark it, nuncle:—

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn more than thou trowest,
 Set less than thou throwest;
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,
 And keep in-a-door,
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer, you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [To KENT.] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord that counsell'd thee
 To give away thy land,
 Come place him here by me,
 Do thou for him stand:

The sweet and bitter fool
 Will presently appear;
 The one in motley here,
 The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't, and ladies too: they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching.

Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;
 For wise men are grown foppish,
 And know not how their wits to wear,
 Their manners are so apish.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When you clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gavest them the rod and puttest down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep,

And I for sorrow sung,

That such a king should play bo-peep,

And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool; and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. [To GONERIL.] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing.

Mum, mum;
 He that keeps nor crust nor crumb,
 Weary of all, shall want some.

That's a shealed peascod. [Pointing to LEAR.
Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,

But other of your insolent retinue
 Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth
 In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,

I had thought, by making this well known unto you,

To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,

By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
 That you protect this course, and put it on
 By your allowance; which if you should, the fault

Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,

Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
 Might in their working do you that offence,
 Which else were shame, that then necessity
 Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you throw, nuncle,
 The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
 That it had it head bit off by it young.

So out went the candle, and we were left dark-ling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?
Gon. I would you would make use of your good wisdom,

Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away
 These dispositions which of late transform you
 From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me? This is not Lear:
 Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?

Either his notion weakens, his discernings
 Are lethargied. Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
 Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.
Lear. I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.
Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?
Gon. This admiration, sir, is much o' the favour

Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
 To understand my purposes aright:
 As you are old and reverend, should be wise.
 Here do you keep a hundred knights and
 squires;

Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd, and bold,
 That this our court, infected with their man-
 ners,
 Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
 Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
 Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth
 speak
 For instant remedy; be then desir'd
 By her that else will take the thing she begs,
 A little to disquantity your train;
 And the remainder, that shall still depend,
 To be such men as may besort your age,
 Which know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!
 Saddle my horses; call my train together!
 Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
 Yet have I left a daughter.
Gon. You strike my people, and your dis-
 order'd rabble
 Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents;

[To ALBANY.] O! sir, are you come?
 Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.

Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
 More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a
 child,

Than the sea-monster.

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. [To GONERIL.] Detested kite! thou
 liest:

My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
 That all particulars of duty know,
 And in the most exact regard support
 The worships of their name. O most small fault,
 How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!

Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of
 nature

From the fix'd place, drew from my heart all love,

And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,

[Striking his head.]
And thy dear judgment out: Go, go, my people.
Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.
Hear, Nature, hear! dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend

To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!

Dry up in her the organs of increase,
And from her derogate body never spring

A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live

And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,

With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits

To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child! Away, away! [Exit.]
Alb. Now, gods that we adore, whereof

comes this?
Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;

But let his disposition have that scope

That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What! fifty of my followers at a clap,
Within a fortnight?

Alb. What's the matter, sir?
Lear. I'll tell thee. [To GONERIL.] Life and

death! I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood

thus,
That these hot tears, which break from me per-

force,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs

upon thee!
Th' untented woundings of a father's curse

Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Bewep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,

And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?

Let it be so: I have another daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:

When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find

That I'll resume the shape which thou dost
think

I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant
thee. [Exit LEAR, KENT, and Attendants.]

Gon. Do you mark that?
Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,

To the great love I bear you—
Gon. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!

[To the Fool.] You, sir, more knave than fool,
after your master.

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear! tarry, and
take the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,

Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter;

So the fool follows after. [Exit.]

Gon. This man hath had good counsel. A
hundred knights!

'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights; yes, that on every

dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,

He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.
Gon. Safer than trust too far.

Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.

What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister; 356
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd the unfitness,—

Re-enter OSWALD.

How now, Oswald!
What! have you writ that letter to my sister?

Osw. Ay, madam.
Gon. Take you some company, and away to

horse:
Inform her full of my particular fear;

And thereto add such reasons of your own
As may compact it more. Get you gone,

And hasten your return. [Exit OSWALD.] No,
no, my lord,

This milky gentleness and course of yours
Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,

You are much more attack'd for want of wis-
dom

Than prais'd for harmful mildness.
Alb. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot

tell:
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then—
Alb. Well, well; the event. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—Court before the Same.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these
letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with

any thing you know than comes from her
demand out of the letter. If your diligence be

not speedy I shall be there before you.
Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have

delivered your letter. [Exit.]
Fool. If a man's brains were in's heels, were't

not in danger of kibes?
Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall
not go slipshod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!
Fool. Shalt see thy other daughter will use

thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a
crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can

tell.
Lear. What canst tell, boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does
to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose

stands i' the middle on's face?
Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's
nose, that what a man cannot smell out, he

may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong.—
Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his

shell?
Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a
snail has a house.

Lear. Why?
Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give

it away to his daughters, and leave his horns
without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a
father! Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The
reason why the seven stars are no more than

seven is a pretty reason.
Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good
fool.

Lear. To take it again perforce! Monster in-
gratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have
thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?
Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old before

thou hadst been wise.
Lear. O! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet

heaven;
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.
How now! Are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.
Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that's a maid now, and laughs at
my departure,

Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut
shorter. [Exeunt.]

ACT II

SCENE I.—A Court within the Castle of the
EARL OF GLOUCESTER.

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.
Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your

father, and given him notice that the Duke of
Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here

with him to-night.
Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not. You have heard of
the news abroad? I mean the whispered ones,

for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?
Edm. Not I: pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward,
'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.
Cur. You may do then, in time. Fare you

well, sir.
Edm. The duke be here to-night! The better!

best!
This weaves itself perforce into my business.

My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,

Which I must act. Briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches: O sir! fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;

You have now the good advantage of the
night.

Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Corn-
wall?

He's coming hither, now, i' the night, i' the
haste,

And Regan with him; have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?

Advise yourself.
Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming; pardon me;
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you;

Draw; seem to defend yourself; now 'quit you
well.

Yield;—come before my father. Light, ho!
here!

Fly, brother. Torches! torches! So, farewell.
[Exit EDGAR.]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
[Wounds his arm.]

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen
drunkards

Do more than this in sport. Father! father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOUCESTER, and Servants with torches.
Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp
sword out,

Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the
moon

To stand auspicious mistress.
Glo. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.
Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means
he could—

Glo. Pursue him, ho! Go after. [Exit
some Servants.] 'By no means' what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your
lordship;

But that I told him, the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;

Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine,

Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,

With his prepared sword he charges home
My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm:

But when he saw my best alarm'd spirits
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to the en-

counter,
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far:
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;

And found—dispatch. The noble duke my
master,

My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he which finds him shall deserve our
thanks,

Bringing the murderous coward to the stake; 64
He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him: he replied, 68
'Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should
deny,— 72

As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character,—I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
And thou must make a dullard of the world, 76
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.'

Glo. Strong and fasten'd villain!
Would he deny his letter? I never got him. 80

[*Tucket within.*]
Hark! the duke's trumpets. I know not why he
comes.

All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;
The duke must grant me that: besides, his pic-
ture

I will send far and near, that all the kingdom 84
May have due note of him; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend! since I
came hither,— 88
Which I can call but now,—I have heard strange
news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too
short
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my
lord?

Glo. O! madam, my old heart is crack'd, it's
crack'd. 92

Reg. What! did my father's godson seek your
life?

He whom my father nam'd? your Edgar?

Glo. O! lady, shame would have it hid.

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous
knights 96

That tend upon my father?

Glo. I know not, madam; 'tis too bad, too
bad.

Edm. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

Reg. No marvel then though he were ill
affected; 100

'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well-inform'd of them, and with such
cautions 104

That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your
father

A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir. 108

Glo. He did bewray his practice; and receiv'd

This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.
Corn. Is he pursu'd?

Glo. Ay, my good lord.
Corn. If he be taken he shall never more 112
Be fear'd of doing harm; make your own pur-
pose,

How in my strength you please. For you,
Edmund,

Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours: 116
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glo. For him I thank your Grace.
Corn. You know not why we came to visit
you,— 120

Reg. Thus out of season, threading dark-ey'd
night:

Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some prize,
Wherein we must have use of your advice.

Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister, 124
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home; the several mes-
sengers

From hence attend dispatch. Our good old
friend,

Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow 128
Your needful counsel to our businesses,
Which craves the instant use.

Glo. I serve you, madam.
Your Graces are right welcome. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—Before GLOUCESTER'S Castle.

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally.

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend: art of
this house?

Kent. Ay.

Osw. Where may we set our horses? 4

Kent. I'll mure.

Osw. Prithce, if thou lovest me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why, then I care not for thee. 8

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I
would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know
thee not. 12

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken
meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-
suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking
knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking knave; a
whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical
rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that
wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service,
and art nothing but the composition of a
knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son
and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will
beat into clamorous whining if thou deniest
the least syllable of thy addition. 26

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art
thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known
of thee nor knows thee! 29

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou,

to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days since
I tripped up thy heels and beat thee before
the king? Draw, you rogue; for, though it be
night, yet the moon shines: I'll make a sop o'
the moonshine of you. [*Drawing his sword.*]
Draw, you whoreson, cullionly, barber-monger,
draw. 37

Osw. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal; you come with let-
ters against the king, and ake vanity the pup-
pet's part against the royalty of her father.
Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your
shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

Osw. Help, ho! murder! help! 44

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand;
you neat slave, strike. [*Beating him.*]

Osw. Help, oh! murder! murder!

Enter EDMUND with his rapier drawn.

Edm. How now! What's the matter? 48

Kent. With you, Goodman boy, if you please:
come, 48

I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, and
Servants.*

Glo. Weapons! arms! What's the matter
here?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives: 52
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the
king.

Corn. What is your difference? speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my lord. 56

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirred your
valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims
in thee: a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow; a tailor
make a man? 61

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir: a stone-cutter or a
painter could not have made him so ill, though
they had been but two hours o' the trade. 64

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Osw. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I
have spar'd at suit of his grey beard,— 67

Kent. Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary
letter! My lord, if you will give me leave, I will
tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and
daub the wall of a jakes with him. Spare my
grey beard, you wagtail?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry? 76

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear
a sword,

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as
these,

Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every
passion 80

That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks

With every gale and vary of their masters, 84
Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.

A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?

Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain, 88
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

Corn. What! art thou mad, old fellow?

Glo. How fell you out? say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy 92
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What
is his fault?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor
his, nor hers. 97

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time

Than stands on any shoulder that I see 100
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth
affect

A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he, 104
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth:

An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this
plainness

Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly-ducking observants, 109

That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your grand aspect, 112
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire

On flickering Phœbus' front,—

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you
discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no
flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain accent
was a plain knave; which for my part I will not
be, though I should win your displeasure to en-
treat me to't. 120

Corn. What was the offence you gave him?

Osw. I never gave him any:

It pleas'd the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction; 124
When he, conjunct, and flattering his dis-
pleasure,

Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,

That worthied him, got praises of the king 128
For him attempting who was self-subdu'd;

And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks! 132
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend brag-
gart,

We'll teach you.

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn,
Call not your stocks for me; I serve the king,
On whose employment I was sent to you; 136
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.