

'Thou mak'st the vestal violate her oath;
Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is
thaw'd; 884
Thou smother'st honesty, thou murder'st troth;
Thou foul abettor! thou notorious bawd!
Thou plantest scandal and displacest laud:
Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,
Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief! 889

'Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,
Thy private feasting to a public fast,
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name, 892
Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste:
Thy violent vanities can never last.
How comes it, then, vile Opportunity,
Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee?

'When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's
friend, 897
And bring him where his suit may be obtain'd?
When wilt thou sort an hour great strifes to end?
Or free that soul which wretchedness hath
chain'd? 900
Give physic to the sick, ease to the pain'd?
The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for
thee;
But they ne'er meet with Opportunity.

'The patient dies while the physician sleeps; 904
The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds;
Justice is feasting while the widow weeps;
Advice is sporting while infection breeds:
Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds: 908
Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's
rages,
Thy heinous hours wait on them as their
pages.

'When Truth and Virtue have to do with thee,
A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid: 912
They buy thy help; but Sin ne'er gives a fee,
He gratis comes; and thou art well appaid
As well to hear as grant what he hath said.
My Collatine would else have come to me 916
When Tarquin did, but he was stay'd by thee.

'Guilty thou art of murder and of theft,
Guilty of perjury and subornation,
Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift, 920
Guilty of incest, that abomination;
An accessory by thine inclination
To all sins past, and all that are to come,
From the creation to the general doom. 924

'Mis-shapen Time, copesmate of ugly Night,
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care,
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's
snare; 928
Thou nurdest all, and murderest all that are;
O! hear me, then, injurious, shifting Time,
Be guilty of my death, since of my crime.

'Why hath thy servant, Opportunity, 932
Betray'd the hours thou gav'st me to repose?
Cancell'd my fortunes, and enchained me
To endless date of never-ending woes?

Time's office is to fine the hate of foes; 936
To eat up errors by opinion bred,
Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

'Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things, 941
To wake the morn and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right,
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
And smear with dust their glittering golden
towers; 945

'To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books and alter their contents, 948
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oak's sap and cherish springs,
To spoil antiquities of hammer'd steel,
And turn the giddy round of Fortune's
wheel; 952

'To show the beldam daughters of her daughter,
To make the child a man, the man a child,
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,
To tame the unicorn and lion wild, 956
To mock the subtle, in themselves beguil'd,
To cheer the ploughman with increaseful
crops,
And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

'Why work'st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,
Unless thou couldst return to make amends?
One poor retiring minute in an age
Would purchase thee a thousand thousand
friends,
Lending him wit that to bad debtors lends: 964
O! this dread night, wouldst thou one hour
come back,
I could prevent this storm and shun thy wrack.

'Thou ceaseless lackey to eternity,
With some mischance cross Tarquin in his
flight: 968
Devise extremes beyond extremity,
To make him curse this cursed crimeful night:
Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright,
And the dire thought of his committed evil
Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

'Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,
Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans;
Let there bechance him pitiful mischances 976
To make him moan, but pity not his moans;
Stone him with harden'd hearts, harder than
stones;
And let mild women to him lose their mild-
ness,
Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

'Let him have time to tear his curled hair, 981
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave, 984
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdain'd scraps to give.

'Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
And merry fools to mock at him resort; 989
Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
His time of folly and his time of sport; 992
And ever let his unrecalling crime
Have time to wail the abusing of his time.

'O Time! thou tutor both to good and bad,
Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this
ill; 996
At his own shadow let the thief run mad,
Himself himself seek every hour to kill:
Such wretched hands such wretched blood
should spill; 999
For who so base would such an office have
As slanderous deathsman to so base a slave?

'The baser is he, coming from a king,
To shame his hope with deeds degenerate:
The mightier man, the mightier is the thing 1004
That makes him honour'd, or begets him hate;
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
The moon being clouded presently is miss'd,
But little stars may hide them when they list.

'The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in
mire, 1009
And unperceiv'd fly with the filth away;
But if the like the snow-white swan desire,
The stain upon his silver down will stay. 1012
Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious
day.
Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,
But eagles gaz'd upon with every eye.

'Out, idle words! servants to shallow fools, 1016
Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators!
Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools;
Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters;
To trembling clients be you mediators: 1020
For me, I force not argument a straw,
Since that my case is past the help of law.

'In vain I rail at Opportunity,
At Time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful Night;
In vain I cavil with my infamy, 1025
In vain I spurn at my confirm'd despite;
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.
The remedy indeed to do me good, 1028
Is to let forth my foul-defiled blood.

'Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honour thyself to rid me of this shame;
For if I die, my honour lives in thee, 1032
But if I live, thou liv'st in my defame;
Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame,
And wast afraid to scratch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.' 1036

This said, from her be-tumbled couch she start-
eth,
To find some desperate instrument of death;
But this no slaughter-house no tool imparteth
To make more vent for passage of her breath;
Which, thronging through her lips, so vanisheth
As smoke from Ætna, that in air consumes,
Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

'In vain,' quoth she, 'I live, and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life: 1045
I fear'd by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife:
But when I fear'd I was a loyal wife: 1048
So am I now: O no! that cannot be;
Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

'O! that is gone for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die. 1052
To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery;
A dying life to living infamy.
Poor helpless help, the treasure stol'n away,
To burn the guiltless casket where it lay? 1057

'Well, well, dear Collatine, thou shalt not know
The stained taste of violated troth;
I will not wrong thy true affection so, 1060
To flatter thee with an infringed oath;
This bastard graff shall never come to growth;
He shall not boast who did thy stock pollute
That thou art doting father of his fruit. 1064

'Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
Nor laugh with his companions at thy state;
But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought
Basely with gold, but stol'n from forth thy
gate. 1068
For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
And with my trespass never will dispense,
Till life to death acquit my forc'd offence.

'I will not poison thee with my attaint, 1072
Nor fold my fault in cleanly-coin'd excuses;
My sable ground of sin I will not paint,
To hide the truth of this false night's abuses;
My tongue shall utter all; mine eyes, like
sluices, 1076
As from a mountain-spring that feeds a dale,
Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure
tale.

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended 1079
The well-tun'd warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow sad gait descended
To ugly hell; when, lo! the blushing morrow
Lends light to all fair eyes that light will bor-
row:
But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
And therefore still in night would cloister'd
be. 1085

Revealing day through every cranny spies,
And seems to point her out where she sits weep-
ing;
To whom she sobbing speaks: 'O eye of eyes!
Why pry'st thou through my window? leave
thy peeping; 1089
Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are
sleeping:
Brand not my forehead with thy piercing
light,
For day hath nought to do what's done by
night.' 1092

RAPE OF LUCRECE

1098

Thus cavils she with everything she sees:
True grief is fond and testy as a child,
Who wayward once, his mood with nought
agrees:

Old woes, not infant sorrows, bear them mild;
Continuance tames the one; the other wild, 1097
Like an unpractis'd swimmer plunging still,
With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care, 1100
Holds disputation with each thing she views,
And to herself all sorrow doth compare;
No object but her passion's strength renews,
And as one shifts, another straight ensues: 1104
Sometime her grief is dumb and hath no
words;
Sometime 'tis mad and too much talk affords.

The little birds that tune their morning's joy
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody:
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy;
Sad souls are slain in merry company;
Grief best is pleas'd with grief's society:
True sorrow then is feelingly suffic'd 1112
When with like semblance it is sympathiz'd.

'Tis double death to drown in ken of shore;
He ten times pines that pines beholding food;
To see the salve doth make the wound ache
more; 1116
Great grief grieves most at that would do it
good;
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood,
Who, being stopp'd, the bounding banks o'er-
flows;
Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows.

'You mocking birds,' quoth she, 'your tunes
entomb 1121
Within your hollow-swelling feather'd breasts,
And in my hearing be you mute and dumb:
My restless discord loves no stops nor rests;
A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests: 1125
Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;
Distress likes dumps when time is kept with
tears.

'Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment,
Make thy sad grove in my dishevel'd hair: 1129
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear; 1132
For burthen-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,
While thou on Tereus descant'st better skill.

'And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart 1137
Will fix a sharp knife to affright mine eye,
Who, if it wink, shall thereon fall and die.
These means, as frets upon an instrument,
Shall tune our heart-strings to true languish-
ment. 1141

'And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,
As shaming any eye should thee behold,
Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,

That knows nor parching heat nor freezing
cold, 1145
We will find out; and there we will unfold
To creatures stern sad tunes, to change their
kinds:
Since men prove beasts, let beasts bear gentle
minds. 1148

As the poor frightened deer, that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly,
Or one compass'd with a winding maze,
That cannot tread the way out readily; 1152
So with herself is she in mutiny,
To live or die which of the twain were better,
When life is sham'd, and death reproach's
debtor. 1155

'To kill myself,' quoth she, 'alack! what were it
But with my body my poor soul's pollution?
They that lose half with greater patience bear it
Than they whose whole is swallow'd in con-
fusion.
That mother tries a merciless conclusion, 1160
Who, having two sweet babes, when death
takes one,
Will slay the other and be nurse to none.

'My body or my soul, which was the dearer,
When the one pure, the other made divine? 1164
Whose love of either to myself was nearer,
When both were kept for heaven and Collatine?
Ay me! the bark peel'd from the lofty pine,
His leaves will wither and his sap decay; 1168
So must my soul, her bark being peel'd away.

'Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy:
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy: 1173
Then let it not be call'd impiety,
If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole
Through which I may convey this troubled
soul. 1176

'Yet die I will not till my Collatine
Have heard the cause of my untimely death;
That he may vow, in that sad hour of mine,
Revenge on him that made me stop my
breath. 1180
My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath,
Which by him tainted, shall for him be spent,
And as his due writ in my testament.

'Mine honour I'll bequeath unto the knife 1184
That wounds my body so dishonoured.
'Tis honour to deprive dishonour'd life;
The one will live, the other being dead:
So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred; 1188
For in my death I murder shameful scorn:
My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.

'Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,
What legacy shall I bequeath to thee? 1192
My resolution, love, shall be thy boast,
By whose example thou reveng'd mayst be.
How Tarquin must be us'd, read it in me:
Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,
And for my sake serve thou false Tarquin so.

1099

RAPE OF LUCRECE

'This brief abridgment of my will I make:
My soul and body to the skies and ground;
My resolution, husband, do thou take; 1200
Mine honour be the knife's that makes my
wound;
My shame be his that did my fame confound;
And all my fame that lives disbursed be
To those that live, and think no shame of me.

'Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will; 1205
How was I overseen that thou shalt see it!
My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill;
My life's foul deed, my life's fair end shall free it.
Faint not, faint heart, but stoutly say, "So be
it." 1209
Yield to my hand; my hand shall conquer
thee:
Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors
be.'

This plot of death when sadly she had laid, 1212
And wip'd the brinish pearl from her bright
eyes,
With untun'd tongue she hoarsely call'd her
maid,
Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies;
For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers
flies. 1216
Poor Lucrece' cheeks unto her maid seem so
As winter meads when sun doth melt their
snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-
morrow,
With soft slow tongue, true mark of modesty,
And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow, 1221
For why her face wore sorrow's livery;
But durst not ask of her audaciously
Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,
Nor why her fair cheeks over-wash'd with
woe. 1225

But as the earth doth weep, the sun being set,
Each flower moisten'd like a melting eye;
Even so the maid with swelling drops 'gan wet
Her circled eyne, enforc'd by sympathy 1229
Of those fair suns set in her mistress' sky,
Who in a salt-wav'd ocean quench their light,
Which makes the maid weep like the dewy
night. 1232

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,
Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling;
One justly weeps, the other takes in hand
No cause but company of her drops spilling;
Their gentle sex to weep are often willing, 1237
Grieving themselves to guess at others'
smarts,
And then they drown their eyes or break their
hearts:

For men have marble, women waxen minds,
And therefore are they form'd as marble will;
The weak oppress'd, the impression of strange
kinds

Is form'd in them by force, by fraud, or skill:
Then call them not the authors of their ill, 1244
No more than wax shall be accounted evil
Wherein is stamp'd the semblance of a devil.

Their smoothness, like a goodly champaign
plain,
Lays open all the little worms that creep; 1248
In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain
Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep:
Through crystal walls each little mote will peep:
Though men can cover crimes with bold stern
looks, 1252
Poor women's faces are their own faults'
books.

No man inveigh against the wither'd flower,
But chide rough winter that the flower hath
kill'd:
Not that devour'd, but that which doth devour,
Is worthy blame. O! let it not be hild 1257
Poor women's faults, that they are so fulfill'd
With men's abuses: those proud lords, to
blame,
Make weak-made women tenants to their
shame. 1260

The precedent whereof in Lucrece view,
Assail'd by night with circumstances strong
Of present death, and shame that might ensue
By that her death, to do her husband wrong:
Such danger to resistance did belong, 1265
That dying fear through all her body spread;
And who cannot abuse a body dead?

By this, mild patience bid fair Lucrece speak
To the poor counterfeit of her complaining:
'My girl,' quoth she, 'on what occasion break
Those tears from thee, that down thy cheeks
are raining?
If thou dost weep for grief of my sustaining,
Know, gentle wench, it small avails my
mood: 1273
If tears could help, mine own would do me
good.

'But tell me, girl, when went'—and there she
stay'd
Till after a deep groan—'Tarquin from
hence?'— 1276
'Madam, ere I was up,' replied the maid,
'The more to blame my sluggard negligence:
Yet with the fault I thus far can dispense;
Myself was stirring ere the break of day, 1280
And, ere I rose, was Tarquin gone away.

'But, lady, if your maid may be so bold,
She would request to know your heaviness.'
'O! peace,' quoth Lucrece; 'if it should be
told, 1284
The repetition cannot make it less;
For more it is than I can well express:
And that deep torture may be call'd a hell,
When more is felt than one hath power to
tell. 1288

RAPE OF LUCRECE

1100

'Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen:
Yet save that labour, for I have them here.
What should I say? One of my husband's men
Bid thou be ready by and by, to bear 1292
A letter to my lord, my love, my dear:
Bid him with speed prepare to carry it;
The cause craves haste, and it will soon be
writ.' 1295

Her maid is gone, and she prepares to write,
First hovering o'er the paper with her quill:
Conceit and grief an eager combat fight;
What wit sets down is blotted straight with will;
This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill: 1300
Much like a press of people at a door,
Throng her inventions, which shall go before.

At last she thus begins: 'Thou worthy lord
Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee, 1304
Health to thy person! next vouchsafe t' afford,
If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see,
Some present speed to come and visit me.
So I commend me from our house in grief:
My woes are tedious, though my words are
brief.' 1309

Here folds she up the tenour of her woe,
Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.
By this short schedule Collatine may know 1312
Her grief, but not her grief's true quality:
She dares not thereof make discovery,
Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse,
Ere she with blood had stain'd her stain'd
excuse. 1316

Besides, the life and feeling of her passion
She hoards, to spend when he is by to hear her;
When sighs, and groans, and tears may grace
the fashion
Of her disgrace, the better so to clear her 1320
From that suspicion which the world might
bear her.
To shun this blot, she would not blot the
letter
With words, till action might become them
better.

To see sad sights moves more than hear them
told; 1324
For then the eye interprets to the ear
The heavy motion that it doth behold,
When every part a part of woe doth bear:
'Tis but a part of sorrow that we hear; 1328
Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow
fords,
And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of
words.

Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ
'At Ardea to my lord, with more than haste.'
The post attends, and she delivers it, 1333
Charging the sour-fac'd groom to hie as fast
As lagging fowls before the northern blast.
Speed more than speed but dull and slow she
deems: 1336
Extremity still urgeth such extremes.

The homely villein curtsies to her low;
And, blushing on her, with a steadfast eye
Receives the scroll without or yea or no, 1340
And forth with bashful innocence doth hie:
But they whose guilt within their bosoms lie
Imagine every eye beholds their blame;
For Lucrece thought he blush'd to see her
shame: 1344

When, silly groom! God wot, it was defect
Of spirit, life, and bold audacity.
Such harmless creatures have a true respect
To talk in deeds, while others saucily 1348
Promise more speed, but do it leisurely:
Even so this pattern of the worn-out age
Pawn'd honest looks, but laid no words to
gage.

His kindled duty kindled their mistrust, 1352
That two red fires in both their faces blaz'd;
She thought he blush'd, as knowing Tarquin's
lust,
And, blushing with him, wistly on him gaz'd;
Her earnest eye did make him more amaz'd:
The more she saw the blood his cheeks re-
plenish, 1357
The more she thought he spied in her some
blemish.

But long she thinks till he return again,
And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone. 1360
The weary time she cannot entertain,
For now 'tis stale to sigh, to weep, and groan:
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,
That she her plaints a little while doth stay,
Pausing for means to mourn some newer
way. 1365

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy;
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen's rape the city to destroy, 1369
Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy;
Which the conceited painter drew so proud,
As heaven, it seem'd, to kiss the turrets bow'd.

A thousand lamentable objects there, 1373
In scorn of nature, art gave lifeless life;
Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,
Shed for the slaughter'd husband by the wife:
The red blood reek'd, to show the painter's
strife; 1377
And dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy
lights,
Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioneer, 1380
Begrim'd with sweat, and smeared all with dust;
And from the towers of Troy there would appear
The very eyes of men through loop-holes thrust,
Gazing upon the Greeks with little lust: 1384
Such sweet observance in this work was
had,
That one might see those far-off eyes look
sad.

1101

RAPE OF LUCRECE

In great commanders grace and majesty
You might behold, triumphing in their faces;
In youth quick bearing and dexterity; 1389
And here and there the painter interlaces
Pale cowards, marching on with trembling
paces;
Which heartless peasants did so well re-
semble, 1392
That one would swear he saw them quake and
tremble.

In Ajax and Ulysses, O! what art
Of physiognomy might one behold;
The face of either cipher'd either's heart; 1396
Their face their manners most expressly told:
In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd;
But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent
Show'd deep regard and smiling government.

There pleading might you see grave Nestor
stand, 1401
As 'twere encouraging the Greeks to fight;
Making such sober action with his hand,
That it beguill'd attention, charm'd the sight.
In speech, it seem'd, his beard, all silver white,
Wagg'd up and down, and from his lips did fly
Thin winding breath, which pur'd up to the
sky.

About him were a press of gaping faces, 1408
Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice;
All jointly listening, but with several graces,
As if some mermaid did their ears entice,
Some high, some low, the painter was so
nice; 1412
The scalps of many, almost hid behind,
To jump up higher seem'd, to mock the mind.

Here one man's hand lean'd on another's head,
His nose being shadow'd by his neighbour's ear;
Here one being throng'd bears back, all boll'n
and red; 1417
Another smother'd, seems to pelt and swear;
And in their rage such signs of rage they bear,
As, but for loss of Nestor's golden words, 1420
It seem'd they would debate with angry
swords.

For much imaginary work was there;
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
That for Achilles' image stood his spear, 1424
Grip'd in an armed hand; himself behind,
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind:
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
Stood for the whole to be imagined. 1428

And from the walls of strong-besieged Troy,
When their brave hope, bold Hector, march'd
to field,
Stood many Trojan mothers, sharing joy
To see their youthful sons bright weapons
wield; 1432
And to their hope they such odd action yield,
That through their light joy seemed to ap-
pear,—
Like bright things stain'd—a kind of heavy
fear.

And, from the strand of Dardan, where they
fought, 1436
To Simois' reedy banks the red blood ran,
Whose waves to imitate the battle sought
With swelling ridges; and their ranks began
To break upon the galled shore, and than 1440
Retire again, till meeting greater ranks
They join and shoot their foam at Simois'
banks.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
To find a face where all distress is stell'd. 1444
Many she sees where cares have carved some,
But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
Till she despairing Hecuba beheld,
Staring on Priam's wounds with her old
eyes,
Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot
lies. 1449

In her the painter had anatomiz'd
Time's ruin, beauty's wrack, and grim care's
reign:
Her cheeks with chaps and wrinkles were dis-
guis'd; 1452
Of what she was no semblance did remain;
Her blue blood chang'd to black in every vein,
Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes
had fed,
Show'd life imprison'd in a body dead. 1456

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,
And shapes her sorrow to the beldam's woes,
Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,
And bitter words to ban her cruel foes: 1460
The painter was no god to lend her those;
And therefore Lucrece swears he did her
wrong,
To give her so much grief and not a tongue.

'Poor instrument,' quoth she, 'without a sound,
I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue,
And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
And with my tears quench Troy that burns so
long, 1468
And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

'Show me the strumpet that began this stir,
That with my nails her beauty I may tear. 1472
Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur
This load of wrath that burning Troy doth
bear:
Thy eye kindled the fire that burneth here;
And here in Troy, for trespass of thine eye,
The sire, the son, the dame, and daughter
die.

'Why should the private pleasure of some one
Become the public plague of many moe? 1480
Let sin, alone committed, light alone
Upon his head that hath transgressed so;
Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe;
For one's offence why should so many fall,
To plague a private sin in general? 1484

RAPE OF LUCRECE

1102

'Lo! here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
Here Hector faints, here Troilus wounds,
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,
And one man's lust these many lives confounds:
Had doting Priam check'd his son's desire,
Troy had been bright with fame and not with fire.'

Here feelingly she weeps Troy's painted woes;
For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell, 1493
Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes;
Then little strength rings out the doleful knell:
So Lucrece, set a-work, sad tales doth tell 1496
To pencil'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow;
She lends them words, and she their looks
doth borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting round,
And whom she finds forlorn she doth lament:
At last she sees a wretched image bound, 1501
That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent;
His face, though full of cares, yet show'd content;
Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
So mild, that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.

In him the painter labour'd with his skill 1506
To hide deceit, and give the harmless show
An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
A brow unbent that seem'd to welcome woe;
Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so
That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.

But, like a constant and confirmed devil, 1513
He entertain'd a show so seeming-just,
And therein so ensconced his secret evil,
That jealousy itself could not mistrust 1516
False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust
Into so bright a day such black-fac'd storms,
Or blot with hell-born sin such saint-like forms. 1519

The well-skill'd workman this mild image drew
For perjurd Sinon, whose enchanting story
The credulous old Priam burnt for slew;
Whose words, like wildfire, burnt the shining glory
Of rich-built Ilium, that the skies were sorry, 1524
And little stars shot from their fixed places,
When their glass fell wherein they view'd
their faces.

This picture she advisedly perus'd,
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill, 1528
Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abus'd;
So fair a form lodg'd not a mind so ill:
And still on him she gaz'd, and gazing still,
Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,
That she concludes the picture was belied.

'It cannot be,' quoth she, 'that so much guile,'—
She would have said, 'can lurk in such a look;'

But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while, 1536
And from her tongue 'can lurk' from 'cannot'
took:
'It cannot be,' she in that sense forsook,
And turn'd it thus, 'It cannot be, I find,
But such a face should bear a wicked mind:

'For even as subtle Sinon here is painted, 1541
So sober-sad, so weary, and so mild,
And if with grief or travail he had fainted,
To me came Tarquin armed; so beguil'd 1544
With outward honesty, but yet defil'd
With inward vice: as Priam him did cherish,
So did I Tarquin; so my Troy did perish.

'Look, look, how listening Priam wets his eyes,
To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds!
Priam, why art thou old and yet not wise?
For every tear he falls a Trojan bleeds:
His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds;
Those round clear pearls of his, that move
thy pity, 1553
Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

'Such devils steal effects from lightless hell;
For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold, 1556
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell;
These contraries such unity do hold,
Only to flatter fools and make them bold:
So Priam's trust false Sinon's tears doth
flatter, 1560
That he finds means to burn his Troy with water.'

Here, all enrag'd, such passion her assaults
That patience is quite beaten from her breast.
She tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,
Comparing him to that unhappy guest 1565
Whose deed hath made herself herself detest:
At last she smilingly with this gives o'er;
'Fool, fool!' quoth she, 'his wounds will not
be sore.' 1568

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
And time doth weary time with her complain-
ing.
She looks for night, and then she longs for
morrow,
And both she thinks too long with her remain-
ing: 1572
Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sus-
taining:
Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps;
And they that watch see time how slow it
creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipp'd her
thought, 1576
That she with painted images hath spent;
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment;
Losing her woes in shows of discontent. 1580
It easeth some, though none it ever cur'd,
To think their dolour others have endur'd.

1103

RAPE OF LUCRECE

But now the mindful messenger, come back,
Brings home his lord and other company; 1584
Who finds his Lucrece clad in mourning black;
And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky:
These water-galls in her dim element 1588
Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares:
Her eyes, though sod in tears, look'd red and
raw, 1592
Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares:
Both stood like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wondering each other's
chance. 1596

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins: 'What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling
stand?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour
spent? 1600
Why art thou thus attir'd in discontent?
Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.'

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire,
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe:
At length address'd to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe; 1608
While Collatine and his consorted lords
With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale swan in her watery nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending. 1612
'Few words,' quoth she, 'shall fit the trespass
best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending:
In me woe more than words are now depending;
And my laments would be drawn out too long,
To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

'Then be this all the task it hath to say:
Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed
A stranger came, and on that pillow lay 1620
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head;
And what wrong else may be imagined
By foul enforcement might be done to me,
From that, alas! thy Lucrece is not free. 1624

'For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature with a flaming light,
And softly cried, "Awake, thou Roman dame,
And entertain my love; else lasting shame 1629
On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
If thou my love's desire do contradict.

"For some hard-favour'd groom of thine,"
quoth he, 1632
"Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee,
And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of lust, and so did kill 1636

The lechers in their deed: this act will be
My fame, and thy perpetual infamy."

'With this I did begin to start and cry,
And then against my heart he set his sword,
Swearing, unless I took all patiently, 1641
I should not live to speak another word;
So should my shame still rest upon record,
And never be forgot in mighty Rome 1644
The adulterate death of Lucrece and her
groom.

'Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
And far the weaker with so strong a fear:
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak;
No rightful plea might plead for justice there:
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes;
And when the judge is robb'd the prisoner
dies. 1652

'O! teach me how to make mine own excuse,
Or, at the least, this refuge let me find;
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this
abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind; 1656
That was not forc'd; that never was inclin'd
To accessory yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure.'

Lo! here the helpless merchant of this loss, 1660
With head declin'd, and voice damm'd up with
woe,
With sad-set eyes, and wretched arms across,
From lips new-waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away that stops his answer so: 1664
But, wretched as he is, he strives in vain;
What he breathes out his breath drinks up
again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide
Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste,
Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride 1669
Back to the strait that forc'd him on so fast;
In rage sent out, recall'd in rage, being past:
Even so his sighs, his sorrows, make a saw,
To push grief on, and back the same grief
draw. 1673

Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh:
'Dear lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth
Another power; no flood by raining slaketh.
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh 1678
More feeling-painful: let it then suffice
To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

'And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy Lucrece, now attend me:
Be suddenly revenged on my foe,
Thine, mine, his own: suppose thou dost de-
fend me 1684
From what is past: the help that thou shalt lend
me
Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die;
For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

RAPE OF LUCRECE

1104

'But ere I name him, you, fair lords,' quoth she,—
Speaking to those that came with Collatine,—
'Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine;
For 'tis a meritorious fair design 1692

To chase injustice with revengeful arms:
Knights, by their oaths, should right poor
ladies' harms.'

At this request, with noble disposition
Each present lord began to promise aid, 1696
As bound in knighthood to her imposition,
Longing to hear the hateful foe bewray'd:
But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,
The protestation stops. 'O! speak,' quoth she,
'How may this forced stain be wip'd from
me? 1701

'What is the quality of mine offence,
Being constrain'd with dreadful circumstance?
May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,
My low-declined honour to advance? 1705
May any terms acquit me from this chance?
The poison'd fountain clears itself again;
And why not I from this compelled stain?'

With this, they all at once began to say, 1709
Her body's stain her mind untainted clears;
While with a joyless smile she turns away
The face, that map which deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune, carv'd in it with tears. 1713
'No, no,' quoth she, 'no dame, hereafter
living,
By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving.'

Here with a sigh, as if her heart would break,
She throws forth Tarquin's name, 'He, he,' she
says, 1717
But more than 'he' her poor tongue could not
speak;
Till after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
She utters this, 'He, he, fair lords, 'tis he,
That guides this hand to give this wound to
me.'

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul un-
sheath'd: 1724
That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
Of that polluted prison where it breath'd;
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeath'd
Her winged sprite, and through her wounds
doth fly 1728
Life's lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone-still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,
Stood Collatine and all his lordly crew;
Till Lucrece' father, that beholds her bleed, 1732
Himself on her self-slaughter'd body threw;
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
The murderous knife, and as it left the place,
Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase;

And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
Circles her body in on every side,

Who, like a late-sack'd island, vastly stood, 1740
Bare and unpeopled in this fearful flood.
Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,
And some look'd black, and that false Tar-
quin stain'd.

About the mourning and congealed face, 1744
Of that black blood a watery rigol goes,
Which seems to weep upon the tainted place:
And ever since, as pitying Lucrece' woes,
Corrupted blood some watery token shows;
And blood untainted still doth red abide,
Blushing at that which is so putrified.

'Daughter, dear daughter!' old Lucretius cries,
That life was mine which thou hast here de-
priv'd. 1752

If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live now Lucrece is unliv'd?
Thou wast not to this end from me deriv'd.
If children predecease progenitors, 1756
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

'Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new born;
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,
Shows me a bare-bon'd death by time outworn.
O! from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn,
And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,
That I no more can see what once I was. 1764

'O Time! cease thou thy course, and last no
longer,
If they surcease to be that should survive.
Shall rotten death make conquest of the
stronger,
And leave the faltering feeble souls alive? 1768
The old bees die, the young possess their hive:
Then live, sweet Lucrece, live again and see
Thy father die, and not thy father thee!'

By this, starts Collatine as from a dream, 1772
And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place;
And then in key-cold Lucrece' bleeding stream
He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
And counterfeits to die with her a space; 1776
Till manly shame bids him possess his breath
And live to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul
Hath serv'd a dumb arrest upon his tongue;
Who, mad that sorrow should his use control
Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,
Begins to talk; but through his lips do throng
Weak words so thick, come in his poor heart's
aid, 1784
That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime 'Tarquin' was pronounced plain,
But through his teeth, as if the name he tore.
This windy tempest, till it blow up rain, 1788
Held back his sorrow's tide to make it more;
At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er:
Then son and father weep with equal strife
Who should weep most, for daughter or for
wife. 1792

1105

RAPE OF LUCRECE

The one doth call her his, the other his,
Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.
The father says, 'She's mine.' 'O! mine she is,'
Replies her husband; 'do not take away 1796
My sorrow's interest; let no mourner say
He weeps for her, for she was only mine,
And only must be wail'd by Collatine.'

'O!' quoth Lucretius, 'I did give that life 1800
Which she too early and too late hath spill'd.'
'Woe, woe,' quoth Collatine, 'she was my wife,
I ow'd her, and 'tis mine that she hath kill'd.'
'My daughter' and 'my wife' with clamours
fill'd 1804
The dispers'd air, who, holding Lucrece' life,
Answer'd their cries, 'my daughter' and 'my
wife.'

Brutus, who pluck'd the knife from Lucrece'
side,
Seeing such emulation in their woe, 1808
Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in Lucrece' wound his folly's show.
He with the Romans was esteemed so
As silly-jeering idiots are with kings, 1812
For sportive words and uttering foolish
things:

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise;
And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly, 1816
To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
'Thou wronged lord of Rome,' quoth he, 'arise:
Let my unsounded self, suppos'd a fool,
Now set thy long-experienc'd wit to school.'

'Why, Collatine, is woe the cure for woe? 1821
Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous
deeds?
Is it revenge to give thyself a blow
For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?
Such childish humour from weak minds pro-
ceeds: 1825

Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
To slay herself, that should have slain her foe.

'Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
In such relenting dew of lamentations; 1829
But kneel with me and help to bear thy part,
To rouse our Roman gods with invocations,
That they will suffer these abominations, 1832
Since Rome herself in them doth stand dis-
grac'd,
By our strong arms from forth her fair streets
chas'd.

'Now, by the Capitol that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stain'd,
By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's
store, 1837
By all our country rights in Rome maintain'd,
And by chaste Lucrece' soul, that late com-
plain'd
Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody
knife, 1840
We will revenge the death of this true wife.'

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kiss'd the fatal knife to end his vow;
And to his protestation urg'd the rest, 1844
Who, wondering at him, did his words allow:
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow;
And that deep vow, which Brutus made be-
fore,
He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence;
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence: 1852
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly did give consent
To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.